

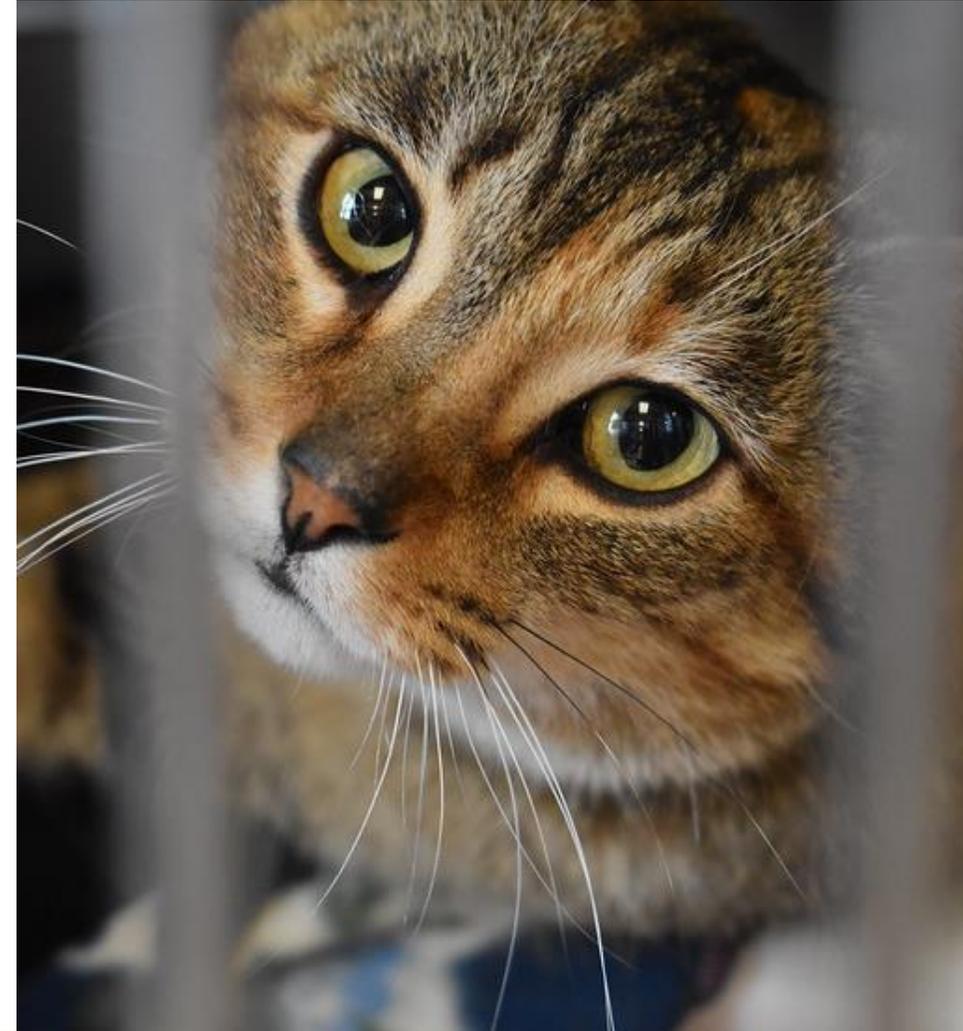
Welcome To



Humane Society of
Huron Valley

Working with Blue Dot Cats

- **Approval process**
- **Signage and logs**
- **Daily assessment**
- **Body language and behaviors to expect**
- **How to approach and work with these cats**
- **Reporting behavior**



What makes a cat a Blue Dot?

- **“Assessment”**
- **Medical handling**
- **Cats moving to FOH**
- **Observed behavior**
- **Reported behavior**
- **Historical behavior**
- **Noted changes throughout stay**



Things to think about:

- **Visits with multiple people**

- Customers
- Comforters
- Staff
- JV's
- Tours coming through
- Medical staff

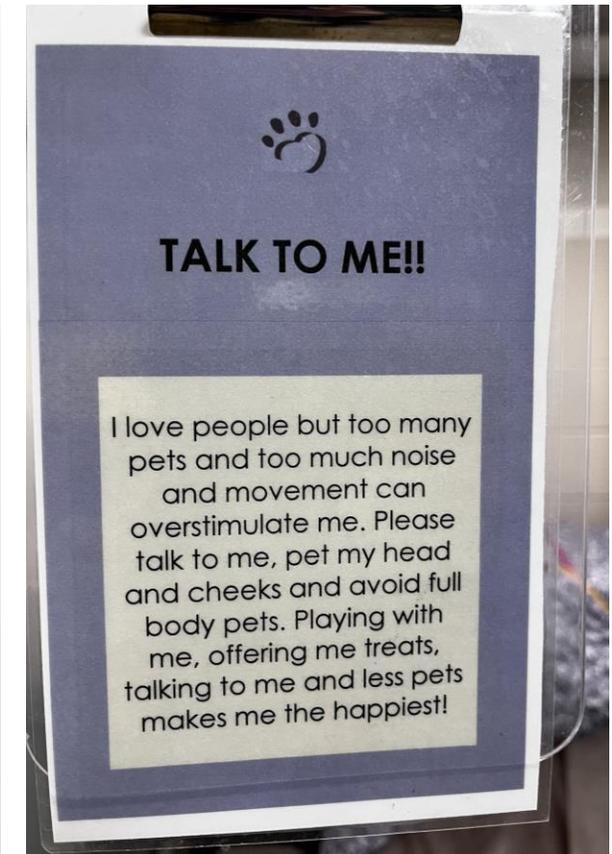
- **Might not be obvious to you**

- Lots going on outside of comforting shifts!

- **Fewer visits, less stimulus**



Signage



Star sticker

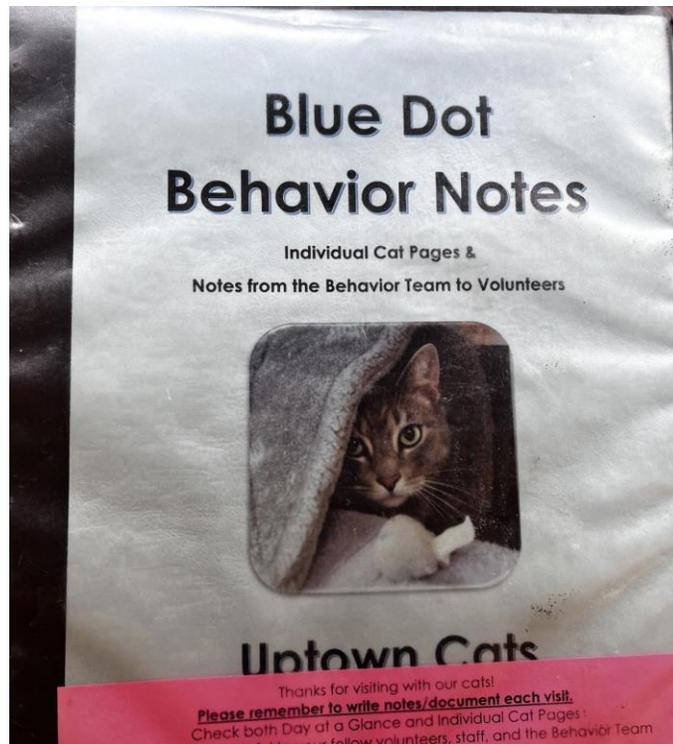
- **Star Sticker**

- Indicates that cat has specific visitation directions
 - This is actually for staff, but important for you, too!
- Visitation directions are indicated in the appropriate comforting log
- If you need more information, any staff member should be able to help!



Logs

Blue Dot Notes and Logs



Blue Dot Uptown

Simon and Valley can be shy on approach and does feel most comfortable without a lot of touch initially. Offer face/ cheek pets, some play, treats or talk only. Can become playful with time, offer toys when interested in that. Keep an eye on body language and give space as needed. Do not push to accept touch, let them decide when they're ready for that interaction. Try playtime, treats for calm or appropriate behavior, read to calm/ talk to calm and limited handling. Keep pets to face and cheeks and pay close attention to body language for signs of high arousal or a fear response.

