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Heather Hamblin Utah State University

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# ANALYZING FEAR FREE VETERINARY PRACTICES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN MANAGING CLIENT AND PATIENT FEAR, ANXIETY, AND STRESS, AND THE PROFITABIITY OF THESE TECHNIQUES

by

#### Heather Hamblin

Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

### **UNIVERSITY HONORS**

with a major in

Animal and Dairy Science in the Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences

Approved:		
Capstone Mentor	Military and the second	Departmental Honors Advisor
Dr. Lyle McNeal		Dr. Lee Rickords
	University Ho	nors Program Director
		Kristine Miller

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY Logan, UT

Spring 2019

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#### **Abstract**

Fear-Free veterinary techniques are a new approach to caring for patients and clients in the veterinary clinic that have gained a great deal of popularity and traction. However, many veterinary professionals are left to question whether the utilization of these practices is resulting in a big enough change in client and patient stress levels to make it worth implementing these methods. This research looks into the views of veterinarians and clients on the effectiveness of these practices, and the competitive advantage of having a fear-free certified clinic from a business point of view.

### Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Dr. Lyle McNeal for mentoring me on this project. Dr. McNeal has been a beloved mentor for many students throughout his 40 years of teaching at Utah State University, and has been an integral part of my education. I feel so privileged to have been able to be mentored by him, and to have his guidance as I worked through this project and throughout my four years at Utah State University. "Doc", as he is lovingly called by many, has become a great friend and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to get to know him, and for how his role in this project has built our friendship. I'm excited to see what adventures he goes on after he retires this Spring after 40 years of spectacular work at USU.

I'd also like to thank the veterinarians at Heritage Animal Hospital, Dr. Kolste and Dr. Miller, for teaching me all they know about fear free veterinary techniques and encouraging my interest in this topic. I'd also like to thank them for paying for me to become Fear Free Certified® and the role that played in my research. These two veterinarians along with many other veterinarian mentors throughout my years have encouraged me to learn all I can about the profession and showed me the importance of knowing sound business practices and finding ways to differ your veterinary clinic from others.

I'd like to thank all those who've encouraged me to follow my dreams of becoming a veterinarian and have helped me ultimately get accepted to veterinary school. I'd especially like to thank my family and my sweet husband for their support and encouragement on my journey to getting accepted to veterinary school. I will now do all I can to learn what practices I will implement in my clinic in the future and to be the incredible veterinarian all of these mentors and supporters have encouraged me to be.

# Analyzing Fear Free Veterinary Practices and their Effectiveness in Managing Client and Patient Fear, Anxiety, and Stress, and the Profitability of these Techniques

Fear Free techniques are a set of techniques that have been put forth as a part of a certification for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, kennel technicians, groomers, dog trainers, and pet owners. This certification is offered by a company called Fear Free, LLC which is based in Denver Colorado and was founded in 2016. This initiative strives to increase understanding of animals' emotional wellbeing as well as reduce the amount of fear, anxiety, and stress in pets. According to the Fear Free website, "Fear Free provides online and in-person education to veterinary professionals, the pet professional community, and pet owners. Our courses are developed and written by the most respected veterinary and pet experts in the world, including boarded veterinary behaviorists, boarded veterinary anesthesiologists, pain experts, boarded veterinary internists, veterinary technicians (behavior), experts in shelter medicine, animal training, grooming, boarding, and more." There are now more than 48,000 certified veterinary and animal professionals and they're found in every state in the united states and in more than 30 countries worldwide.

This certification has taken the veterinary field by storm, and is growing rapidly. A lot of these simple techniques are not completely new to the field, but the regular use of these practices and taking care to prevent pets' fear, anxiety, and stress is a new practice for many veterinary professionals. There has been some research done on the impact on pets' stress of individual techniques such as the use of pheromones and different methods of animal handling and restraint. However, not much research has been done on how effective pet owners and fear free professionals actually think the overall certification and use of a combination of fear free techniques are. Depending on the volume of team members a practice is certifying, practice owners pay anywhere from \$70 to \$279 per person to have their staff certified in these practices. These business owners also commonly invest money in various tools, treats, cleaners, diffusers, and possibly even clinic renovations if they are going to fully implement all the techniques suggested by the certification. Knowing whether their colleagues find these techniques effective, and whether clients find them effective and are willing to pay more for these services are key questions business owners should be asking when they are considering implementing these techniques and certifying their team members.

The age-old stigma of pets being terrified to go to the vet is starting to be overturned. As clients are bringing their pets into clinics utilizing these practices, their eyes are opened to the idea that a trip to the vet doesn't have to be stressful for them or for their pet. The veterinary profession is changing in result of this new certification and many believe that it is changing for the better. However, we are left wondering- are these techniques effective enough at managing client and patient fear, anxiety and stress, and can they increase the profitability of the veterinary practices enough that it makes it worth these business owners' time and money to implement them into their clinics?

## **Project Rationale**

The primary goal of this research was to establish a basis of information to help determine how effective veterinary professionals, community members, and pet owners thought fear free techniques are in managing client and patient fear, anxiety, and stress. This research also worked

to determine if pet owners would be willing to pay more for services from Fear Free Certified® clinic than services from a Non- Fear Free Certified® clinic. As a result, this research is designed to help veterinary professionals make a more educated decision on whether or not they wish to pursue this certification for their staff members and their clinic. More specifically, this research is a culmination of the education of its primary researcher, Heather Hamblin, and incorporates both her interests in veterinary medicine and her interests in business. This research will be submitted as the Capstone Project in partial fulfillment of requirements for Heather to graduate from University Honors in the Spring of 2019. This research will help her know whether fear free certification is something she'd like to implement in her own future veterinary clinic, and also help her design future similar research projects in relation to her future business ventures.

#### **Methods**

The methods used to collect the data presented in this research included obtaining personal experience, conducting a Qualtrics survey as well as conducting personal interviews. The primary researcher in this project, Heather Hamblin, worked at a local veterinary clinic, Heritage Animal Hospital, as a part of this project and worked alongside veterinarians and technicians who were Fear Free Certified®. Heather also went through the process and classes to become certified herself. By doing so, she sought to truly understand what these techniques and certifications are all about, and what is expected of people who obtain this certification. The Qualtrics survey was built and then distributed to participants through various social network tools including the primary researcher's personal social media, along with distribution in specific groups of pet owners. It was also distributed in a social networking group of Fear Free Certified® Professionals. By distributing this survey in such a focused manner, researchers sought to get responses of mostly pet owners, and a lot of data from people who were Fear Free Certified. In addition to the survey, and becoming Fear Free Certified®, Heather interviewed and spent time with world renowned animal behavior specialist, Dr. Temple Grandin, to ask her about her views of these techniques and their impact on pets' fear, anxiety, and stress. The survey data was then synthesized into a graphical analysis using the Qualtrics software, and also into a written analysis of the results. The information gathered from the interview was summarized in written form. The exact question content of the survey can be seen in Appendix I of this paper.

## **Survey Results**

In total, 407 people responded to the Qualtrics survey that was conducted as a part of this research. Out of those 407, 154 were veterinary professionals, and 129 of those veterinary professionals were Fear Free Certified®. Out of the 407 people surveyed, 90.5% of them were pet owners and/or worked in the animal care field. Before continuing with questions about respondent's opinions on fear free services, they were required to read a paragraph that explained what fear free is, and what these practices strive to do for the owner and the pet. The full list of questions and results of the survey can be seen in Appendix I of this paper, but in this written summary, the key/noteworthy results will be discussed.

Out of the pet owners surveyed in this research, 35.5% of them said that their pet "gets very nervous" when they go to the vet. In response to this same topic, only 18.6% of pet owners said

their pet loves going to the vet and gets excited. A possible explanation for a significant percentage saying their pet gets excited is that these respondents could be veterinary professionals who take their pets to work with them on a regular basis. The majority (45.4%) of respondents to this question had neutral responses, saying their pet didn't particularly get nervous, but also didn't seem to enjoy going to the vet. In connection with this question, respondents were asked if they themselves get nervous or anxious about taking their pet to the vet. The results showed that 40.8% get at least a little nervous, and an additional 4% said they get really nervous about taking their pet to the vet. The remaining 55% said that going to the vet doesn't make them nervous at all. Again, this large positive response to going to the vet could be explained by the fact that 38% of respondents in this survey worked in the veterinary field and therefore probably weren't intimidated by it.

