



# Look and Talk Like a Veterinary Professional

Wendy S. Myers, CVJ, President, Communication Solutions for Veterinarians Inc., 6455 Montano Place, Castle Pines, CO 80108, USA; 720-344-2347; [wmyers@csvets.com](mailto:wmyers@csvets.com); [Csvets.com](http://Csvets.com); [Facebook.com/csvets](https://Facebook.com/csvets); [YouTube.com/csvets](https://YouTube.com/csvets); [@wendysmyers](https://www.instagram.com/wendysmyers)

## Meet your consultant



Wendy S. Myers, CVJ, owns Communication Solutions for Veterinarians in Denver, Colorado. Her consulting firm helps teams improve telephone and communication skills, client service, and compliance. Communication Solutions for Veterinarians is a leader in phone-skills training. Wendy offers monthly CE credit webinars. She is a certified veterinary journalist and author of five books, including *101 Communication Skills for Veterinary Teams*. For five years, Wendy was a partner in an AAHA-accredited specialty and emergency hospital, which was sold to a corporate group. Wendy is a member of the American Animal Hospital Association and has been an instructor for AAHA's Veterinary Management School. She serves on a committee for the Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry.

## What you'll learn:

- How to project confidence during exam greetings
- Best practices for uniforms, name badges and staying sharp when you're facing a messy day
- How the words you use impact clients' acceptance of your medical recommendations
- Tips for collaborative body language when presenting diagnoses and treatment plans
- Incorporating technology without shutting down effective communication
- Ways to be an active listener

If you want to get paid as a professional, you need look and talk like one. When you present a dental treatment plan for \$1,200, you want the patient to get needed medical care and the client to have confidence in your team's medical skills. Body language, appearance and the words that you use will have a significant impact on pet owners' decision making.

## How to project confidence during exam greetings

---

**Identify whether you've previously met the client and patient.** Before you step into the exam room, check the electronic medical record or paper chart. Your practice-management software tracks who delivered care, so use this tool to go beyond tracking doctor production and use it to enhance client relationships. If you offer a first-time greeting to a client you've been seeing for five years, she may assume that you don't pay attention to details and don't value her business. Say to a returning client, *"Wendy, it's great to see you and Alex again."*

If you're meeting a client for the first time, share your name and role. Say, *"Welcome to <Your Veterinary Hospital.> I'm Sandy, the technician who will be assisting Dr. Jones today."*

**Knock on the exam room door.** Lightly tap on the door to announce your presence. The client will look towards the sound and immediately make eye contact with you as you enter the exam room. If she has an unruly pet, she can have a firm hold on the leash.

**Shake clients' hands.** A study found 80% of patient survey respondents want the physician to shake their hand.<sup>1</sup> Clients may expect the same professional greeting from their pets' doctors.



Offering a firm handshake shows confidence and is preferred over a limp handshake, which can indicate to a client that you're not interested in building rapport with him.<sup>2</sup> Give a firm three-to-five pump handshake while standing about 16 inches from the client. A handshake is the quickest, most effective way to establish rapport with another person. Research in the United States shows it takes an average of three hours of continuous interaction to develop the same level of rapport that you get with a handshake.<sup>3</sup> Offer a handshake regardless of whether the client is male or female. Most women say that when a man does not offer his hand, it makes her feel she is not respected or seen as an equal.<sup>3</sup>

**Meet the family and pet.** Acknowledge others in the room such as children, a spouse or a friend. Also offer each a handshake and make eye contact. Because the entire family cares for the pet, establish a relationship with everyone in the exam room. If you diagnose a pet's obesity and begin explaining a weight-management diet to the mother, compliance at home might fail if the teenage son who is in the exam room is responsible for feeding the dog.

When greeting the dog, the late Dr. Sophia Yin shared two Golden Rules: 1) Never pet a dog without the owner's permission and 2) Always let the dog make first contact.<sup>4</sup> Well-wishers who approach the patient too quickly or crowd too closely may cause some dogs to freeze or shrink under this pressure. Stand straight up or crouch down on one knee while looking slightly away, so the dog can approach and sniff you at his own pace. Once the dog is relaxed, calmly pet him under the chin and neck or on the side of the front half of his body. Offering treats that the shy dog can choose to take out of your hand while you're looking away will speed the friendship process.

