

Consumer psychology:

SIX themes of communication in veterinary practice

Insights to help you structure, tailor and 'pitch' your daily communication with dog owners.



THEME 1

How to order information

Think about how "order" affects your own dialogue with owners to enhance the overall effectiveness of your recommendations.

- When people hear **two** arguments in quick succession, they are most likely to remember the **first**
- When recalling information from a long speech, people remember what they heard last
- People are unlikely to remember information they hear after an emotionally salient point



How to negotiate if opinions differ

- **Labelling:** By naming the owner's emotions, you are validating and empathising with their feelings
- **Tactical empathy:** By showing you know how the owner feels, you build trust and increase influence
- **Calibrated questions:** By giving the owner a chance to express their feelings, you are involving them in the decision-making process

"I can see you're apprehensive"

"How does that sound to you?"

THEME 2



THEME 3



Loss frame example

How to frame information

- Repeat and reinforce **loss frames** such as emphasising the cost of **not** following advice
- Create a **sense of urgency** to encourage the owner to make a decision

"If we do not start treatment soon, we'll lose this opportunity"





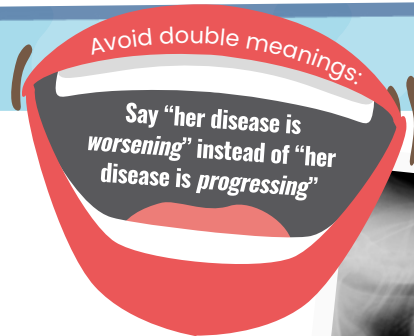
How to avoid reactance

When someone thinks you are trying to control them, they may rebel against your instruction even if they think you're right.

There are **two** things you can do to help avoid reactance:

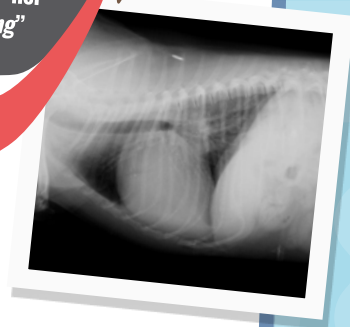
- Use a softer tone and language to **reduce** the owner's perception that they're **being controlled**
- Make the owner feel they are involved in the decision-making process by asking questions

THEME
4



Avoid double meanings:

Say "her disease is **worsening**" instead of "her disease is **progressing**"



THEME
5

What tone of voice to use

- Use relatable and accessible language
- Keep recommendations and responses soft
- Avoid using too much medical jargon
- Be clear and precise whilst avoiding terms with double meanings for example, "**progressing**" and "**big heart**" may be misinterpreted as positive news. Instead use "**worsening**" and "**enlarged heart**" to avoid ambiguity
- Use test results and images to help communicate a problem



How to use social norms

Create social norm appeal to influence behaviour by telling owners how other owners are acting.

For example:

"In this situation, most people choose to..."

"This is our most popular option..."

THEME
6



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