



**TORONTO
HUMANE
SOCIETY**

like no
other.

SHELTER TRAINING SERVICES

Program Summary

Executive Summary

The purpose of this program is to provide intentional, humane training and behaviour modification to animals within Toronto Humane Society. Toronto Humane Society prides itself on the high-level certifications that are staffed carry and maintain, to provide leading examples of Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive (LIMA) strategies grounded in scientific principles. These approaches are practiced daily by our team of shelter trainers to aid animals behaviour health and well-being during their time at Toronto Humane Society, working within our [*Animal Socialization, Enrichment and Behaviour Policy*](#). Our goal is to continually evaluate progress and regress our animals while pathway planning, to ensure each individual animals emotional well-being is always at the forefront.

In addition to this direct care and support, the program works alongside other areas of the organization to promote and educate those within our organization and community to implement evidence-based training and behaviour modification approaches. Whether that be fear free approaches at a vet visit, during provision of daily care, providing hands-on training, or one-on-one consultation sessions with Foster Parents and Adopters.

Program Objectives

Objective One: To Provide Humane, Evidence-Based Training and Care Within the Shelter Division

Toronto Humane Society trainers bring compassion and a nonjudgmental approach to behaviour problems, making them accessible and valued coaches to both animals and their handlers. The animals are evaluated regularly for progress and regress to ensure the individual plans are appropriate to meet the needs of the animal and their caregivers, safely.

Objective Two: To Educate and Support the Internal Members of Toronto Humane Society and Our Community of Adopters on the Use of Best Practices for Animal Training and Behaviour Modification

Training is not a regulated industry. With that in mind, the shelter trainers take any opportunity to educate and support members of the organization or community on best practice approaches. Along with their high level of compassion and empathy for pets, they carry the same level of compassion for people, and want to ensure they are promoting the human-animal bond at every interaction.

Program Leadership

Division Manager, Shelter Programs – Melissa Shupak, CSB-D, CPDT-KA

Melissa made a career change from social work to the animal industry in 2014. After spending some time in different field areas, such as wildlife, clinical, and sheltering, she found her passion lied with sheltering and animal welfare. Within this, she found a passion for behaviour and training.

Melissa is a Certified Shelter Dog Behaviour Consultant through the International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (IAABC). She also holds certification as a Certified Animal Trainer through Certification Council of Professional Dog Trainers, an Animal Trainer Professional and a Fear Free Shelter graduate through Fear Free Pets.

Melissa started her career with Toronto Humane Society as an Animal Care Worker in 2015 and moved into the Training Department as a Trainer, and then became the Assistant Manager,



Training. Now overseeing the Shelter Programs Division, Melissa works alongside the teams of Shelter Care, Shelter Veterinary Care, Shelter Training and Admissions and Rehoming to Improve the Lives of Animals.

Director, Behaviour – Dr. Jacklyn Ellis, MRes PhD CAAB CSB-C

Dr. Ellis is the Director, Behaviour at Toronto Humane Society. Prior to joining the position, she served as an authority on feline behaviour at Nestlé Purina in her role as a Behaviour Scientist in their research and development division. She earned her PhD in Animal Welfare at the Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island, where she conducted research on methods for reducing stress in shelter cats. Her work has been published widely in peer reviewed journals and she has presented at many national and international conferences, particularly on feline stress and elimination behaviour. She has recently published two chapters in the new edition of the leading textbook on the behaviour and welfare of shelter animals.

