



# **Conflicts, Criticism, & Community Cat Programs**



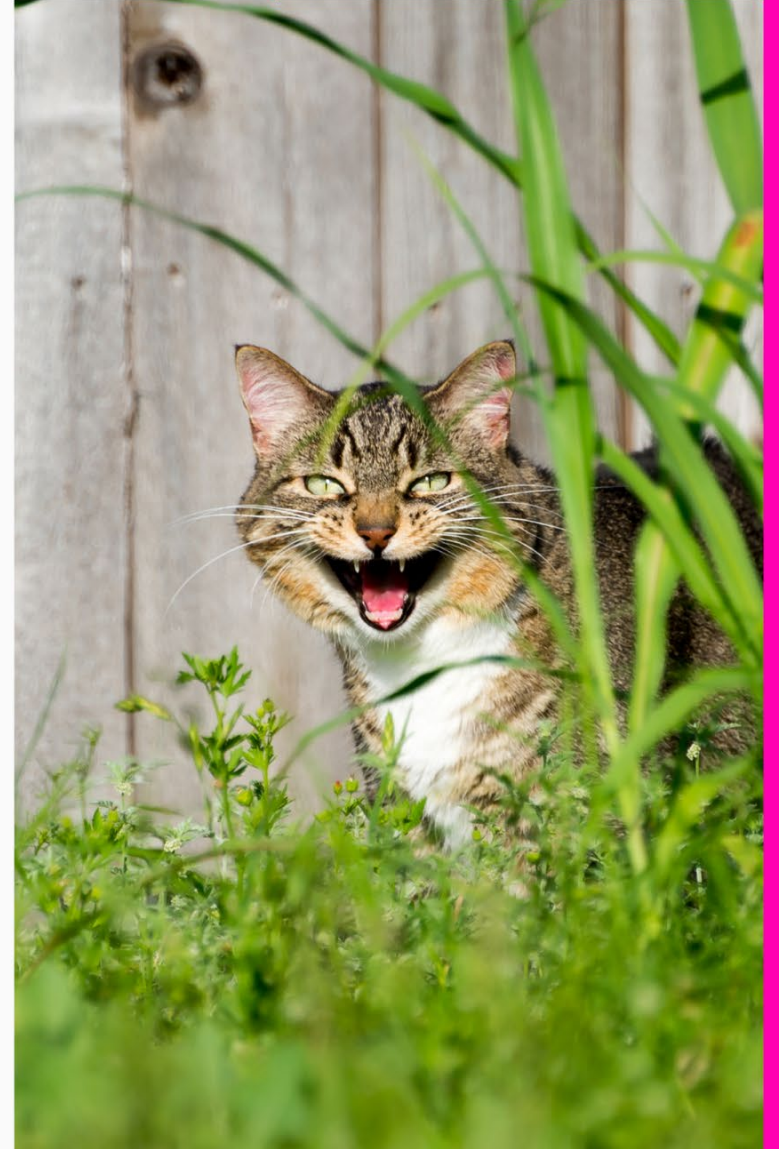


# Overview

Critics, naysayers, and anti-cat activists are chief challenges facing animal service organizations as we move forward with new ways of servicing cats both inside and outside of our shelter walls. Effective communication is more important than ever as we drive a culture shift in the very way we think about cats.

Today, we will discuss a hospitality/conflict resolution model to engage in positive communication in every situation.

Then we will discuss a change management model to take the next steps in preparing, equipping, and supporting individuals to thrive through change.





# Tara Tomcsik-Husak

**Founder & CEO - Feline Fund**

**President & CEO - Troy Chamber of Commerce**

Tara Tomcsik-Husak brings over 25 years of experience in the non-profit management, entertainment, and hospitality industries. She has three degrees in Jazz Voice, Intercultural Communication, and Peace and Conflict Studies with a concentration on Group Think and Hostage Negotiation and Terrorism.

Her passion for animal welfare led her to found Feline Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to helping local cat rescue organizations fund the business and medical needs to keep rescued and feral cats healthy, ready to be adopted, and help them find their FUR-ever homes.





**"You cannot shake hands with  
a clenched fist" – Indira Gandhi**







# **Tackling arguments with aggression.... just leads to more aggression**



While we want to defend our actions...  
We must remember to always keep our  
responses and actions courteous,  
professional, and factual.







## **WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**Conflict, arguments, and change are natural parts of our lives, as well as the lives of every agency, organization, and nation.**

**Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them.**

**Conflict resolution can be good for all parties involved. Often, each side will get more by participating in the conversation than they would by walking away, and it can be a way for your group to get resources that might otherwise be out of reach.**





# Methodology

Most community cat problems have only four possible solutions, but only one of them will be both convenient for you and hopefully solve your concerns:

- Do nothing (which usually makes matters worse).
- Repeatedly trap the cats and take them to the shelter (a temporary solution at best).
- Repeatedly trap the cats and relocate them (often considered abandonment and can be illegal in some states).
- Let us do TNR and see how it works.