According to Pam Johnson-Bennett, a certified cat behavior consultant and author of eight books on cat behavior, cats are territorial and use their sense of smell to determine whether an approaching person or animal is familiar, friendly or a potential threat.<sup>5</sup> When you walk into the exam room, get down on the cat's level by sitting or kneeling and extend your index finger at the same height as the cat's nose. In the cat world, cats approach each other and engage in a round of nose-to-nose sniffing to determine familiarity and do an initial scent investigation. When you extend your finger at the same height as the cat's nose, it becomes a surrogate kitty nose. Hold your finger still and give the cat the option to approach or not, which reduces his stress level. When the cat approaches, he'll sniff your finger. If he wishes to interact further, he may rub his cheek or side of his head along your finger. Your veterinary hospital also can become a Cat Friendly Practice® through the American Association of Feline Practitioners ([www.catvets.com](http://www.catvets.com)).

**Personalize exam rooms to make you approachable.** Hang your veterinary degree, family photos with your pets, pictures of police and service dogs under your care and photos of your team with their pets. Photos can be icebreakers that help clients start casual conversations. Pet owners have already observed every inch of wall space in exam rooms before you open the door.

**Install peepholes in the back of exam doors.** You'll have a preview of the client's body language and who is in the room before you turn the doorknob. Employees will love this tool when playing "find the doctor" game. Employees can see if the doctor or technician needs assistance and check the client's body language to see if he needs privacy for situations such as euthanasia. Buy peepholes from a local hardware store and install them yourself. Mount peepholes at a comfortable viewing level for all employees—the average adult female height is 5 feet, 4 inches.<sup>6</sup>

**Introduce yourself and explain your role.** When greeting clients in exam rooms, technicians or assistants should introduce themselves, shake hands and explain their role.

**For preventive checkups:** *"Good morning, I'm <technician name>, the technician who will be assisting Dr. <Name>. For your pet's checkup, we will do a nose-to-tail exam, vaccines, heartworm/tick screen, intestinal parasite screen, and refill 12 months of preventatives. I will take a brief history, collect samples for testing and get your pet's vital signs. Then the doctor will*



*begin the exam. Does your pet have any health or behavior concerns you want to discuss with the doctor?"*

Say "vaccines" instead of specific ones. Based on exam findings, the veterinarian may add or subtract vaccines. Saying, "We will refill" encourages 12 months of parasite protection. Asking, "Is there anything else you want to discuss with the doctor?" identifies "Oh, yeah...could you also check...?" Many well pets may have sick-pet problems—ears, skin, dental disease—so identify questions early so the doctor can prioritize which order to address them. This strategy also helps you efficiently manage exam time.

Previewing services lets you gauge whether pet owners have financial concerns. If clients ask about prices, prepare treatment plans or access fees on computers in exam rooms. Say, *"Let me review the services and prices with you. Before deciding, let's have the doctor perform an exam, and then help you prioritize which services and products your pet will need."*

**For sick-patient visits:** *"Hello, <client name> and <patient name>. I'm <technician name>, the technician who will be assisting Dr. <Name> today. I understand that <patient name> has been vomiting for three days. I will ask you questions about her symptoms, and then the doctor will begin the exam. Once the doctor performs his exam, we will prepare a treatment plan that describes the services and fees. Then we will discuss your questions and the next steps."*

Once the veterinarian performs the exam, he will explain necessary diagnostics and answer the client's questions. After the discussion, the doctor would say, *"I will have my technician prepare a treatment plan that lists the services that we just discussed, along with the fees. After you and the technician have reviewed it together, we can begin your pet's treatment or discuss how you'd like us to proceed."*

Whether a client is visiting for a pet's preventive checkup, an illness or an emergency, always be upfront about prices. This avoids surprises for both you and the pet owner.

**For surgical and dental admissions:** *"I will call you after 1 p.m. to update you on <pet's name> procedure. If you have questions before then, please call and ask for me. Here's my business card."*

Providing a business card instills client confidence, boosts pride in staff, helps receptionists quickly connect calls, and may generate new clients when passed along. Watch my video on using business cards at [www.YouTube.com/csvets](http://www.YouTube.com/csvets). Print an appointment reminder and Facebook or AAHA logos on the back of business cards.