This survey was also built to find out if owners would be willing to pay more for fear free veterinary services. Three different groups were identified from previous questions, including: pet owners with pets that are fearful of going to the vet, pet owners with pets who aren't fearful of going to the vet, and non-pet owners. Each of these groups were asked a question similar to the following: "Assuming that fear free veterinary practices would definitely decrease fear. anxiety, and stress considerably in your pet, would you be willing to pay 10% more for veterinary services such as exams, nail trims, blood draws, anal gland expression, etc.? (i.e. instead of paying \$40 for an exam, you'd pay \$44)." The group of non-pet owners were given the clarification, "If you had a pet, and it was fearful of going to the vet...", and pet owners with pets that aren't fearful of going to the vet were given the clarification, "If your pet was fearful of going to the vet...". Out of the pet owners with pets that are fearful of going to the vet, 63.28% said "yes" they would pay 10% more, 26.56% said "maybe" they would pay 10% more, and only 10.16% said "no" they wouldn't pay 10% more. Of the pet owners with pets that weren't fearful of going to the vet, 69.7% said "yes" they would pay 10% more, 21.21% said "maybe" they would pay 10% more, and only 9.09 % said "no they would not pay 10% more for fear free services if their pet was fearful. Out of the non-pet owners surveyed, 68.18% said "yes" they would pay 10% more if they owned a fearful pet, 18.18% said "maybe" they would pay 10% more if they owned a fearful pet, and only 13.64 % said "no" they wouldn't pay 10% more for fear free services if they owned a fearful pet. Overall, pet owners and even non-pet owners had pretty comparable responses in regards to the proportion that responded with each response. The responses were overall positive towards paying 10% more for fear free veterinary services.

To add onto the question that was discussed in the previous question, respondents were asked, "...how much more likely would you be to take your pet into the vet for more regular preventative care such as yearly exams at a clinic using fear free methods?". This question was asked to find out if fear free would increase pet owners' frequency of vet visits. Out of the respondents to this question, 37.53 % said they would be "much more likely", 25.74 % said they would be "a little more likely", and 36.19% said it wouldn't change their frequency of vet visits. It should also be noted that 2 respondents had very negative views of fear free veterinary practices and said that if a clinic was using fear free techniques, it would make them not want to take their pet to that vet at all. Overall, 63.27% said there would be at least some chance that their frequency of visits would increase, and 37.53% showed very positive responses by saying they'd be much more likely to increase their frequency of vet visits.

One of the main strong suits of the research results from this survey was the large volume of respondents who were Fear Free Certified®. This information will particularly be valuable to veterinary professionals decided if they'd like to implement these practices, as well as to the primary researcher in this project in deciding whether this is a practice worth implementing in her future clinic. One of the results that was overwhelmingly positive towards encouraging other vet clinics to use these practices was from when we asked Fear Free Certified® respondents, "In your opinion, is it worth taking the time to certify staff on fear free methods, as well as taking the time to using fear free methods in the veterinary clinic?". In response to this question, 99.16% of respondents, that yes, it was worth taking the time to certify, whereas only 1 respondent said it wasn't worth taking the time. We also asked these fear free professionals if, in their experience, fear free designation increased their volume of clients. In contrast to the previous question, 65.55% said yes it increased their client volume, whereas 34.45% said it didn't increase client volume. While these responses weren't as positive as the ones from the previous question, the greater majority were still positive toward obtaining this certification. However, the 34.45% that said it didn't increase client volume should be considered when deciding whether or not to implement this certification into a veterinary clinic. This group of respondents was also asked if they thought providing fear free care made their clinic more profitable. In response to this question 87.39% said that it made them more profitable overall, and only 12.61% said it didn't make them more profitable. When analyzing whether certifying staff is a good business decision, this question result provides a very positive basis towards certifying and becoming more profitable. In an effort to gain additional and more personized information on top of this project, Fear Free Certified ® respondents were also asked if they'd be willing to contacted for a 5-10 minute interview about fear free practices. It was expected that there would maybe be 10 people to agree to this, at most. However, 52 individuals said they'd be willing to be contacted for further interviewing and information. Contact information was then collected from these individuals for future use of Heather Hamblin in researching these practices further. This will provide a great basis for future research into the plausibility of certifying clinic staff on these practices. Overall, a great amount of information was gathered from pet owners, non-pet owners and Fear Free Certified ® Professionals through this survey, and the information will prove useful for the primary researcher in this project as well as for other veterinary professionals.

#### **Interview Results**

As a part of this research, Heather Hamblin spent an entire day with, and conducted an informal interview throughout the day with Dr. Temple Grandin. Dr. Grandin is a world-renowned expert on animal behavior, a designer of livestock facilities, and also is a professor at Colorado State University. She is also on the autism spectrum, and is an autism spokesperson. By having a whole day to spend with Dr. Grandin, Heather had the opportunity to informally discuss various fear free practices with her throughout the day. Overall, Dr. Grandin was very supportive of these practices, and techniques that help limit animal's stress and improve animal handling. The main things Dr. Grandin suggested veterinarians do to limit stress in a typical veterinary visit were providing non-slip surfaces, giving the pet treats, bringing puppies in for get to know you visits where you don't do any procedures, and overall try to have positive veterinary experiences for the animal. All of these practices are things that are seen as a part of fear free practices. She also mentioned that if an animal has a negative experience in a vet clinic, that it will take a lot of work and positive experiences at the vet's office in order to help that animal be somewhat

accepting to going to the vet again. While it seems logical that Dr. Grandin would support anything that would be for the betterment of animals, it was a great opportunity to discuss these practices with her in person and to hear from her that these practices will help limit pets' stress and help veterinarians provide better care. Dr. Temple Grandin's conversations with Heather played a key role in this research, and will play a key role in Heather's decisions about using these practices in her clinic in the future.

#### Conclusion

The results of this research were overall very positive towards fear free veterinary practices. However, all the results, even those not in favor of these practices should be considered when deciding whether or not these practices should be a part of one's veterinary clinic. By surveying pet owners, veterinary professionals, and even non-pet owners, it was found out that overall people would be willing to pay 10% more for fear free veterinary services if they had a pet that was fearful of going to the vet, and they'd be more likely to choose a clinic offering fear free services over clinics that didn't provide these services. Useful results were also gathered from surveying Fear Free Certified® Professionals and getting their take on the value of this certification and techniques and how they benefit a business. The results seen from these professionals was overwhelmingly positive and will help other clinic owners and veterinarians to decide on whether or not it would be a wise business decision to implement these practices. These results also have helped Heather Hamblin decide that these are practices she will likely implement into her future veterinary clinic.

#### Reflection

My honors capstone project represents a true blending of my interests are areas of study from my time at Utah state University. In my time at USU I've been heavily involved in my major of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences, as well as in the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurship minor. I plan to start my own veterinary clinic, and am very interested in ways to make my veterinary clinic unique from other surrounding clinics. In my entrepreneurship classes I was challenged to come up with ways I would make my future veterinary clinic different or better than other veterinary clinics. One exercise we completed was called assumption reversals, where you would take an assumption about your business and then find a way to change that assumption. One assumption I kept coming back to was that going to the veterinarian was stressful for pets and owners. I started coming up with ways to reverse this assumption and make veterinary visits enjoyable and fun for owners and their pets. Soon after completing this exercise I found out about the new veterinary certification initiative called Fear Free, and I was very interested in learning more about it and how it could benefit my future clients, and my future business. Thus, my capstone project idea was born.

One of my biggest challenges in this research was finding a professor to be my mentor. Since my research wasn't going to be the typical laboratory work, and I wasn't researching livestock like most of the professors working in my college, it was difficult to find a mentor to agree to be my mentor and work with me on this project. I ended up meeting with one of my professors, Dr. Lyle McNeal and discussing my idea with him. While he admitted that he didn't have a lot of expertise on small animal veterinary clinics, he did have lots of animal behavior experience and connections to people such as Dr. Temple Grandin that would help my project succeed. Other than finding a mentor, and working out the logistics of my project, I didn't have

too many struggles actually completing this project. I anticipated lots of difficulty in getting enough respondents for my survey. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a lot of people who were willing to take 5 minutes of their time and support me and my research. I still have a hard time believing I was able to get 407 people, mostly strangers, to participate in my research. By becoming a Fear Free Certified®, it helped connect me to a lot of people working with this certification, which was a key factor in the success of this research.

