Play The Length of Stay Game (Where Everybody Wins)

Cats don't "stay".
I am just humoring you.







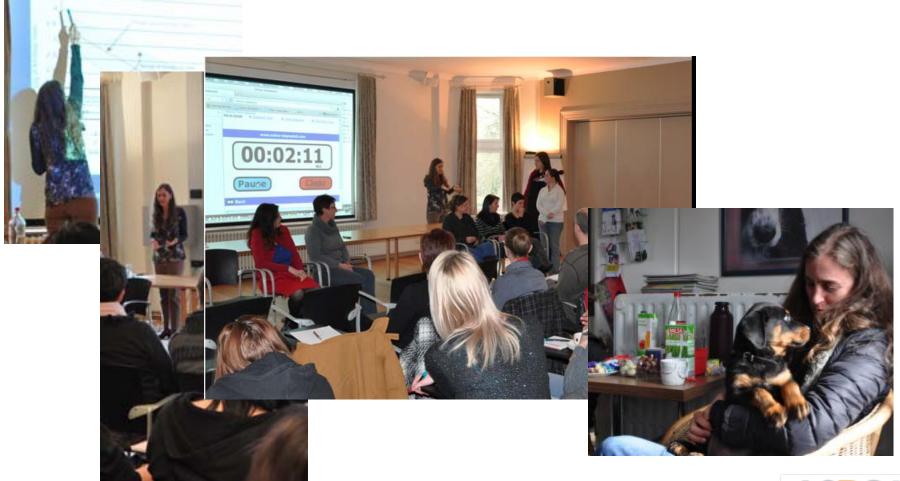
Sandra Newbury, DVM Koret Shelter Medicine Program Center for Companion Animal Health University of California, Davis

www.sheltermedicine.com

www.facebook.com/sheltermedicine



A little history





The problem

Play the Game

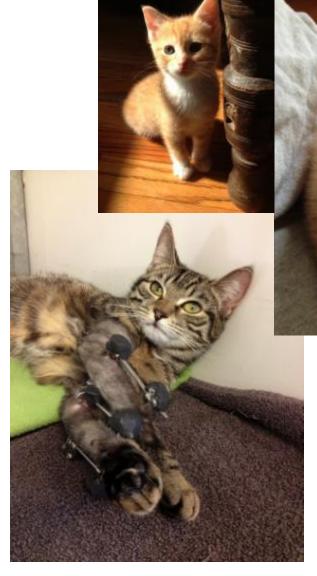


www.aspcapro.org/stay



Averaging Length of Stay







Average and median length of stay

Identification	Intake date	Outcome date	Length of Stay
1	4/2/13	4/20/13	18
2	4/12/13	4/25/13	13
3	4/12/13	4/17/13	5
4	4/15/13	4/20/13	5
5	4/24/13	4/25/13	1
6	4/25/13	4/29/13	4
7	4/26/13	4/29/13	3

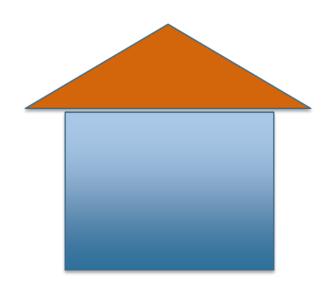
9		
49	Total Days in care	
7	Number of Animals	
7	Average LOS	
5	Median LOS	

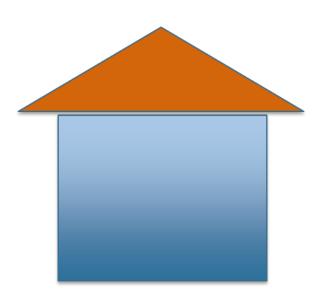
Avg. LOS = Total Days in Care / Number of Animals Median LOS = the number in the middle 1, 3, 4, **5**, 5, 13, 18

Specifics on calculating average and median length of stay can be found in the Length of Stay FAQs at www.ASPCApro.org/STAY



Shelter A or Shelter B?





Intake: 1,000 animals/year

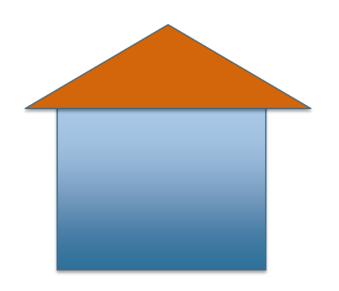
Intake: 2,000 animals/year

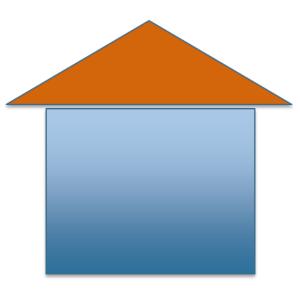
Which one costs more to run each day?

- a. A
- b. B
- c. It depends.



Shelter A or Shelter B?





Capacity: 100 animals a day

Capacity: 200 animals a day

Which one serves more animals each year?

- a. A
- b. B
- c. It depends.



Capacity versus flow

Capacity: how many animals you can care for at once

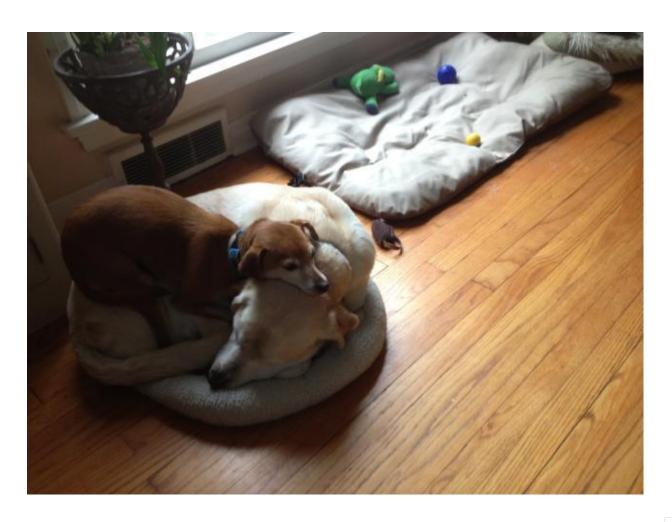




Flow: how many animals you can care for over time



Determining capacity





Animal care day: the basic unit of capacity

- 1 animal's day
- +1 day's worth of care time
- +1 day's consumable supplies =
 - 1 animal care day



Not all care days are created equal



Costs for shelter and animal depend on amount and quality of:

- Housing
- Care provided
- Consumable supplies



Capacity

Total care days at any one time = capacity

Census (Daily Population, Inventory)
PLUS care needs
PLUS consumable supplies
Capacity

Not as simple as how many housing units.





Budgeting care days?

How much do you have?

Actual – housing and care

Ideal – don't be afraid to dream big

- Space per animal
- Time per animal per day
- Extras (enrichment, medical care, foster care...)

How much do you need?

Intake x length of stay







Staying on budget

What are your choices if your resources don't match your expenses?

