



# UNLOCKING RESILIENCE

August 2023 – December 2023

Lecture: Mondays at 12 pm ET (also recorded)

Discussion: Wednesdays at 12 pm ET (live only, not recorded)

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## **How do we develop emotional well-being and resilience in our animals? This is the core question. Isn't this what we all want to know and do?**

We spend so much time focusing on behavior issues and decreased welfare. These issues are critically important. However, this course takes a different approach and focuses on all the pieces you need to foster happier, more resilient dogs (and other animals).

Unlocking Resilience is holistic, it's grounded in the latest research, and it explains the WHY, not just the "how to". Why do the techniques we use work? Why do other approaches not work well? Where are we failing to care for the emotional health of our animals and how can we change this?

- Unit 1: Course building blocks – what do animals need to be okay?
- Unit 2: How does stress impact behavior and welfare?
- Unit 3: How do emotion and cognition influence behavior?
- Unit 4: Why are some animals more resilient and how can we increase resilience?
- Unit 5: How can we apply this information to working with behavior issues?

In the first part of the course, we lay the groundwork—the key concepts, or building blocks, that you must understand to place the rest of the course in context. We then spend time discussing the definitions and components of welfare and well-being. From there, we move onto a conversation about stress and the impacts of stress. Next, we cover emotion and cognition and how they relate to behavior, stress, and well-being. Finally, we conclude the first part of the course with a discussion of individual differences. Why are some animals able to go through horrible experiences and come through more or less healthy and happy? Why do others fall to pieces?

Once we've covered those basic foundations, we'll move onto the second part of the course which is all about promoting well-being and helping animals cope with stress. First, we'll talk about assessing well-being and how to manage and reduce stress. Then we talk about building stress resilience—both as a preventative measure and in animals



that are already struggling to cope. We'll wrap up the course by talking about applying the human mental health framework to other animals and cover what research and treatment of mental health disorders in humans (such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD) can teach us about preventing and resolving behavior issues in our animals.

### What will you get?

The most effective learning occurs when students are not only provided with the facts, but also *have ample opportunity to use that information in concrete ways, engage in challenging activities, interact with others, and receive frequent feedback on their progress*. Therefore, this course will be taught using an approach that encourages collaboration and active learning.

#### ALL STUDENTS will get:

- Weekly *live*, one-hour lectures
  - Also recorded for those who cannot attend live.
  - Provide a solid foundation in the course material.
  - Allow for questions and interactions throughout the lecture
- Course access for 18 months
- Auditor CEUs:
  - IAABC – 16
  - CCPDT – 16 for behavior consultants (and trainers)
  - CEUs will require watching the lectures and submitting secret words.

#### FULL STUDENTS will also:

- Attend weekly one-hour live discussions – this is where the magic really happens!
  - Discussions are designed to create deep, transformative, and lasting learning related to applying the course material directly to training and behavior.
  - Participate in exercises to master, analyze, interpret, and apply the material from the lecture, all under Dr. Spaulding's guidance.
  - Take advantage of an active learning format where you are presented with a real-life challenge, then given an opportunity to discuss the challenge and identify a solution with other students. We will then discuss the answer as a group and Dr. Spaulding will provide additional information on applications and connections to other concepts.
  - \*Full students will need to view the lectures before attending discussion.
  - \*Discussions are not recorded.
- Complete assessments (see below)
- Upon successful completion of the course earn:
  - Unlocking Resilience badge and link to client-facing marketing page
  - Unlocking Resilience certificate
  - IAABC – 25 CEUs
  - CCPDT – 21 CEUs for behavior consultants (and trainers)

## What will you have to do?

### Auditors:

- Attend or view lectures and submit secret words at end of course

### Full students:

- Discussion posts
  - Submit weekly forum posts reflecting on the lecture for the week—and respond to at least one other student.
  - Requirements: participate in discussion posts at least 12 out of the 16 weeks.
- Complete assessments
  - Assessments are designed to assess your ability to apply the material to your work or life with animals. Registered students will have access to a full syllabus with complete details on the assessments.
  - There will be one assessment for each unit and one final assessment
    - Expect to spend 1 – 2 hours on each assessment
    - Students can drop one assessment
  - You will receive feedback on assessments
- Earn a total score of 80% or higher

## What supplies do I need to have for the course?

### REQUIRED FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Computer
- High speed internet access,
- Speakers

### REQUIRED FOR FULL STUDENTS

- Microphone
- Access to Google docs and the ability to access it while on zoom calls
- \*Google Docs is free, if you need help with this, please contact Dr. Spaulding

### STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

- Book: [The Stress Factor in Dogs](#), by Dr. [Spaulding](#)
- A desktop computer (for full students)

## What is the course atmosphere like?

First of all, I'll just own it. I really am a geek. As in, I get super excited about science stuff and dog behavior and new ideas. And I love sharing it all. Really love it. So, you should probably expect a bit of enthusiasm.



