Enrichment for Shelter-Housed Cats

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Home environment
- Free to move around entire home/territory
- Able to choose social partners
- Ability to access resources
- Predictability and Routine

Shelter environment
- Confinement
- Social Isolation or “arranged marriages”
- No choice regarding access to resources
- Lack of predictability in daily routine
- Unable to retreat from environment

Shelter Cat or Sheltered Cat?

The Road Map...

What
- Five Freedoms
- Five Provisions
- Sensory Info
- Enrichment Goals

Why
- Improved Welfare
- Education

Where
- Housing

Who
- Enrichment Providers
- Cats

How
- Training
- Play
- Case Studies

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The Five Freedoms
- Freedom from hunger & thirst
  - Ready access to fresh water & diet to maintain full health and vigor

The Five Provisions
- Good nutrition
  - Minimize thirst and hunger, enable eating to be a positive experience

The Five Freedoms
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease
  - Prevention, rapid diagnosis, treatment

The Five Provisions
- Good health
  - Minimize aversive experiences, promote pleasurable experience and physical experience

The Five Freedoms
- Freedom from discomfort
  - Appropriate environment, shelter, resting area

The Five Provisions
- Good environment
  - Minimize discomfort/exposure and promote thermal, physical, other comforts
The Five Freedoms

- Freedom to express normal behavior (species-specific)
  - Sufficient space, proper facilities & company of other cats

The Five Provisions

- Appropriate behavior
  - Minimize threats & unpleasant restrictions on behavior, promote engagement in rewarding activities

The Five Freedoms

- Freedom from fear and distress
  - Conditions/treatment that avoid mental suffering

The Five Provisions

- Positive mental experiences
  - Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control

Sensory Enrichment

- Visual
- Auditory
- Olfactory
- Taste
- Tactile

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WizmqL6I2ok

Touch...by whom?
Are you paying attention??

Feline Bite/Scratch Reports

- In/Out Carrier (8)
- In/Out Cage (12)
- Holding (6)
- Petting/Handling (13)
- Trying to Catch (6)
- Cleaning Cage (2)
- Pulling from ceiling tile (1)
- Child pulled tail (1)
- Medical Restraint (5)
- Fell on cat (1)
- Collar caught on leg (1)
- Attacked sleeping owner (1)

86% are related to (mis)handling by humans

Increases to 95% when medical restraint is added

Enrichment Goals

- Increase behavioural diversity
- Reduce the frequency of abnormal behaviour
- Increase the range or number of normal, species-typical behaviour patterns
- Increase positive utilization of the environment
- Increase the ability to cope with challenges in a more normal way.
Environmental Enrichment Strategies


Five Freedoms
- Hunger & thirst
- Pain, injury, disease
- Discomfort
- Express normal behaviors
- Fear & distress

Five Provisions
- Good nutrition
- Good health
- Good environment
- Appropriate behavior
- Positive mental experiences

Sensory
- Visual
- Auditory
- Olfactory
- Taste
- Tactile

Enrichment Goals
- Increase behavioral diversity
- Reduce # abnormal behaviors
- Increase # and range of normal behavior
- Increase positive utilization of environment
- Improve coping skills

Putting It All Together...

Enrichment, Training & Welfare

- Decreasing risks
- Improving physical and psychological welfare
- Seeing the “whole cat”
- Ultimately welfare is defined on an individual bases
Educating Our Communities

Show your community the untapped potential of cats

Happy Caregivers

- More smiles & laughter
- Creates opportunities to directly contribute to making a difference and saving a life by empowering staff & volunteers

Housing and Enrichment

- In Shelter
  - In cage enrichment, single cat
  - In cage enrichment, multi-cat
  - Out of cage enrichment, single cat
  - Out of cage enrichment, multi-cat
  - Windows/No Windows
  - Sound
  - Placement (high vs. low)
- Offsite
- Foster Care
Housing and Enrichment

WHERE
- Kittens
- Adolescents
- Adult Cats

Foster Care

- Staff
- Volunteers
  - Specialized Volunteers
- Foster Homes
- Shelter Visitors

Enrichment Providers

AdvoCATs
SPCA Serving Erie County
Types of Responders: Active vs. Passive Responders

Active Responder
- Often at front of cage/enclosure
- Rears on hind legs, attempts to climb cage/enclosure
- Attempts to escape by pawing at exit point to cage/enclosure
- Paws anyone passing cage/enclosure
- Paces at front of enclosure/exit points in home
- Attention-seeking vocalizations
- Follows owner(s) in home
- Displays aggressive behaviour towards people/other animals in the home
- May be destructive or house soil if left alone in the home

Passive Responder
- Behavioral depression, including inhibition of maintenance behaviours such as feeding, drinking, grooming, elimination
- Immobility, often attempting to hide (head and/or body may be hidden under bedding/structure)
- No vocalizations (although may display defensive vocalizations such as hissing/growling if approached)
- Lack of interest in the environment (both social and physical)
Play as Enrichment

- Object play
- Food play
- Predatory play
- Social play
  - With other cats
  - With other animals
  - Human & non-human

Training as Enrichment

- Classical Conditioning
- Operant Conditioning
  - Targeting
  - Shaping
  - Luring
  - Capturing

+R Training: Cat Pawsitive

"I can’t thank this program enough for allowing us glimpses of cats’ true personalities and not just their coping mechanisms in the shelter."
Kittens on Campus

Behavioral Foster Care: Pawsitive Journeys
• Identify Cats
• Identify Foster Homes
• Provide Support

Enrichment and Behavior – Case Study: Hattie
• Aggressive Behavior
• Inappropriate Play
• Confinement Frustration

Photo courtesy of SPCA Serving Erie County
Enrichment and Behavior – Medical Cases
- Cats in Isolation (contagious disease)
- Post-surgical/surgical recovery
  - Case Study: Louie
- Traumatic injury/conditions requiring cage rest/confineement
  - Case Study: Trax

Enrichment and Behavior – Case Study: Athena
- Lack of response to environment
- Unknown medical condition?

In Summary…
- WHAT
- WHERE
- WHO
- HOW
- WHEN
  - NOW!!
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