



Animal Welfare Board of India

The Art and Practice of Humane Dog Handling



Produced by



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BACKGROUND

Since its foundation, **Vets Beyond Borders** (VBB) has focused on the development and implementation of innovative and effective programmes aimed at improving animal welfare and public health.

Milestones include:

- 2005: Partnering with the State Government of Sikkim and Fondation Brigitte Bardot to establish and operate the Sikkim Anti-Rabies & Animal Health (SARAH) Programme, the first statewide ABC-AR project in India. The SARAH Programme is now a designated Division of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Fisheries and Veterinary Services and is internationally recognised as a model animal birth control and anti-rabies (ABC-AR) programme.
- 2008: Inception of its landmark **VetTrain** initiative, and partnering with the Animal Welfare Division of the Ministry of Environment & Forests (Government of India), the Animal Welfare Board of India, the Marchig Trust and RSPCA International to compile and deliver specialised ABC-AR training courses at the National Institute of Animal Welfare and other centres cross India. The establishment of **VetTrain** was hailed as a major development in the animal welfare sector, and other organisations have since adopted this highly acclaimed training format. Under its **VetTrain** banner, VBB remains committed to the provision of training for veterinarians, paraveterinarians, Humane Dog Handlers and animal welfare project managers in India, China, South-East Asia and the Pacific.
- 2016: Implementation of the pilot phase of **VetMatch**, a unique initiative, connecting appropriately skilled volunteers with partner animal welfare organisations around the world.

Vets Beyond Borders, Global Wildlife Resources, Fondation Brigitte Bardot and **Indigree Angels Trust** are committed to assisting organisations working to improve the health and welfare of animals in India.

This Humane Dog Handling Training Programme has been produced as a result of this collaboration and with the support of Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dr. R.M. Kharb, AVSM, Chairman of the Animal Welfare Board of India, for circulation throughout India to organisations involved in ABC-AR work.

The manual and video comprise a detailed curriculum, to be used by animal welfare organisations in providing training to Humane Dog Handlers, irrespective of skill-level or experience. The aim of this important initiative is to enhance and standardise the knowledge and expertise of Humane Dog Handlers working with such projects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Vets Beyond Borders** (VBB) would firstly like to thank its major sponsor, **Fondation Brigitte Bardot**, for its generous and ongoing funding support, without which the production of this training resource would not have been possible.
- The content of the manual and video is founded on principles and techniques taught by Dr Mark Johnson DVM, Executive Director of **Global Wildlife Resources**. VBB expresses its sincere thanks to Dr Johnson for his commitment to the production of these materials.
- VBB sincerely thanks the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and **Help In Suffering** (HIS) for permitting reference to material previously published in “Standard Operating Procedures” (AWBI) and “The ABC Manual” (HIS).
- VBB expresses its deep gratitude to Anusheh Hussain of Indigree Angels Trust, who produced the first draft of the manual, and to Susanne Gehrig, who produced the wonderful illustrations.
- Design and layout of the manual was generously undertaken by Gloria Kwan (gloriasfkw@gmail.com).
- Photographs provided or sourced by VBB and Dr. Mark Johnson: all necessary credits have been given.

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THE SITUATION

India has one of the highest populations of stray dogs in the world. The life of an Indian street dog is very hard: coping with lack of food, shelter, water, extreme weather conditions, the risk of abuse and the varied stresses of living in the city.

ABC-AR (Animal Birth Control & Anti-Rabies) projects, operating throughout India, are the legally prescribed method for dog population and rabies control, endorsed by the World Health Organisation. Sadly, there is a lack of appropriately trained personnel to deliver these programmes.

In 2009, the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) published Standard Operating Procedures for ABC-AR programmes. Organisations carrying out ABC-AR work are required to adhere to these protocols, which include humane methods of catching and handling dogs.

This manual and the associated video have been produced to provide detailed theoretical and practical information, to assist in the training of animal handlers and promote the humane management of street dogs. This resource will also help to increase the capacity and improve the operational standards of ABC-AR projects, with the overarching aim of improving animal welfare and public health.

Animal welfare organisations and municipal corporations run joint programmes in many cities in India to rescue, sterilise and treat wounded and diseased dogs. Over the last few years, as awareness of animal welfare has increased, there has been much controversy regarding the methods employed by some dog catching teams, including:

- Using catch-poles with wire nooses in a cruel manner
- Using tongs to restrain and drag dogs
- Injuring dogs during the catching process

- Not returning dogs to their catch location; releasing them instead in an area where they have to compete with local dogs to establish territory

Much of this cruelty arises because some dog catchers simply do not know how to capture dogs in a humane way.

The aim of this training course is to provide animal handlers with tools and methods that promote gentle and respectful, safe and successful, dog handling. It emphasises the importance of compassion and the skills and qualities required to be a Humane Animal Handler.

Humane and efficient dog catching is an essential component of all ABC-AR projects. Application of the principles and techniques covered in this training programme will improve the effectiveness of and public support for the work of ABC-AR projects, especially Humane Animal Handlers. This will assist in ongoing efforts to reduce the death toll from rabies infection in humans and animals and the incidence of dog-on-human attacks. It will also improve the health and welfare of street dogs.

DAY ONE

INTRODUCTIONS (20 mins)

Aim: The aims of this exercise are to introduce the participants and the facilitator to each other and to allow the facilitator to summarise the varied aspects of the work of Humane Animal Handlers.

Exercise: Ask participants to introduce themselves. Hand out a notepad, and ask participants to describe the things they like and dislike about their work, handling animals, using one sheet of paper for each comment.

SETTING NORMS (15 mins)

Aim: To establish boundaries and discipline at the outset to make sure that time is managed properly and everyone gets a chance to learn.

Exercise: Ask participants to suggest group attitudes that will encourage everyone to make a contribution to the training experience.

The list should include suggestions such as: do not be judgmental; respect each other's opinions; listen to others—everyone has something to teach us; we are all each other's teachers; do not interrupt others; give everyone a chance to speak.

Once developed, the list of Norms should be kept on display for reference, should participants need reminding.

PRELIMINARY VIDEO VIEWING

“Rabies—a major disease of humans and animals” (10 mins)

“Animal Birth Control—Anti-Rabies (ABC-AR) Projects” (15 mins)

These videos inform participants of the importance of the work of animal birth control and anti-rabies projects and particularly the work of Humane Dog Handlers.

TOPIC 1: THE ART OF HUMANE DOG HANDLING

(Supporting videos: “The Art of Humane Dog Handling” and “All About Dogs”)

SECTION 1: COMPASSION

CLASS EXERCISE: What is compassion? (60 mins)

Aim: To encourage analysis and understanding of how we perceive and relate to dogs.



When we see a person or animal in distress—and feel their pain as if it were our own and strive to lessen their pain and suffering—we are showing compassion. Compassion is important because it makes us feel good about who we are and what we do.

When we practice compassion, we are kinder and more generous.

Exercise: Ask participants to relate occasions when they have been compassionate or where others have displayed compassion towards them. How did this make them feel? What in their opinion is the benefit of compassion?

CLASS EXERCISE:

Why is compassion important for dog capture and handling? (60 mins)

Dogs respond to how we are feeling and what we are thinking.

A respected dog trainer once wrote that, when he wanted to know the truth about his own state of mind and heart, all he had to do was be in the presence of his dogs and they would tell him the truth through their behaviour and response to him.