### **Best practices for uniforms, name badges and staying sharp when you're facing a messy day**

Earning recognition and respect as a veterinary team requires professionalism in performance and appearance. Because people judge a person's character based on the first 12 seconds of interaction, you must demonstrate your character through your personal appearance.<sup>7</sup> Uniforms are a "nonverbal, conscious statement that you have the skills and knowledge to care for patients and clients." A uniform is a powerful form of nonverbal communication related to the wearer's identity, authority, status and occupation.<sup>7</sup>



When a pet owner visits your veterinary hospital, it may be difficult to identify which employees are caregivers when everyone is dressed in medical scrubs. Similarly dressed staff members could be from as many as seven different roles—veterinarian, technician, veterinary assistant, receptionist, manager, boarding team or groomer. Consider uniforms that use different styles or colors by discipline so pet owners can clearly distinguish your role at the veterinary hospital.

**Receptionists:** Try a collared polo or long-sleeved, wrinkle-free oxford shirt with your logo embroidered on the pocket or shirt front. Choose a color that compliments your hospital's logo. For example, if your logo is blue, receptionists should wear blue polo shirts with a white embroidered logo. Khaki pants look sharp and won't show pet hair. For consistent results, buy shirts and pants from one vendor, such as L.L. Bean, Lands' End Business Outfitters (AAHA member benefit at <http://business.landsend.com/store/aaaha/>) or a local uniform company. If you're not specific about uniform styles, you'll have some receptionists wearing Dockers and others in cargo pants.

**Technicians:** Choose matching scrub tops and bottoms in a solid color because solid colors look slimming and professional on people of all shapes and sizes. Choose a gender-neutral color such as blue or green. Embroider your hospital's logo on the scrub top. Patterned scrub tops could add the look of 10 extra pounds.

**Veterinarians:** Worn by doctors since the 1800s, the lab coat is the symbol of a healer and white represents hope. Many veterinary colleges also have white coat ceremonies for their students. Now the white-coat tradition is becoming history. In Britain, white lab coats have been banned, along with watches, ties and sleeves. The "bare below the elbow" rule is designed to reduce infection.<sup>8</sup> Only 1 in 8 U.S. physicians wear a white lab coat.

Try a short-sleeved doctor's coat with a zip front and convenient front pockets. This accommodates the "bare below the elbow" hygiene standard. Embroider the coat with your hospital's logo and the doctor's name. Wash it often or consider a laundry service.

No matter which uniform style you choose, uniforms must be clean and free of wrinkles, stains and pet hair. Keep a spare uniform in your employee locker or car in case you need to change your uniform after delivering messy patient care. Have lint rollers in the lab/pharmacy hallway so you can remove pet hair between exams.

Dressing better can change the way your brain works, helping you to focus on the big picture, according to a study published in the journal *Social Psychological & Personality Science*. Clothing had a significant impact on cognitive processing.<sup>9</sup>

### **Name badges**

Always wear a nametag. Your nametag should include your name, title and the hospital logo. AAHA offers magnetic lapel pins for accredited practices at [www.aaaha.org/professional/store/accredited\\_members.aspx#gsc.tab=0](http://www.aaaha.org/professional/store/accredited_members.aspx#gsc.tab=0). Keep a spare nametag in your desk drawer, car or locker in case you forget yours or it gets damaged.

Embroidered names may be the best choice for employees who deliver patient care. Pinned nametags often rip clothing and can pose safety hazards when working with patients. Bonus: You'll never forget your nametag if it's stitched on your shirt! Search online for local embroidery, trophy and apparel shops who can embroider your hospital logo and employee names for just a few dollars per shirt. Magnetic name badges work best.

Your name should appear on the right side of your uniform. When you shake a client's hand, his eyes will travel up your arm and land on your nametag. Place the hospital logo on the uniform's left side or below your name.



Your hospital also should set standards of appearance about acceptable jewelry, makeup, hair color and tattoos.

