



Reaching Inward:

Cultivating a progressive organization culture

The Pets for Life philosophy.

Driven by social justice, the PFL philosophy recognizes that a deep connection with pets transcends socio-economic boundaries, and no one should be denied the opportunity to experience the benefits and joy that come from the human-animal bond.

The Pets for Life methodology.

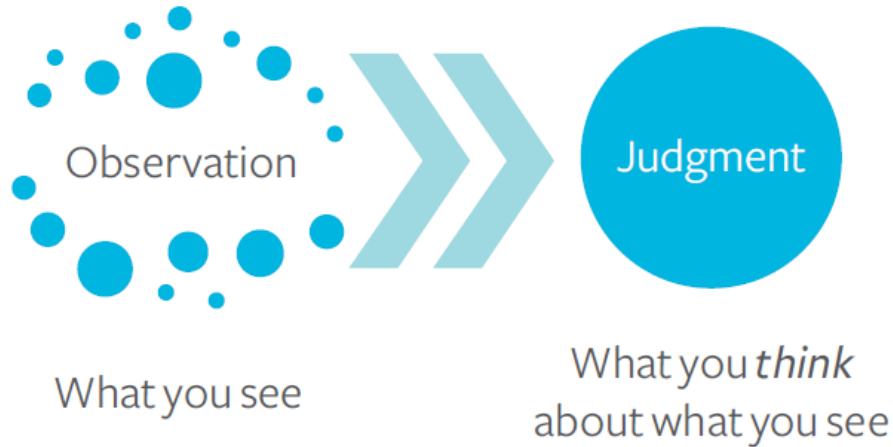
- Direct Care – delivering pet services and information
- Mentorship and Training – supporting local organizations outreach programs
- Policy and Enforcement Reform – more support focused and less punitive

Objectivity and Subjectivity.

- Objectivity - focusing on facts, refraining from assumptions
- Subjectivity - looking at things from your own point of view, potentially letting personal bias skew or distort the facts



Objectivity and Subjectivity.





Uncover and Acknowledge Bias.

- Bias: a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment
- Harvard's Project Implicit.net



Minimize Bias.

- Ask open ended questions
- Begin a genuine dialogue



Overcome Bias.

- Identify what bias or biases you are most prone to
- Don't just look at one fact, look at all of the facts
- Ask others what they think before telling them what you think
- Seek diverse perspectives and opinions



Challenge Yourself.

- Are my biases keeping me from being truly objective?
- How are my biases affecting overall organization culture?



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**



Pets for Life

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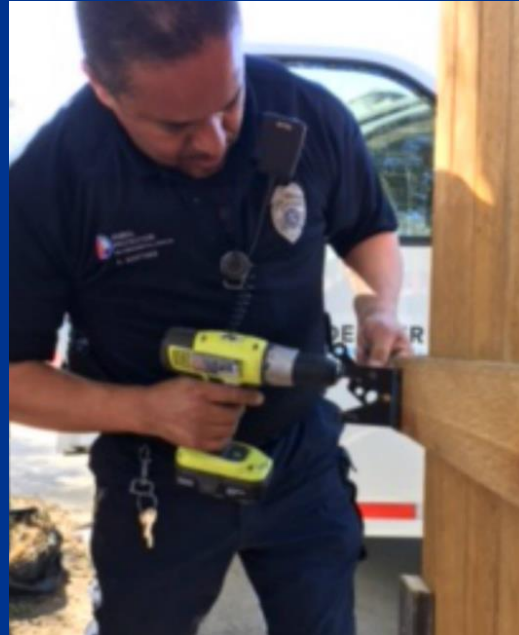
Extend compassion and non-judgmental approach internally first

- **Training on non-judgmental caregiver practices already prioritized municipality-wide: mental health first aid, self-care, wellness, and trauma informed practices**
 - Better mindset = better ability to connect with clients (able to focus outside self)
 - Using these trainings to institutionalize non-judgment language and approach and weaving it into our culture of customer service



First step: admitting there's a *problem*

- **Highlight importance of judgement-free customer service — identify gaps and struggles**
 - **Acknowledge human aspect of “brain shortcuts”**
 - **Challenge staff about assumptions & feelings based on “stories”**
 - **Breakdown the “us” vs. “them” hero mentality**
 - **Highlight the importance of assuming positive intent (internally and externally)**



Build bridges & trust — empower your staff

- Listen, listen, listen: Empower staff to voice scenarios & struggle — Staff’s voice is unique to their point of view (experience, role, etc.)
 - Continuously tie impact of eliminating judgment to org’s vision and staffs’ roles
- Engagement creates buy-in & allies
- Be open to changing policies
- Continuous process —change is never really “done”



Communicate: early, often & with empathy

- Use every outlet — hallway chats, team meetings, etc.
- Prioritize discussion of philosophy with both current & new staff (highlight in onboarding, PFL shadowing)
- Don't shy away from speaking to the elephant in the room (i.e., what really worries staff if unknown or not addressed)
 - *Examples:* “I need to do this” mindsets; tradeoffs in citations vs. resources; PFL approach related to BSL; costs of change - “is this our job?”



Collaborate, celebrate & share

- Celebrate small wins and everyone's roles
- Sharing struggles is equally valuable (internally & externally with others orgs serving clients — collaborative training and support)
- Building trust with gov't by connecting with citizens through pets — increasing their voices and access to other service partners
- Promoting a community-based approach
 - Won Mayor's 5281 Award in Service to Customers
 - Celebrated city-wide & gained Council member support — led to funding we didn't ask for





denver animal shelter



**ANIMAL
PROTECTION**

DENVER PUBLIC HEALTH
& ENVIRONMENT

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Pets for Life



Tangible Steps to Positive Change

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1. Review Policies and Procedures
 2. Challenge Your Team
 3. Pay attention to your words, they matter
 4. Be kind





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