

PHONE SCRIPTS, TIPS and CLINIC WIDE KNOWLEDGE

One of 3 outcomes are expected from every phone call; an appointment is scheduled, a medication/food is refilled, or a new client's information is gathered. Remember this client is your priority while they are on the phone, they reached out for your help, please make them know we are there to help. We want every client to feel important and welcome and that you believe the care they get at Healing Paws is top notch and Fear Free.

If you do not know how to deal with what the client is asking you, do not make it up or guess! Get as much contact information as possible and tell them you will find out the answer and return the call the same day, tell the client you want to be sure to get the correct information they need and they will appreciate your help.

Do not feel rushed, simply ask if you can please put the client on a brief hold while you review their chart. "Joanie, would you mind if I please briefly put you on hold for a moment, or would it be okay if I call you right back at xxx-xxxx?" You do not want the client on hold for more than 90 seconds – if you find it is taking longer than that, get back on the phone and say "Joanie, it is going to take me a few minutes to get your answer, may I call you back shortly?"

Do not say on the phone "let me check the schedule and then sit in silence". If you are able to converse about their pet while reviewing the schedule then keep interacting. If you can not, simply say "okay, may I please put you on a brief hold while I review the schedule to find the best fit for you. I will be back shortly."

If the client has a question about an issue that has been addressed by examination in the last 4 weeks it is ok to have the owner send their questions in an email to healingpaws@carlisleveterinarian.com or via the app. If the pet was seen for the same problem and PET IS NOT WORSE - then the email or app questions can be sent to a veterinary nurse via whiteboard. If the pet is worse or has not be seen for 4 weeks - then schedule a recheck without sending questions to a nurse.

Every time you speak with a client add a communication log to their record - when you schedule an appt "appt request type", when you learn about how a patient is doing "patient update", when a client cancels an appt "cancel request" and more. If you talk to a client, it gets entered into comm log. If you email a client, you email them through eVet and that is automatically logged. If you chat via vet2pet - choose "vet2pet" as communication type.

MANDATORY PHONE GREETING: Pause & smile, speaking more slowly than in "normal" conversation so that you can be understood. "Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for calling Healing Paws Veterinary Care. This is '*your name*', can I have your name, please? Hi, *client name*, how can I help you?" (You should now be using the client's name in the search bar of eVet - you instantly know if they are a new client or have been with us and can then easily access their recent history, current medications, & services due.)

Phone Shoppers:

If a caller asks you for prices: We want to impress them with our services and focus on the pet, not the price. After getting the owner's name, ask the pet's name. "I would be happy to help you with that. Can I have *pet's name* so I can look up their record?"

- CURRENT CLIENT

"When *Fluffy* comes in for his/her visit, our doctor will give her a full nose-to-tail examination and discuss with you *Fluffy's* lifestyle and risks. We practice Fear Free techniques and individualized medicine here. Our doctor and team members are certified in Fear Free techniques and focus on your pets emotional as well as physical well-being to give your pet the best experience possible. The doctor will customize *Fluffy's* preventative care plan with you during your visit. We like to treat each pet as an individual – I have a few appointments available next Thursday, would that day work for you?" Once that is done if they still ask you the price then you can say "That thorough Fear Free nose to tail examination by our doctor is just \$ (price based on whether it is a wellness exam or illness exam). Would you like the Thursday at 5 pm appointment?" If they fuss more about the price, say "We have a payment plan option - would you like me to send you the application link before I schedule you the appointment?"

- NEW CLIENT

"When *Fluffy* comes in for his/her visit, our doctor will give her a full nose-to-tail examination and discuss with you *Fluffy's* lifestyle and risks. We practice Fear Free techniques and individualized medicine here. Our doctor and team members are certified in Fear Free techniques and focus on your pets emotional as well as physical well-being to give your pet the best experience possible. The doctor will customize *Fluffy's* preventative care plan with you during your visit. We like to treat each pet as an individual. "That thorough Fear Free nose to tail examination by our doctor is just \$ (price based on whether it is a wellness exam or illness exam). Can I send you our website link to fill out our new client application? Once you have submitted that, our scheduling manager will be calling you!"

- EUTHANASIA PRICE SHOPPING

- "I know how difficult this must be. We will do everything we can to help make this as peaceful time as possible. Let me tell you a little about what to expect. The doctor will get (*Pet's name*) comfortable by giving her/him a medication that helps relieve pain and anxiety first. Then you can relax together as she goes over the process and makes a paw print for you. After (*Pet's name*) is relaxed an over dose of sedation will be given to put (*Pet's name*) to sleep. You may spend as much time with him/her as you need. Our euthanasia package is \$130. If you choose to have (*pet's name*) cremated, there will be an additional fee based on whether you have him/her cremated privately or communally. Would you like me to get those prices for you?"
- Do not ask the owner how much the pet weighs! You should have enough interaction with the client to know if the pet is a large breed dog or a cat. If you have not, work it into the conversation (ex: Pete sounds so sweet, what kind of dog is he?)