Daily assessment

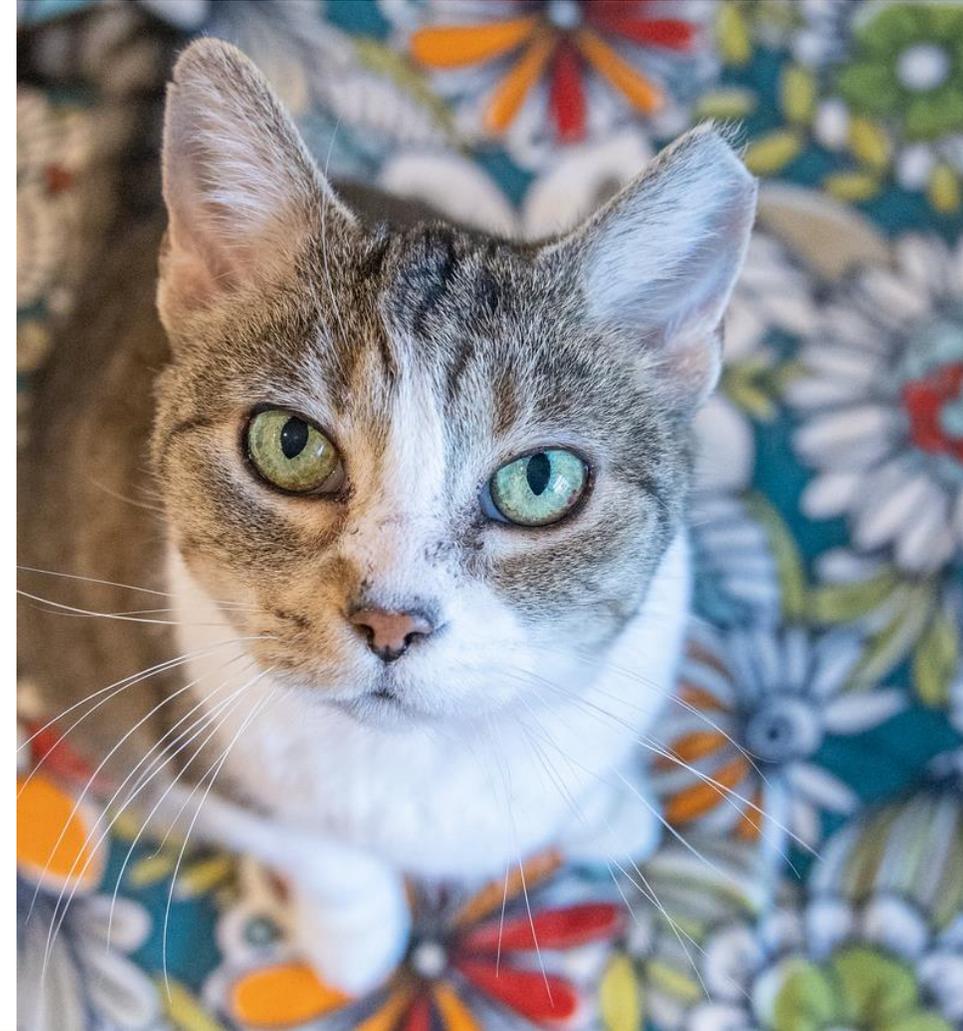
- **Comforting logs**
- **Behavior alert board**
- **Physical rounds**
- **Observational rounds**
- **Communication with staff**



Reassessment of needs

- **Physical assessment**
- **Review of all notes**
 - Comforter logs #1!
- **Communication with staff**

- **Looking for**
 - Fear
 - Overstimulation
 - Triggers



Housing for Blue Dot cats

- **Lowest stress possible based on available space**
- **Triage cats who can **only** be up for adoption in condos**
- **Top cages with portals**
- **Communal housing**
 - Hard to monitor/ manage but can be best for some cats!