 Keep spending more than you earn, pay an enormous amount of interest, get less of what you need over time, and eventually go bankrupt







Staying on budget

What are your choices to make your resources match your expenses?

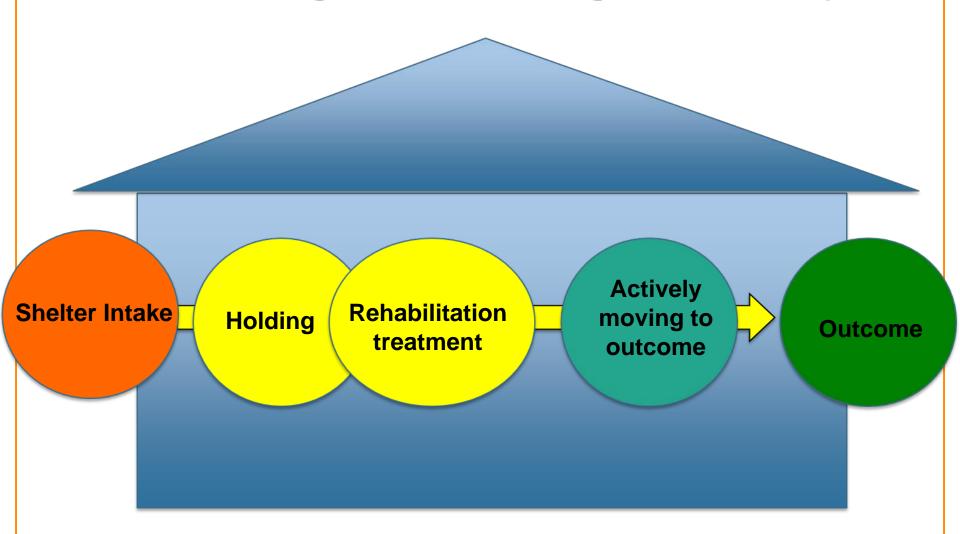
- Keep spending more than you earn, pay an enormous amount of interest, get less over time, and eventually go bankrupt
- Buy crummier stuff
- Buy less stuff
- Earn more money
- Get better bargains!
- Quit wasting money
- Invest wisely



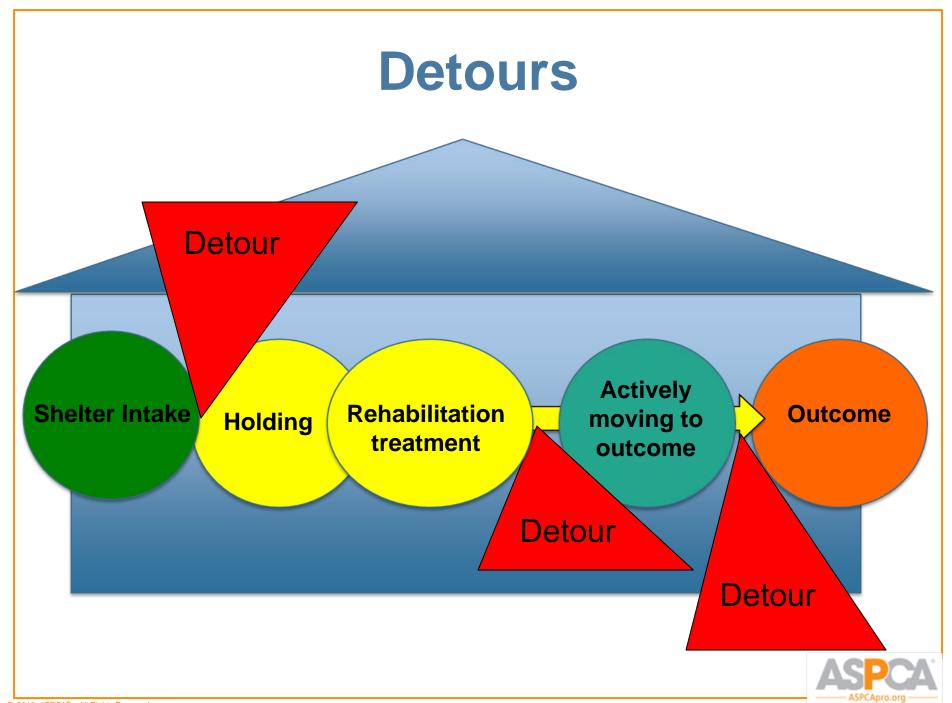




Breaking down length of stay







Defining Pathways

Stray holding to adoption

Owner surrender to adoption (no holding?)

Trap/neuter/return program

Behavior rehabilitation before adoption

Medical rehabilitation before adoption

Limited expectation for positive outcome?

C M F



For each each pathway:

Evaluate each part of length of stay for each type of animal you admit

- Stray vs owner surrender vs transfer
- Dog versus cat (versus feral)
- Neonate versus juvenile versus adult
- Healthy/behaviorally sound versus not

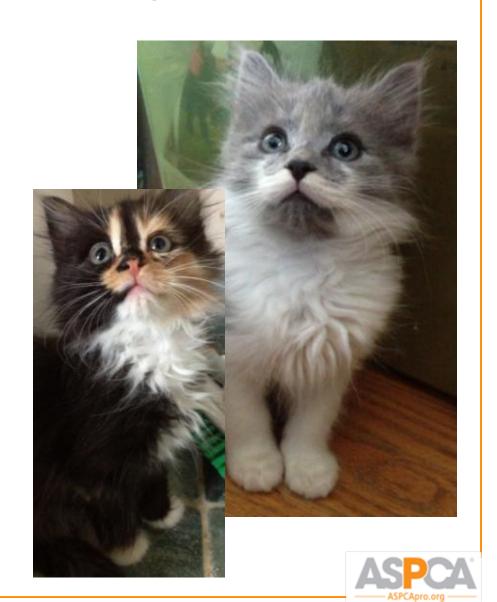


Ichi and The Beauty Queen

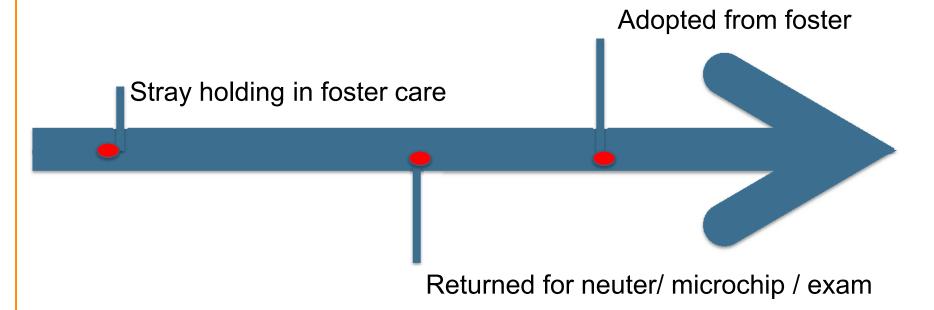
Underage Susceptibility

- Socialization
- High potential for adoption
 Stray holding in foster care
 Supportive care while in foster