### **How the words you use impact clients' acceptance of your medical recommendations**

---

Your ability to be an effective communicator directly impacts whether patients get needed medical care. Unlike human medicine, veterinary patients can't talk. The veterinarian-client-animal relationship is comparable to a pediatrician-child-parent situation.<sup>10</sup>

Communication skills competencies needed when working with clients and companion animals mirrored that of human medicine:<sup>11</sup>

- Educating clients
- Providing choices
- Use of two-way communication between the practitioner and the client
- Breakdowns in communication that impair the interaction
- Challenges in communication such as discussion of finances, client misinformation, more than one client in the interaction and time constraints

Health literacy research urges physicians to use clear communication practices.<sup>11</sup> When conveying information verbally, physicians and staff should communicate key points and avoid excessive information. Most patients will not remember more than three messages. Speak slowly and avoid medical jargon. Use analogies for common ailments—a patient might better understand joint problems if joints are compared with hinges. Read handouts with patients, highlighting and circling important points. Encourage the patient to ask questions.

As with human healthcare professionals, veterinary teams must be clear communicators. When clients don't understand your advice, they may decline diagnostic testing, dentistry and treatments. Be a good teacher. Try these word makeovers to improve client communication:

**Say “treatment plan” instead of “estimate.”** The word “estimate” centers on price, while “treatment plan” emphasizes needed medical care. Some dentists use the term “treatment solutions.” A treatment plan explains medical services, fees and payment policies. Change the term in your practice-management software so it prints on forms. If you see the word “estimate,” you may slip back into old habits. The technician would say, *“Let me explain the treatment plan for your pet’s Grade 2 dental disease that Dr. <Name> diagnosed.”*

**Say “need” instead of “recommend.”** Don't tell a client, “I recommend that you get your dog's teeth cleaned.” Clients may hear that they can wait because the procedure is just a recommendation and not medically necessary.

Confidently present the diagnosis. Replace “recommend” with “needs” to communicate the medical urgency and importance of treatment. Explain consequences of delaying or declining treatment. The veterinarian would tell the client, *“<Pet name> has Grade 2 dental disease. She needs dental treatment now to slow the progression of her dental disease and treat her oral infection. As her dental disease gets worse, serious health problems can happen. It’s common for pets to get painful abscesses or a toothache that causes them to eat less or not at all. Bacteria in the mouth can pass through the bloodstream and permanently damage the kidneys, heart, liver and lungs. I will have my technician explain <pet name’s> dental procedure.”*





When receptionists get calls from price shoppers about spays and neuters, they need to communicate your surgical standards of care. When describing preanesthetic testing, use the word “include” if it is required. The word “required” sounds like a rule and some callers may challenge the receptionist. No one will argue if it’s included. If preanesthetic testing is optional, replace the wiggle word of “recommend” with “advise.” Say, *“We include/advise performing pre-surgical blood work to make sure your pet is healthy.”*

Take the same approach when explaining preventive diagnostics. Don’t say, “I recommend that we perform a heartworm test.” Clients may hear that testing is just a recommendation and not medically necessary. Get prevalence maps for heartworms, tick-borne diseases and intestinal parasites from the Companion Animal Parasite Council at [www.capcvet.org](http://www.capcvet.org). In 2018, 1 in 78 dogs is testing positive for heartworms. Even if the patient has been on year-round protection, the American Heartworm Society recommends annual testing to ensure protection is maintained ([www.heartwormsociety.org](http://www.heartwormsociety.org)).

Tell clients, *“Mosquitos spread heartworms to both dogs and cats. We will collect a blood sample today to test your dog for heartworms. Signs of heartworm disease can include exercise intolerance, coughing, loss of appetite, weight loss, labored breathing, or heart disease. Dogs need to be tested for heartworms each year, even when on 12 months of heartworm prevention. In Alabama, 1 of out 27 dogs tests positive for heartworms. This blood test also screens for tick-borne diseases, including Lyme, Ehrlichiosis and Anaplasmosis. We’ll have your results today, and then we will refill 12 months of prevention.”*

**Say “surgical / dental admission” instead of “drop off” for surgery and dentistry.** Call clients one day before surgical and dental procedures. Confirmation calls help clients remember fasting instructions and to allow ample time for check-in. You also could email treatment plans and consent forms in advance.

Remove “drop off” from your vocabulary and hospital forms. “Drop off” implies the admission process will take seconds—hand you the leash or cat carrier and go. The term “admission” is more professional and communicates there is a check-in process, just as with any human outpatient surgical center or hospital.