Exercise: Discuss the following statements with participants:

If we express compassion, patience, selflessness and humility and promote the well-being of others, many positive outcomes will follow:

- Dogs will be more trusting, feel safer with us and hence be calmer; so it will be easier to catch and handle them.
- Since there will be less fighting or struggling with the dog, handlers will less likely to be bitten and the catching and handling process will be less stressful for both dogs and handlers.
- You will be respected in the community because, when you show compassion, you influence other people to be kind and to see how similar all living beings are in their need for kindness, thereby increasing affinity between animal and man.

- Compassion strengthens ABC-AR projects because it motivates us to strive for higher standards of care for animals and helps us catch more dogs. It also builds trust and public support for ABC-AR work.
- When we are compassionate, we feel good and proud of ourselves. We are also far less stressed, because the dogs and the public respond to us more positively.
- If we can win the trust of even one dog and get it to respond calmly to us, this has a ripple effect on other dogs in the area, making it easier to catch them in future.
- Kindness is the right thing to do: when we practice compassion towards others, we learn to be more compassionate towards ourselves.

PRACTICAL SESSION:

Approaching dogs (60 mins)

Participants are taken to a secure area in the shelter complex, where they are introduced to well-familiarised dogs, and practice approaching them, but not handling them, using the following guidelines:

- Initially avoid eye contact and physical contact
- Focus on exhibiting compassionate dominance
- Take small steps towards the dog
- Be patient
- Offer food to the dog
- Interpret how the dog is feeling in your presence and what you can do to calm the dog
- Continuously analyse how you are feeling. Are you calm, excited, nervous?
- Restore and maintain your balance at all times

Notice what kind of body movements make the dog more afraid and which make the dog more relaxed. See how the dog reacts when you step directly towards it and compare this to how the dog reacts when you move in an arc towards it. See if the dog is more comfortable accepting a treat when you are facing it or when you stand to the side.

At the end of this exercise, the participants

are questioned on their individual experiences with the dogs, what they learned, what was different in their interactions and whether they induced different responses from dogs as a result. How did this exercise make them feel about themselves?

SECTION 2: ALL ABOUT DOGS

Understanding a dog's nature and working with, not against, the dog is less stressful for both dogs and humans. There are qualities common to all dogs, irrespective of whether they live on the street or in our homes, whether they are pedigreed or mixed breeds.

In this section, we will discuss those inherent qualities and, by doing so, better inform ourselves about who dogs really are. In our day-to-day lives, we study our relationships with other people carefully, knowing what can trigger confusion, fear and other emotions in those around us, so that we can better manage or guide them.

For similar reasons, it is important to understand the nature of dogs, so that we can handle them better and therefore make our own work easier and more enjoyable. Once we understand what creates fear, irritation or excitement in dogs, then we can avoid those practices, because we want to make our job easier.

CLASS EXERCISE:

What do you think dogs think? (45 mins)

The facilitator lists the following statements about dogs and asks the participants whether they agree or disagree. They are asked to explain their answers and to give examples to support their opinions.

1. Dogs are the most social and loyal of all animals: Agree/Disagree. Why?
2. Most dogs are submissive: Agree/Disagree. Why?
3. A dog's affection and trust can be won quite easily: Agree/Disagree. Why?
4. Dogs have heightened senses. They are very sensitive to how big and fast our movements are: Agree/Disagree. Why?
5. Dogs like high-pitched and loud noise, as it calms them: Agree/Disagree. Why?
6. Dogs on the street are insensitive animals. They don't get scared, feel pain, or react to their environment: Agree/Disagree. Why?
7. Dogs have a unique ability to understand humans. They know when we are feeling sad, tense, angry or fearful and when we act like we are trying to catch them: Agree/Disagree. Why?
8. Dogs reflect our own energy back to us by the behaviour they display. If we are tense, they are tense and if we are calm, they will be calmer: Agree/Disagree. Why?
9. Dogs on the street have low fear and stress levels: Agree/Disagree. Why?
10. Dogs have the ability to show gratitude and compassion: Agree/Disagree. Why?
11. Dogs have an ability to trust us: Agree/Disagree. Why?

CLASS EXERCISE: Dispelling some myths about dogs (45 mins)

Aim: To address any misunderstandings that participants may have about dogs in general. For example, many people avoid handling dogs because they have concerns about catching diseases.

Exercise: Participants are asked to write down their responses to the following statements.

Dogs can spread disease to humans	Myth or Fact ?
If I am bitten by a dog, I will definitely catch rabies	Myth or Fact ?
Dogs often bite randomly for no good reason	Myth or Fact ?
All stray dogs carry rabies	Myth or Fact ?
A dog gives no warning before biting you	Myth or Fact ?
If a dog howls, it is signalling an impending death	Myth or Fact ?
Touching a stray dog can give me skin infections	Myth or Fact ?
All stray dogs are aggressive by nature	Myth or Fact ?
Dogs serve no ecological purpose and are just a public menace	Myth or Fact ?

The facilitator then provides the correct answers; this is followed by a class discussion.

CLASS EXERCISE: The cultural and spiritual significance of dogs in India (45 mins)

Aim: To remind participants that dogs have been valued in India for thousands of years. We will share stories of compassion and respect shown towards dogs found in religious teachings.

Exercise: Participants are divided into groups and asked to relate one significant spiritual or cultural story of compassion towards dogs or the value of dogs.

Guideline for the Exercise: There is no religion in the world that instructs you to be cruel to animals.

In Hinduism, the Mahabharata tells the wonderful story of how, when Yudhisthira finally reaches the gates of heaven, he refuses to enter unless the stray dog, that showed him unflinching loyalty and accompanied him all the way, is allowed to enter heaven with him. It turns out that the dog is Yudhisthira's father Dharma.

In Islam, the Qur'an does not condemn any of God's creation and the dog is no exception. Surah 18 portrays a dog as a wonderful companion of believers in refuge.

The Hadith literature has some extremely humane examples as well, such as: All creation is the family of God, so you shall be kind to them all. There is great reward for you in the kind treatment of any animal. A man entered paradise because he gave water to a thirsty dog. A woman deserved hell because she used to torture a cat.

Imam Ali one of the ten Caliphs of Islam is said to have stated: *"Happy is the one who leads the life of a dog! For the dog has 10 characteristics which every believer should possess. First, the dog has no status among creatures; second, the dog is a pauper, having no worldly goods; third, the entire earth is his resting place; fourth, the dog goes hungry most of the time; fifth, the dog will not leave his master's door even after having received a hundred lashes; sixth, he protects his master and his friend, and when someone approaches, he will attack the foe and let the friend pass; seventh, he guards his master by night, never sleeping; eighth, he performs most of his duties silently; ninth, he is content with whatever his master gives him; and tenth, when he dies, he leaves no inheritance."*

DAY TWO

RECAP (30 mins)

Discussion of topics covered the previous day; providing participants with an opportunity to address any confusion or concerns.

SECTION 2: ALL ABOUT DOGS (continued)

LESSON: Dog psychology and body language (15 mins)

There are some basic aspects of dog psychology, which, if understood, help to make handling as stress-free and safe as possible, for the dogs and ourselves.

- Dogs do not want to fight; they only want to escape or protect themselves.
- Most dogs will cooperate if they know you have good intentions and if they feel safe in your presence.
- Dogs are domestic animals and have a deep desire to bond with humans. This is a huge advantage for the dog handler.
- Dogs are extremely sensitive to us. They can feel when we are tense and when we are calm and compassionate. Although we may not be aware of the signals we are sending, we can never lie to a dog about how we are feeling.
- Dogs have a reflex to submit to energies that are calm yet assertive because they have an ingrained pack mentality. In a dog's world, we are either stable or unstable, a leader or a follower. To be effective at handling we have to learn to be a leader.
- The dominant or alpha dog is a teacher, not a bad dog.
- Dogs will usually allow themselves be physically restrained if correct humane techniques are used.