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING SCRIPTS:

- **PATIENT ALERT “PVP”:** Check patient alerts for this information when scheduling the appointment. “I see that Fluffy takes medication ahead of her appointment to help make her visit a better experience. Do you know if you have enough for her visit? Would you like me to have a nurse call to review her plan with you?”

- **Adult Wellness Appointment:** “I see that *Fluffy* is due for her Preventative Care exam and several vaccinations. Right now I have an available appointment on December 25th at 2:00pm or January 1st at 9:30am - which of these will work the best for you?” You should always offer 2 appointment choices and empower the client by asking them which of those work the best.
Find these openings by selecting the appointment type *CONCIERGE Wellness - Established Client* or *CONCIERGE Wellness - New Client* from the drop down options, then view by week or month.

- **New Puppy or Kitten Appointment:** NOTE: all pups/kittens require a complimentary virtual visit prior to their first examination and they must be seen by a doctor within 10 days of their owner adopting them. This is to ensure that the puppy is healthy, not physically stressed by the change in home, and is started off on the right paw. We have seen puppies who have waited longer than 10 days to be seen turn out to be quite ill and then it is much harder to nurse them back to health. Please know, if we do not have pup/kit appts available in that time frame, we would much rather the client go somewhere else rather than wait longer to be seen because for us, the pup/kitten’s health is much more appt than getting that appointment for our very own. You can be proud of how much that pup/kitten’s health matters to us..
 - “Congratulations! I love that name, or how did you pick that name?”
 - NEW CLIENT WITH NEW PUP/KITTEN
(client has not been seen since Jan 2019 then direct them to our website to submit a new client application and then the scheduling manager will reach out to them.
 - CURRENT CLIENT WITH NEW PUP/KITTEN
“You are going to love your first visit with Dr. X! He will get snuggled, loved, and plenty of snacks and they will create a vaccination and preventative care plan based on your family and Fluffy’s lifestyle! We have one puppy/kitten appointment left in the time period that we recommend Fluffy is seen in on Jan 6 at 10 am - does that work for you?”
 - Find these openings by selecting the appointment type “Pediatric FIRST Exam”.
When you schedule be sure to change the appt type to either CONCIERGE - Kitten First Exam or CONCIERGE - Puppy First Visit

- **Illness Appointment:** “I’m sorry to hear that *Fluffy* is not feeling well, we definitely want a doctor to examine her -let me find my soonest opening. Right now I have an appointment available on Jan 2nd at 9am or Jan 4 at 4 pm - this appointment typically lasts between an hour and an hour and a half, which of these works best for you?”
 - **CURRENT CLIENTS** -
 - triage that this is not a male cat with urination issues, a sudden painful eye issue, breathing difficulty or potential bloat (for signs you can study bloat at www.veterinarypartner.com) - if it is any of these signs you must schedule an appointment the same day (or bloat within 2 hours) or send them to SHORES.
 - If it is none of the above search for a *CONCIERGE - Illness/Establish Care/Second Opinion* (dark blue block) first, if none available in a time frame appropriate for the severity of the signs, then search for *INPATIENT - Illness/Medical Concern* (green block), finally, be aware of your *URGENT ILLNESS* (pink blocks) - if this is a current client and the need feels urgent (hasn’t been going on for a long time) then you may schedule in the *URGENT ILLNESS* block as long as it is within 24 hrs
 - **NEW CLIENTS**
 - triage that this is not a male cat with urination issues, a sudden painful eye issue, breathing difficulty or potential bloat (for signs you can study bloat at www.veterinarypartner.com) - if it is any of these signs you must schedule an appointment the same day (or bloat within 2 hours) or send them to SHORES.
 - If it is none of the above search for a *CONCIERGE - Illness/Establish Care/Second Opinion* (dark blue block) first (make sure it doesn’t say *CURRENT* inside it), if the time frame available is not acceptable for the pet then they need to use SHORES or their current vet and should set up an establish care visit in 2 weeks (to recheck from what they had done elsewhere) or as a wellness for months down the road when their vaccinations are due. If there are open *INPATIENT - Illness* within the next 12 hours, you may schedule one of these for a new client that has been approved.
 - **What to do if no illness appointment is available:**

If we don’t have any appointment options in an appropriate time frame for an ill pet, move to the option of contacting SHORES. We always refer to SHORES as the 24 hr urgent care facility - never as the EMERGENCY facility. We also strongly recommend they call in the late evening hours as they have longer wait times during the day than at night. Do not say “unfortunately”, “we are just too booked”, or “we’re swamped”.

