

Humane Dog Training

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports the humane training of dogs which includes force-free, evidence-based techniques that foster the human-dog relationship. The Edmonton Humane Society opposes the use of aversive techniques and devices that cause fear, anxiety, stress, pain or injury in dogs.

Rationale

- EHS supports the use of reward-based training which relies on positive reinforcement. Reward-based training provides motivation and supports the human-dog relationship. Humane training includes the correct application of learning theory, positive reinforcement of desirable behaviours, avoiding reinforcement of undesirable behaviours, and environmental management.
- Dominance theory involves the use of force and coercion to achieve an "alpha" status over dogs to control behaviour. This concept is contradictory to evidence-based practices and jeopardizes the physical and emotional health of dogs.
- Aversive techniques and devices (e.g. squirt bottle, dog whistles, citrus bark collars, prong collars, etc.) are associated with welfare risks, such as fear, anxiety, stress, aggression, pain and injury. There is no evidence that aversive techniques and devices are more effective than reward-based training.
- Aversive techniques and devices do not address the underlying causes of behavioural problems in dogs. Rather, this may exacerbate behavioural issues by increasing fear, anxiety, and stress. In some cases, behavioural issues can also be caused by pain or medical conditions.
- The International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants supports a Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) approach to behaviour modification and training.

References

1. International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (2019) Position Statement on LIMA. <https://m.iaabc.org/about/lima/>
2. International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (2019) Hierarchy of Procedures for Humane and Effective Practice. <https://m.iaabc.org/about/lima/hierarchy/>
3. B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (2016) Position Statement on Animal Training. <https://spca.bc.ca/programs-services/leaders-in-our-field/position-statements/position-statement-on-animal-training/>
4. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2015) Humane Training Methods for Dogs – Position Statement. <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/humane-training-methods-for-dogs>

5. American Veterinary Society of Animal Behaviour (2008). Position Statement on the Use of Dominance Theory in Behaviour Modification of Animals.
https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Dominance_Position_Statement-download.pdf
6. Zive G (2017) The effects of using aversive training methods in dogs – A review. Journal of Veterinary Behavior, 19: 50-60.