- Dogs live in the moment. They do not live in the past or worry about the future like humans do. If they feel safe and secure in the moment, they can suppress pre-conditioned behaviour, provided we have the time and patience to encourage them to do so.

Like humans, dogs have different temperament types depending on their early socialisation, conditioning and individual experiences. Dogs communicate how they are feeling by adopting various body postures and making certain sounds. If we have the ability to read their body language, we can learn which techniques may be best to use for catching that particular dog. This can help reduce the time spent catching a dog and avoid the stress the dog experiences when we use techniques that are inappropriate for the dog's temperament.

This skill also helps us to decide whether a dog is likely to bite. Dog bites are not badges of honour! If you are being bitten regularly, you must make more effort to understand what dogs are trying to convey to you by their behaviour.

People have a tendency to brand some dogs as "bad" on the basis of their behaviour. There is no such thing as a "bad dog". It is circumstances that make dogs behave in certain ways. It is important to remember that dogs do not think like humans. Their reactions are based entirely on self-protection and a desire to escape from what they perceive to be a threatening situation.

CLASS EXERCISE: Interpreting body language 1 (90 mins)

The facilitator describes the various body postures displayed by dogs and their significance. This should be done with reference to the video segment entitled “All About Dogs” and the list below. Participants are asked to consider the different types of dogs they come across in their work and contribute to the discussion.

How do I know if a dog is being **CONFIDENT**?

Stance: erect

Head: held high

Ears: erect

Eyes: bright

Mouth: may be held slightly open but relaxed

Tail: may sway gently, curl loosely or hang in a relaxed position

Behaviour: friendly, non-threatening and at ease with surroundings

How do I know if a dog is being **HAPPY**?

A happy dog will show the same signs as a confident dog; in addition, the dog will usually wag its tail and sometimes hold the mouth open more or pant quietly. A happy dog appears even more friendly and content than the confident dog, showing no signs of anxiety

How do I know if a dog is being **PLAYFUL**?

Stance: may jump around and run; may exhibit the “play bow” (illustrated in the picture), with front legs stretched forward, head straight ahead, rear end up and possibly wiggling in excitement—an invitation to play

Behaviour: excited

How do I know if a dog is being **SUBMISSIVE**?

Stance: the body is lowered to the ground; the dog may roll over onto its back

Head: lowered

Ears: held down/flat

Eyes: averted

Tail: held low between its legs and may sway slightly
Behaviour: meek and gentle; may urinate; may nuzzle and lick you; the general attitude is subservience, as if to say “I am not looking for trouble”



(Image Source: Courtesy of Thomas from USA (Wolf Mix)
[CC-BY-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons))

How do I know if a dog is **ANXIOUS**?

Stance: may act submissive, but adopts a tense posture and may tremble

Head: head and neck extended

Ears: may be held partially back

Eyes: may show the whites of the eyes

Mouth: may whimper, moan, yawn or lick lips

Tail: will be held low and may be tucked between the hind legs

Behaviour: may overreact to stimuli and can become fearful or even aggressive if provoked

How do I know if a dog is **FEARFUL**?

Stance: crouches/cowers, very tense posture and may tremble; hunches the body

Head: held low

Ears: pinned back

Eyes: may show the whites of the eyes

Mouth: whimpers, moans, yawns and/or licks lips

Tail: usually tucked between the hind legs

Behaviour: may try to run away; if the dog feels trapped it may growl and even charge or bite

How do I know if a dog is being **DOMINANT**?

Stance: erect and confident; may lean slightly forward

Head: held high

Ears: erect

Eyes: wide, making direct eye contact with the other dog or person

Mouth: low growl

Tail: held high and somewhat stiff

Behaviour: appears less friendly and may even bite. If it encounters another dog that does not submit, a fight may eventuate; a dog that directs dominant behaviour towards people can pose a serious threat.

The difference between an alpha and a dominant dog is that the term "alpha dog" is used only in relation to other dogs in its pack. "Dominant" is a more general term that can be applied, regardless of where the dog ranks in a pack.

How do I know if a dog is **AGGRESSIVE**?

Stance: feet firmly planted on the ground in a territorial manner; may lunge forward; hackles (the hairs along the back) are raised

Head: held straight ahead

Ears: pinned back

Eyes: narrow and piercing, and firmly fixed on the dog's perceived opponent in an intense and



a Fearful dog



a Dominant dog



an Aggressive dog

(Image Source: U.S. Air Force Photo by Josh Plueger [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons)

challenging stare

Mouth: bares teeth, snaps and growls or barks threateningly

Tail: erect and straight; may wag at the tip

Behaviour: The general attitude is one of menace. The dog can be an extreme threat to your safety and may attack viciously; however, only two per cent of all dogs are inherently aggressive.

Fear-induced aggression

A fearful dog may display aggression as a way to protect itself. This is learned behaviour, stimulated by survival instinct. Fear aggression is often interpreted as aggressive behaviour, as it typically involves barking, growling and menacing. This type of temperament may be very difficult to recognise, and the dog may be incorrectly branded as bad, nasty or vicious. Some nervous dogs learn that, by pretending to be mean and intimidating, they can scare off what they perceive as an immediate threat to them.

Difference between the bite of an aggressive dog and that of a fearful dog

An aggressive dog typically does not let go after it bites you; whereas a nervous dog will usually make rapid snapping movements or give one or two quick bites before running off. The majority of dog bites are inflicted by nervous or fear-aggressive dogs.

CLASS EXERCISE: Interpreting body language 2 (45 mins)

Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a picture of a series of dogs displaying particular postures. Ask the group to identify the likely temperament types from the list below and to explain their reasoning:

- Confident Dog
- Happy Dog
- Playful Dog
- Submissive Dog
- Anxious Dog
- Fearful Dog
- Dominant Dog
- Aggressive Dog
- Fearful-Aggressive Dog

At the end of this exercise, each group presents its conclusions and these are reviewed by the facilitator and other participants.

PRACTICAL SESSION: Dog temperaments (45 mins)

Participants, divided into groups of no more than three, are taken to a secure area of the shelter where dogs of a range of temperaments are held. Each group studies each dog in turn and records what it feels is its likely temperament type for each dog.

CLASS EXERCISE: Observations and comments (30 mins)

Each group makes a brief presentation to the facilitator and other groups on their observations and conclusions.

SECTION 3: ALL ABOUT YOU AND DOGS

LESSON: The philosophy of Humane Dog Handling (30 mins)

The Power of Intention: A positive mind-set is essential. Visualising a successful handling experience, with you and the dogs staying calm and safe and being successful in what you have set out to do, will help relax you before you start work.

Dog Psychology: Be attentive to the signals the dogs give you and learn to respect them and work with them, not against them. Understand that every dog is your teacher and will help you to refine your skills.

Energy: When you are calm yet assertive, you can communicate your intentions to dogs and possibly convince them to do what you are asking. This is an art that is mastered with practice and patience.

- Our greatest tools are not Y-Poles, nets or box-traps, but compassion, patience and confidence. Our energy and body language largely determine the nature of our interaction with dogs and the outcome. Energy emanates from our thoughts and feelings; body language

is the physical manifestation of those thoughts and feelings. Correct attitude and body language are our primary tools when working with dogs.

