

BEHAVIORAL EUTHANASIA DECISIONS

A GUIDE FOR SHELTER STAFF

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TRISH MCMILLAN



- My experience with BE
- Saving them all
- Outsourcing euthanasia
- Current views



AGENDA

- What is “no-kill?”
- When is BE not necessary
- Ethical alternatives?
- What issues warrant BE?
- Ethical issues around outsourcing BE to adopters
- Written policy

WHAT IS “NO-KILL?”



- Save them all?
- Save 90%?
- Save more every year?
- Are dogs becoming more challenging?

WHEN IS BE NOT NECESSARY?



- Take a history! Pics of bites?
- What are triggers? Are they avoidable?
- Is it normal behavior?
- The Cocker Spaniel
- When might other alternatives be appropriate?

ARE THERE OTHER OPTIONS?



- Work with the behavior in shelter?
- Work with behavior in foster?
- Board and train?
- Manage the dog?
- Rehome?
- Find a "sanctuary?"
- Euthanize?

WHAT IS OUTSOURCING BE?

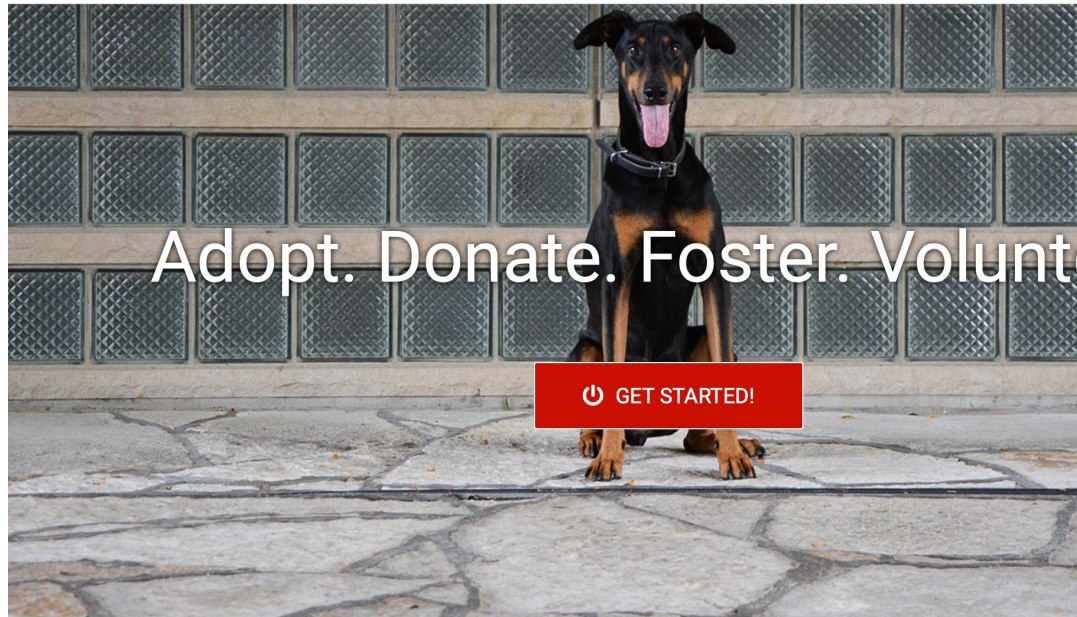


- No-kill label
- Pressure to increase LRR
- Social media pressures
- Cross your fingers and...

ARE RESCUE GROUPS THE ANSWER?

ILLINOIS
DOBERMAN
RESCUE **PLUS**

Adopt Surrender Support L



- Sometimes (breeds with specific needs, don't shelter well)
- Do they have people who understand behavior issues?
- Rescue hoarding issues





CASE STUDY

- Forever Homes rescue
- 66 matted, sick, urine soaked dogs in crates in home
- Even legit groups can be overwhelmed and hoard



HOW DO WE AVOID THIS?



One of the Forever Homes dogs

- Vet your rescue groups!
- Will their lives be better?
- How are their dogs housed?
- Foster homes?
- Long term kennels?
- Crates in a warehouse?
- Go look in person if you can
- Do they actually adopt out dogs?

