



Bond-Centered Practice*

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A Bond-Centered Practice supports and responds to the emotional needs created by the human-animal bond.

The practice of veterinary medicine is a complex endeavor. Along with medical expertise, today's veterinarians must also be well informed about legal issues, customer service techniques, personnel management, and the cutting edge business principles that can make practices more successful.

While the end results of this knowledge--animals' lives saved, valuable staff retained, annual profits gained---are often used to define the overall health and success of a practice, there is another significant measurement of professional achievement. This is a practice's ability to care for people, as well as animals.

A Bond-Centered Practice prioritizes people and the bonds they form---the family-pet bond, the family-pet-veterinary team bond, the bonds between veterinarians and members of their staff. A Bond-Centered Practice believes that managing and supporting these relationships is as much a priority as providing high quality medical treatment for animals. This focus on building and healing the relationships that stem from the human-animal bond forms the heart of a Bond-Centered Practice.



The heart of veterinary practice is not often discussed. After all, it's much easier to write a business plan than to craft a value system about relationships. But, a business plan doesn't address human emotions. It can't comfort a grieving child when her beloved cat dies or save a misbehaving puppy from a fatal sojourn at the local animal shelter.

More and more of today's veterinarians sincerely want to help their clients deal with the emotional, pet-related situations that they face. In fact, many believe that, if they regularly call upon the power of the human-animal bond to "sell" their veterinary services, they indeed have a moral and ethical responsibility to respond to their clients' emotional needs when the bond is threatened or broken in some way.

If you share this belief, you know how important it is for you and your staff to learn how to provide skilled emotional support for your clients and their families. Emotional support that is specific and pertinent to veterinary practice is based on a combination of clinical communication skills and emotional support protocols.

If you'd like to learn more about how to create your own Bond-Centered Practice, visit the Resource Center at www.veterinarywisdom.com

**The concept of Bond-Centered Practice, which is a systematic approach to dealing with the emotional, non-medical needs of people, was developed by Colorado State University's Argus Institute for Families and Veterinary Medicine and introduced nationally in 1994 with the publication of *The Human-Animal Bond and Grief*.*

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