# **L.E.A.R.N. Model**

**L- Listen**

**E - Empathize**

**A- Apologize**

**R- React**

**N- Notify**







# L- Listen



- In moments of complaints and conflicts- **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!**
- Listen to what the actual problem is and do not make assumptions.
- Be an active listener
  - Ask Questions
  - Do NOT Interrupt
- Rephrase what you're hearing as a question:  
"Let me see if I'm following you. You're saying that... Is that correct"





# E- Empathize



- To be empathetic, does not mean you agree. It means you understand
- Empathy is NOT sympathy
- Put yourself in their place. You're more likely to resolve the problem if you're able to walk in the other person's shoes for a moment to appreciate their perspective
  - Use terms such as
    - "I can understand why you feel that way"
    - "If I was in your shoes"





# A - Apologize

**SORRY /  
NOT SORRY**

- An apology does not have to be an admission of fault or guilt.
- An apology goes a long way when a problem has come up.
- "I am sorry, this is happening to you... here is how we are trying to help"







# R- React

(also known as Recommend)



- **Decide what you will do to resolve the problem. Everyone should be empowered to make the right decision right then and there.**
- **Reacting doesn't mean you are taking their side or changing what you are doing. Appeal to their thoughts and feelings**
- **If you cannot change the scenario at the moment, you MUST keep the opposed party informed during this part of the process. Explain to them what steps you are going to take to fix the issue.**
- **This step is also where you can recommend some ideas to help find a solution**





# N – Notify

(or Negotiate)

## Notify.

- With every conflict, you should record or notify to not only keep record but to ensure steps are taken to resolve the conflict

## Negotiate??

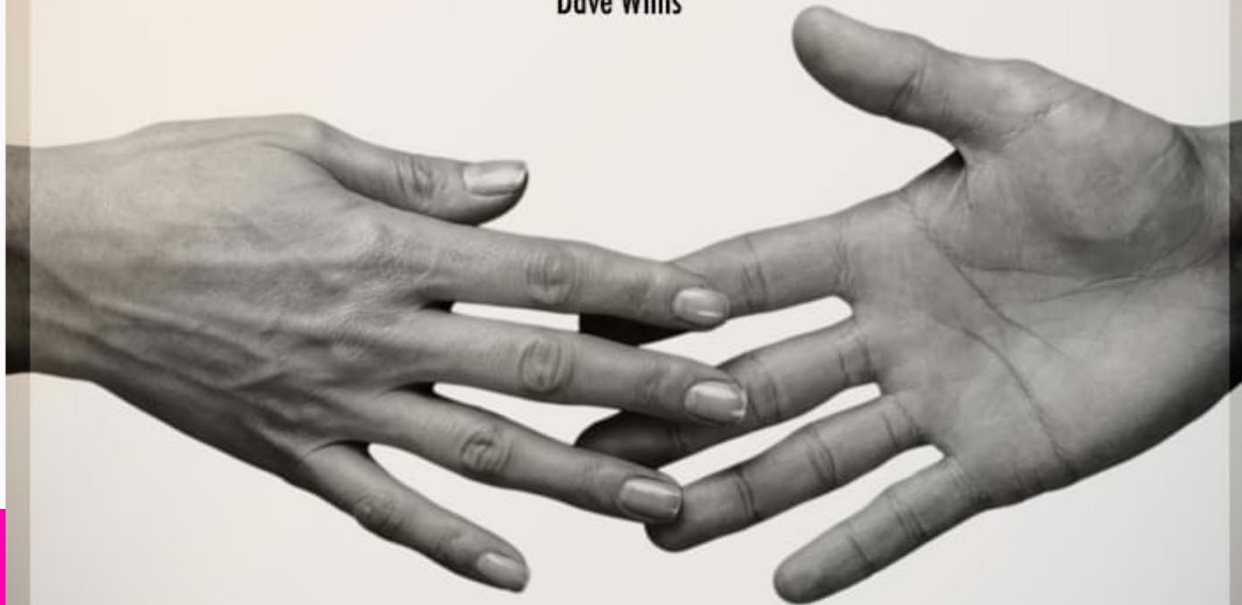
The main goal of negotiation with your opposition is to come to an agreement that benefits all parties. This cannot always occur but can help.

- To understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and backgrounds may be different from your own. In order to resolve a conflict, you'll need to look at the conflict from your opponent's point of view and learn more about this person or group's perspective and motivations.