IS FOSTER THE ANSWER?



- Does the behavior happen in a home?
- Place from foster?
- Adoption Ambassadors
- Skipper's case

IS BOARD AND TRAIN THE ANSWER?

Animal shelter owner pleads guilty to illegal importation of animals

Forever Home made headlines last summer after a pitbull they adopted out mauled a 90-year-old grandmother to death. The owner, Jamie Cochran, faced 10 charges of illegal importation of animals.



- Rarely
- Often use harsh methods
- May not transition to home environment
- When the e-collar comes off...
- Blue

IS MANAGEMENT THE ANSWER?



- “No kids, no pets, no men”
- We don’t live on a kid-free planet
- What happens if management fails?
- What are triggers?
- What is risk to public?



IS SANCTUARY THE ANSWER?



- One More Chance – 400+ dogs
- ASPCA rescued 379 living and 76 dead dogs from overcrowded and filthy conditions
- “No kill” gone wild
- Rescuer was pulling from euthanasia lists
- Considered a hero

“FIX IT” IN SHELTER?



- Can dogs be “rehabbed” while institutionalized?
- Keep notes, have goals, use fosters
- Monitor progress

WHAT CAN'T WE FIX?



- Have written criteria
- Know your limits
- Make calls promptly if obvious
- You don't have to "try everything"
- Are you waiting for a blood donor?
- Kenneling forever is cruel
- Dogs evolved as social/companion animals

DO YOU NEED A “UNICORN” HOME?



- How many homes/how many difficult dogs?
- Do you want to live with this dog?
- Do you want to live next door to this dog?
- What limitations do we need? No dogs? No cats? No kids? No men?
- Where is the perfect home?
- Farm home?



FARM HOME?

- My farm home
- 32 animals of 5 species
- Hay delivery
- Heavy machinery
- Farm workers
- Clients



WHAT ISSUES WARRANT BE?*



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- Aggression toward people
- Aggression toward dogs
- Fear and anxiety
- Separation anxiety
- Cognitive dysfunction

*in Trish's opinion



THE ONLY CHOICE: CHINOOK



- Starved mom
- Sibling breeding
- Raised by a trainer from birth
- Early behavior
- Behavior as an adult
- The last day...

WHAT IS LOSING LULU?



- Facebook group
- More than 20,000 members
- After-the-fact BE support

THE PERILS OF PLACING MARGINAL DOGS



- Rosie's story
- "Only dog home"
- Consequences to other animals in community
- Consequences to my friends
- Will they ever adopt again?
- Ethics of outsourcing euthanasia to adopters

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?



- Have written policies
- Come up with as a group
- Do daily rounds
- Never just one person's choice
- Committee makes decisions
- Doesn't remove "gray area" but...

IN CONCLUSION



Canine victim of cruelty meeting new friend

- “No-kill” is a divisive term
- Rescue and sanctuary can’t fix all
- Have written criteria for BE
- Not all dogs are cut out to be pets
- Outsourcing euthanasia is unethical

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Losing Lulu



Wesley Case Study

History:

5 year old hound mix from rural North Carolina. Neutered on intake. Has spent life chained in shelter for four weeks

Heartworm positive, heavy load, started treatment



- Unable to introduce to any other dogs in the shelter over multiple tries – reactive toward male dogs, female dogs, calm dogs. Not just barrier reactivity, even on muzzle he charges and tries to bite.
- In a few days, becomes very reactive to people and other dogs passing his kennel
- Begins muzzle training for medical handling (remains hard to handle in medical, needs heartworm treatment)
- One week in, Wesley bites staff member while giving treat, draws blood, placed on 10 day bite quarantine. Started gabapentin twice a day, but continues to lunge and bark at all dogs and unknown people passing his kennel.
- Four weeks in, unable to redirect attention whenever other animals around. Staff are uncomfortable having him out on a leash. Continues to be unable to be with any dog in playgroup, and reactive toward people and dogs in the kennel.

Questions:

- If you have written criteria, would he meet criteria for BE?
- What other information would you need to make a decision on BE vs placement?
- What pathway would this dog likely take in your shelter?