This project gave me the firsthand opportunity to design my own project, carry it out, and interpret the results. This project will be very useful for me in the future, not just because of the data gathered, but because it helped me learn how to conduct this type of research. I anticipate I will be doing similar types of research in respects to other types of veterinary techniques and practices in the future to help me make the best decisions possible in starting my own veterinary clinic.

I also had the wonderful opportunity to build a meaningful relationship with my mentor, Dr. Lyle McNeal. I formed a relationship with "Doc" that I know will last a lifetime, and I know he'll continue to support me in my future education and goals, and that we will keep in contact throughout the years to come. This relationship has provided me with so many wonderful opportunities including the opportunity to interview and spend the day with Temple Grandin, and I will forever be grateful to Dr. McNeal and his contributions to my education and this project.

This project also helped me engage in my local community of Cache Valley pet owners, but also with a widespread community of Fear Free Certified® Professionals. This experience really opened my eyes to the benefits of building a community around ourselves, and how much people in the community are willing to help students succeed. It also will help connect me on an

ongoing basis to the veterinary community as I share my findings and help fellow veterinary professionals make educated decisions concerning fear free techniques.

Overall, this project really helped "cap off" my education at Utah State University and will serve me greatly in my future educational and career goals. I'm so grateful for the opportunity I had to complete this project, and to present my research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. This capstone project provided me with the opportunity to build a relationship with a valued mentor, participate in the community, and build my network. It encouraged me to think deeper about the things I was learning in my classes, and also find ways to apply my classes in my capstone project. I loved completing this project and I'm so grateful for all that it has done and will do for me.

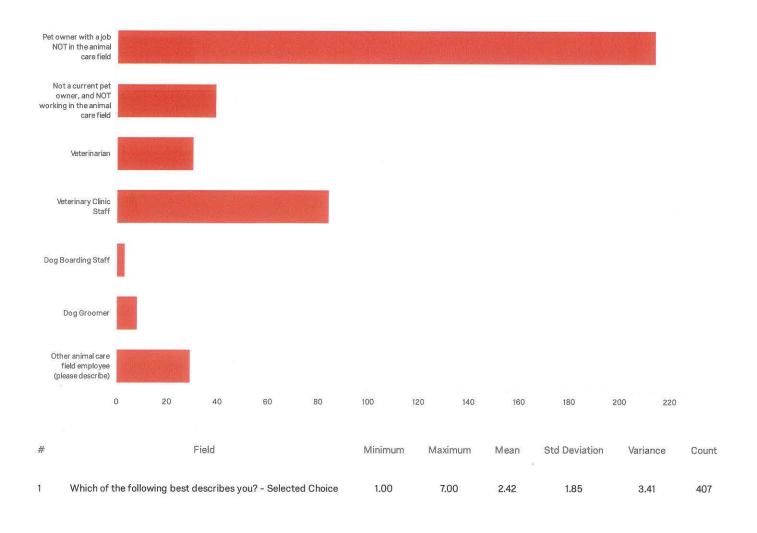
#### Author's Bio

Heather Hamblin will be graduating from Utah State University in the Spring of 2019 with a major in Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences and minors in Chemistry, Biology, and Entrepreneurship. Throughout her time at Utah State University Heather has been involved in many clubs on organizations on campus including the Sheep and Goat Club, Pre-Vet Club, and Entrepreneurship Club. She also has served since the spring of her Freshman year as an ambassador for the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences and has spent lots of time recruiting in middle school and high school classes and at various events representing the college. She also has loved giving tours of both campus and the USU dairy and farms to prospective students. Heather also worked at Hogle Zoo for 2 years during her time at USU, has volunteered, interned, and worked at many veterinary clinics in Cache Valley, and currently works at Heritage Animal Hospital in Nibley. Heather has loved her time at Utah State University, and has been accepted into the USU/WSU School of Veterinary Medicine through the WIMU Program. She will be starting veterinary school this fall at USU, and after 2 years at USU she will finish her DVM degree with 2 additional years at WSU.

# Default Report

Fear-Free Business Analysis April 28, 2019 2:25 PM MDT

# Q1 - Which of the following best describes you?



#	Field	Choice C	ount
1	Pet owner with a job NOT in the animal care field	52.58%	214
2	Not a current pet owner, and NOT working in the animal care field	9.58%	39
3	Veterinarian	7.37%	30
4	Veterinary Clinic Staff	20.64%	84
5	Dog Boarding Staff	0.74%	3
6	Dog Groomer	1.97%	8

	# Field	Choice C	ount
	7 Other animal care field employee (please describe)	7.13%	29
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	Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8		
G	Q1_7_TEXT - Other animal care field employee (please describe)		
	Other animal care field employee (please describe)		
	LVT		
	I do not work in the animal care field (although I would like to). And I can't say that I own my cat Ash. She is a stray that I have been taking care years.	of for 4	
	Trainer		
	I raise sheep, cattle and goats		
	Certified Fear Free Trainer working in shelter clinic		
	Vet assistant volunteer in behaviour and clinic		
	Dog trainer		
	Dog Trainer, CPDT-KA		
	Trainer		
	Trainer		
	Dog trainer - Fear Free Certified		
	horse and dog trainer		
	Veterinary student		
	Trainer/Behavior Consultant		
	Vet tech, animal owner, practice manager		
	Licensed veterinary Technician		
	Pet owner with a job NOT in a animal care field but volunteer animal rescuer		
	Petsmart employee		
	trainer/hehavior consultant		

Other animal care field employee (please describe)

Animal care giver - hired to pet sit, dog walk, drop in to give care (feed, play, take out, etc.), dog boarding, other requests from pet owners.

Veterinary clinic staff and veterinary student

Dog trainer/behavior consultant

Certified trainer and previous ly worked as an ER vet tech

Veterinary Student with an Animal

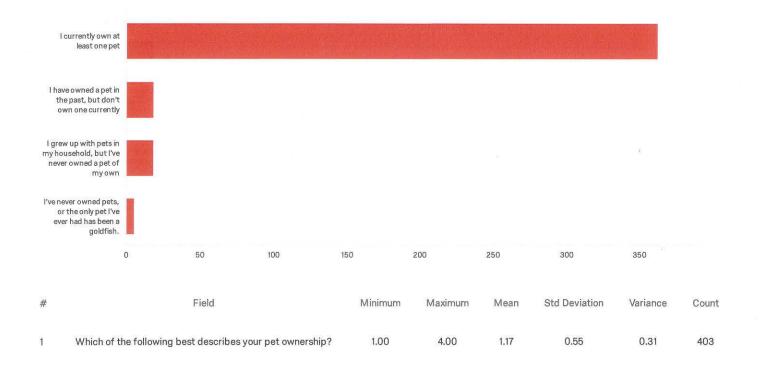
Animal husbandry - aquarium

Animal owner working in animal industry

Admissions Counselor at the Humane Society of Utah

Pet Sitter/Dog Walker

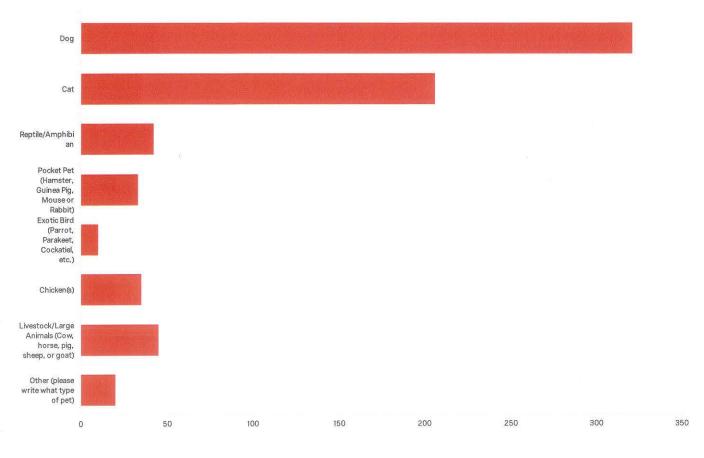
# Q2 - Which of the following best describes your pet ownership?