Returned for neuter/ microchip / exam Adopted from foster

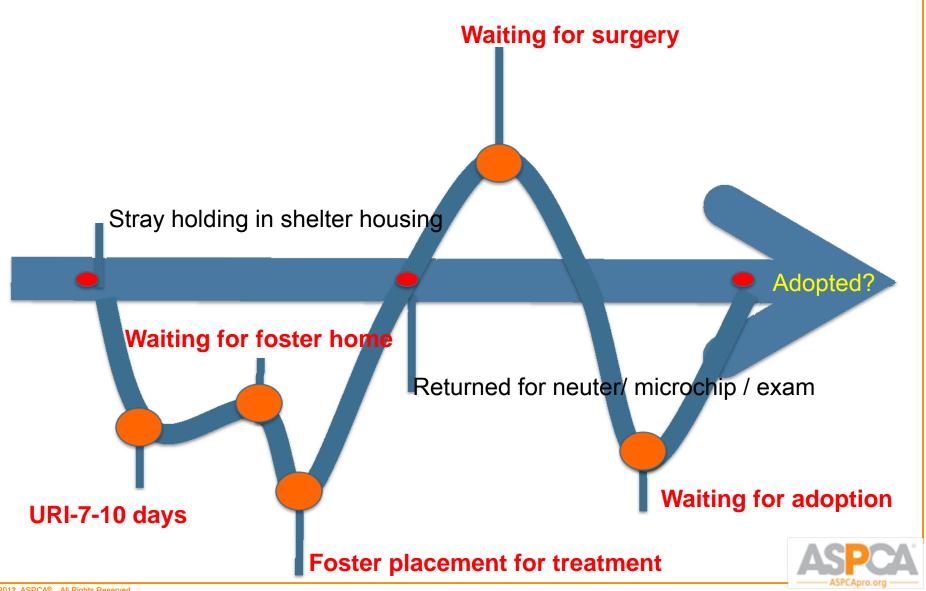


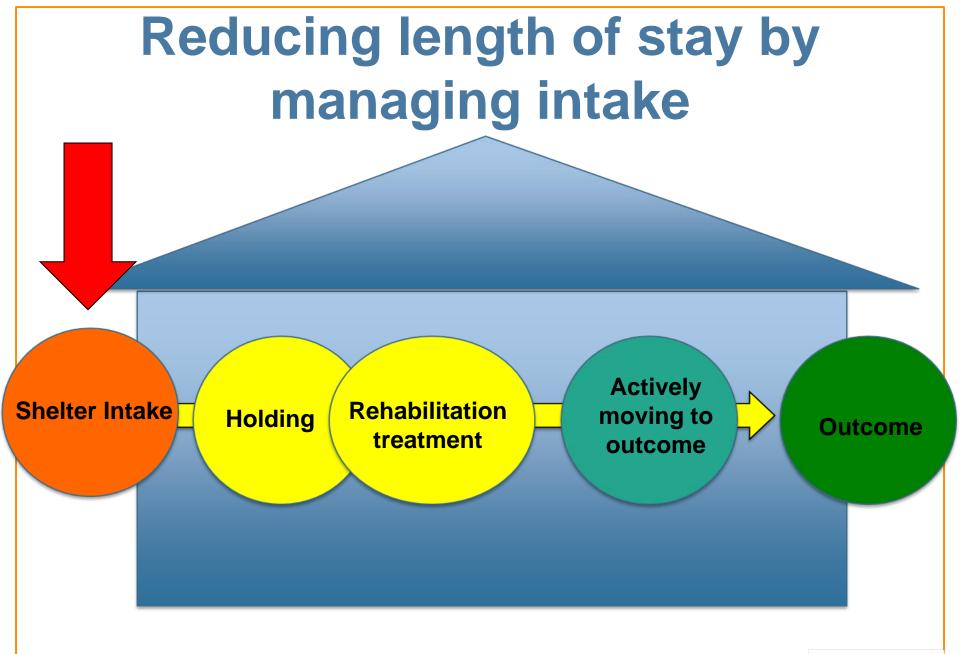
Planned pathway





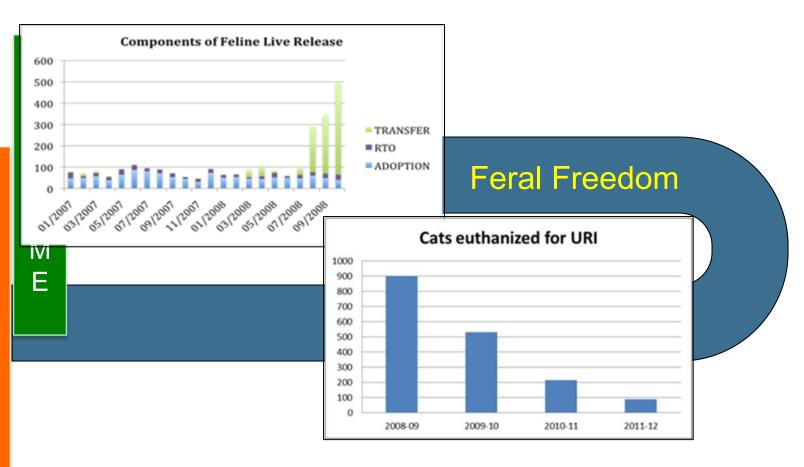
Alternate long and winding pathway







Should they stay where they are?



Feral Freedom Guide available at

http://bestfriends.org/uploadedFiles/Content/Resources/Resources_for_Rescuers%281%29/Community_Cats/FeralFreedomGuide.pdf

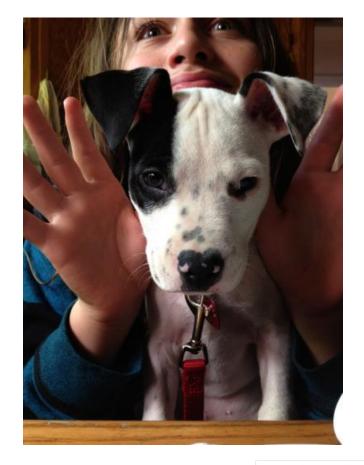


Pre-intake options

Shelter Intake
Pre-intake

Allow some "length of stay" to take place outside the shelter

- Scheduled intake
- Pre-intake care
 - Foster return scheduling
 - Ready, Set, Go
 - Finder/foster





Scheduled intake

Allows thoughtful planning on both sides Opportunity for alternatives to be found

- Designate and equip staff to schedule appointments
- 5-7 day wait time may actually help
- Provide medical, behavioral, rehoming resources
- Decide on plan for those who can't/won't wait

Surrender your pet

ANIMAL ADMISSIONS CENTER (763) 412-4969
Animals accepted only by appointment, call to schedule

Let's work together to ensure the best possible solution for you and your pet. Click on the following links for additional information.