Say, *“This is <your name> calling from <Your Veterinary Hospital> to remind you of <pet name>’s surgical / dental procedure tomorrow. Please withhold food after \_\_\_\_ p.m. tonight. Your surgical / dental admission begins at \_\_\_\_ a.m. with a technician, who will spend 15 minutes reviewing the consent form, answering your questions, and getting phone numbers where we can reach you the day of the procedure. Please allow at least 15 minutes for <pet name>’s admission to the hospital. If you have questions, please call us at 555-555-5555.”*

**Say “day admission” instead of “drop off.”** You drop off dry cleaning, not a beloved family member for a hospital stay. Use the term “day admission” for outpatient hospital stays. When you request a day admission for your clinic’s convenience (i.e. full schedule, time needed to perform workup), the client is not charged for hospitalization. When the day admission is for the client’s convenience and is requested by the client, charge a 1- to 12-hour hospitalization fee. For example, the client’s dog is due for an annual checkup, but the client has a looming deadline at work.

**If day admission is for your convenience:** Let’s say a client calls because her cat has been vomiting for three days but your schedule is full. Say, *“Based on your cat’s symptoms, a doctor needs to see him today. We have a full schedule of patients today, but we could admit your cat to the hospital and our surgery doctor can assess his condition and call you about needed diagnostics and*



*treatments. For 15 minutes, a technician will meet with you when you bring your cat in to discuss everything that needs to be communicated to the doctor. When do you plan to arrive?”*

**If day admission is for client’s convenience:** *“We would be happy to provide services for your pet’s annual checkup as a day admission. For 15 minutes, you will meet with a technician, who will ask you history questions, get your pet’s vital signs and review which services and products are due. We will get your cell phone number in case the doctor has questions. You may pick up your dog after \_\_\_ p.m. Because we will care for your pet throughout the day, there is a day admission charge of \$ \_\_\_. Let’s schedule your day admission appointment with a technician. We can admit your dog at 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. Which choice fits your schedule?”*

**Say “early detection screen” instead of “wellness test.”** Clients with pets that appear healthy may think, “My pet is well, so why do I need a wellness test?” Use the term “adult or senior early detection screen” to communicate the value of preventive medicine. Use the word “screen” for preventive care and “test” for sick-patient diagnostics. For example, perform a “heartworm/tick preventive screen” during a checkup but run a “heartworm/tick test” on a patient presenting with heartworm or tick-borne disease symptoms.

**Say “preventive exam” instead of “wellness exam.”** Pet owners with young, healthy animals or indoor cats might assume they don’t need wellness exams. Your goal is to change clients’ perceptions from “Veterinarian = Shots” to “Veterinarian = Preventive Care.” Clients may perceive wellness exams as optional, while preventive care exams are actionable. Pet owners want to keep their best friends healthy. Update the term in your practice-management software so it prints on invoices, treatment plans and reminder emails and postcards.

#### Quick reference communication tips

Weak communication / Medical jargon	Clear communication
Dental prophylaxis	Dental treatment
Drop-off	Day admission
Electrocardiogram	Heart monitor
Estimate	Treatment plan/solution
Fecal examination	Intestinal parasite screen
Geriatric	Senior
Osteoarthritis	Arthritis
Recommend	Need
Renal disease	Kidney disease
Surgery drop-off	Surgical / dental admission
T4	Thyroid test
Wellness exam	Preventive care exam
Wellness test	Early detection screen

#### Tips for collaborative body language when presenting diagnoses and treatment plans

Research studies by Professor Emeritis Albert Mehrabian, a psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, found 93% of communication is from body language and non-verbal communication:<sup>12</sup>

- 7% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in the words that are spoken
- 38% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said)
- 55% of message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in facial expression



**Remove physical barriers between you and the client.** Avoid standing behind the exam table or burying your face in an exam room computer or medical record. If you're the receptionist, get out from behind the reception counter (a.k.a. Berlin Wall) to interact with clients and patients.

**Stand shoulder-to-shoulder or form L-shaped body language.** This is collaborative body language, compared to a confrontational posture of talking across the table with a physical barrier between you and the client.