Secondly, I have high standards. I think our field could use a much deeper dive into the knowledge behind our craft. So you should expect to encounter much deeper material with me, and to study it at a higher level. Essentially, I take a college approach rather than a conference one.

Thirdly, though, my standards for myself are just as high. If I'm going to ask you to do the work, you should know I'll be working my tail off to make sure you're successful. You'll find me prepared, full of creative ideas to help you really "get it" and be able to use it, and always ready to offer extra help or support. Because I'm also really friendly and always happy to chat science and dogs. I am thrilled when people approach me for extra help, so please don't hesitate to do so!

### **Course content and objectives**

It's all in one place.

Everything is connected. It's difficult to truly understand how the many different aspects of behavior fit together without spending a lot of time with the material. That's why this course exists – to take all the different pieces of information related to stress and resilience and put them all into one cohesive, in-depth narrative. This one course will cover everything you need to know about the impacts of stress and how we can cultivate the development of resilience in our animals. I am SO excited to teach this course – and I know you'll love it too!

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Communicate why managing stress is absolutely fundamental to promoting well-being in animals.
- Detail the impacts of stress on learning and behavior and incorporate this information into training and behavior plans/programs.
- Explain how an understanding of emotion and cognition can help you evaluate and predict behavior and construct effective training and behavior plans.
- Identify which animals are most at risk for behavior issues and decreased quality of life and use this information to make choices about interventions.
- List the factors that contribute to resilience and improved stress coping in animals and integrate this information into new and existing training and behavior plans and programs.
- Think critically about the use of behavioral labels and constructs and use them effectively, intentionally, and accurately.
- Interpret and appropriately apply human and rodent research on mental and emotional health to the animals we live and work with in order to enhance their emotional well-being and facilitate the prevention and resolution of behavior issues.
- Evaluate information and programs for their potential impact on stress, resilience, and well-being.
- Analyze behavior from a multi-dimensional perspective by considering the interaction among many different systems and processes in the body as well as environmental influences.



## Schedule

Week #	Date:	Topics
<b>UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION</b>		
1	8/14	What do animals need to be okay? (Part 1)
2	8/21	What do animals need to be okay? (Part 2)
<b>UNIT 2: STRESS</b>		
3	8/28	What happens when animals are faced with challenge?
-	9/4	<b>NO CLASS – US HOLIDAY</b>
4	9/11	Why is toxic stress so devastating?
<b>UNIT 3: EMOTION AND COGNITION</b>		
5	9/18	What might the animal mind look like?
6	9/25	How do “big feelings” impact behavior? How do emotions work? (Part 1)
7	10/2	Why are “mental” and “physical” health impossible to separate? How do animals regulate their own behavior?
8	10/9	How do animals make decisions?
<b>UNIT 4: RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING</b>		
9	10/16	Why are some individuals more resilient than others? (Part 1)
10	10/23	Why are some individuals more resilient than others? (Part 2)
11	10/30	How can we foster the development of resilience? (Part 1)
12	11/6	How can we foster the development of resilience? (Part 2)
<b>UNIT 5: EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH</b>		
13	11/13	Can we apply the human mental health model to other animals? Should we use labels?
-	11/20	<b>NO CLASS – US HOLIDAY</b>
14	11/27	Can hyperactivity and impulsivity be abnormal?
15	12/4	How are animals impacted by trauma?
16	12/11	What drives aggression? Where do we go from here?



## Sample homework (for full students)

- **Unit 2 Assessment (Stress)**

- What is the assignment? For this assignment, you will have choose between one of two options:
  - Option 1: Create a handout, blog post, meme, info graphic, webpage, video or some other product that communicates key points from the stress unit. Identify your target audience so I know who you're speaking to.
  - Option 2: Take a training/behavior plan or an existing program and modify it to incorporate information from the stress unit. Be explicit about how you are doing this.
- How long should it be?
  - The exact length will vary depending on your format, but here are some guidelines:
    - Videos: 3 -5 minutes
    - Written work/handouts: 1 – 2 double-spaced pages with 10 – 12 point font
- What's the purpose of the assignment? Take the information from a course and apply it directly to your work or life with dogs. This will help you process the information on a deeper level, practice applying the concepts to the real world, and hopefully help your business/organization and the animals you live or work with!

## Refunds

Refunds, minus a \$10 processing fee, will be granted if requested up to one week before the start of class. After that, 50% refunds will be granted up until the start date of the course. Refunds are not available after the start of class.

Refunds will not be granted if you are unable to attend class and therefore unable to complete the required work. Excused absences will be granted in case of emergencies and illness (with proper documentation).