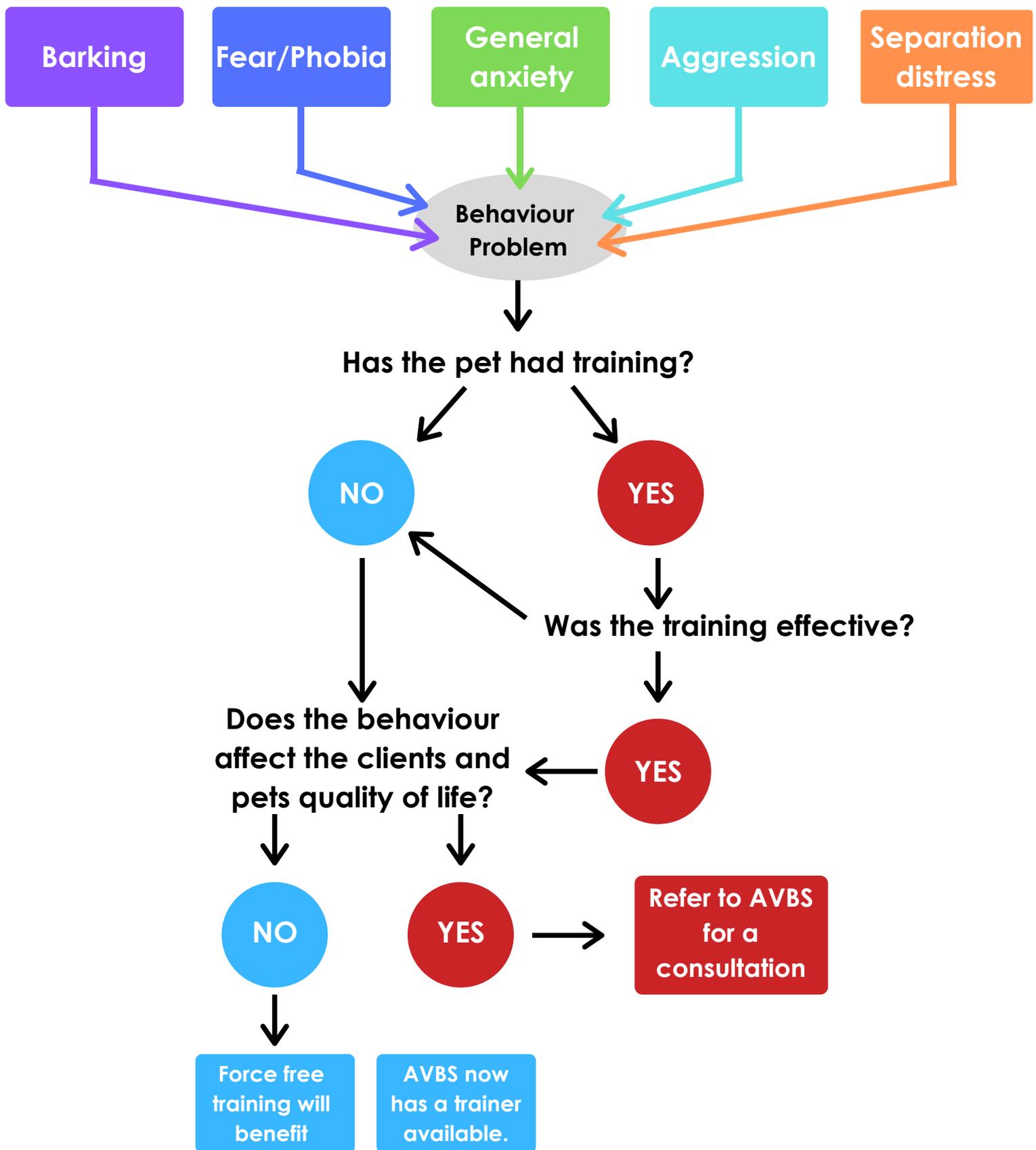


Behaviour consultation flow chart



Behaviour consultation flow chart

Behavioural medicine - is it important?

Behaviour problems are the number one reason for the surrender and euthanasia of dogs and cats in Australia. This is a very sad fact that can be reduced by education of vets, vet nurses, pet owners and people involved in the animal industry.

Vets in general practice are often the first port of call for pet owners. Greater than 50% of new puppy owner's questions at the first visit are about behaviour. Pet owners 'assume or expect' that vets know about animal behaviour. It is important for clinic staff to know the basics about behavioural medicine, so they can at least direct owners to the appropriate professional for help.

If we can all work together to ensure the bond between owner and pet is established and maintained, this will result not only in improved welfare for the pets, but also reduced relinquishment to shelters due to behaviour problems.

Options for the pet with a mental health disorder:

1. Tolerate the problem
2. Rehome the pet - Not recommended for mental health disorder – due to welfare issue.
3. Euthanasia -Is often a kind option for pets that are experiencing severe mental illness.
4. Treatment by either:
 - GP vet (yourself)
 - A vet who has further interest and education with behavioural medicine, or
 - A vet who has become a member of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in Veterinary behaviour, by examination, or
 - A veterinary behaviour specialist (Dr Kersti Seksel consults at AVBS 2-3 times a year).

Mental health disorders are NOT training problems, so trainers should not be the first port of call. Trainers are important in the treatment program, and can be involved by working with a vet, to help implement the behaviour modification program.

Note- AVBS have a trainer who can implement behaviour modification/management to ensure your treatment is successful.

Advice and treatment you can offer:

- NO PUNISHMENT
- Decrease exposure to situations that trigger the behaviour
- Discuss treatment with Feliway™ or Adaptil™ and/or anxiolytic medication
- Mental health disorders get worse if not treated properly
- Be aware of inappropriate advice (online, TV or literature)
- A force free trainer to help implement behaviour modification/management.



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