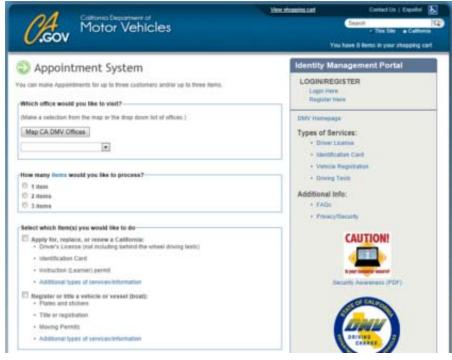
- ALTERNATIVES TO SURRENDERING YOUR PET
 We may be able to help you keep your pet at home or there may be alternative rehoming options available to you.
- SURRENDERING YOUR PET TO ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY
 Begin the process of surrendering your pet to AHS if alternative resources don't address the circumstances you are experiencing with your pet.
- SURRENDER FORMS FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT AND FEES
 Complete and print out the required corresponding surrender form and bring it and a copy of your pet's veterinary records with you to your appointment.

Animal Humane Society is an open-admission facility that serves all people and animals.



Which would you choose?







One shelter's experience

Incoming

Down 25%

Placement Rate

- Up 20%
- Now at 81%

Euthanasia Rate

- Down 39%
- Now at 20%

Length of Stay

- Cats 10.5 days
- Dogs 12.8 days

Call Center

 Of those who do not make an appointment 40% have either rehomed on their own OR utilized a resource and decided to keep animal.

Slight increase in feline impounds for local animal control; now transferring cats in weekly

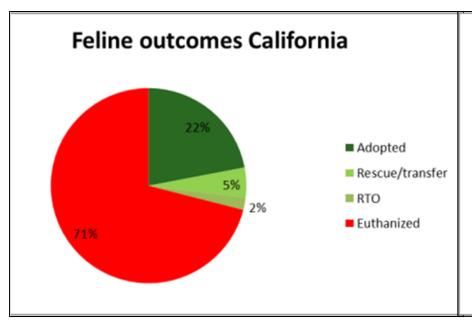
Small cat cages converted 3 into 1

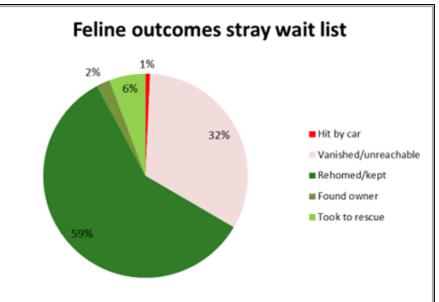




Not the only game in town







www.yourspca.org



Ready set go!

- Combine with scheduled intake or "finder/foster"
- Vaccinate, +/- surgery, initial behavior evaluation, treatment if needed
- Hold for two weeks or until ready to go (age, health)
- Provide support materials for finder/foster parents
- Foster buddy?
- Web based resources?
- · Post strays as found
- Straight up to adoption upon return (or from foster)



abcdpyt.blogspot.com



The power of "The Ask"

We've managed to find homes for about 500 more animals a year by doing this...I think that in general the success has come down to the power of asking. We never asked anyone before. When we started, overwhelmingly people said yes, especially for cats and kittens that would have otherwise been an automatic euthanasia due to the fact that they were already ill when our foster program was already full and the shelter had no additional space.

Of course we get people who say no still, but even the fact that we're sharing accountability with the general public has raised staff morale in addition to saving more lives.





Evaluation for intake/adoption scoring system

Assign points to:

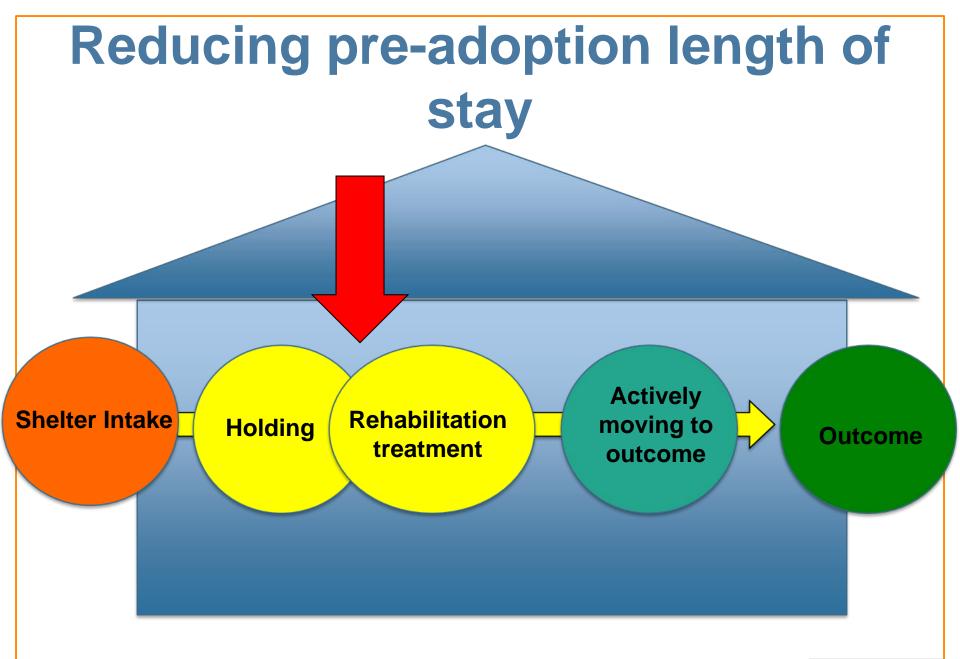
- Behavior
- Age
- Health
- Special characteristics
 Decide on fast track/slow track/super slow track
 Plan housing accordingly

Feline evaluation for adoption tool	Points
Behavior (choose 1)	
Exceptionally friendly/no known cat issues	8
Social/no known cat issues	4
Shy/neutral/doesn't like other cats	1
Age (choose 1)	
Kitten (6 weeks -4 months)	8
Adolescent (4 - 6 months)	6
Young adult (6-12 months or so)	5
Adult (1-4 years)	4
Middle aged (5-8 years)	2
Senior (9 plus years)	C
Health (choose 1)	
Healthy	4
Minor, treatable health issue	2
Moderate, treatable health issue	C
Special characteristics (choose all that apply)	
Non-black but non-exceptional color	1
Special color/pattern	2
Purebred(ish)	2
Other physical cuteness (e.g. extra toes)	2
Already spayed/neutered	2
Well told sob story	2
Total score for individual cat	

Try this at home!

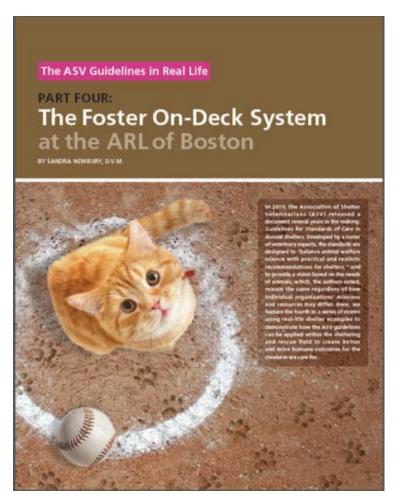
http://www.sheltermedicine.com/shelter-health-portal/information-sheets/developing-intake-and-adoption-decision-making-criteria







Batter up!