 - “I understand why you’re concerned, I am as well and *Fluffy* should be soon. All of our appointments have been filled for the next several days and it would be safest for *Fluffy* to be seen today/tomorrow. We highly recommend Shores for urgent care, you can expect the same level of care as we provide at similar prices and they are available 24/7 so you can go at a time that’s convenient for you. Our staff and clients who have taken their pets to SHORES have received wonderful care for their pets. Do you have a pen? I have their number for you -(717) 798-8500. “
 - If the client pushes you for the appointment and wants to know why we won’t see a “good long term client” - “*Fluffy* and you both matter to us and that is why we are recommending SHORES. Our appointments are full and if we were to

double book Fluffy our doctors and care team could not give Fluffy the thorough care and attention she deserves. I will certainly call you if we get a last minute cancellation but that rarely happens and I don't want Fluffy to get worse. I can absolutely set up a recheck exam for 2 weeks as (insert urination issues, eye problems, whatever is wrong with Fluffy here) usually need a recheck in about 2 weeks. If SHORES decides she needs a recheck in a different time frame just let us know and we can certainly reschedule that. This way Fluffy's doctor here will still be involved in her long term care of the problem."

- Please note that we do not ever offer to double book or check with our doctors if we can add in extra appointments UNLESS IT IS FOR EUTHANASIA OF A PATIENT THAT HAS BEEN SEEN IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS.

- **Surgery:** see our surgery scheduling processes

- **Euthanasia:** Owner calls to schedule or find out about putting their pet to sleep – give them your undivided attention and be sympathetic and patient! This is a time when it is okay to let the other phone ring without you answering it. Use owner and pet name if you know it, if you don't "I am so sorry to hear that you are at this time, may I ask your name? And what is your pet's name?" The minute you hear that this call is about quality of life or euthanasia you should take on a sad tone of voice.
 - For these appointments first use holders that are available of the Quality of Life/Euthanasia type, if not please use *CONCIERGE - Illness/Establish Care/Second Opinion* (dark blue block) holder but YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST CHANGE THE APPOINTMENT TYPE TO EUTHANASIA. This is the most important thing from you to learn - if you accidentally have it as any other appt type than Euthanasia the owner will get reminders that include having them fill out history forms and talk about how we want their pet to live its best life - that would be awful!
 - When searching for an illness spot to put this appointment, work to choose one at the beginning or end of the appt shift if at all possible.
 - If we do not have an opening in the time frame the owner needs we recommend [Peaceful Pet Passage](#) (717) 691-9214, they provide in-home euthanasia services.
 - If the pet has been seen by a doctor at Healing Paws in the last 6 months, before offering Peaceful Pet, please let them know that we do work with Peaceful Pet but you will also reach out to the nurse supervisor to see if there is any way we can add them into our schedule within the next 2 days. Then you must whiteboard the veterinary nurse (and enter in patient's comm log) to see if this can happen.
 - Let the owner know what to expect "I know how difficult it must be for you right now. We will do everything we can to help make this as peaceful a time as possible. Let me tell you a little about what to expect.
 - When you and Fluffy arrive for your appointment, please text the word ARRIVED from the parking lot - don't worry there is a sign to remind you. A nurse will come out to your car and go over everything with you. Then, while Fluffy has a catheter placed so that she can be with you for the procedure, a team member will guide you to our memorial garden or shaded porch so that you have a private place to say goodbye to Fluffy.
 - The Doctor will get (Pet's name) comfortable by giving her/him a medication that helps relieve pain and anxiety first and will place a catheter or line so that Fluffy can be with

you during his final moments. Once that is placed you can relax together as the doctor goes over the process and makes a paw print with you. Once Fluffy has his catheter, you will be able to hold him for his passing or, if you would rather, a nurse can hold him. Our doctors make this a very peaceful process and will take good care of you and Fluffy. You may spend as much time with him/her as you need after he is gone. The team will not rush you and we have a quiet garden where you can privately grieve. ”

- Cremation Conversation:(client’s name) do you know if you will be needing cremation services? We offer both communal and private cremation. With communal (pet’s name) will not be returned to you but with Private, (pet’s name) will be cremated completely by themselves and in about 2 weeks I will call for you to come get him/her here. It is a wonderful family that does the cremation and (pet’s name) will be treated with utmost respect.” If the owner does not know which, “that is understandable – this can be a hard decision. You can let us know by calling back or at the time of your appointment.”

- ***Never refer to the pet as a body or ashes – only as their name! Even when an owner is calling to check on ashes - you say “let me see if Fluffy is ready for you yet, can I check the register and give you a call right back?” Do not place the owner on hold while you are finding this out - it seems like you are digging around looking for their pet!***

Emergency Calls:

- Follow Our Referring Emergency Process