

The Choice & Agency Wellness Framework

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Built upon the modern Five Domains Model of Animal Welfare, this framework is centered on canine empowerment. Rather than treating the dog as a passive recipient of touch, our approach honors the dog as an active, directing partner. By prioritizing autonomy and comfort-centered connection, we foster true mental security, emotional resilience, and overall well-being.

Core Pillars of the Framework

1. Active Agency & Autonomy

Going beyond simple consent, this pillar actively encourages the dog to guide and control the interaction.

The Power of Direction: The dog is recognized as the author of the session. Choosing to change positions, walk away, or disengage is celebrated as a successful expression of agency.

Two-Way Communication: The session functions as a continuous dialogue. Techniques are dynamically adjusted based on comfort, ensuring the dog maintains functional control over where and how they are touched.

Freedom of Environment: Sessions take place in an entirely unrestricted space, allowing the dog to freely select their preferred surface, orientation, and physical distance.

2. Comfort-Centered Pacing

Progressive wellness honors the dog's individual timeline, ensuring every movement is collaborative and free of expectation.

Collaborative Pacing: Interaction moves strictly at the dog's preferred speed, leaving ample time to process and acclimate without pressure.

Informed Transitions: Before shifting hands-on techniques or moving to a new body area, the practitioner pauses to invite engagement, ensuring the dog is ready and willing to proceed.

Rest and Integration: Open pauses are naturally woven into the session, offering regular opportunities to process relaxation and independently decide whether to re-engage.

3. Life Enrichment & Behavioral Support

This pillar focuses on active emotional regulation, thriving, and enhancing day-to-day well-being.

Support for Behavioral Wellness: Specifically designed for dogs navigating fear, anxiety, or environmental sensitivities. Providing a safe, predictable, and non-demanding interaction lowers systemic stress and builds resilience.

Enhancing Quality of Life: The primary focus is to cultivate deep relaxation and physical comfort, which positively influences overall mood, sleep quality, and daily behavior.

Observational Language: The practitioner continuously monitors behavioral indicators of ease and comfort to guide the session, ensuring a purely stress-free experience.

A Complementary Practice: Dedicated strictly to stress reduction and relaxation, serving as a supportive lifestyle practice entirely separate from clinical medical treatment.

Science and Ethics

Our Choice & Agency Wellness Framework is not simply a philosophy of kindness; it is a rigorous approach directly informed by animal behavior, welfare science, and neurobiology. Insights from modern welfare and behavioral research prove that animals experience true mental security and emotional health when they function as active directors of their own experiences.

References

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