Foster On Deck program proactively seeks foster parents. We know we'll need you. You'll know when by watching your your place on the roster. Just let us know if you're going to be away or need a rest break and we'll move you down. Otherwise, when your turn is up get ready for your call to step up to the plate.

http://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/animal-sheltering/back-issues/nov_dec_2011_pp22-43.pdf



Evaluating stray hold

Legal obligations

What's best for most animals

- Proportion reclaimed?
- Other live release outcomes available?

Hold to live release:

- Ideally 0 for cats, ~ 3 days for dogs with no ID
- Longer hold with ID, or to euthanasia
- Couple with promotion/legislation for ID

Days in kennel	# RTO	Percent
0	165	37%
1	161	74%
2	38	82%
3	22	87%
4	10	90%
5	9	92%
6	13	95%
7	9	97%
8	1	97%
9	1	97%
10	3	98%
11	4	99%
12	1	99%
13	0	99%
14	1	99%



Minimize optional intake quarantine

Keep track of date of disease onset for all animals

Evaluate quarantine benefit routinely If needed: *just* long enough to catch majority of problems

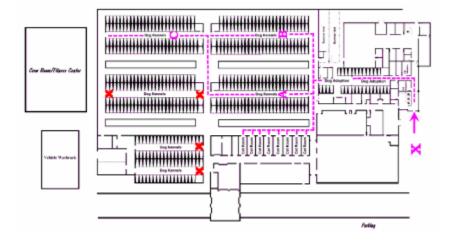
- May vary by source
- Consider titers to identify healthy animals at low risk for parvo/distemper/panleukopenia
- Watch out for shelter-acquired disease spike at 10-14 days
- 3-5 days max for vaccine protection

haracteris 6c	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Oeneral appearance attitude			\vdash				
Appetite							
Stool		+	\vdash	+	\vdash	\vdash	\vdash
Utine		+	1	\vdash	+	\vdash	
Respiratory		+					
Skin		+	1	_	+	_	
Behavior		+				_	
Other							
Initials of person monitoring		\vdash	1	_	_	\vdash	
Comments (please o	ate and in	itial):	_	-	_	1	-
11							
Georgi N = bright, she Appetite N = socoul,	rt, responsi	e, Quequet	D × depend	ell v // dog man	e consecuely:	(mane)	_
Short: N = noonal, Once other	one present,	Smooth true fo	oned, Deda	otes, Be tio	ody, Megasi		connects for
Urine: N = normal 0=ac Respiratory: N = acena docharje, C**sre com llain: N = acenal, I=int	L Circoughi mean by, Arthair	ing, Dressad Ins. (allopecia	discharge (ter), C*rose con	unibe is com naests for ot	mests – color. Serobservatio		, parades)



Open Selection: waiting for adoption while waiting for reclaim

- Offer visibility to most preadoption animals
- Let the public (citizens and rescue groups) help select who is "adoptable"
- Identify priority animals for needed pre-adoption processing if you can't get to them all
- Designate restricted area for animals considered dangerous, legal holds, treatment



Hillsborough County Animal Services, Tampa, Florida



Open selection

- Decide priority/process for multiple would-be adopters/rescuers
- E.g. citizens, staff, pro-active transfer partners, reactive transfer partners?
- First come/first serve, lottery?
- Document contacts and flag records clearly





Surprising choices?









Reducing length of stay to adoption **Actively Shelter Intake** Rehabilitation moving to **Holding Outcome** treatment outcome



Fast track

- Transition to ADC or not
- "Shelter within a shelter" for highly adoptable juveniles and adults
- Skip to the head of the line
- Intake 1-2 weeks, then move to general population
- Prioritize "low disease" housing for fast trackers, high quality enriched housing for slow trackers



Try this at home! ASPCApro.org/stay or http://www.sheltermedicine.com/node/37



Fast track

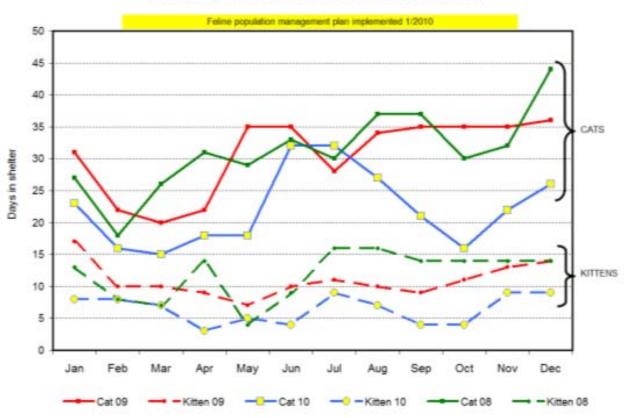
We used to pick pretty much by date of intake, but now any fast track cats get priority in their exams. We designate whether a cat is fast or slow track on the move up board, and any fast track cats should always be moved up prior to slow track cats. Slow track cats aren't actually waiting any longer than they were before for their exams as the whole process of prioritizing fast track cats expedites things.





Fast track

Median Length of Stay for Adopted Cats & Kittens [Boston]





Cat care day total in 2009: 43,004 Cat care day total in 2010: 32,459 Admitted 179 more cats, adopted 182 more



Adoption readiness

List procedures that need to be done before an animal is made available for adoption

- Does it need to be done?
- Can it be done during hold?
- Can in be done while available for adoption or after adoption?

Is there **sufficient staff** to do it 7 days a week?

- Train more staff/volunteers
- Strategic timing for intake/available staff (often Thurs/Friday)
- Just before an event





Turning up the flow

Promote adoption early, often and by a variety of means

Population special efforts

- Historic patterns
- Special occasions
- Don't wait for crowding Individual special efforts
- Characteristics rather than time
- Consider <u>scoring system</u>
 Rescue
- Don't wait until animals make the euthanasia list!