From Blue Dot to JV

- **Kittens!**
- **Defensive, fear-based behavior reduced**
- **Quiet time with mindful visits**
 - Increases trust and confidence
- **Constantly reevaluated**



Blue Dot video, resource library

- Great source of visual on visits with a few cats!
- There's also a Blue Dot presentation you can view
- Even if you're not a Blue Dot comforter, this is great info!
- <https://www.hshv.org/volunteertraining/>

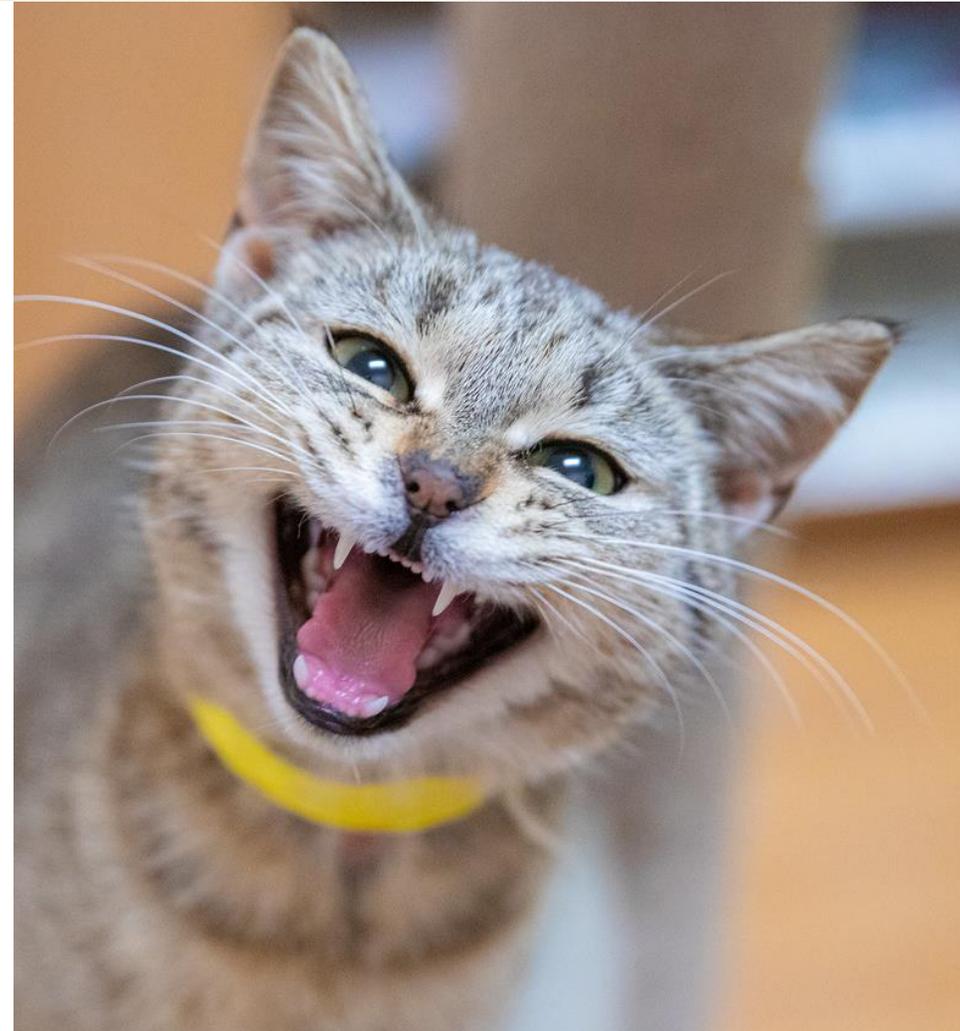


– Cat Care

- Blue Dot Cat Training Presentation
- Blue Dot Cat Training Video
- Cat Body Language
- Cat Resource Library-Body Language & What Your Cat is Thinking
- Cat Comforting in BOH
- Cat Headstart-Clicker Training
- Front of House Map
- Level 1 Cat Comforting Training
- Read to Calm for Cats
- Step by Step Comforting Guide
- The Truth about FIV

Body language and behavior

- **Most common reasons for Blue Dot:**
- **High arousal, overstimulation, handling sensitivities**
- **Door dashing, easily frustrated or cat reactivity**
- **Fearful behavior**