**Sit to explain your diagnosis.** Use stools for doctors and technicians in exam rooms. When a doctor sits to explain his diagnosis and recommendations, his body language communicates, "You have my complete attention, and I want to focus on you and what your pet needs." When he stands, the body language politely signals, "Our visit is finished."

**Get on the same eye level.** If the client is seated, you should be, too. Sit in a stool or kneel down so you are eye-to-eye. If the client is seated and the doctor is standing, he is in a position of dominance.

**Use "honest hands."** When a person is being truthful, the palms of the hands will be exposed and the fingers will be extended. When giving a treatment plan or receipt to a client, hold the side (not top) of the paper and present it from an angle rather than head-on, which could be perceived as shoving information.

**Use visual aids.** Pictures will help you explain diagnoses and treatments.

- **Photo books and digital slideshows:** Few pet owners have ever seen an animal's dental procedure or surgery from start to finish. To create photo books, use websites such as Shutterfly, Walgreens or Costco. Place photo books in each exam room and your lobby. Be sure that photos are kid-friendly because children will want to see the images you're showing to their parents. Take a photo of a smiling technician in your in-clinic lab to demonstrate preanesthetic testing—don't show a jugular blood draw on a patient (frightening!). For a digital option, create slideshows on digital photo frames, tablets or exam room computers. When computer hibernate, your slideshow becomes the screen saver.
- **Models:** Models of ears, teeth and joints can help clients see inside their pets and understand procedures and home-care treatments. Place models in each exam room where they are within arm's reach. You're less likely to leave the exam room in the middle of a discussion to go fetch a model.
- **Medical illustrations:** IDEXX Pet Health Network® 3D lets you improve client communication with three-dimensional anatomical animations, radiographs and home-care videos ([www.pethealthnetwork3d.com](http://www.pethealthnetwork3d.com)). Also ask pharmaceutical and pet food companies about atlas of veterinary anatomy.
- **Videos:** Set up a free YouTube account, and then create your hospital's own channel. Teach with instructional videos. Show clients how to brush pets' teeth, clean ears, give pills, trim nails and administer subcutaneous fluids. Feature your veterinarians and technicians in videos.

### **Incorporating technology without shutting down effective communication**

---

**Maintain eye contact when using exam computers.** Don't turn your back to the client because you'll shut down communication. Place computers on a side counter or use wall-mounted monitors and keyboards to let you stand sideways and still maintain eye contact with the client while typing. You also could listen to the client while maintaining eye contact and before turning away say, "I'm going to add notes to your pet's medical record now."





**Use tablets.** A Kindle Fire tablet is an affordable option that works with your hospital's Wi-Fi ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). Use tablets to share videos on your hospital's YouTube channel, photos of procedures, show trusted websites and even entertain kids.

**Let clients take a look.** Your treatment area (a.k.a. "in the back") should not be a hidden dungeon. Remove the mystery and escort clients behind the scenes. When you diagnose ear mites, lead the client to your microscope to see the "monsters." Her home-care compliance will be perfect!

When you take x-rays, show clients images on a monitor or tablet. IDEXX I-Vision Mobile™ Application lets you take your images for a walk ([www.idexx.com/small-animal-health/products-and-services/small-animal-diagnostic-imaging.html](http://www.idexx.com/small-animal-health/products-and-services/small-animal-diagnostic-imaging.html)). When you perform ultrasound, let clients watch tableside or share images.

At Aventura Animal Hospital & Pet Resort in Aventura, Florida, TV monitors above the front desk stream live video from the special procedures room, surgical suite, boarding and play area (<https://vcahospitals.com/aventura>). Staff can switch cameras immediately in case of emergencies or situations that wouldn't be appropriate to broadcast. When using a video otoscope, the team shares images on LCD screens in exam rooms.

## Ways to be an active listener

---

**Stop and listen.**<sup>13</sup> Listening is not a multi-tasking skill. Look the client in the eye and only listen. If you don't pay attention the first time, your efforts will be counterproductive and exam time will run longer.