#	Field	Choice C	ount
1	I currently own at least one pet	89.83%	362
2	I have owned a pet in the past, but don't own one currently	4.47%	18
3	I grew up with pets in my household, but I've never owned a pet of my own	4.47%	18
4	I've never owned pets, or the only pet I've ever had has been a goldfish.	1.24%	5
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Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

# Q3 - What kinds of pets do you own? (Select all that apply)



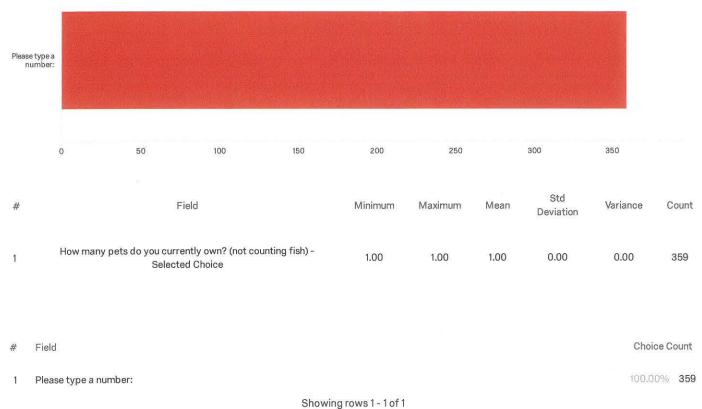
#	Field	Choice C	ount
1	Dog	45.08%	321
2	Cat	28.93%	206
3	Reptile/Amphibian	5.90%	42
4	Pocket Pet (Hamster, Guinea Pig, Mouse or Rabbit)	4.63%	33
5	Exotic Bird (Parrot, Parakeet, Cockatiel, etc.)	1.40%	10
6	Chicken(s)	4.92%	35
7	Livestock/Large Animals (Cow, horse, pig, sheep, or goat)	6.32%	45
8	Other (please write what type of pet)	2.81%	20
			712

Showing rows 1 - 9 of 9

## Q3\_8\_TEXT - Other (please write what type of pet)

Other (please write what type of pet)
Beta, guppies and plecostamus
Fish
Sugar glider
I've owned dogs in the past
Hedgehog
Fish
Tarantula
Fish
Invertebrates: Tarantula and Roaches
Turtle
Fish
Aquariums
Alpacas
feral cat colony
Ferret

# Q23 - How many pets do you currently own? (not counting fish)



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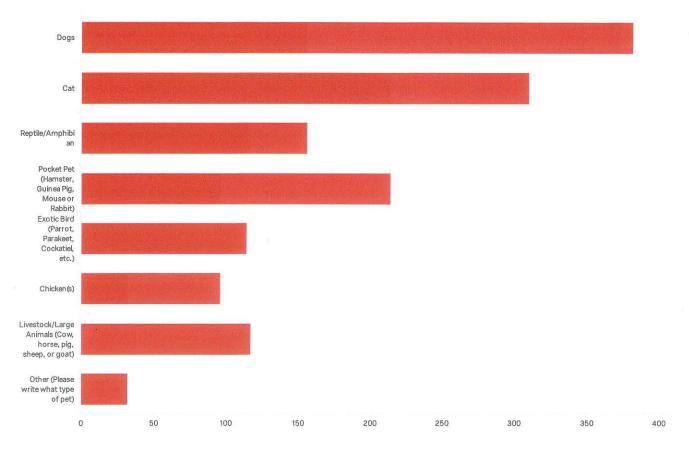
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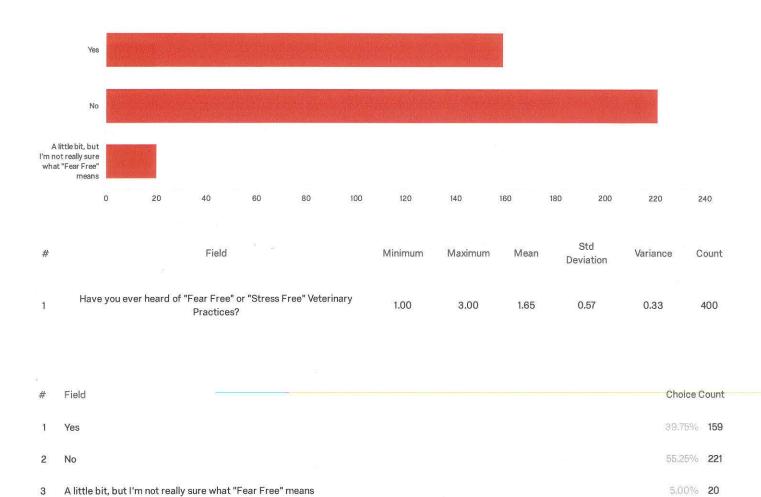
# Q4 - What kinds of pets have you owned or had in your household in the past? (Select all

## that apply)



#	Field	Choice C	ount
1	Dogs	26.88%	382
2	Cat	21.82%	310
3	Reptile/Amphibian	10.98%	156
4	Pocket Pet (Hamster, Guinea Pig, Mouse or Rabbit)	15.06%	214
5	Exotic Bird (Parrot, Parakeet, Cockatiel, etc.)	8.02%	114
6	Chicken(s)	6.76%	96
7	Livestock/Large Animals (Cow, horse, pig, sheep, or goat)	8.23%	117
8	Other (Please write what type of pet)	2.25%	32
			1421

# Q5 - Have you ever heard of "Fear Free" or "Stress Free" Veterinary Practices?



Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

400

# Q10 - Are you currently a certified Fear Free Certified® Professional?



#	Field	Choic Coun	
1	Yes	84.31%	129
2	No	15.69%	24
3	I'm working on my certification right now	0.00%	0
			153

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

### Q5 A - Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary Practices:

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P...

Hospitals employing fear free use their skills and time to reduce the s, f, & a pets have coming to and receiving veterinary care. pet parents are happier, pets are happier, and staff is happier. This likely increases visits and compliance.

They use more antianxiety drugs, more likely to give sedatives and pain meds, staff is less likely to get bitten, clients have to be educated as to why visits may take longer

Where they work with the animals in a non aggressive fear free way. Using positive interactions and tactics instead of force or muzzles

Working to ensure that the pt has a low stress/stress free visit for whatever the need to do.

A way of running a vet clinic in order to minimize the stress and fear of animals coming in by using different techniques and drugs to help facilitate this.

My vet is a Fear Free veterinary practices. The vets see their patients more often, That makes your pet know the people better and has a better time at the vet. No stress, anxiety, for both pet and owner. I love the Fear Free vets, as my dog is a service dog and the last thing I want is for him to be scared of going to places. My vet is amazing.

Changed our culture about what approaches to animal care and handling are acceptable

I think that fear free is a misnomer but the idea is to use low stress handling techniques, and gauge fear/anxiety / stress in clinic. Depending on an animal's reaction, it may be appropriate to use medication to reduce anxiety along with recommending a trainer knowledgeable in cooperative care techniques to practice at home.

Fear free techniques are very helpful and have made a huge difference in how the pets come to us.

I initially started to become interested in Fear Free out of a desire to help my dog who suffers from separation anxiety but soon realized that the techniques could help all pets.

They are great for handling hard to handle animals. They really care about the pets, and doing what is best for the animals.

Without fear? Don't and loving touch?

I am a level 3 certified veterinarian.

My current vet uses them, but I don't really know that they mean.

Fear free practices allow animals to have better experiences in home and veterinary settings.

A way to observe, interact and handle people's pets in a Veterinary practice. The technique reduces fear, anxiety, and stress while in clinic by the use of low stress handling, gentler handling, treats, pheromones and also reduced noise - there's so much more to it- but it should include all staff.

I've heard that "fear free" focuses on the fear and stress levels of the patient and not doing things that make them stressed out or afraid.

Methods for helping a dog have positive associations with vet's.

Fear Free Veterinary Practices are safe spaces for animals with fear, anxiety, or stress. The pets and clients that go to these places can expect that their animals are treated well and if they need to do slower exams or recommend additional anti anxiety medications they will do so.

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P...

Reduced pet fear, stress and anxiety. Helps pets, owners and clinic staff in a smoother more relaxing and successful day

Our clinic is Fear Free, all of our employees are certified in Fear Free as well! It works great!!!