How we did it...Marketing

Marketing

- YouTube Videos
- Staff Picks!
- Petango Memos
- "Coming Soon" webpage
- Social Media
- iPhone app
- Streamline adoption paperwork
- Variable Pricing
 - Lower prices
 - Ending in '9'

Gandalf's Staff Pick and Petango Memo:

"Greyhame, Mithrandir, Stermorow... he may have many names, but Gandal! is the one he knows! Brent chose Gandal! as his staff pick because although he is very playful, he possesses a wisdom and power beyond his age. And although he may know sit, he is not some conjurer of cheap tricke! YOU SHALL NOT





http://www.wihumane.org/



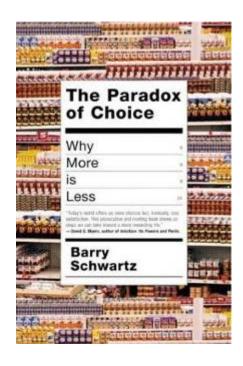


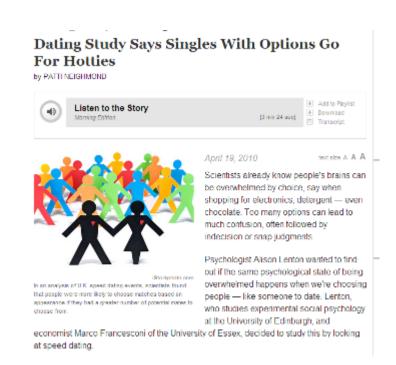
Adoption capacity and length of stay





More is not always better





http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126050697



Adoption driven capacity

Monthly daily average adoptions x ~ 7-14

Age, breed or condition specific

Minimum to provide some variety



We know this in other contexts.



Easier said than done?

We have heard repeatedly heard about the difference it can make, but it is initially hard to decrease your overall intake and numbers housed in adoptions.

We have kitty condos and are starting to move toward having them in a duplex instead of a single, but have been afraid to completely make the change.



H

ASPCA Research: Less is More on the Adoption Floor

Less is MORE

Shelters are so often bursting with cats in particular that it is possible that people who come through the shelter doors with every intention of adopting might find the sheer number of available cats overwhelming and they go home empty-handed.

The ASPCA's Less Is More research tests the hypothesis that decreasing the number of cats available on the adoption floor might increase the likelihood that a potential adopter makes a choice and goes home with a cat.

What's Happening

We tested this hypothesis at the <u>Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region</u> (HSPPR), a large open admission facility in Colorado. We began by calculating the <u>agency's transition rate</u> (the number of cats adopted v. the number of people who came in the door saying they were coming to look at cats).

For two weeks in October 2010, HSPPR staff conducted brief greeter surveys asking visitors what brought them to the shelter.

- HSPPR kept track of the responses and compared them to the daily adoption logs to find out how many visitors actually adopted cats.
- By dividing the adoptions by the number of people who came in the door to look at cats, HSPPR established its transition rate for cats.

In early December 2010, the staff covered a portion of the cat cages on the adoption floor with attractive wraps to reduce the visible cats by 40% without reducing the number of cats being housed in the shelter. The staff

then calculated the transition rate for another two week period.



HSPPR staff cover adoption floor as p More research.

Research Results

We expected to see a small increase in transition rate, but were amazed when we learned that the transition rate had more than doubled.

- Although fewer people came in to the shelter in December (traditionally a slower month for many organizations), total cat adoptions increased.
- More than twice the number of people who came in the door to look at cats actually walked out the door with new pets.

http://www.aspcapro.org/aspca-research-less-is-more-on-the-adopt.php



Afterglow...

The most exciting thing for me is our change in the cat adoption area...We have the kitty condos that you can open up and we now give all adult cats an up and down duplex. The cats can all be at eye level now, have a nice separation from their food/water and litter, and have more room.

We had a volunteer make a bunch of cage covers like the Shor-line quiet time covers that we place on the bottom cage of the duplex for cats that are stressed to go down and hide behind. With the duplexes the kennel staff can freshen one half and then the other with minimal stress to the cats. ..

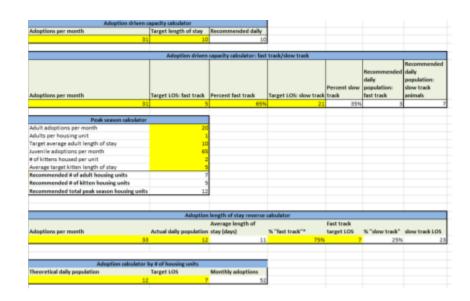
All of the changes in the cat adoption area have led to an increase in our adult cat adoption, decrease in the incidence of cat scratches and bites and a significant reduction in our URI rate. For the first time since I have been here (and the first time anyone can remember) we had no cats in our cat isolation and this lasted for a few weeks. Since kitten season started we have gotten a slight increase in URI but cat isolation is staying less than half full which is drastically different than last year. ...I just thought you might appreciate a positive update now and then.





Calculating Adoption Driven Capacity (ADC)

- ADC = Average daily adoptions x 7-10
- 232 adoptions in 5.5 months = 42 adoptions/month, 1.4 adoptions per day
- $1.4 \times 7 = 10$
- $1.4 \times 10 = 14$
- Adoption Driven
 Capacity = 10-14



Try this at home!

http://www.sheltermedicine.com/documents/adoption driven capacity calculator



Getting on track

Wait for slow season

One big push

Short term intake deferral

Fast track on top of background adoptions

Reconfigure housing gradually to support ADC





Cost?





What if adoption capacity numbers are below ADC?

Getting to ADC may increase adoptions!

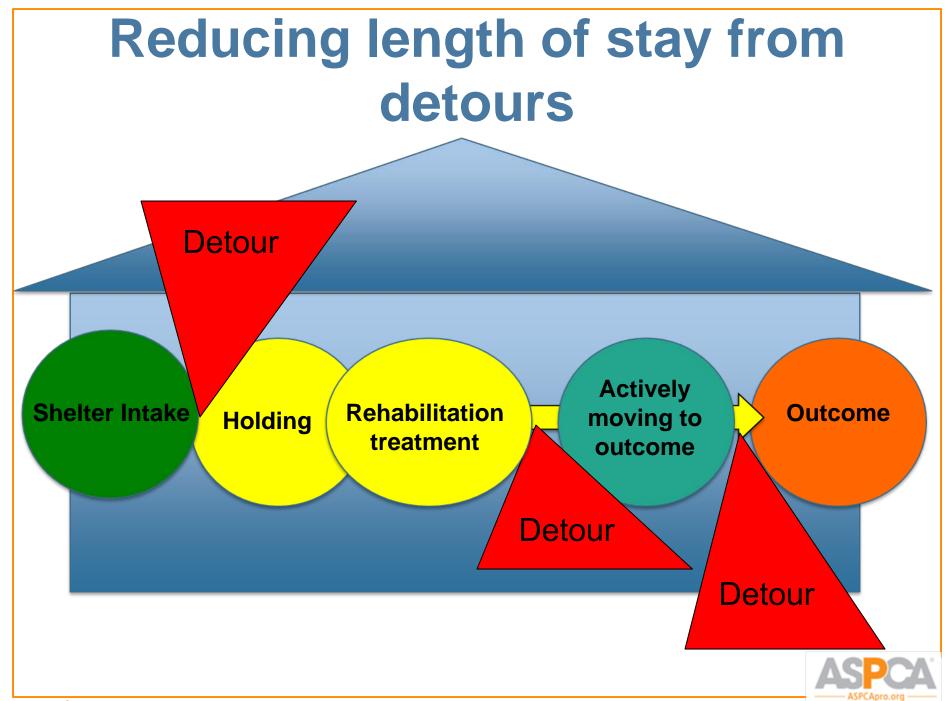
Is adoption "well stocked" and length of stay short?

