

The Pet Professional Guild Guiding Principles

"Informed by Science, Guided by Empathy, Governed by Ethics"



Section One: The Non-Negotiables

To be in any way affiliated with the Pet Professional Guild all members must adhere to a strict code of conduct. Pet Professional Guild members understand Force-Free to mean that:

No shock, No prong, No choke and No Pain, No fear, No Force are ever employed in the training, behavior modification, care, or management of any pet.

Definition of Force

Any definition can never be so expansive and explicit that every possible situation is addressed. This is universal in its application. A good example is the US legal system where, very often, courts cannot agree on a single interpretation of what terms and definitions mean – including physical force.

Recognizing this, in the context of its Guiding Principles and as a general framework, the Pet Professional Guild defines physical force as “any intentional physical act against a pet that causes psychological or physical pain, harm or damage to the pet.”

Equipment

Certain equipment is covered above in the Non-Negotiables. Clearly the use of many (or even most) harnesses, head halters, collars (non-choking) and leashes would not be considered physical force under this guiding definition if 1) they are used consistently with our Guiding Principles, 2) they are used as intended and designed, and 3) they are not used in a way that is contrary to their design and intent, i.e. not used in a manner which would cause psychological or physical pain, harm or damage.

Section Two: Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

At the Pet Professional Guild, we envision a world where people and pets can live together to their mutual benefit and where pets can live and function free from physical and emotional pain, stress and fear as valued family members.

Mission

Our mission is to help make every pet a cherished family member and improve the relationship and the quality of life people share with their pets by:

- Providing the greatest value and highest quality, state-of-the-art, force-free, science- based pet training and pet care for each client.
- Always demonstrating integrity, compassion and an uncompromising commitment to excellence in the care and support of clients and their pets.
- Continually expanding our knowledge and improving our skills to serve our clients as a valuable resource, providing the most innovative pet training and pet care possible.

Values

- First, do no harm. Our ethical principles allow for no harm and provide for the well-being of each pet.
- Emphasize a holistic, force-free approach to pet training and pet care by attending to the physical, emotional and environmental well-being of pets in our care.

Section Three: Pet Professional Guild Members' Professional Ethics

1. We always hold the pet's welfare as our top priority. The pet is the vulnerable component in the consultation process as he/she cannot offer informed consent.
2. The professional's role is one that is beneficial to the pet and never to his/her detriment. Always seek to do no harm.
3. We do not condone or endorse any treatment by a pet's owner that is physically or psychologically cruel. We will opt out of a consulting agreement rather than attempt to manage an unethical course of action.
4. We only consult with clients who offer cases that we have the professional competence to deal with.
5. We only use procedures, protocols and training tools that are empirically-based and have a proven track record.
6. We always consider communications with our clients privileged. We will only break that confidentiality if a pet is being abused and the client cannot be dissuaded from using their current approach. We always act according to local and state laws in terms of reporting animal cruelty.
7. We recognize that the pet's owner is responsible for their pet and the owner has the right to make decisions about the professional treatment of their pet.
8. We ensure that all communications are professional and based on fact. When discussing industry practices, trends or issues, members will limit discussion to practices and consequences rather than the individuals using them thereby ensuring informed, professional and civil exchanges that enrich members and the industry of force-free pet professionals.
9. We will apply the following ethical principles to each situation we encounter:
 - Respect for the freedom and dignity of others.
 - Do no harm.
 - Do good.
 - Act fairly.
 - Be faithful to promises made.

Section Four: Pet Professional Guild Members' Pledge

1. We pledge to use our knowledge and skills for the benefit of pets and their owners.
 2. We pledge to practice our profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the Guiding Principles of the Pet Professional Guild.
 3. We pledge to accept, as a lifelong obligation, the continual improvement of professional knowledge and competence.
 4. We pledge to commit to the highest professional and ethical standards in any business practices and in the approach to pet training and pet care.
 5. We pledge to always treat clients with respect, kindness and caring.
 6. We pledge to work openly and honestly with clients who share these values in their relationship with their pet and who:
 7. Enjoy working, playing, and spending time with their pets.
- Integrate their pets into their family and are willing to teach them how to live in a home and the wider community.
 - Recognize and understand the value, effectiveness, and power of force-free training methods.
 - Are dedicated to optimizing the physical, social, mental, and emotional well-being of their pets.

Please also refer to the Pet Professional Guild Code of Ethical Conduct that speaks to the organization's recognition of the need for a level of oversight in the pet training and services industry – specifically regarding business practices, transparency, and marketing.

The Pet Professional Guild Code of Ethical Conduct states the following: The professional growth and improvement of the pet training and services industry depends upon a recognition that the varied sectors found within the industry must be based, first and foremost, on a respect for the animals in our care, the people we serve, and our colleagues.

This means members must continually seek to establish the highest ethical standards by adhering to the Pet Professional Guild's Guiding Principles and satisfying the needs of their clients in a professional, proficient, and ethical way. Acceptance of and adherence to this Code of Ethical Conduct is an eligibility requirement for Pet Professional Guild members.