

Name: Kelsey Cullen

ABA Client Re-Frames Assignment



Reply to these client questions and statements with client-friendly language to help the client move from a character trait model or myths about behavior to thinking in terms of OC and CC (without jargon), and arm them with accurate information about behavior.

	Client Statement	Re-Frame
1	"He knows exactly what I want but is willful and has a mind of his own, so he does it (comes when called) when he wants to, or only if I bribe him!"	"That must be frustrating for you! Luckily, coming when you bribe him is a great accomplishment for you, as he knows you have something he wants. Dogs are like most people; they don't work for free. Most people wouldn't go to work if they didn't get paid. Luckily, we learn that our pay checks are coming without our boss flaunting money in front of us every day. We can teach your dog that flaunting food at him is NOT a predictor of getting that food anymore, and that the only time he gets 'paid' is when he comes after you call, even though he can't see his reward yet."
2	"Someone on social media said if I let him on the furniture he'll think he's the boss. And then I googled it and apparently I should not let him ever be higher than me! Is that true?"	"I once made the mistake of googling a headache, only to learn that I was probably pregnant with a brain tumor and headed to a early painful death... I am somehow still alive, with no baby, and in apparently good health...turns out is was just an ordinary headache – I am more careful now with what I read on the internet. If your dog likes to lie on furniture, it is probably because it is comfortable. Remember that you are the one who feeds him, walks him, gives him access to outside for potty breaks, fills his water dish, and decides when anything fun may happen for him – I think your dog knows you are in charge. However, If you are having a behavioural concern with your dog such as growling at you or a family member while on furniture, please let me know and I would be more than happy to help with that."

3	"When can I stop using food?" (student in obedience class)	"Only when we are positive that the dog knows the command and responds to it every single time, we can start feeding every other time. We can never stop using food completely, or else the dog will eventually quit. Think of it like a slot machine at a casino. Though he may not get paid every time, he must get paid SOME of the time in order to keep him interested in playing the game."
4	"I tried yelping when he bites and he didn't care. So I say 'NO!' and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I read somewhere you should clamp their mouth shut as you say it so it's clearer." (puppy biting)	"Clamping a puppy's mouth shut may actually be FUN to some puppies who crave any sort of attention. For others, it can be traumatizing to be handled in such a way. In either case, you not going to achieve your desired outcome. Unfortunately It can be tough for puppies to understand what we want from them. Dogs learn from consequences of their behaviour. When puppies bite us, usually they are attempting to seek our attention. We can actually teach them that the opposite is true: biting humans LOSES our attention. We do this by letting out a soft yelp or an "ouch!" when they bite, followed immediately by getting up and physically leaving him alone for a brief period of time. He will learn over time that his biting is what causes his human to leave, and he can prevent this from happening by not biting."
5	"I know you said he doesn't associate the scolding with his accident if I don't catch him in the act. But he only acts guilty when I come home and there's an accident, and he's acting guilty before I've even seen the accident."	"If he has been punished previously when you have come home, the anticipation of the punishment happening again can mimic the 'guilty look' he is giving you when you come home. You must continue to refrain from punishing him in these situations, and we will adjust his routine and/or confinement area to help prevent these accidents from occurring while you're out and set him up for success."
6	"I bought the bed like you suggested but he still insists on getting on my bed. I think he likes that it smells like me but I really don't want dog hair in my bed."	"Make sure that the bed is nice and comfortable, and put it in a location where he is most likely to want to sleep. Since he has built up a history of going on your bed, we need to now teach him that this is no longer his sleeping spot. If there are certain times that your dog has a routine of getting on your bed (like when you are getting ready for bed), try to guide him onto his new bed before he has a chance to jump on your bed – then reward him heavily. Use this heavy reward whenever you notice him laying on his own bed throughout the day, and if he does jump on your bed, redirect him back down onto his bed, and again, reward him heavily. Over time he will develop a fondness of his bed and will actually prefer it – as it is not only comfortable but it also gets him yummy snacks."

