

5+ Animal Behavior Resources for Pet Families

From AMC's "Fur the Love of Pets" Blog by Dr. Ann Hohenhaus
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Behavior problems are a clear pain point for pet parents. Common behavior issues include biting, anxiety, inappropriate urination, and litter box concerns. Behavior problems such as these are all cause for relinquishment of pets to a shelter. To help pet families cope with behavior problems in their pets, here are some resources, because when your pet is misbehaving, you want help fast.



#1: Your Veterinarian

No one knows your pet like your family's veterinarian. Bad behavior can simply be bad behavior or it may indicate a medical problem. For example, urinary accidents often indicate a bladder infection and an unprovoked bite could suggest a painful disease underlying your pet's uncharacteristic biting behavior. So if your pet is acting out, the first stop is your family's veterinarian.

#2: Veterinary Specialists Certified in Behavior

If your family veterinarian doesn't find a medical problem and the behavior problem is serious, you and your pet might be referred to a board certified veterinary behaviorist. These specially-trained veterinarians have residency-level training and specialty board certification as experts in correcting serious behavior problems in pets. Because these specialists are veterinarians, they can use special techniques to improve bad behavior AND prescribe medications such as tranquilizers, anti-anxiety drugs and behavior-modifying drugs to curb bad behaviors.

#3: Certified Dog Trainers

Some behavior problems can easily be corrected by diligent work with a certified dog trainer. Certification is not required to be a dog trainer, but choosing a trainer with a certification suggests that he/she has participated in a training program to gain skills.

#4: Graduate-Trained Animal Behaviorists

Animal behaviorists have a Master's or PhD degree in animal behavior from a university. While they are not veterinarians and thus cannot prescribe medications, many veterinarians collaborate with animal behaviorists to correct behavior problems in their patients.

#5: Internet Resources

Sometimes you just need a bit of information to help you correct your pet's bad behavior or understand what might be going on. Here are some internet resources from reliable sources:

- **Common Canine Behavior Issues (ASPCA):** www.asPCA.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues
- **How to Select a Trainer - A Guide for Owners (DACVB):** www.dacvb.org/wp-content/uploads/How-to-select-a-trainer-A-guide-for-owners.pdf
- **Find a Veterinary Behaviorist (DACVB):** www.dacvb.org/about/member-directory/