It focuses on providing a fear free visit for the pet through gentle handling, creating a more relaxed and fun atmosphere, and drugs if needed

I know a lot of veterinary professionals feel like it is a waste of time and not applicable to real life. Personally, I think it is benefiting the industry greatly. People in the future will be horrified that it was done any other way.

FF also takes the pets emotional well being into consideration- not just the physical.

not much about the practices themselves, just knew about the program

Better way to practice medicine to create a better visit for pets and owners

I never knew anything about fear free until I started at my current hospital. So everything I know now, I've learned from taking the courses and my experiences thus far.

Not scared I guess that's what they've told me

Went through they training but didn't pay to keep certified.

It's a growing trend with tremendous benefit to the animal patients, their owners, and the veterinary or grooming staff that cares for them. They deserve to live without fear in situations they require regularly, like vet visits and grooming trips.

Sophia Yin started it all for me

Helping animals not be so scared, working slowly, not letting anxiety ramp Up

They are gaining in popularity.

I work as a trainer in a fear free clinic in an animal shelter. The clinic is not certified although a couple of vets and techs are.

'Taking the Pet out of Petrified' sounded like a great idea to me. We use Fear Free techniques in my practice and have seen wonderful results.

A place where the emotional needs of an animal are as important as their medical needs.

Gentler approach to animal handling

That they're committed to better quality of care and the emotional well-being of their patients.

I've not heard much of anything specific about Fear Free veterinary practices (assuming you mean from clients or other vet professionals).

Minimal restraint and other fear free techniques helps reduce stress and injuries in patients, clients, and staff.

Fear free means accommodating a pet in the clinic in a way that any handling or procedures do not increase fear or anxiety,

I first heard about this at APDT 2017, and became certified as a trainer. I also use a vet clinic that has many certified staff.

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P... They decrease fear, anxiety and stress in pets and their owners. As a FF Vet Tech I know about FF but not an actual FF practice. Fear free is better communication with animals I am the practice manager and we got clinic certified last August. Reducing fear, anxiety, and stress in pets by attending to their mental and emotional needs as well as their physical health. I'm currently working at a hospital and every employee is fear free certified. We are currently working on becoming a fear free certified practice They have more knowledge on handing patients that are showing signs of FAS I've gone through the trainer certification and I take my dogs to a fear free vet so I've seen it from that angle as well. They make the veterinary visit lowe stress for animals. This includes educating clients about what they can do at home as well as the way staff addresses the animals mental health during their visit. Vet school prepped for FF I've done the level 1 certification and that is the extent of my knowledge I am Level 3 fear free certified and I love the way pets respond to this type of handling That it provides an environment where the animal feels at ease as opposed to stressed Low stress handling beneficial to pets and clients. Use of tools and body language to help maintain low stress. To keep animals as comfortable as possible I'm not sure I'm assuming you don't have to worry like honest practice Making visits less stressful for pets I was a founding advisory committee member and co author of the level 1 exam room module. I am also Low Stress handling cert since 2014 and have a patent for a medical record system to record and score the positive reinforcers to a low stress exam. An approach to Veterinary medicine that aims to decrease the fear, anxiety, and stress of patients. Heard about free free before it launched through Dr Marty Becker and Dr Lisa Radosta. Practice certifications are few and far between but are up and coming.

Fear Free practices work very hard to take the stress out of veterinary visits for their patients.

Great ideas and great new way to approach our animals

That the list of fear free clinics is growing every day

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P...

I heard Dr. Marty Becker speak about it at WWC in October of last year and couldn't get myself and my team certified fast enough. I graduated from vet school in 1991 and learning about Fear Free was an a-ha moment for me, of course that is how I want to practice! We are in the process of clinic certification currently.

Clients, patients, and staff are happier, less stressed, and have less burn out. Fear free is good at driving business by word of mouth and online searches.

They seem to be gaining traction with the public but unfortunately many professionals feel resentful that they "have to" get the certification.

part of best clinic strategies; how i have always practiced - just now has a name

I use a FF vet. They work with the guardians and trainers to reduce stress for pets at the vet, using a variety of techniques and methods including meds, pheromones, training, treats, less restraint.

Positive reinforcement to make visits less stressful

They strive to reduce FAS in pets visiting their practices and hopefully refer clients to Fear Free trainers for work at home and preparing for vet visits

Low stress handling, reduction of stress and anxiety associated with veterinary visits incorporating medications, pheromones and handling techniques designed to help minimize stress for the pet.

I heard it's a new approach to keep animals FAS lower for a better experience at the vet

Reduce stress and improve future visits for our oatients

The clinic I work at is part of a shelter and we've always been pro force free/poo positive reinforcement, so Fear Free felt like a natural step for us. I had never heard of it until our practice manager told us about it though.

Currently certified.

Currently level 2 certified, as well as certified in Low Stress Handling

Only what i have read on fb page and web site

They do their best to lower fear, anxiety and stress for you and your pet

Techniques and philosophy to address fear, anxiety and stress in pets while at the vet or groomer.

Fear free is the idea that veterinary medicine does not have to equate to fearful experiences, and that there are numerous practical things we can do to lower fear and anxiety. These practices ultimately improve patient expect, client trust, and staff safety.

"Taking the pet out of petrified". Fear Free has gained much momentum lately across all animal fields. I am my hospitals fear free coordinator in charge of training staff on all aspects of fear free like gentle restraint and support, considerate approach, and educating clients as well as modifying our clinic as I see fit to make it a more calming environment, restocking our pheromone supplies, providing treats, and ensuring our bio security is in place by using products like rescue that are fear free certified and also help remove the fear scents!

I've completed level one and our practice is working towards Fear Free certification. I believe practicing in a fear free manner makes it easier for pets to get the medical care they need. "Fear Free" is good medicine for pets and makes vet visits easier for owners too...

I hadn't heard anything about it until a new vet opened up near me that I chose to help me with my dog and breeding issues.

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P...

They approach the animal as a sentient patient not just a task to be done

I am certified with the first level of Fear Free Certification. My long term goal is to work my clinic slowly towards more fear free practice guidelines - it is a large busy clinic so this is a difficult change to institute

They work to get the animals consent for what they need to do through positive reinforcement and conditioning.

We are a Fear Free practice and we strive to make each visit as stress free as we possibly can. We work with the owners before, during and after their visit to ensure their pets are comfortable mentally and physically. I've been practicing for 12 years and this is a great change that everyone should be making!! Clients and pets are so much happier with this level of care.

I have heard it will help with my studies

These are practices that apply care in such a way that fear and stress is minimized or at the very least reduced in the patient

I've heard some negative comments lately about the organization but feel that it is making more people aware of body language of dogs and makes it easy to get everyone on the same page in the clinic when you are all coming from different backgrounds.

Low stress handling techniques to prevent fear and anxiety and the associated physiologic and detrimental changes.

I'm a registered veterinary technician who works at a clinic that applies fear free techniques with all of our patients. I'm fear free level 2 certified

I've heard many things! When my practice was going through the steps to be certified, I learned about a ton of physical things that needed to happen, like non slip floors, divided waiting rooms, soft music, etc. They seemed so profound at the time, but now they're just a part of life.

I have not hurd anything about the fear free practice.

Amazing program and have learned a lot. It gives me and my staff the knowledge and experience to help our companion animals be less stressed at vet visits

Fear Free practice explains itself. It means you handle pets in a way that doesn't make them fearful. So you can give them treats while doing things, holding them in different positions while doing things, or giving them medication while at the clinic so they don't act in fear

Gentle handling; "don't wait, sedate"

I've heard it's a practice that involves helping animals be comfortable with vet procedures through positive reinforcement and desensitization.

I've been Fear Free Certified since 2016

Certified, and currently working on others to get hospital certified.

Helps animals live more fulfilled lives.

I used to be a vet tech for 3 years and got my fear free certification while working in a private practice. I absolutely love it. It is effective. I've seen fearful pets become more comfortable over repeat times. We also encouraged owners to bring in pets just for us to love on and give treats without treatment being done. Highly recommended

They are interested in what's best for the pet. They understand the anxiety and stress that a vet visit brings and how to manage it

I am level 1 certified and currently working on level 2.

