



## **Mission**

The Academy exists to provide a comprehensive, science-based curriculum on aversives-free pet dog training, behavior and behavior modification so that dogs:

- 1) are not relinquished to shelters and rescues due to behavior problems
- 2) are integrated into families and not relegated to yards, garages or kennels
- 3) are socialized, have high quality of life, enriched environments, and a sense of safety
- 4) are understood by their human families and allowed to engage in species-normal behavior, empowered to access reinforcers (e.g. attention, play, food, toys, smells etc.) in ways that are acceptable in a human environment,

so that dog trainers:

- 1) are trained and mentored in an ethical and evidence-based standard of care
- 2) have long, safe, fulfilling careers
- 3) are supported and provided a safe environment to learn, grow and flourish,

and so that dogs' families:

- 1) can enjoy the richest possible relationship with their dogs
- 2) are empowered to manage and modify their dogs' behavior
- 3) understand the nature and needs of their dogs.

## **Code of Conduct**

To achieve this mission, students, staff and graduates of The Academy ("members of The Academy") willingly adhere to the highest professional standards befitting a complex, helping profession. These include:

### **I. Aversives-Free Training Philosophy**

While The Academy recognizes that it is still legal in most jurisdictions to use P+ and R- tools and techniques on dogs, there is ample evidence in both the pure and applied literature that training, dog wrangling and behavior modification can be accomplished without the use of aversive stimuli and their attendant side effects, impact on dog welfare and ethical considerations. Students, staff and graduates of The Academy practice and endorse training, dog wrangling and behavior modification that does not employ pain, fear, startle, electric shock, intimidation, strangulation etc.

### **II. Evidence-Based Practice and Intellectual Integrity**

Competence at dog training, behavior modification and effective skill-building in owners relies on a thorough knowledge of the principles of operant and classical conditioning, as well as their

efficient application in pet dog settings. Furthermore, the dog owning public is best protected as consumers of dog training and behavior modification services if questions of motivation and side-effects are transparent. Competence and transparency are therefore critical to our work. Obfuscation of means of motivation that is based either on poor knowledge of animal learning or deliberate attempts to hide or re-brand techniques and tools are unacceptable practice. Misrepresenting to clients, other professionals or the public how training and behavior modification work is dishonest and unethical practice.

### **III. Professional Demeanor, Collegial Atmosphere, Etiquette**

Fellow students, fellow professionals, clients and Academy members are to be treated with respect, courtesy and an assumption of goodwill. Slander, verbal or written attacks by students, graduates or staff towards fellow students, graduates or staff of The Academy are unacceptable. Bashing of other professionals (to clients, to Academy members or publicly) reflects poorly on one's own character and on The Academy. Healthy debate on technique, approach and practice is encouraged, and while The Academy respects the passion of good practitioners about their work, personal disputes should be resolved by taking up issues with the party(s) privately.

The Academy Café on Facebook is a closed and supportive group wherein personal triumphs, trials and tribulations may be shared without constraint. Academy members are expected to adhere to professional etiquette and not share or use Café posts or information outside of the Café.

Academy members are asked to use good discretion when sharing third party material in the Café, vetting content for taste and educational value, and to obey all applicable intellectual property laws.

### **IV. Representing Membership in The Academy**

Academy members are asked to understand that their work - including but not limited to advertising and promotion, client interactions and materials, social media posts and comments, blog posts, written articles and presentations - reflects on the reputation of The Academy as well as their own. Academy members are therefore asked to please consider the ethos presented in this document in their day-to-day communications and behavior. Please request permission before using The Academy logo.

*The Academy Mission and Code of Conduct are "living" documents and Academy members are encouraged to offer suggestions for additions or refinements.*