



Communicating Behavioral Euthanasia Decisions to Stakeholders

Leah Craig Chumbley
Executive Director, Brother Wolf Animal Rescue
Asheville, NC

Moving from chaos to
set expectations,
procedures, and
transparent
communications



Understanding the
Need for Change:

Quality of Life Concerns

Safety Concerns

Only 50% kennels open to save lives





Plan Change

Learn from the experts

- Engage your organization's leaders + board of directors
- Talk to others in animal welfare
- Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (who has experience working with shelters)
- Veterinary Behaviorist (who has experience working with shelters)



Plan Change

Things that spoke to us;

Imagine the world you want to create

- Not warehousing animals who we know can't be safely adopted out: Quality of Life
- Doing the most good for the greatest number of animals in our region
- Making safe placements for adopters, neighbors and other animals in our community
- Supporting shelter pets as a whole through responsible placements



Plan Change

Create Adoptability Criteria

- Guidelines to help your team with decision making
- Animals still treated as individuals
- Fluke aggression incidents not included
- Decide what works for your community and organization

Communicating Change - Transparency!

Share your education and policy changes with other stakeholders

- All staff members
- Major donors
- Volunteers/Fosters
- Community
- Adopters
- Let your behavior set a high bar for others



Implementing Change - Transparency!



Taking next steps with your Adoptability Criteria

- Change intake protocols to match the animals you can help (if you can)
 - Talk with owner surrenders about euthanasia
 - Talk with source shelters/county about your Adoptability Criteria
- Animal Care & Support weekly team meetings
- Say goodbye to the animals who do not meet your Adoptability Criteria

Implementing Change

Develop policies for informing stakeholders about euthanasia decisions

- All communications should underscore your Adoptability Criteria

Euthanasia Communications at Brother Wolf

- Staff: Day of Procedures
 - Be open to further discussion one-on-one
- Adoption Returns
 - Transparency and possible participation
- Foster Family
 - If incident took place in their home
- Shelter Partners
 - Varies based on partner
- Volunteers
 - If particularly close; phone or in person
- Board of Directors



Implementing Change - Transparency!



Setting expectations
moving forward

- Interviewees
- New Employee Orientation
- Foster / Volunteer Orientation
- Board Orientation

You can do this, if you believe!

Celebration is allowed!



Join us!

Dive into the Details: 3 follow up workshops

Effective change management and communication practices regarding euthanasia policies and decisions with various stakeholder groups:

April 9: **Staff, Shelter Partners/Other Animal Welfare Orgs**

April 23: **Volunteers & Fosters**

May 7: **Donors, Community Supporters, Adopters, the Media**