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P... Went to website Our hospital is a fear free certified practice Lam level 2 certified Not very much. I can only remember hearing "fear free". Trying to minimize animal's fear during veterinary visits, procedures, boarding, etc. by paying attention to signs of unease, fear, discomfort and using techniques to calm those animals as much as possible and get them acclimated to our procedures. We currently operate using many Gear Free methods at my clinic. I am the Practice Manager and Fear Free certified. They try to reduce stress for the pet at veterinary appointments. They try to make the expersince for the animal as positive as they possibility can. They use methods such as treats/spray cheese, etc., before they resort to more forceful methods of restraint Fear free practices help reduce fear, stress, and anxiety for our patients and the owners and help operations run more smoothly and keep clients coming back Fear free is a more gentle way of handling our patients. One that allows them to be calm and comfortable and doesn't "force" them into treatments or procedures they aren't comfortable with. Not much mostly fear free non anesthetic dental putting the time "in" early in your relationship with the patient and the client pays off big in the end. Animal does not fear the vet? Methods to address fear stress and anxiety associated w/ vet visits and procedures. Nothing really specific, just that it is more friendly and not so stressful. I know that is what my vet uses and it's been very interesting to watch how they interact vs vets I have gone to in the past. For an entire practice to be certified, the vets and techs all need to be certified and the facility needs to tend to details such as flooring, colors, separation for cats and dogs (ideally to the point of different air venting so cats don't smell dogs), having hiding places for cats in the exam rooms, having appropriate enrichment available for all pet clients, taking the time to allow the pets to settle or making arrangements for PVPs to be administered prior to exams or treatments - all with the aim of reducing the experience of fear, anxiety and stress in the patient. Ideally, setting up a situation where the pet can cooperate with procedures, feeling they have some control over the activities - taking time to pause and wait for the patient to be ready to continue. They are geared towards reducing fear, anxiety and stress in the animals That need and educate the clients so they can work together with the staff to

Ive heard it more as a training practice, to take your animal to the vet without any procedures done to help them not be nervous when theyre there. So far mine has been great everytime there.

It is a method of handling animals and administering care which eliminates as much stress and anxiety in the animal as is possible.

make vet visits as positive as possible for the pets

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P... I'm a FF L2 licensed vet tech Mountain view vet practices this. Ive had 2 dogs now that are fearful of the vet. They try to help relax your pet with treats and kind words I am a strong adovovate of Fear Free practices both in the clinic and at home. I'm Level 1 certified and try to use Fear Free techniques are often as possible in my clinic work. My current clinic has certified members, but they still could make improvements. The pets and owners return more relaxed in future visits Read about it. If I remember correctly designed to put the owner at ease and have the animal in a more stress freee environment. That it exists. One of the doctors at the Veterinary Clinic I work for attended a conference and became certified then an advocate for fear free. Since then our entire full-time staff is now certified level 2 and we are in the planning stages for a remodel to eventually become a fear free certified practice. I have completed a fear free course through my job. Soft lights, calm music, gentle approach to animals. Technique for vets to use around dogs who msy bite out of fear at the vet Aside from being told by a coworker "I was too fear free" not much from others. Some coworkers were Interested in my techniques and others resisted and were convince brute force was the answer Help take the pet out of petrified. Sadly, some clinics do not embrace what it is about and just use it as a marketing ploy. Others embrace it- it is a clinic culture- that is what we need more of! I've heard of stress free but not fear free. That it uses practices that help animals reduce their stress levels while they are at the vet. Calms the pets. I'm a level 3 certified CVT and on the speakers board. They are great! I am the only certified employee at my hospital because I had started at a previous job. I am level 3. My coworkers use fear free techniques as much as they can but management is not pursuing fear free certifications. It helps benift the patient and practice in many ways. It is a higher quality of medicine.

Meant to help reduce the stress of an animal patient and their owners

ccc dddd w ww wwwwww

Tell me a little bit about what you've heard about "Fear Free" Veterinary P...

Veterinary staff attempts to perform procedures/exams in a "fear free' way, such as not having a table but instead doing exams on the ground or on shelves cats are allowed to climb on. They also don't restrain or do anything to stress out the animals beyond what is necessary.

It is effective, but some treatments are not available when using fear free methods

"Fear free" seeks to limit the stress and anxiety of animals and pet owners while at the veterinary clinic.

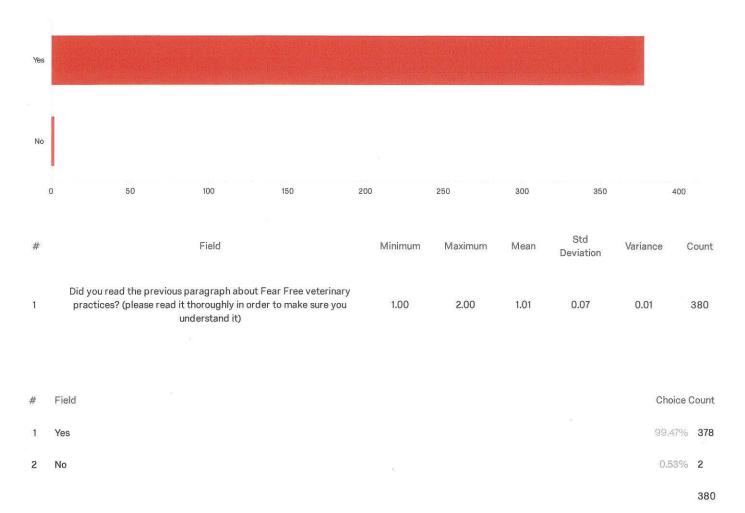
They don't use restraints on animals. They aren't that good for patients.

Only that it exists.

Almost nothing.

Fear free is when the animal enters the clinic, the smells, color of walls, and the environment is more relaxing to the pets

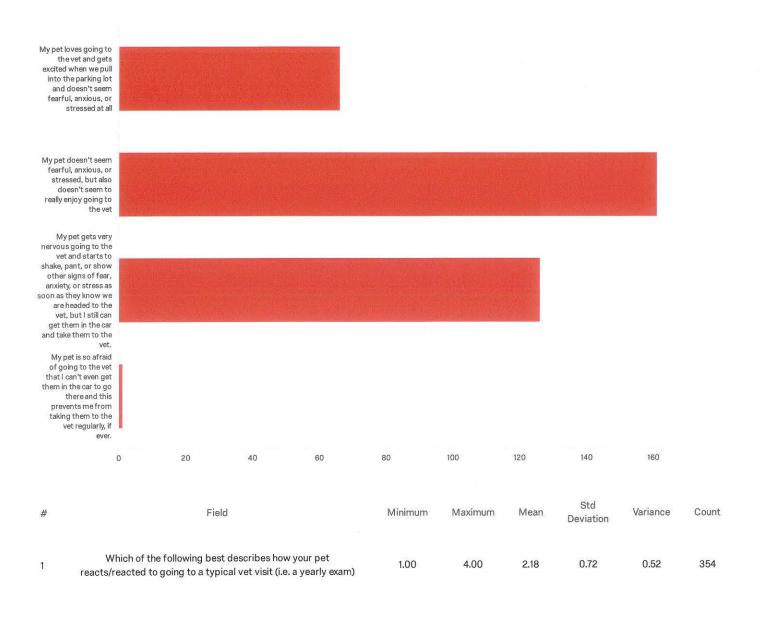
# Q7 - Did you read the previous paragraph about Fear Free veterinary practices? (please read it thoroughly in order to make sure you understand it)



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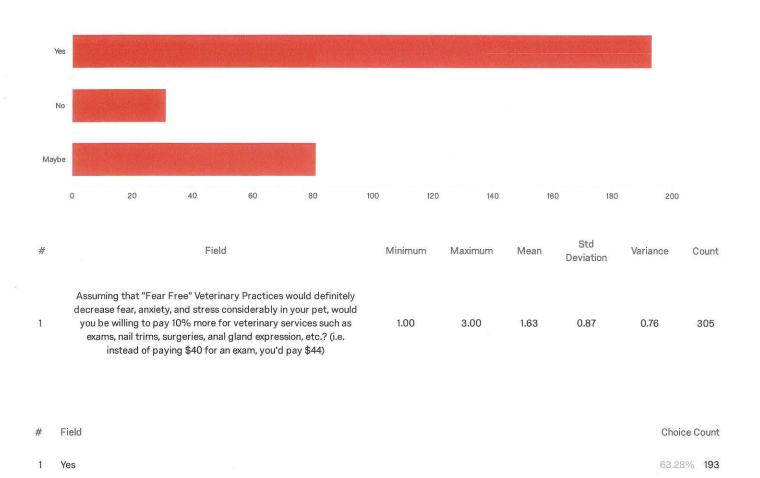
## Q13 - Which of the following best describes how your pet reacts/reacted to going to a

