



## **The DogNostics Dog Behavior Diploma Program**

Upon successful completion of the Dog Behavior Diploma Modules you will be entitled to use the DN-DBC by your name.

When DogNostics first launched its behavior program in 2014 we did not then offer an independent and separate comprehensive Dog Training Certificate, now we do! The DogNostics Dog Training Certificate is as comprehensive, if not more so, than any you will find on the market

The DogNostics Dog Trainer Certificate Program provides an all-encompassing in-depth understanding of operant and respondent conditioning, with students learning about everything from discriminative stimuli, motivating operations, setting events, the transferal of stimulus control; to primary and secondary reinforcement consequences, protocols and schedules; to canine ethology and social behavior. All students learn the Train-Test-Train method, as well as how to successfully implement the four key stages of learning from acquisition, to fluency, to generalization and maintenance.

DN-DTC graduates have a comprehensive understanding of and ability to apply many training methods including luring, capturing, micro-shaping, targeting, environmental molding, social and conceptual learning. Students begin the program learning how to efficiently and effectively lure behaviors and end the program, not only have an in-depth understanding of the scientific principles involved in training, but also with the competent skills to teach complex compound behavior chains, sequences, merges, modifiers, quantifiers, comparatives and matches to sample.

At DogNostics we believe that the pet industry needs to continually move towards a higher level of professionalism. As such we do not offer short programs that certify or accredit individuals as Dog Training Professionals or Dog Behavior Consultants. We offer comprehensive programs that will ensure certificants or graduates are highly credentialed and possess the relevant level of knowledge and skills to successfully practice their craft using the latest science and research available and supported by full consumer transparency and professional ethics.

What is a Behavior Consultant?

At DogNostics we consider a Behavior Consultant is a professional who undertakes private consultations with pets and their owners and focuses primarily on modifying behavior problems

that are elicited by the animal's emotional state in a given context (e.g. fear, anxiety). Behavior Consultants are often professional dog trainers who can competently teach pet manners classes, obedience classes, day training, private training sessions, and board and train programs that focus on pet dog skills and manners. A Behavior Consultant is aware of their limitations in terms of ability to prescribe psychotropic or any other kind of medication and diagnose illness, as well as their ethical responsibility in such cases, and can refer to a Veterinarian or Board-Certified Veterinary Behaviourist with greater academic and expansive knowledge. It is considered unethical in pet counselling for a professional to engage in any discussion regarding the diagnosis or treatment of an illness, physical or mental. Only Veterinarians or Board-Certified Veterinary Behaviorists are authorized to do this through the license and qualifications they hold.

The DogNostics Diploma offers modules that we believe, having a comprehensive Dog Training Certificate in place, are needed to supplement a Certified Dog Trainers knowledge and skills at the highest of levels.

# **The DogNostics Dog Behavior Diploma Modules**

## **1. The Use & Application of Best Practices – A Working Guide to Case Management**

Professionals committed to best practice will always take into consideration whether they have the required level of competency to be working with any individual training or behavior case, whether they should only work on the case with support from a peer, or a peer with case-specific knowledge and/or experience; whether they should work on the case under the supervision of a more experienced behavior consultant or whether they should refer the case to a veterinary behaviorist.

There is an array of best practice models in the Pet Training Industry. Some of these models begin training and behavior change programs with the least invasive and aversive protocols available and work up to the more aversive levels – as deemed necessary by the individual trainer involved. Progressing up the hierarchy to more invasive and aversive protocols is merely a matter of time for individuals who are not proficient in their trade, or do not have the requisite scientific knowledge or education to understand why this strategy is so problematic in the first place. Simply because something is included as a guideline or an ethical code or endorsed by a well-known individual, does not mean that it will either be implemented correctly, nor, indeed, that it will be implemented at all. These existing hierarchies argue for why a new Best Practice model is needed to guide pet professionals.

## **2. A Comparison and Contrast Between Respondent Conditioning and Operant Conditioning**

It is assumed based on the programs eligibility requirements that students have a comprehensive understanding of both non-Associative and Associative learning. This module delves a little deeper into the differences between Respondent Conditioning and Operant Conditioning. It is critical that consultants can develop effective behavior change programs incorporating all aspects of applied animal behavior. We can no longer just focus on operationalizing our dog training protocols through applied behavior analysis and must have a higher understanding of involuntary and voluntary behaviors, how they are elicited and/or evoked and the role of conditioned emotional responses. Across the differing approaches to dog training and behavior modification, professionals may commonly be insistent on using tools or approaches with little concern to the emotional state expressed by the pet in front of them. All too often there is a myopia to what the pet is communicating, feeling, or even how he is reacting or responding. As

such, subtle signs of stress, anxiety or fear may be missed due to the insistence that the chosen approach is acceptable and or the only approach.