Are adopters walking out empty handed for lack of selection?

Capacity versus flow issue

- Too few housing units?
- Too few animals moving into available units?
- Problem solved?





What are detours?

Not progressing towards appropriate outcome

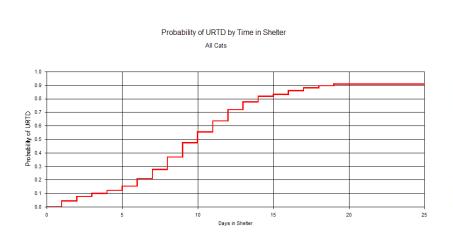
- Treatment for shelter acquired disease
- Waiting for something to happen

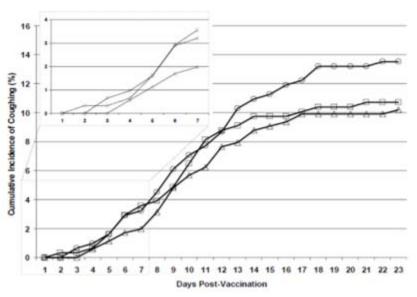
Tends to feed upon itself





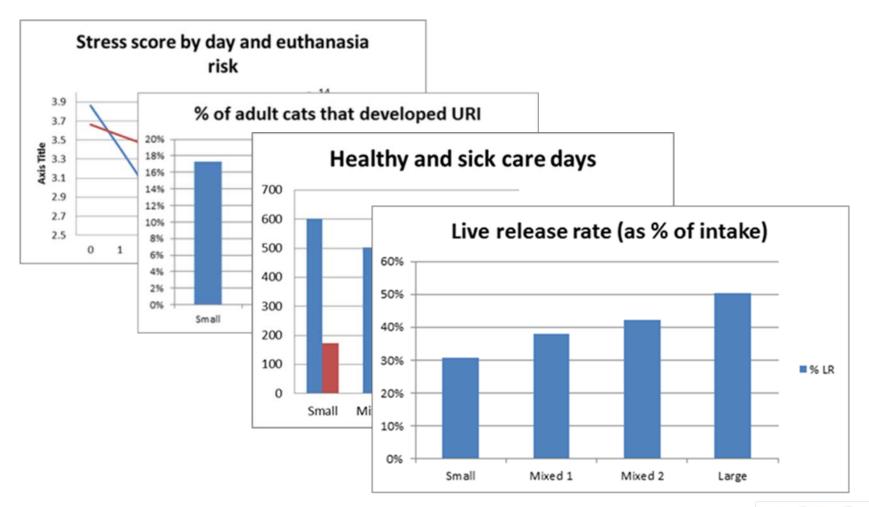
Length of stay and illness





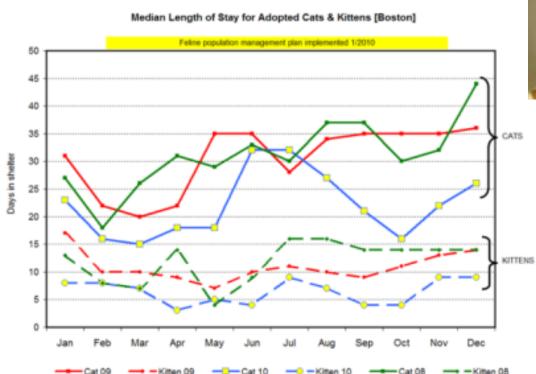


Quality of care, stress, illness, length of stay and live release





Quality of care and length of stay







In February 2011, we took a huge step and cut holes in between cat holding cages, and inserted PVC portholes, effectively doubling the space available to each cat and cutting the number of cages we had in half. Actually less than half - because each loft had an odd number of cages, there is a set of triple cages in each loft.

We've now got 60 separate cat holding cages. These portholes were designed to be permanent openings, we did not make any "doors" to close because then it's too tempting to revert to less space and more cats.

We had many staff and volunteers who were very leery of the change, fearing that more cats would be euthanized because we lacked space.



Yay

We saw some effects right away. The lofts were immediately quieter, cats seeming more relaxed. There were very few cats "fake sleeping". The longer term effects are just starting to show up.

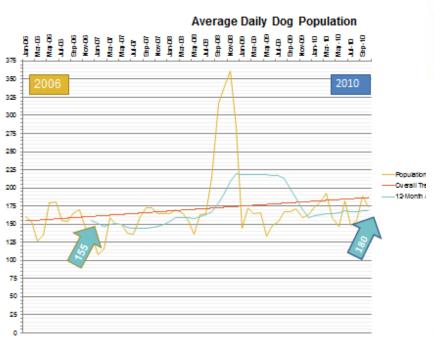
Cat isolation is empty today, because our URI rates have plummeted. Cats aren't breaking with URI right before or after adoption.

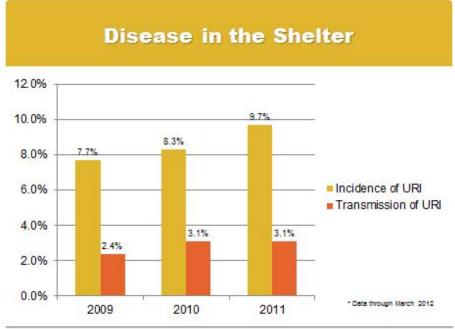
And now that the statistics for July are in, we found that our live release rate for felines in July 2011 was 70%. In 2010 it was 54%. We euthanized 140 fewer felines in July 2011 compared to July 2010.





Not just a cat thing



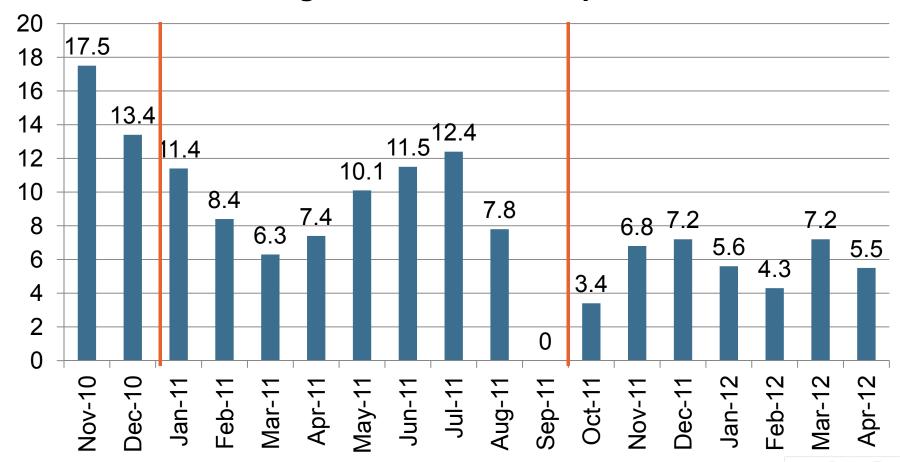


Slides from Wisconsin Humane Society



Intervention

Dog LOS: Intake to Adoption

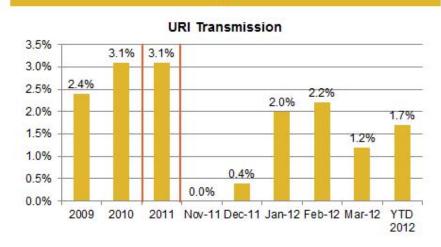


Meaningful outcomes

Fewer dogs . . .