## typical vet visit (i.e. a yearly exam)



#	Field	Choice C	ount
1	My pet loves going to the vet and gets excited when we pull into the parking lot and doesn't seem fearful, anxious, or stressed at all	18.64%	66
2	My pet doesn't seem fearful, anxious, or stressed, but also doesn't seem to really enjoy going to the vet	45.48%	161
3	My pet gets very nervous going to the vet and starts to shake, pant, or show other signs of fear, anxiety, or stress as soon as they know we are headed to the vet, but I still can get them in the car and take them to the vet.	35.59%	126
4	My pet is so afraid of going to the vet that I can't even get them in the car to go there and this prevents me from taking them to the vet regularly, if ever.	0.28%	1

Q8 - Assuming that "Fear Free" Veterinary Practices would definitely decrease fear, anxiety, and stress considerably in your pet, would you be willing to pay 10% more for veterinary services such as exams, nail trims, surgeries, anal gland expression, etc.? (i.e. instead of paying \$40 for an exam, you'd pay \$44)



Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

Maybe

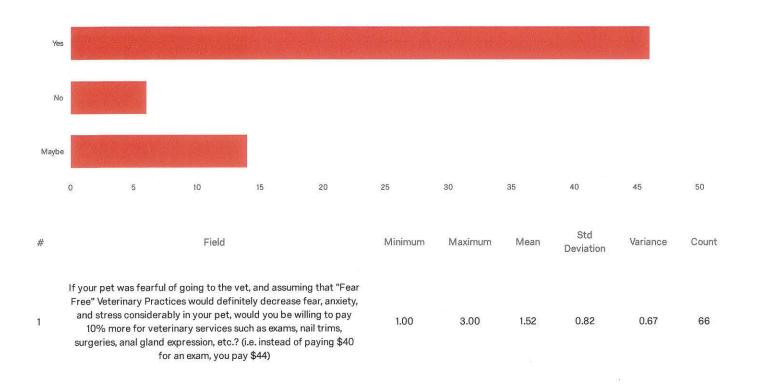
10.16% 31

26.56% 81

305

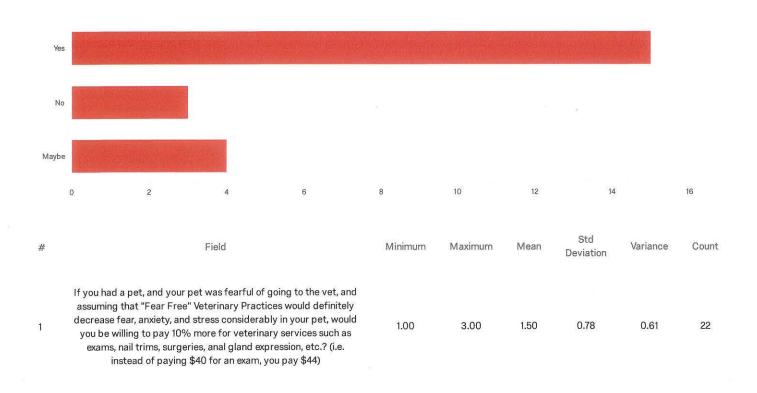
Q14 - If your pet was fearful of going to the vet, and assuming that "Fear Free" Veterinary Practices would definitely decrease fear, anxiety, and stress considerably in your pet, would you be willing to pay 10% more for veterinary services such as exams, nail trims, surgeries, anal gland expression, etc.? (i.e. instead of paying \$40 for an exam, you pay

\$44)



#	Field	Choice	
1	Yes	69.70%	46
2	No	9.09%	6
3	Maybe	21.21%	14
			66

Q16 - If you had a pet, and your pet was fearful of going to the vet, and assuming that "Fear Free" Veterinary Practices would definitely decrease fear, anxiety, and stress considerably in your pet, would you be willing to pay 10% more for veterinary services such as exams, nail trims, surgeries, anal gland expression, etc.? (i.e. instead of paying \$40 for an exam, you pay \$44)

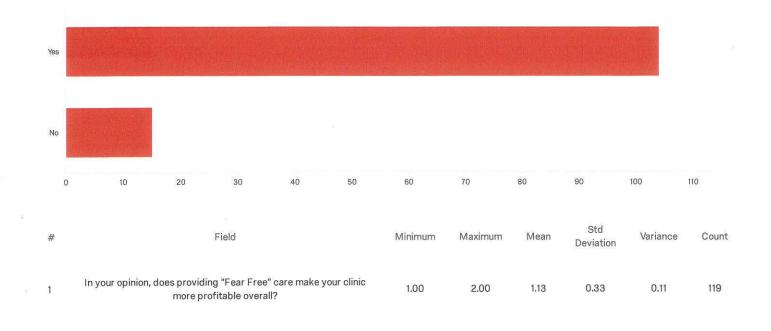


#	Field		Choice	e t
1	Yes		68.18%	15
2	No		13.64%	3
3	Maybe		18.18%	4

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# Q17 - In your opinion, does providing "Fear Free" care make your clinic more profitable

#### overall?



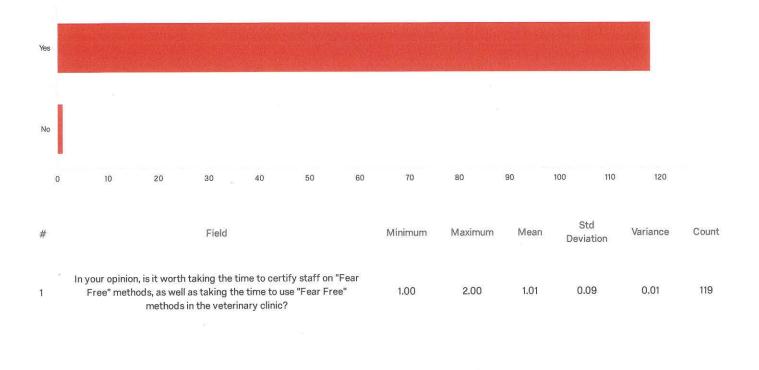
#	Field	Choic	
1	Yes	87.39%	104
2	No	12.61%	15

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

119

Q18 - In your opinion, is it worth taking the time to certify staff on "Fear Free" methods,

as well as taking the time to use "Fear Free" methods in the veterinary clinic?



#	Field	Choic	e t
1	Yes	99.16%	118
2	No	0.84%	1

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Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

# Q19 - In your experience, does having a "Fear Free" designation increase volume of

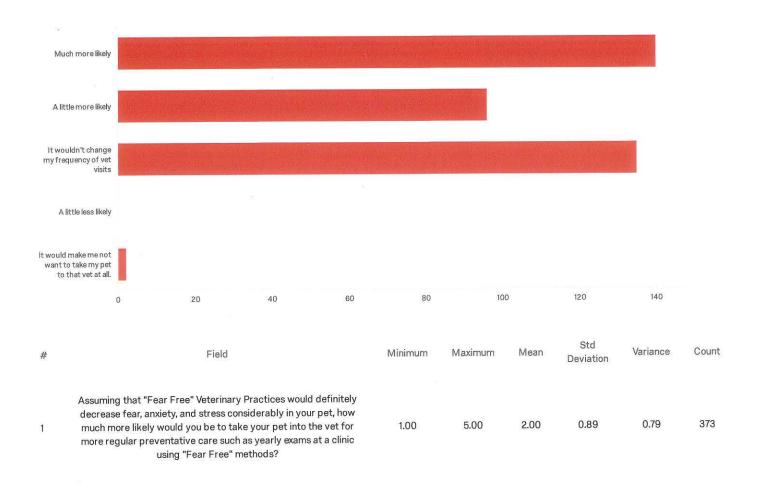
## clients?



