

FREQUENTLY ASKED:

What is fear aggression?

As guided by Amy

FOUNDER, NOOSA COUNTRY CAT HOTEL

It's Fear, Not Dominance or Naughtiness

Fear aggression happens when a cat feels threatened, trapped or overwhelmed and believes aggression is the only way to create distance from the perceived threat. It is a normal response to an abnormal or frightening situation.

Overall, K. L. (2013). Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals. Mosby Elsevier.

Signs of Fear Aggression

These can include hissing, growling, ears flattened to the side, dilated pupils, tense body, tail tucked or lashing, swatting, biting or lunging. The intensity can vary depending on the level of fear and how cornered the cat feels.

Pryor, K. (2017). Don't Shoot the Dog! 3rd Ed. Penguin Random House.

Why Cats Become Fearful

Fear can be triggered by pain, illness, lack of socialisation, previous trauma, sudden changes, unpredictable handling or feeling trapped. Even friendly cats can react aggressively if they are scared and think they have no other choice.

American Association of Feline Practitioners (2012). Feline Behavior Management Guidelines.

It's Not Their Fault

Punishment or force can increase fear and make aggression worse. The goal is to reduce fear, increase the cat's sense of safety and give them choice and control wherever possible.

Herron, M. E. (2016). Feline Aggression in Context: Making Sense of Cat Conflicts and Aggression. Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, 18(2), 93-104.

How We Help

We focus on calm environments, predictable routines and positive experiences that build confidence. We go at the cat's pace, respect their boundaries and never force interaction. This helps fearful cats feel safe and reduces the need for aggressive responses.

Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (2021). APBC Position Statement on Force-Free Practice.

Prevention Is Key

Understanding early body language and respecting a cat's need for space can prevent fear from escalating. The more choice and control we give our cats, the less likely they are to feel the need to use aggression to cope.

International Society of Feline Medicine (2022). ISFM Feline Friendly Handling Guidelines.



Fear aggression is a communication of extreme fear and a request for distance. With patience, understanding and the right approach, we can help fearful cats feel safe, build confidence and live without needing to protect themselves through aggression.

EVIDENCE-BASED
FELINE CARE

Noosa Country
Cat HOTEL

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WELLBEING
TRUSTED BY FAMILIES