



Choice and Training:  
The Shelter/Rescue  
Environment

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It's all about agency

- Perceived control
- Clark – “agency refers to an animal’s ability to gather knowledge and enhance skills for future use” (White, 1959)

Spinka and Wemelsfelder, 2011; Clark, 2017

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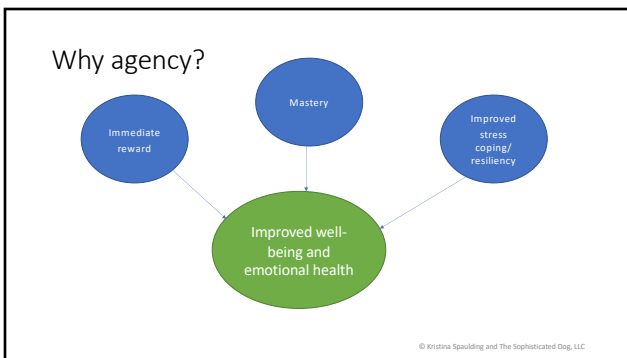
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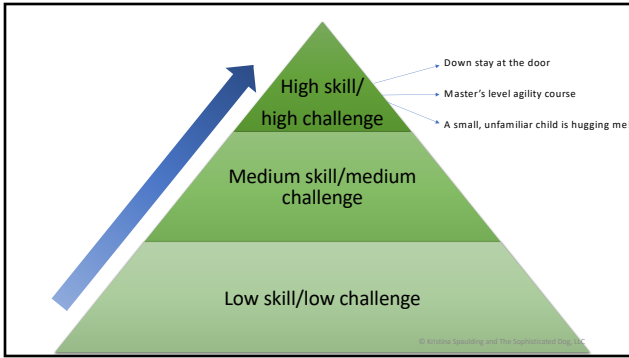
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**Activity**

- Task:**
  - Think about ways to increase agency
  - Work in groups of six
  - Be creative
  - Any species is fine
- Discussion:**
  - Share your ideas

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**Why do animals get returned?**

- Aggressive towards humans (Dogs 23.5%, Cats 9.7%)
- Aggressive towards animals (Dogs 14.7%, Cats 12.5%)
- Other reasons:
  - Destructive behavior, moving to new home, separation anxiety, medical needs of animal (all between 7 and 11% in dogs, 1 and 14% in cats)
  - Other reasons: Medical/other costs, human health, issues with resident pet

Hawes et al., 2020

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### Why do animals get returned?

- Behavior issues
  - 55.9% of dogs and 34.7% in cats
- Personal issues
  - 31.4% of dogs and 56.9% in cats
- Medical issues
  - 8.8% of dogs and 5.6% in cats

Hawes et al., 2020

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### How does this affect the future?

- Powell et al., 2022
  - 1 in 10 adopt again within 12 months
    - Cat adopters 2.45X more likely to return than dog adopters
  - Owner-related reasons ↓ likelihood (reduced)
  - Behavior-related reasons for return ↓ likelihood (reduced)
  - Animal health reasons for return ↑ likelihood (increased)

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### Activity

- Task:
  - Role play: Adoption counseling
    - Think about ways to help a new adopter
    - Use the provided sample dogs
  - Work in pairs
  - Switch roles

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### Adoption counseling

- Expectation management
- Easy win
- Follow up plan

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### Activity

- Task:
  - Develop a post-adoption plan
    - Frequency
    - Format (e-mail, phone, other?)
    - Required or voluntary?
    - Who initiates?
    - Other key components?
  - Ten minutes on your own
  - Five minutes with a partner

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### Thank you!

- To all of you!
- To Jennifer Franco and the APDT

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### Get in touch

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