- Remember that the equipment available to assist us in our work becomes an extension of our body and personality when we use it. A net in the hand of an angry, impatient handler will not yield positive results. A catch-pole used by a nervous or excited person is neither humane nor effective.
- The best dog handlers remain calm and assertive when working with a dog. They are not in a hurry to catch the dog, nor are they interested in fighting the dog. Their energy is focused on keeping the dog calm and displaying compassion.
- Dogs are extremely sensitive and can anticipate our intentions. The dog's reaction to us is based on how we present ourselves (our body language) and what it thinks our intent is. Our energy dictates our body language, which in turn reveals our state of mind and our intentions to the dog. Our body language is defined by how we approach the dog, our stance and facial expression and the voice we use.
- Humane handling requires you to connect with the dog in a compassionate way and to use that connection to enable calm and assertive interventions.
- The most successful interactions with dogs occur when we are mindful of our own thoughts, movements and reactions. When we pay attention to our state of mind, we are calmer and the dog will be calmer too. The more confident we are, the more likely we are to achieve what we have set out to do.
- Therefore, **the first principle of humane handling is to look at yourself, not the dog.** Once you have assessed your own state of mind and energy, you can ensure that you are calm and centred - and that you stay that way. Once you are calm and centred, you can look at the dog and decide what it needs from you.

LESSON: Common dog handling errors (15 mins)

Dog catching and handling can be challenging. When handlers are afraid of dogs, they tend to treat them poorly. Struggles arise because the dog catcher sees the dogs as a menace and does not seek to establish a compassionate connection with them.

Some dog catchers see the job only as a means of putting food on the table and have no interest in developing the skills necessary to be a Humane Dog Handler.

So, some projects, supposedly dedicated to improving animal welfare, actually increase the suffering and distress experienced by dogs, as result of the way they capture, handle and transport them.

If you look closely, you will find that, when a street dog is being captured, any conflict between dog and human is almost always caused by the dog catcher. Except for the rare encounter with an alpha dog, dogs are simply afraid and focused on how to protect themselves and escape. These are very natural responses.



Be a Humane Dog Handler
—not a dog catcher

The most “aggressive” dogs we encounter are the ones who try harder to protect themselves. A common problem is that, when we go out to catch dogs, we become fixed on the outcome and forget to focus on the initial stage of the process—assessing the dog and its immediate needs, concerns and intentions.

As Dr. Mark Johnson states in his blog (www.feraldog.wordpress.com):

“Truly understanding the dog and the source of conflict allows us to handle dogs more humanely and safely and in a caring and respectful manner in line with our heart-felt purpose. With this attitude, the quieter approaches are tried first and the dogs will be more likely to comply with your requests. When working in Buddhist communities in Ladakh, India, I did not have to remind them to seek the quieter alternatives. Compassion and minimizing conflict is their conscious way of life and a natural way for them to relate to the animals and each other. As we were working dogs we noticed when our determination got too strong and our energy too intense. We would stop, reflect and create a better strategy for catching the dog even if it was just using the same strategy in a calmer manner.”

Dogs have a desire to submit. As puppies the first thing they learn is how to surrender. If you approach a dog correctly, it will usually submit.

CLASS EXERCISE: **Understanding calm assertiveness** **(60 mins)**

Calm assertiveness is a basic principle of humane handling; it is important have a clear understanding of what it means.

Everyone understands the meaning of “calmness” and can relate to it. Perhaps you feel calm when you see a beautiful sunset, listen to music or feel the breeze. Being assertive however is not necessarily a state that we experience regularly or with which we are familiar.

Being assertive is **not** being angry.
Being assertive is **not** being impatient.
Being assertive is **not** being forceful.
Being assertive is **not** the same as being aggressive.
Being assertive is **not** an overt display of power.

With participants working in groups of no more than three, ask them to create a list of qualities that an assertive person may possess. After participants present their lists, the following list is detailed by the facilitator and discussed:

- Assertiveness is putting your point of view forward without being threatening to or harming the rights of others.
- Assertive people are sensitive to the weaknesses and strengths of others, respect others’ boundaries and are motivated by care and concern for the well-being of others as well as their own; whereas aggressive people do not respect the boundaries of others, and harm and hurt them. Aggressive people seek to dominate, irrespective of the consequences.
- Assertive people have good self-esteem. They value themselves and therefore have the ability to value others.
- Assertive people respect others and therefore gain the respect of others easily.
- Assertive people know how to control feelings of anger, frustration and helplessness. They are balanced in their responses and know that calm and clear communication yields the best results.
- Assertive communication can also be helpful to others, because you are giving clear information about what you wish. By doing so in a non-threatening manner, you give others the opportunity to refuse your requests, if your needs conflict with their needs.
- Being assertive means respecting yourself and other beings; seeing all creatures as equals, no more or less important than you. The goal of assertive behaviour is to stand up for your rights in such a way that you do not violate another’s rights. It is achieved through

open and honest communication, respecting opinions other than your own—and by negotiation.

- Being assertive does not mean that you always get what you want, but it can help you achieve a compromise. Even if you don't get the outcome you want, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you handled the situation well.

Understanding **how** to be assertive provides you with the choice of **when** to be assertive. It does not mean you have to be assertive in every situation. For example, if you are faced with a very aggressive dog then being passive may be a safer option. Learning how and when to be assertive provides you with a choice.

Assertive Communication involves:

- Good body language: How you stand or sit, the gestures you use, how you look at someone and your voice are important. If you are hunched and awkward, or nervously wringing your hands, you are conveying weakness and fear, not assertiveness. If, on the other hand, you "are standing too close to the other and leaning over them, you are being aggressive! Someone communicating assertively will stand or sit in an upright, relaxed way, establish eye contact and have an open expression. Stand with good posture. Good posture gives you confidence and expresses that confidence to the dog without being threatening.
- Taking responsibility for your own feelings and not blaming the dog for making you feel stressed, anxious or frustrated.
- Timing: It is important to interact only when you feel ready. It may not be a good idea to try when you are more stressed than usual, anxious or feeling impatient.
- Practice: Learning to be more assertive takes practice. You can practice assertive postures in front of a mirror or ask a friend to give you feedback and suggestions.



CLASS EXERCISE: Understanding energy types (20 mins)

Role-play is used as a means to experience the impacts of differing postures and movements, and to appreciate the importance of calm assertiveness. Pair-off participants: one person crouches down to the level of a dog and the other adopts body postures and movements displaying (in any order):

- Aggression
- Nervousness/Fear
- Calm Assertiveness

Note: This is a silent exercise - words should not be used. The person playing the role of the dog should remember how he/she felt in response to the various body postures and movements displayed by his/her partner. Switch roles and repeat the exercise. A group discussion is then held on how participants felt when they were acting-out, and in response to, differing energy types.

DAY THREE

TOPIC 2: THE PRACTICE OF HUMANE DOG HANDLING

“When handling dogs, you must first look at yourself. Dogs are extremely sensitive to humans. Calm and settle yourself and the dog will calm as well. This is the key to successful and compassionate dog handling. In this way we attend to the “ways of being” as well as the “ways of doing””: Dr. Mark R. Johnson

(Supporting video: “The Practice of Humane Dog Handling”)

PRACTICAL SESSION (3 hours)

Participants are taken into the field in the early morning to watch experienced handlers catching dogs, using different methods such as the “Soft-Catch”, the “Do Bora” and the Net. They will be silent observers of the process and will make notes on which aspects of the work they felt were well performed and what they felt could have been done better. They will also report on the attitude of the community (both negative and positive) to the catching process. On return to the classroom, these notes will be shared with the facilitator and discussed.



