

The Role of the Trainer in Geriatric Care

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The emotional well-being of geriatric animals can be significantly improved with further education.

Aging is not a disease and the quality of life of our geriatric animals, on both a physical and emotional level, can be improved.

Trainers can play a significant role in helping to care for the emotional health of geriatric animals by providing education on the emotional health and needs of geriatrics.

Trainers can form part of a team that helps to educate owners on what changes to look out for as an animal ages, as they move from being a senior to a geriatric.

This may include changes in: toileting, appetite, thirst, diet, behavioural changes, sensory abilities, interactions with family members, interactions with unfamiliar people, being able to be handled, etc.

Trainers can educate owners on signs of pain, anxiety or cognitive dysfunction. Trainers can encourage owners to seek medical advice and receive veterinary attention earlier at any subtle change or difference in their animal's behaviour.

We can help clients to accept their animal is aging and provide management strategies to assist with these changes to ensure the animal's emotional and physical needs are being taken care of.

We can help create a safe and secure environment for a geriatric pet and provide solutions and management strategies in how to care for their pet, as their needs change.

Bedding, access, exercise, grooming, social interactions and enrichment can all be modified to help assist an animal to feel more comfortable and less vulnerable. Modifications in the environment can help to reduce vulnerability and help an animal to feel more secure.

Making an animal's life easier, and helping owners understand the aging process in their pets, improves an animal's emotional health.

Trainers can provide both practical and emotional support to households that are dealing with grief and can help members of the family (including animal members) to adjust.

Working as a team, can help geriatric animals in our care receive the dignity and understanding they deserve.

References

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3. Charlotte Waack, "The Joys of Living with an Older Dog", VetzInsight VIN 2018
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5. "Is Your Dog In Pain" IVAPM
6. "Is Your Cat In Pain" IVAPM