Average dog "count" per day (Milwaukee Campus) 180 171 157 160 142 140 115 114118 120 100 70 76 76 70 80 60 40 Double-sided Runs 20 Apr-11

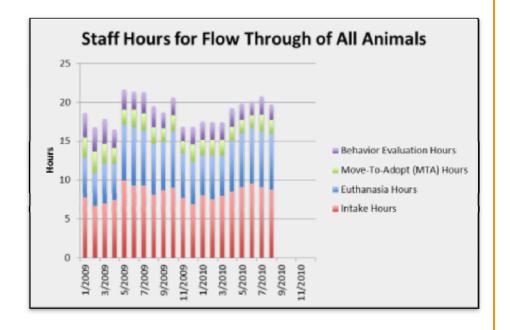
... means less disease transmission ...





Waiting for something to happen

- Owner contact
- Behavior, medical eval
- Rescue contact
- Spay/neuter surgery
- Move to adoption
- Euthanasia





Population rounds

- Meet each animal's needs while decreasing length of stay detours at every stage
- Include personnel with medical, behavioral, management authority
- If you can't swing daily, biweekly or weekly is a good beginning
- Assign action items with dates and accountability
- Distinguish how many are "due" versus "past due" it gets easier with time!

Try this at home: http://www.sheltermedicine.com/documents/daily-population-wellness-rounds

Population rounds: for each animal

- ✓ Consider medical and behavioral health, stage of movement towards outcome
- ✓ Pathway?
- ✓ Evaluate paperwork, computer record as well as animal
- ✓ Dates correct?
- ✓ ID noted?
- ✓ Description accurate?
- ✓ Owner, interested party, rescue contact?
- ✓ Required services due or overdue?
- ✓ Right location?
- ✓ Right status?
- ✓ Discouraging or missing signage?
- ✓ Encouraging picture and description on paper and web?
- ✓ Medical, behavioral or comfort needs?
- ✓ Is it time to take extra steps?





Removing barriers

- Restrictive adoption policies
- Limited hours for adoption
- Poor customer service
- High fees (that interfere with placement)





Flow through caption contest

Hey Mister, Don't hold back the flow!

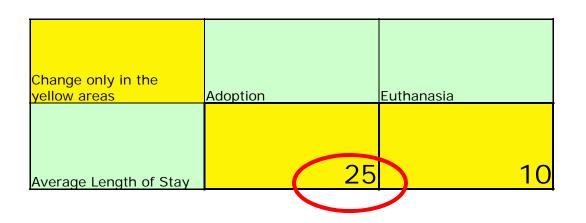


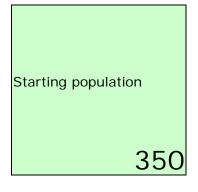


Is it all about live release?



Effect of Changes in Avg. Length of Stay

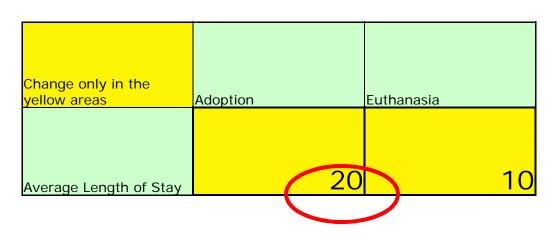


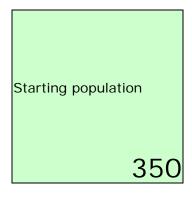


		T		
	Aveage daily intake	LOS	Daily Population	Daily Population Change
Adoption(LR)	10	25	250	
Euthanasia	10	10	100	
Total Intake	20		350	0%
Live Release	50%			



Effect of Changing Avg. Length of Stay

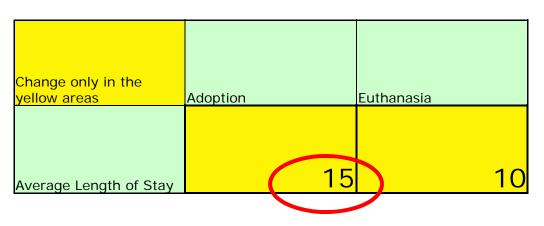


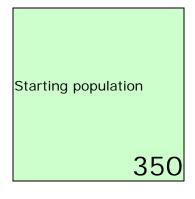


	Aveage daily intake	LOS	Daily Population	Daily Population Change
Adoption(LR)	10	20	200	
Euthanasia	10	10	100	
Total Intake	20		300	-14%
Live Release	50%			



Effect of Changes in Avg. Length of Stay

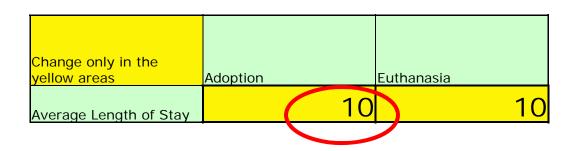




	Aveage daily intake	LOS	Daily Population	Daily Population Change
Adoption(LR)	10	15	150	
Euthanasia	10	10	100	
Total Intake	20		250	-29%
Live Release	50%			



Effect of Changes in Avg. Length of Stay



Starting population

	Aveage daily intake	LOS	Daily Population	Daily Population Change
Adoption(LR)	10	10	100	
Euthanasia	10	10	100	
Total Intake	20		200	-43%
Livo Pologgo	50%			

Use the calculator yourself at www.ASPCApro.org/STAY



Putting it all together

- ✓ Set your bar for quality of care
- ✓ Determine your target length of stay
- ✓ Use multiple strategies to decrease length of stay
- ✓ Monitor and celebrate success
- ✓ Create an positive cycle of:
 - ✓ decreased length of stay
 - √ better care
 - ✓ lower costs
 - ✓ more resources to create positive outcomes
 - ✓ AND community programs which reduce intake

....which means lower costs, etc. etc. etc. until we all get to retire and go play with puppies



Thanks for playing!



We hope you win!

...and thanks to the ASPCA for the partnership with UC Davis that makes my position possible...and for the cool cartoon I've always wanted!



Upcoming ASPCApro Webinars

aspcapro.org/webinars

- Stress Reduction and Enrichment for Shelter Cats
 Tuesday, June 18, 3-4:30pm ET
- Spay/Neuter: What You Need to Succeed Tuesday, July 16, 3-4pm ET
- The Lifesaving Magic of Community Partnerships
 Wednesday, July 17, 3-4pm ET
- Building Collaborations between Private Practice
 Vets & Animal Welfare Organizations
 Thursday, July 25, 3-4pm ET