**Show respect even to  
people who don't deserve  
it, not as a reflection of  
their character, but as a  
reflection of yours.**

Dave Willis



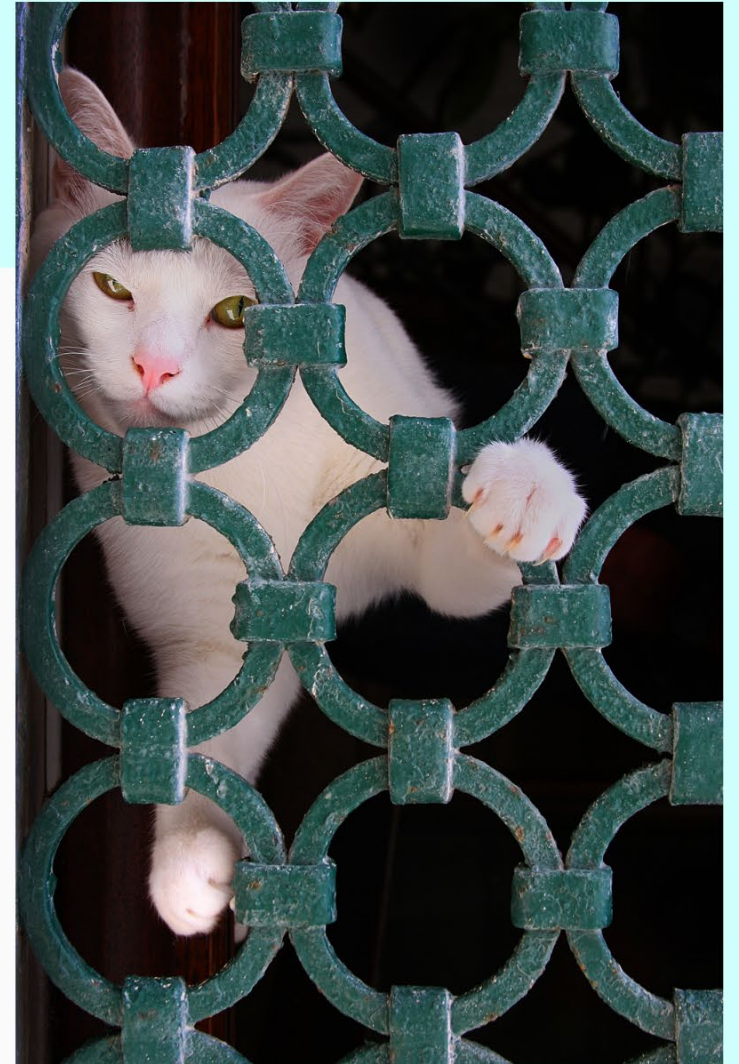


# Now What?

## \*Change Management

We've listened to the problem, we have several solutions.... what do we do now?

Start Change Management to keep it going



# ADKAR- Model



**A**

**Awareness** – Of the need for change

**D**

**Desire** – To participate and support the change

**K**

**Knowledge** – On how to change

**A**

**Ability** – To implement desired skills & behaviors

**R**

**Reinforcement** – To sustain the change







# **A - Awareness**

## **AWARENESS – OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE**

- In the ADKAR Model, the first building block is defined as "awareness of the need for change," not simply "awareness that a change is happening."
- Sharing both the nature of the change and answering why this change is necessary. It means clearly explaining the business drivers or opportunities that have resulted in the need for change. It also means addressing why a change is needed now, and explaining the risk of not changing.





# D – Desire

## **DESIRE – TO PARTICIPATE AND SUPPORT CHANGE**



- Once an individual has an understanding of why a change is needed, the next step in successful change is making a personal decision to support and participate in the change.
- Desire is the most difficult of the five building blocks to achieve. Desire is difficult because it is ultimately a personal decision that is not under our direct control. While there are certainly ways to try and influence a person's decision to embrace a change, in the end individuals must make this decision themselves.
- As with awareness, desire is only achieved when the individual says to us, "I will be part of this change."





# K – Knowledge

## KNOWLEDGE – ON HOW TO CHANGE

- There are two distinct types of knowledge.
  - The first is knowledge of how to change (what to do during the transition)
  - The second is knowledge of how to perform effectively in the future state (skills and behaviors needed to support the change)
- Knowledge is only effective when the individual already has awareness and desire. Each of us has been to a training program where we were not sure why we were there in the first place. Without awareness and desire, you cannot effectively create the knowledge that is necessary for a successful change.





# A - Ability

## **ABILITY - TO IMPLIMENT CHANGE**

- They have the tools of knowlegde... now they need to have the ability to use the tools.
- In addition to training to impart knowledge, people must be given sufficient tools for building their own abilities. This includes hands-on practice, support from coaches, and the availability to network and work with others who have made the change successfully.
- By understanding the difference between knowledge and ability, you can help others not only learn new behaviors and skills required by a change but make sure they can put that knowledge into practice







# **R- Reinforcement**

## **REINFORCEMENT – TO SUSTAIN CHANGE**

- **As the final building block of successful change, the focus on reinforcement needs to remain strong so that changes are sustained and deliver the expected results over time.**
- **Reinforcement needs to have a continued effort to communicate the impact**
  - **Example- We see a decrease of kittens every year- Remind the supporting community and reinforce the message**
- **Continued Support is key and planning on how to deliver the message is equally important.**



# Questions?



**Tara Tomcsik-Husak**  
**Feline Fund**  
**[tara@felinefund.org](mailto:tara@felinefund.org)**