#	Field					Choic Coun	e t
1	Yes	196.				65.55%	78
2	No					34.45%	41
			40				110

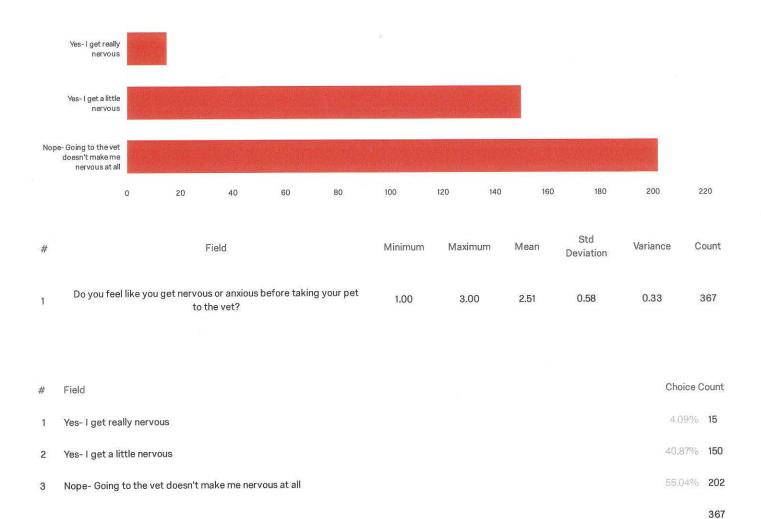
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Q20 - Assuming that "Fear Free" Veterinary Practices would definitely decrease fear, anxiety, and stress considerably in your pet, how much more likely would you be to take your pet into the vet for more regular preventative care such as yearly exams at a clinic using "Fear Free" methods?



Choice C	Count
37.53%	140
25.74%	96
36.19%	135
0.00%	0
0.54%	2
	36.19% 0.00%

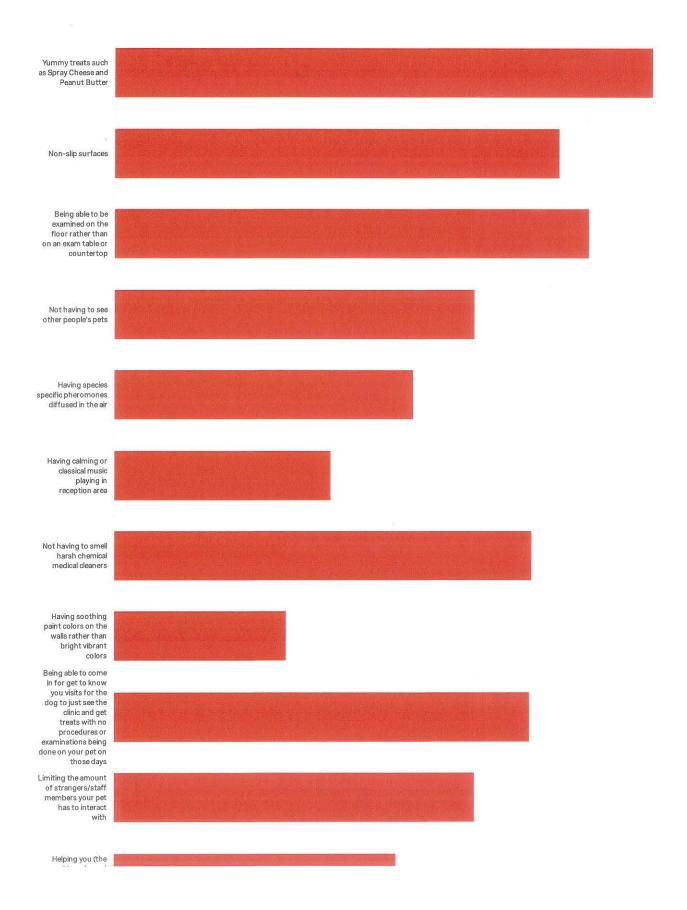
# Q21 - Do you feel like you get nervous or anxious before taking your pet to the vet?

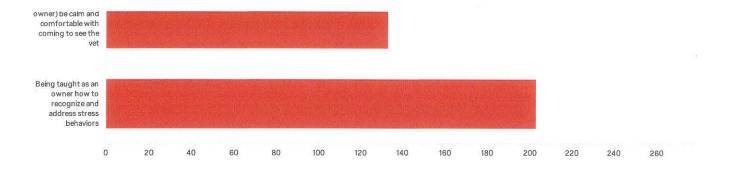


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# Q22 - Which of the following do you think would help your pet feel more comfortable

## going to see the vet? (select all that apply)



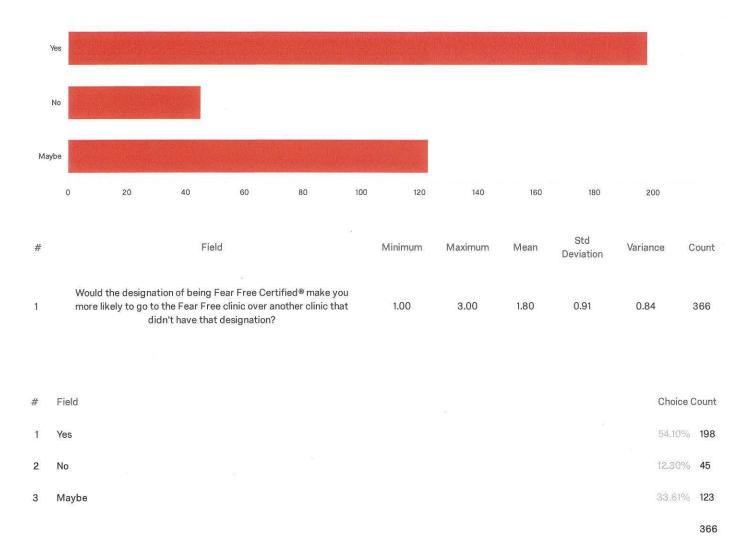


#	Field	Choice (	Count
1	Yummy treats such as Spray Cheese and Peanut Butter	12.21%	254
2	Non-slip surfaces	10.09%	210
3	Being able to be examined on the floor rather than on an exam table or countertop	10.76%	224
4	Not having to see other people's pets	8.17%	170
5	Having species specific pheromones diffused in the air	6.78%	141
6	Having calming or classical music playing in reception area	4.90%	102
7	Not having to smell harsh chemical medical cleaners	9.47%	197
8	Having soothing paint colors on the walls rather than bright vibrant colors	3.89%	81
9	Being able to come in for get to know you visits for the dog to just see the clinic and get treats with no procedures or examinations being done on your pet on those days	9.42%	196
10	Limiting the amount of strangers/staff members your pet has to interact with	8.17%	170
11	Helping you (the owner) be calm and comfortable with coming to see the vet	6.39%	133
12	Being taught as an owner how to recognize and address stress behaviors	9.75%	203
			2081

Showing rows 1 - 13 of 13

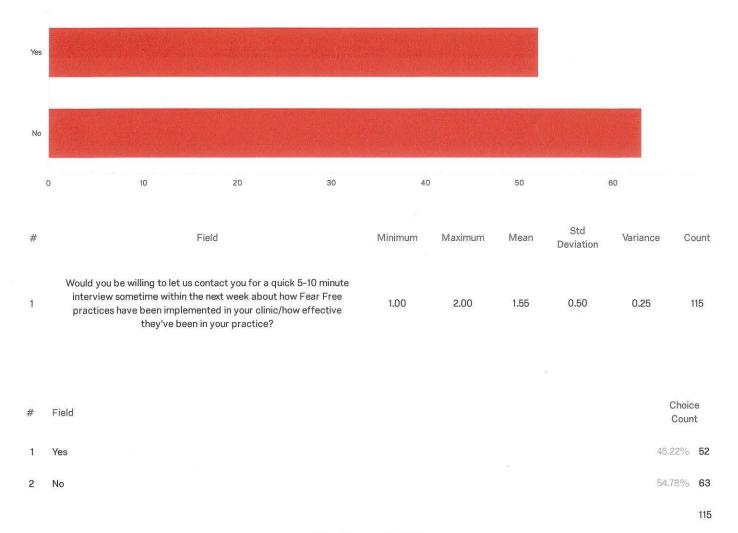
## Q24 - Would the designation of being Fear Free Certified® make you more likely to go to

## the Fear Free clinic over another clinic that didn't have that designation?



Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

Q26 - Would you be willing to let us contact you for a quick 5-10 minute interview sometime within the next week about how Fear Free practices have been implemented in your clinic/how effective they've been in your practice?



Showing rows 1-3 of 3

**End of Report**