7	“He snapped at me when I went near him while he was eating. I can’t have him not respect me like that.”	“Although it is hard for us humans to not take aggression personally, especially coming from our own family dogs, food guarding is a completely normal behavior which dogs needed as a survival skill in the wild. Imagine if a wild dog openly shared his meal with others; that dog would end up dying of starvation. The good news is that if you are committed to work on this, we can work to reverse his fear of you stealing his food! We will work on a plan to teach your dog that not only are you not going to steal his food, but that GOOD things actually happen when you approach him while eating.”
8	“Dogs are not people. They don’t care about reason. They care about where they stand in the hierarchy, and they need strong leadership and clear discipline. Otherwise they’re unbalanced.”	“I have to apologize to you on behalf of my industry. As you may know, dog training is unregulated, making accurate information hard to distinguish from non-sense. The hierarchy theory is based on old-school training methods, which have been recently re-popularized on television series, and focuses on an out-of-date idea of how wolf packs are organized. If you would like more information on this, I would be happy to supply you with The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behaviour’s position statement on Dominance. As well, if you have a behavior problem you need help with, I would gladly offer you help using the most current scientific training techniques that are both humane and effective.”
9	“He resents it when we leave him alone. He was digging in the yard and a website said don’t leave him in the yard. So we brought him in and he chewed my computer, my shoes and stole food off the counter.”	“Wow, your dog has a lot of energy to burn, that must have been a nightmare to come home to! His behavior, though extremely frustrating for you, is actually perfectly normal. Dogs don’t understand that a bone is for chewing and shoes are not, unless we teach them. Same as with food on the counter; dogs don’t instinctively know that our food is not for them. Since monitoring this behavior while you are out would be difficult, the best option at this point is to crate or confine him in a completely dog-proofed area. You can provide dog toys for him in there, so when he feels that need, he will have something ‘legal’ to chew on.”
10	“He was doing it (sit) at home but he forgets it if he gets distracted. When will he have it? Can dogs have ADD?”	“Dogs have difficulty generalizing. This means that even if he does it perfectly in your living room, if he hasn’t practiced outside at the park, he may not know how to do it there. We tend to look for that moment when our dog “gets it”, though it is actually more like learning a dance routine – there is not that moment where he suddenly gets it – but the more you practice, the stronger his behavior will get. Sitting around distractions takes a lot of practice, but I can reassure you there is nothing wrong with your dog, this is just a normal part of the learning process.”

11	"He was trembling at the vet and we pet him and told him it would be okay but the lady next to us said never pet them otherwise you are reinforcing the fear. Makes sense!"	"Let's think about this. Imagine being scared of a thunderstorm and sitting in bed all alone listening to it, then your spouse brings you a cup of cocoa, puts on your favourite movie, and cuddles with you in bed until it is over. Do you really think that you could end up more fearful of thunderstorms after this? Though it may or may not help ease your fears in the future, it seems hard to believe that your fear could actually get any worse by reassurance from a loved one."
12	"Our new puppy is so stubborn on walks! He plops down and just looks around or stops to sniff leaves and won't keep going. Will he always do this?"	"A leashed walk is a brand new experience for your puppy. Not only is he getting used to being on a leash, he is also experiencing a whole bunch of brand new sights and smells, which may be overwhelming for a young pup. Smelling is a great way for dogs to learn about their environment, it is very enriching for them. Give him time to take it all in, and try not to be impatient with him. If you are eager to move forward, bring some treats along with you to help lure him along when he sits down. But be careful not to push him too quickly. Most puppies will learn on their own that walking is fun, as they get to explore more areas the farther they walk."

Client Reframes

Student:

Date:

0 10 20 30 40 50 *Content is accurate and responsive to client concern(s)*

0 10 20 30 *Language is empathetic and appropriate for novice clients*

0 10 20 *Examples, analogies, metaphors used effectively ("sticky")*

PASSED

REVISE/RESUBMIT (1)

FAILED (2)