### **3. A Deep Dive into Canine Communication, Social Behavior & Emotions!**

Understanding the science of behavior is one thing, understanding the emotional impact that our training and behavior processes and protocols have on our four-legged student is another. To enable us to be more proficient and humane behavior consultants we need to understand the nuances of canine communication. Communication “signals” are social behavior, just like any other behaviors. It is critical for behavior professionals to have a complex understanding of canine communication. It is important to be able to identify and interpret distance increasing and decreasing behaviors for many reasons such as: to make relatively reliable predictions about the near-future behavior of the dog; to know when to observe for antecedent conditions that set the occasion for and evoke problem behavior; to know when to observe for consequences that may be maintaining a behavior; to judge whether the stimulation you are applying in training will likely turn out to be reinforcing or punishment. This module covers a vast array of topics such as the topography of behavior, communication indicators and signals, consent testing, preference testing, aggression, and dog bite analysis. Becoming proficient in canine communication and social behavior ensures we avoid behavior myopia in our consulting work.

### **4. The Functional Assessment – A Professional Approach & Flow to Behavior Case Management**

The approach and flow of behavior case management makes the case for the systematic application of using functional assessments in the practice and management of behavior change programs. The behavioral approach to problem behavior is the most effective and efficient model to understanding behavior because it is based on the science of learning theory and follows scientific processes to identify the antecedents and consequences of the behavior. The behavior analytical approach does not rely on guess work, trial and error tactics or anecdotal recommendations but systematically identifies the functional relationship the behavior has with the environment, nor should it ignore the emotional welfare of the pet. When these relationships have been identified then efficient and effective solutions can be developed. The behavior analytical approach is called a functional assessment, an objective and systematic, efficient and effective strategy for explaining, describing and controlling behavior. After all, if we cannot provide an accurate hypothesis on why the problematic behavior functions and how it is being elicited and maintained then it is not feasible that we attempt to develop a behavior change program. Using the application of science to work through our case management offers far better

solutions than common sense or conventional wisdom. Science offers solutions that are public, peer reviewed and have a verification of findings across independent groups of researchers.

## **5. Building Behavior Change Programs Using Differential Reinforcement, Counter Conditioning & Desensitization Protocols**

Many professionals can cite or explain the sciences but find it difficult to operationalize these concepts into protocols. With an enhanced knowledge of conditioning students will learn both academically and in practical terms how to construct counter conditioning programs and develop desensitization hierarchies to resolve common behavioral problems that are involuntarily elicited.

Respondent conditioning techniques for changing behavior focus on the antecedents, the stimuli, setting events and motivating operations that contribute to or elicit the problematic conditioned emotional responses and the operants they motivate.

Respondent conditioning techniques and procedures used for changing behavior are a combination of, a) In vivo systematic desensitization where the pet is systematically and gradually exposed to the problem stimulus while maintaining the animal below the conditioned emotional response threshold, b) counter conditioning a type of exposure therapy where the problematic conditioned emotional response is replaced with a more desirable or appropriate response and c) attention exercises that promote relaxation by redirecting the animal's focus. In this module students will increase their understanding of how conditioning takes place and its application in dog training. They will also learn about emotional learning, conditioned emotional responses and the important role emotions play in behavior and how we select and choose our protocols and procedures for different case management.

In contrast we will also review during this module shaping and differential reinforcement and how they can contribute to humane behavior change programs rather than using punishment.

## **6. Managing Productive & Professional Behavior Consultations**

Much of a professional consultant's role is teaching clients how to train their dogs and/or participate in behavior change programs. Training others to train is an important skill. This module takes you through the project management of Behavior Consultations and the human resource skills required to be an effective consultant.

Learn the necessary skills to conduct effective consultations that build consensus around agreed upon behavior goals. This module covers communication skills, building consensus skills and how best to work with clients to achieve the results needed by the guardian, pet and consultant.

Understand the biology of learning and grasp a systematic approach you can integrate into your practice.

## **7. Transformational Change - The Art & Science of Teaching People**

Much of our work in changing pets' behavior is working with their owners. Teaching people is very different to training dogs. It requires a strategic approach and a system of breaking down skills and ensuring they are fully understood. In this module we cover all the communication skills required to effect change with people and we introduce and work through the "On Task Skill Coaching" system.

You will work through a Training Plan, a Lesson Plan and a Session Plan and understand the difference. This is a fun and very different module where your focus will be on the effective teaching and training of people to conduct a mechanical skill – train their pet!

### **DogNostics Diploma Graduation Criteria**

1. Successful completion of each Individual module which is presented as a combination of lectures, PowerPoints and videos. Modules are rounded off with self-check tests and a selection of written homework submission, module tests and video submissions.
2. The successful completion of this program will encompass the successful completion of four Behavior Change Case Studies developed using Functional Assessments and Best practice Models.
  - a. One of the chosen case studies will be chronicled through 5 x 3-minute video submissions.