RECAP (30 mins)

Discussion of topics covered the previous day; providing participants with an opportunity to address any confusion or concerns.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING HUMANE DOG HANDLING

LESSON: Introduction to dog handling (15 mins)

MOST IMPORTANTLY: NEVER HANDLE A DOG, IF YOU DO NOT FEEL THAT IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

In India, there are dog catchers who have never touched a dog! They have only ever caught and moved them with catch-poles, often injuring the dogs in the process.

The ability to apply humane and safe physical restraint is an essential skill for Humane Dog Handlers. It provides the option of using a “soft” capture technique, when it is safe to do so. It also gives us versatility when the dog is being handled at the shelter. Humane physical restraint requires calm assertiveness and confidence.

Physical restraint should be applied with compassion and confidence. It does not involve fighting the animal. It is a strategy used to maintain the animal in a position necessary to enable you to provide care, such as examination of a surgical wound or the administration of medications.

Think of physical restraint as a way to communicate with a dog. It is easy to give dogs the message that you intend to be powerfully dominant. This is the wrong approach; it is aggressive and cruel to the dog, and dangerous for the handler. The dog should only feel kindness. Even with physical

restraint, intense struggling is typically brief, unless you are continuously adding pressure. When the dog relaxes, it should feel that you are relaxed too. When possible, pet the dog as you maintain the physical restraint, if you think this will calm the dog. The response is often positive.

As you are holding the dog, watch yourself as you watch the dog. Keep your energy calm and relaxed. *The crazier the dog gets, the calmer you should be.* Even if the dog is struggling to escape or defend itself, stay calm and have a kind heart. If you are tense and fight the dog, the dog will be tense and defend itself more actively. Remember, people who fight with dogs make their situation more difficult and less safe.

You should be able to confidently apply several different restraint techniques to safely and humanely restrain dogs.

CLASS EXERCISE: Keys to safe and Humane Dog Handling (45 mins)

The facilitator makes a presentation on the following important guidelines. Participants are encouraged to add to this list, based on their morning trip to the field.



Think small: Respect the dog and do not intimidate it by making eye contact. Consider lowering your body to the dog's level if it is safe to do so. Think one step

at a time and remember that the size of each step is defined by the dog, not by you. Decide, with each movement you make, whether you are making the dog more tense or more relaxed.

Common mistake—We walk straight into the dog, face-to-face, expressing our dominance and disrespecting the dog's space. The dog feels threatened and runs away or shows aggressive behaviour to protect itself.

Offer food: An effective way to make friends, but remember your posture while offering food. Keep to one side of the dog; that is less threatening.

Common mistake—We throw the food at the dog from a distance. The dog is suspicious of what has been thrown or feels attacked, as if a stone has been thrown at it. The dog runs off and usually barks, which creates mistrust amongst other dogs in the area.

Be patient: The slower and smaller our steps, the calmer the dog. Humans look very big and threatening to dogs. Take a few



(Image Source: Courtesy of Dr. Mark Johnson)

steps, stop for a while, settle yourself and watch the dog settle, then take a few more. Interpret the dog's energy; how is it feeling? Practice lowering the energy; make the

situation calmer as you work with dogs or try to catch them.

Common mistake—We threaten the dog with large, fast movements and get more tense, chase them faster and further, and make them more afraid.



Relax: Don't fear the dog and don't be tense or in a hurry. Dogs trust focused and calm energy, not confused and weak energy. Don't make sloppy movements. Be attentive to the dog and to what you are doing.

Common mistake—We fear the dog and the dog senses this immediately and will not trust us, as we do not appear confident.

Be compassionately assertive: The most important attributes to possess are love and compassion for animals. The only way to successfully handle animals is to be kind and gentle. At the same time we must be assertive, so that the dog looks at us to lead and trusts that we will not hurt it. Once we have connected with a dog, we can express assertiveness through confident, slow and sure movements, and can then lead the dog.

Common mistake—Avoid just wanting to get the job done. In the process, we may injure the dog or be harsh in our handling, because we have not connected with the dog with care and concern. This is unacceptable. Do not handle animals if you are unable to compassionately connect with them.

Trick the dog: Because dogs are highly aware of, and sensitive to, our thoughts and intentions, avoid focusing on thoughts of catching the dog. We must trick the dog into believing that we only want to befriend it. When the opportune moment arises for capture we suddenly "change our mind". For example, when you are wishing to net a dog, invite the dog to run past you. Truly believe you are inviting the dog past: do not move or lean forward. Then, when the dog is in the exact position to catch, change your mind and move to catch with your net.

Common mistake—We are constantly thinking about capturing the dog. Our intention is quickly picked up by the dog and it swiftly escapes.

Use a technique appropriate for the dog's temperament: As has been described in previous sections, dogs vary in their temperament and react differently to different situations. We must first observe the dog closely, to determine its possible reaction and decide how to approach the dog. Examples of how to handle dogs with submissive, fearful or aggressive temperaments are given below:

- **Submissive:** A submissive dog can often be restrained using only a leash. It will usually allow you to give it a belly-rub and stroke it. Spend some time doing so before attempting to restrain the dog; but remember that even submissive dogs can become more frightened and bite. Apply a humane muzzle wrap and cover the head with a towel before you pick up the dog. This will calm it and make handling safer for you.
- **Fearful:** A fearful dog can be unpredictable. Slow down your movements, be very patient and still for longer periods of time, because this dog can feel threatened by fast movements. Lower your energy as much as you can and be very calm. If the dog is extremely fearful and you think it may bite you, it is best to withdraw or use a catching tool such as the Do Bora or Net, which will catch the fearful dog in a safe manner.

- **Aggressive:** An aggressive dog can be dangerous. If you are able to establish yourself as the pack leader, through assertive and compassionate interaction and handling, the dog should begin to show signs of submission. If not, remove yourself from the situation slowly and calmly, without showing fear.

PRACTICAL SESSION: **Connecting with dogs (30 mins)**

In a secure area of the shelter complex, working with familiarised dogs, approach, but do not attempt to restrain, the dogs using the above guidelines. There should be no more than two participants per dog. Interactions should be closely monitored by the facilitator.

SECTION 2: RESTRAINT TECHNIQUES

VIDEO LESSON: **Single-handed scruff (15 mins)**

To control a dog, you must have control of his head. A dog can be restrained by grasping the scruff of the neck (the loose skin on the top of the neck) with one hand, as close to the back of the head as possible. It may then be lifted with the other hand placed under the body.

This of course requires considerable strength, as dogs may weigh more than 20kg. Know your limits. You must be calm and make the dog feel secure enough to be handled in this way. Any nervousness on the part of the handler will hinder restraint, as the dog tends to struggle more.

Making the scruff near to the shoulders allows the dog to twist around and bite, so ensure you make the scruff just behind the head.

VIDEO LESSON: **Single-handed scruff with muzzle wrap (15 mins)**

Follow the steps for the single-handed scruff, but use your non-dominant hand to hold the scruff, leaving your dominant hand free to muzzle the dog with a soft leash or soft rope.

The end of the leash is wrapped around the dog's mouth a couple of turns and then brought back, to be held by the hand holding the scruff, freeing the dominant hand to lift the dog from under its belly.