**Show empathy.** Clients may be scared, anxious or emotional when their pets are ill. You're a trusted friend and healer, not just an experienced veterinarian. Say, *"I'm sorry to hear your dog has had diarrhea for two days. Let me ask you questions about his symptoms, perform a nose-to-tail exam and then we'll discuss the steps we need to take to help <pet name> feel better."*

**Summarize and repeat information back to clients.** Unless you ask and then listen, the client may not reveal the details you need to lead to a diagnosis. After the client explains the pet's symptoms, repeat information back to him. Reply, *"Your dog had diarrhea three times yesterday and it looked like chocolate pudding. He ate dog food and had table scraps that included pork chops and gravy. Am I correct so far?"* This active listening technique ensures there is no miscommunication.

## Which goals will you implement from today's training?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## References:

1. Makoul G, Zick A, Green M. An evidence-based perspective on greetings in medical encounters. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 2007 June 11;167(11):1172-6. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17563026>.
2. *Psychologist World*. The Handshake. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.psychologistworld.com/bodylanguage/handshake.php](http://www.psychologistworld.com/bodylanguage/handshake.php).
3. Wood P. The Secret of the Perfect Handshake. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.pattiwood.net/article.asp?PageID=2490](http://www.pattiwood.net/article.asp?PageID=2490).
4. Yin S. How to greet a dog. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at <https://drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/how-to-greet-a-dog/>.
5. Johnson-Bennett P. Greeting a cat: Using proper cat etiquette. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.catbehaviorassociates.com/greeting-a-cat-using-proper-cat-etiquette/](http://www.catbehaviorassociates.com/greeting-a-cat-using-proper-cat-etiquette/).
6. Cloe A. Average American woman's weight and height. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.livestrong.com/article/357769-weight-height-for-the-average-american-woman/](http://www.livestrong.com/article/357769-weight-height-for-the-average-american-woman/).
7. Splendore R, Burns H, Choby, C. Dress for respect: A shared governance approach. *Nursing Management*, 2016 April; Vol. 47, Issue 4, pp. 51-53. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [http://journals.lww.com/nursingmanagement/Fulltext/2016/04000/Dress\\_for\\_respect\\_A\\_shared\\_governance\\_approach.13.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/nursingmanagement/Fulltext/2016/04000/Dress_for_respect_A_shared_governance_approach.13.aspx).
8. Picard A. Why do physicians wear white lab coats? *The Globe and Mail*, 2012 July 2. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-do-physicians-wear-white-lab-coats/article4384866/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-do-physicians-wear-white-lab-coats/article4384866/).
9. Gregoire, C. Dressing Better Can Change the Way Your Brain Works. *The Huffington Post*, 05/02/2015. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/02/wearing-a-suit-psychology\\_n\\_7188356.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/02/wearing-a-suit-psychology_n_7188356.html).
10. Hamood W, Chur-Hansen A, McArthur M. A qualitative study to explore communication skills in veterinary medical education. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2014 October 11; 5: 193-198. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4216729/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4216729/).
11. Graham S, Brookey J. Do patients understand? *The Permanente Journal*. 2008 Summer; 12(3): 67-69. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3037129/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3037129/).
12. Mehrabian's communication research. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at [www.businessballs.com/mehrabiancommunications.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/mehrabiancommunications.htm).
13. Four ways to improve physician listening skills. *Next Clinica*. 2015 October 11. Accessed Oct. 2, 2018 at <https://nextclinica.com/communication/improve-physician-listening-skills/>.

Helpful resources	Link
AAHA magnetic lapel pins for accredited practices	<a href="http://www.aaaha.org/professional/store/accredited_members.aspx#gsc.tab=0">www.aaaha.org/professional/store/accredited_members.aspx#gsc.tab=0</a>
American Heartworm Society	<a href="http://www.heartwormsociety.org">www.heartwormsociety.org</a>
Cat Friendly Practice®	<a href="http://www.catvets.com">www.catvets.com</a>
Communication Solutions for Veterinarians' YouTube channel with video tips	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/csvets">www.youtube.com/csvets</a>
Companion Animal Parasite Council prevalence maps	<a href="http://www.capcvet.org">www.capcvet.org</a>
Webinar: Are your wiggle words killing compliance?	<a href="http://shop.csvets.com/communication-skills/are-your-wiggle-words-killing-compliance/">http://shop.csvets.com/communication-skills/are-your-wiggle-words-killing-compliance/</a>