If the dog can see your movements, it may struggle; so, before lifting, cover the head with a small towel or cloth, and the dog will likely be calmer.

VIDEO LESSON: **Two-handed scruff (15 mins)**

The full scruff is a two-handed hold placed on the dog's head: it provides more secure restraint than the single-handed scruff.

The ears of the dog should be positioned in the notch between your thumb and first finger, with the thumbs placed parallel on the top of the dog's head pointing forward. Stretch the fingers of each hand toward the



(Image Source: Courtesy of Dr. Mark Johnson)

corner of the mouth (be careful not to get bitten) and then curl your fingers to gather up the skin of the dog's cheeks. The dog should look like it is "smiling".

Keep the ears deep in the notch between your thumb and first finger, to get the most control. Do not position your fingers around the neck. If you do, you will tighten the skin around the throat and this could choke the dog.

Do not attempt to lift a dog with a two-handed scruff unless someone else is carrying the dog or at least supporting the hips.

Some handlers have a habit of shaking the dog's head as if to get a better grip: Do not do this - as you are sending a message to the dog that you are an opponent and wish to create a fight.

Compassionate animal handling is not only the right thing to do - it makes our work safer and easier!

VIDEO LESSON: **Lateral restraint (15 mins)**

If the correct technique is used, a dog can be safely restrained on its side, to enable examination and minor treatments.

A leash/muzzle wrap should first be applied. The dog is then gently lifted and placed on its side; a towel is placed under the head and a head cover applied. The handler then grasps the underside foreleg above the elbow with one hand; the forearm is used to exert gentle, downward pressure on the neck bones just behind the dog's head.

These measures, correctly applied, will prevent the dog from being able to sit up. Do not place pressure over the throat, as this will impair breathing. If the dog struggles with its hind limbs, the lower hindlimb may also be held, above the hock (ankle), and gentle downward pressure applied to the hindquarters.

PRACTICAL SESSION: **Restraint techniques (2 hours)**

Close-handling restraint techniques are practiced in a secure area of the shelter complex, working with familiarised dogs. There should be no more than two handlers per dog. Interactions should be closely monitored by the facilitator.

DAY FOUR

PRACTICAL SESSION

(3 hours)

Dog catching in the field

RECAP (30 mins)

Discussion of topics covered the previous day; providing participants with an opportunity to address any confusion or concerns.

SECTION 3: DOG CATCHING TECHNIQUES

Humane and acceptable methods for catching dogs are:

- The Soft Catch
- The Net
- The Do Bora (Two Sack)
- The Box Trap

LESSON: The Soft Catch (15 mins)

This technique uses methods previously demonstrated in the “Scruffing and “Muzzling” sections of the “Close-handling” video.



(Image Source: Courtesy of Dr. Mark Johnson)

If you feel that dog is likely to be able to be caught “softly”, spend some time connecting with it before attempting to catch it. Offer some food, talk quietly and gently stroke the dog. But remember that friendly-looking dogs can become frightened and bite. Apply a singled-handed or two-handed scruff and leash/muzzle wrap and place a head cover before picking up the dog. This will help calm the dog and make the process safer for you.

PRACTICAL SESSION (1 hour)

Soft-catching is practiced in a secure area of the shelter complex working with familiarised dogs. There should be no more than two handlers per dog. Interactions should be closely monitored by the facilitator.

VIDEO LESSON: The Net (20 mins)

The Net is one of the oldest humane catching tools - and also one of the most effective. The net itself should be about 5 feet (1.5 metres) in length and 3 feet (90 cm) in diameter. It is attached to a hoop made of a light alloy connected to a handle about 5 feet (1.5 metres) long. **Never** use a frame made of steel or other heavy material, as this will increase the risk of injury to the dogs and yourselves. *Vets Beyond Borders* can advise on supplier of the materials required to make this tool.

The Net can be used to catch sleeping dogs, sitting dogs and moving dogs.

Technique

Two handlers usually work together: one to distract the dog with food and the other handling the Net, approaching the dog slowly, preferably from behind so that you cannot be seen advancing. Make sure you have enough space around the dog to be able to manoeuvre the Net.



Bring the Net smoothly down over the dog and then pull it back towards yourself in a smooth, wave-like movement. This will move the dog deeper into the net. The motion must be quick and fluid. Try to minimise contact between the dog and the hoop. **Do not** slam the net down over the dog, as this will startle the dog and increase struggling, making it more difficult for you to quickly secure the dog in a humane manner.



Dog in Net with Towel

(Image Source: Courtesy of Dr. Mark Johnson)

The mouth of the net is then quickly twisted to confine the dog comfortably but securely at the bottom of the net. A Y-Pole may be gently applied to hold the dog still (see later).

A towel is then placed over the dog's head to help calm it. Once the dog is secure inside the net it may be carried to the vehicle within the net and released inside the vehicle. Alternatively, it may be transported within the net, as long as it is calm and able to breathe easily.

With correct use, dogs are very unlikely to be injured using the Net.



PRACTICAL SESSION (1 hour)

The use of the Net is practiced, using large balls and empty cartons.

VIDEO LESSON: The Do Bora (Two Sack) (15 mins)

The sack is a double-sized gunny bag that has a rope at one end, which acts as a draw-string. Sacks should preferably be made using nearly new sugar sacks of 100kg capacity. These have a tighter weave, are sturdier and therefore last longer.

The Do Bora (Two Sack) has several desirable qualities:

- It is inexpensive and simple to construct
- It is hard to abuse, even in the hands of inexperienced dog handlers.
- In experienced hands, it is safe for dog and staff.

However, staff must be thoroughly trained before they can use this method effectively.

PRACTICAL SESSION (1 hour)

Practicing making the Do Bora and using it in a secure area of the shelter complex working with familiarised dogs. There should be no more than two handlers per dog. Interactions should be closely monitored by the facilitator.

VIDEO LESSON:

The Box Trap (30 mins)

Although not yet in common use in India, the Box Trap assists in the humane capture of dogs that are too wary to be caught by other techniques. Success with the Box Trap requires a thorough understanding of its design and where and how it should be used, as detailed in the Box Trap video segment.



Making the Sack



Technique

As with the Net, two handlers usually work together: one to distract the dog with food and the other to throw the sack over the dog and pull the draw-string to close the sack. The sack, with the dog inside, is then carried to the vehicle and opened so that the dog can move out of it when it is ready.

Please note: The sack must be regularly washed so that dogs do not smell other dogs' scent and become alerted to the presence of the dog handler.



DAY FIVE

PRACTICAL SESSION

(3 hours)

Dog catching in the field

RECAP (30 mins)

Discussion of topics covered the previous day; providing participants with an opportunity to address any confusion or concerns.

SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL TOOLS

VIDEO LESSON: The Y-Pole (30 mins)

The Y-Pole is an extremely useful tool to help manage dogs in a confined space and to assist in the humane restraint of dogs

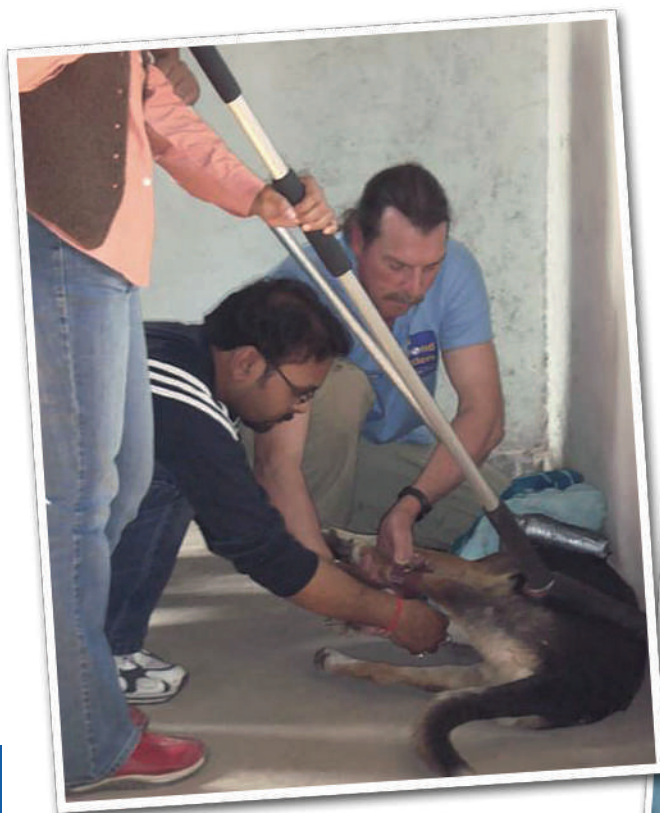
following capture. However, extensive training (as demonstrated in the video) is necessary to ensure that it is used correctly. It is used to encourage the dog to cooperate. It must **never** be used to try to force the dog to do so.

The Y-Pole should be considered to be an extension of your hand. A Humane Dog Handler will never hit or grasp a dog by its throat, and you must **never** use the Y-Pole in such a way.

Once the dog is gently restrained using the Y-Pole, close-handling techniques can be applied with greater safety and less stress for both dog and handlers.

PRACTICAL SESSION (2 hours)

Participants practice using the Y-Pole and close-handling restraint techniques in a secure area within the shelter complex, working with familiarised dogs.



LESSON: The Catch-Pole—use and abuse (30 mins)

The Catch-Pole is only used to handle very difficult dogs. It has the potential to cause severe distress and injury and is not commonly used by Humane Dog Handlers.

Its use should only be considered in confined spaces and when other techniques cannot be used, and only by appropriately trained, experienced, and compassionate personnel. It should never be used to catch dogs outdoors.

Technique

Before using a Catch-Pole, you should examine the cable and release mechanism. The cable should be fully coated; if bare wire is exposed, the cable should be replaced before use. The loop should retain a round shape and the release mechanism should function smoothly. The most humane Catch-Poles have a swivel head so the cable cannot tangle and risk choking the dog.

Release Knob

» snap-back release
instantly forms noose

Plastic Tooth Guard

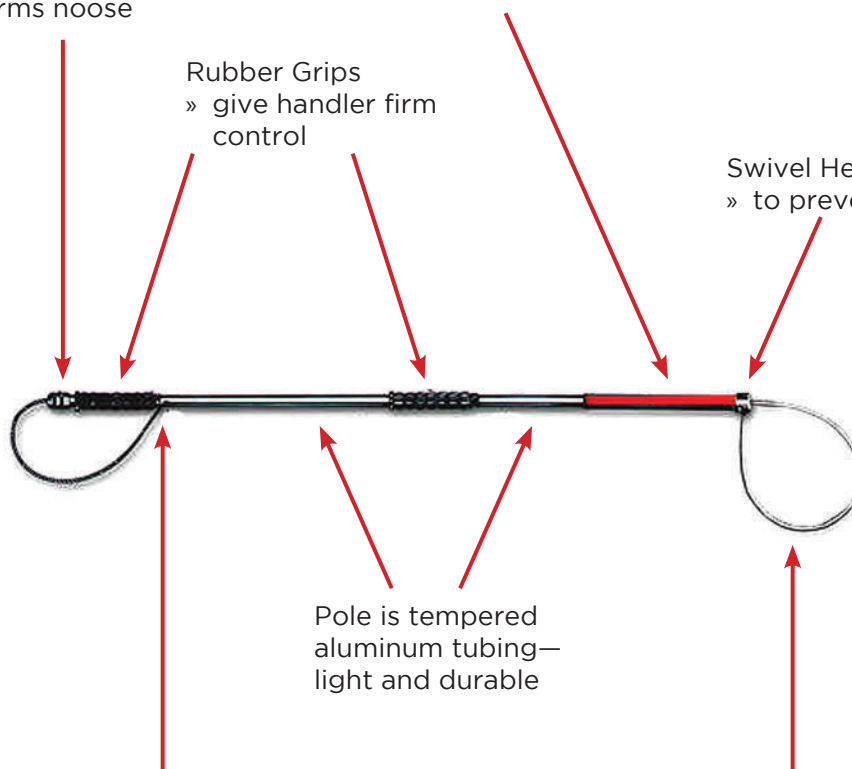
» to protect animal's teeth

Rubber Grips

» give handler firm
control

Swivel Head

» to prevent noose kinks



Cable runs through
pole and forms noose
on the other end

Noose of cable covered
with plastic for animal's
protection

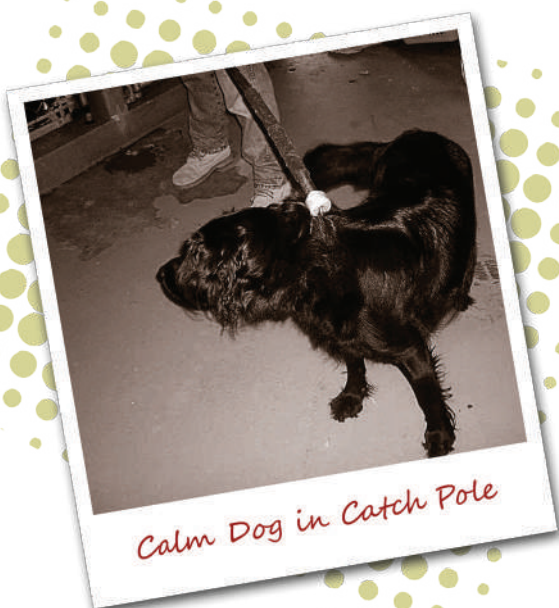
Approach the dog slowly, taking small steps at a time with the Catch-Pole held either behind your back or to your side. Never hold it high like a weapon, as this will threaten the dog and your encounter with him will end up being a fight.

Slip the noose over the dog's head until it is around the lower part of the neck. This is the most robust part of the neck and there is less chance of hurting the dog if the loop is placed there. Then gently tighten the loop. The loop should be snug but *not too tight*. The Catch-Pole is not a weapon to choke the dog or to force it into submission.

Please note: NEVER pull, lift or tug on a dog using a Catch-Pole. NEVER leave a Catch-Pole noose around a dog's neck.

PRACTICAL SESSION (1 hour)

Practice using the Catch-Pole, working with familiarised dogs in a secure area within the shelter complex.



Once the loop is secure, quietly walk the dog in front of you. You must be calm, patient and relaxed, especially if the dog struggles. When the dog stops struggling, remove pressure so the dog does not feel the pole pulling. Hold the pole firmly, but be kind and compassionate.

If the dog is to be lifted, first cover the head with a towel and have a second person lift the dog.

DAY SIX

PRACTICAL SESSION

(3 hours)

Participants use learnt tools and techniques in the field

RECAP (30 mins)

Discussion of topics covered the previous day; providing participants with an opportunity to address any confusion or concerns.

PRACTICAL SESSION (1 hour)

Participants demonstrate their skills, using the complete range of tools and techniques for humane capture and restraint, in a secure area within the shelter complex.

TOPIC 3: OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF ABC-AR WORK

(Supporting videos to be watched again prior to lessons: “Rabies: a major disease of humans and animals” and “Animal Birth Control - Anti-Rabies (ABC-AR) Projects”)

LESSON: Community involvement (25 mins)

Before starting to catch dogs in a new sector, and at any opportunity thereafter, it is important to take the time to explain to the local community why the dogs are being caught and what benefits the animal birth



control and anti-rabies vaccination effort will have for the people of the area, as well as for the dogs themselves. You can also learn from the community about the local dogs.

You must gain the support of local people if you are to be successful at catching dogs. This is a very rewarding responsibility of a Humane Dog Handler:

- It prompts the community to assist in you in a range of ways. They may have a close, friendly relationship with some dogs and may be willing to pick up these dogs and place them in the van for you.
- It raises public awareness; you will find that people from the community begin to contact you for assistance with dogs that are wounded or sick, or need sterilisation and vaccination.
- Talking to the community builds trust and faith in your project and allows you to teach the public about the benefits of sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination.

LESSON: Familiarisation (10 mins)

A few days before commencing work in a new sector, you should start to walk the streets and learn where the dogs tend to be in each neighbourhood. You should try to ascertain their routines, the areas they congregate, seeking food, water, shade and protection, and talk with any members of the community who care for the dogs and feed them.

You should move through the neighbourhood as a kind observer, not as a “dog catcher”, so the dogs get to know you. You should also offer treats to the dogs, especially those who are scared, to begin to build a connection with the animals. As you do this, you will also get to know the community; learn from them about the dogs that live in the area.

LESSON: Work strategies (45 mins)

It is essential that, before dog handlers start work, they have received the complete

course of pre-exposure anti-rabies vaccination. They must also have received training in the treatment of dog bite wounds (see Annexure 3).

Catching and releasing should be carried out in systematic manner. One area should be targeted at a time. When commencing work in a new sector, it is recommended that a “periphery-to-centre” approach is employed, as the risk of rabies outbreak is usually greatest in outlying sectors close to forest areas, where animals and people are more likely to come into contact with wild dogs, foxes and jackals.

A minimum of 70% of the dogs in a sector should be sterilised and vaccinated before moving to the next area.

Please note: if dogs are picked up from different localities and placed together in a vehicle, there is an increased risk of dogs fighting in the van, so this practice should be avoided.

Dogs should be caught and released in the early hours of the morning, to avoid heat stress and traffic congestion.

A team of at least three people is required: one driver and two dog handlers. The vehicle should be parked close to the expected point of capture, so that dogs can be promptly placed in the van following capture. It is usually only possible to catch 2 to 4 dogs on one street on any one occasion, so the van must move on with the handlers as required.

A colour or number coding system should be used to identify each dog and its catch location. A written record must be carefully maintained by the driver, with details of all dogs placed into the vehicle, including sex, colour, other identifying features and exact place of capture, including landmarks, and ideally a contact number of a local person who will monitor the dog after treatment.

Puppies of any age, and their mothers, should be caught and vaccinated, but are not taken to be sterilised; however record their location and plan to return to catch them when they are old enough for surgery. Regular feeding by the public or dog handlers will make catching easier when the time comes. Visibly pregnant females should not be caught for vaccination,



unless they can be caught using the soft-catch technique, as the stress of other capture techniques may cause problems with the pregnancy. Visibly aged dogs should be vaccinated, but are not taken for sterilisation.

Dogs that are unwell or show signs of infectious diseases like severe mange should not be transported with healthy dogs. They should be picked up separately and isolated in the shelter for proper treatment. Such dogs should not be sterilised until they are fully recovered.

After treatment, dogs MUST be released at the location they were picked up. If dogs are released in the wrong location it is very traumatic for them, as they lose their territory, their feeding areas and their pack. They also lose contact with people who may have been caring for them before they were caught. They are prone to be attacked by local dogs. Dogs should not be released on busy roads, as, when they are released from the van, they may run into traffic.

CONCLUSION OF TRAINING

An open session of questions and answers will be held for one hour after lunch, with participants discussing what they have learnt and experienced.

On conclusion, they will be asked to provide written feedback on the training course.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES



ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: Dog transportation

- Care should be taken not to injure dogs during loading, transportation and unloading. Rubber strips covering the edges of the tailgate of the dog-transporting vehicle will help protect the dogs during loading and unloading.
- Never overcrowd the dog-transporting vehicle: the maximum number of dogs (determined by the size of the dog-carrying compartment) should never be exceeded.
- If travel time is more than three hours, stop on the way and provide water for the dogs.
- During the working day, the dog-transporting vehicle should be parked in the shade. An attendant should periodically check the dogs in the dog-transporting vehicle and provide water as required.
- Dogs should not be kept tethered on leashes inside the dog-transporting vehicle. As far as possible, provision should be made for individual cages in the dog-transporting vehicle.
- Dog handlers should not ignore obviously sick or injured dogs. Therefore, at least one separate cage for injured or ill dogs (including suspect rabid dogs) should be carried in each vehicle.
- Additional vehicles or visits may be required to collect dogs that the public has reported as sick or injured.
- Dog-transporting vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected after every use.

(Ref: AWBI, SOP FOR ABC)

ANNEXURE 2: Dogs that bite

Any dog that is known to bite should be handled with caution. It is important to note that only a very small number of dogs that bite are found to be rabid. The dog handler should be able to explain calmly to the community why there is no reason to panic, but inform them of the strict protocols must be followed to reduce the likelihood of rabies transmission.

If a dog bite injury does occur, try to determine why the dog may have bitten. Unprovoked bites are rare.

If a dog is caught that is showing signs of rabies, the primary concern is the safety of dog handlers and the public. Any dog suspected of suffering from rabies should be immediately placed in an isolation cage at the nearest veterinary hospital or shelter. It must be treated as humanely as possible, while keeping staff safe. Any person bitten must be treated as per the protocols detailed in Annexure 3.

Any dog which bites a person, but is NOT showing signs of rabies at the time, should be admitted for observation for 10 days. If the dog does not develop signs of rabies within that time, the person bitten is not at risk of catching rabies, as a dog capable of transmitting rabies will develop signs and die within 10 days.

The dog handler should also try to obtain information from the local community. Details, such as whether other people have been bitten and whether the suspect rabid animal attacked other dogs in the colony, should also be collected.

The municipal authority and other local NGOs should be informed, so that an anti-rabies vaccination campaign can be commenced.

(Ref: AWBI, SOP FOR ABC)

ANNEXURE 3:

Rabies prevention and managing dog bites

It is essential that, before dog handlers start work, they have received the complete course of pre-exposure rabies vaccination. Adequate training should also be provided in the treatment of dog bite wounds.

A first aid kit, the contents of which should include povidone iodine disinfectant, should be kept in the dog catching vehicle at all times.

Step 1:

As soon as possible after a dog-bite is sustained, the wound should be thoroughly washed using antiseptic/disinfectant solution, ideally povidone iodine, for at least 15 minutes, to help to flush out and kill any virus particles that may have been introduced with the bite. If disinfectant is not quickly available, use soap and water. If neither disinfectant nor soap can be promptly found, flush the wound for at least 15 minutes with running water. Do not cover the wound.

Step 2:

Immediately take the patient for essential post-bite treatment from a doctor, as per the WHO recommended regime

(<http://www.who.int/rabies/human/postexp/en/>).

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