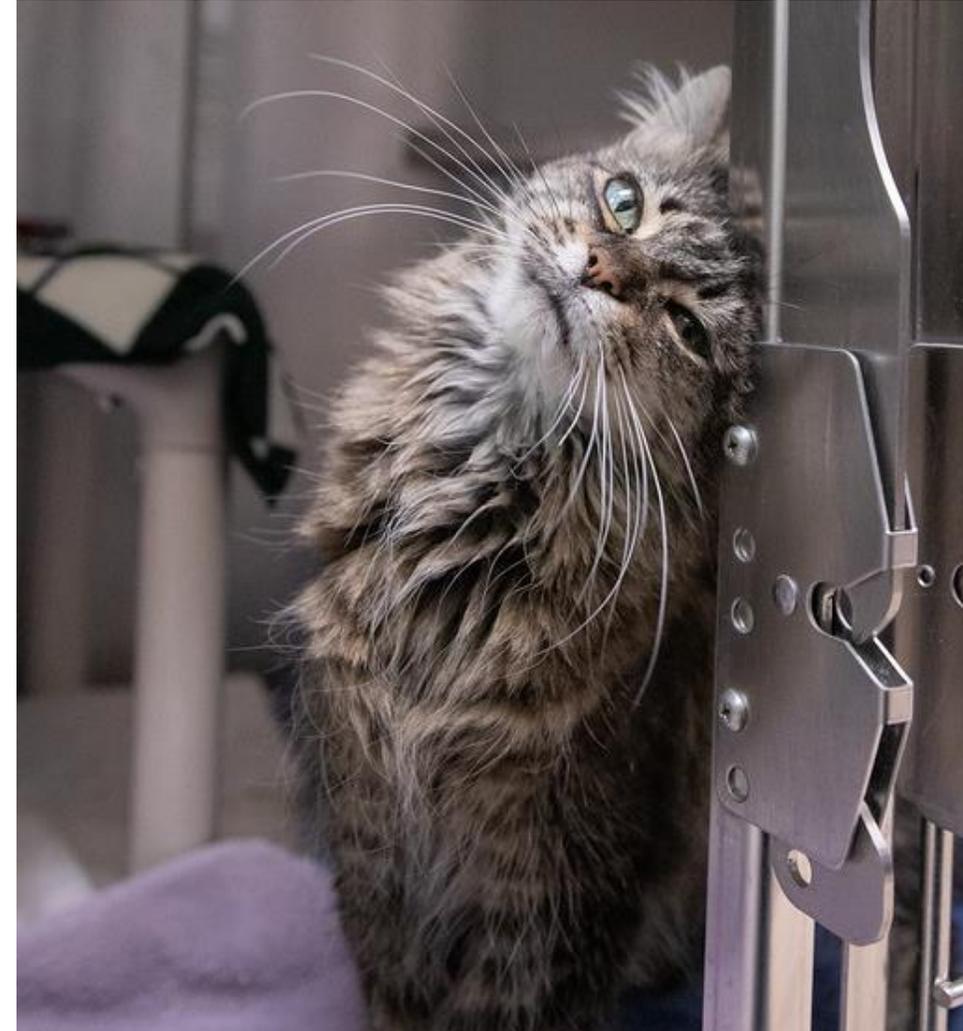
Tips for all Blue Dot visits

- **Short visits**
 - Quality over quantity
 - This is one reason for some cats to be made Blue Dot!
- **Read all previous notes**
- **Blue Dot behavior notes**
- **Approach each visit as if you are meeting the cat for the first time**
 - This almost forces you to pay closer attention to body language and needs



High arousal overstimulation and frustration

- **Typical behavior:**
- **High energy in cage**
 - Rubbing on cage bars, bed legs, hands and arms.
 - Can try to leave cage
 - Focused on movement in cage
 - Pawing outside of cage
 - Pacing in cage
 - Vocalizing
 - Use paws or teeth to seek attention or play
 - Can shift from calm to high energy



High arousal, overstimulation and frustration

- **Typical body language:**

- Watch pupils
 - Change from neutral to constricted or dilated
- Tail energy
- Coat
 - Piloerection
 - Hair at base of tail
 - Rippling
- Watch for licking or vigorous sniffing
- Easy to miss!
- Watch energy and body language



How to respond

- **Limit touch**
 - Face/ cheeks only
 - Very limited touch in other places
- **Let them move around naturally**
 - Rub on hands/ arms
 - Offer play and redirection
- **Talk only**
- **Offer treats**
- **Play games**
- **Can “reward” for appropriate behavior**



How to respond

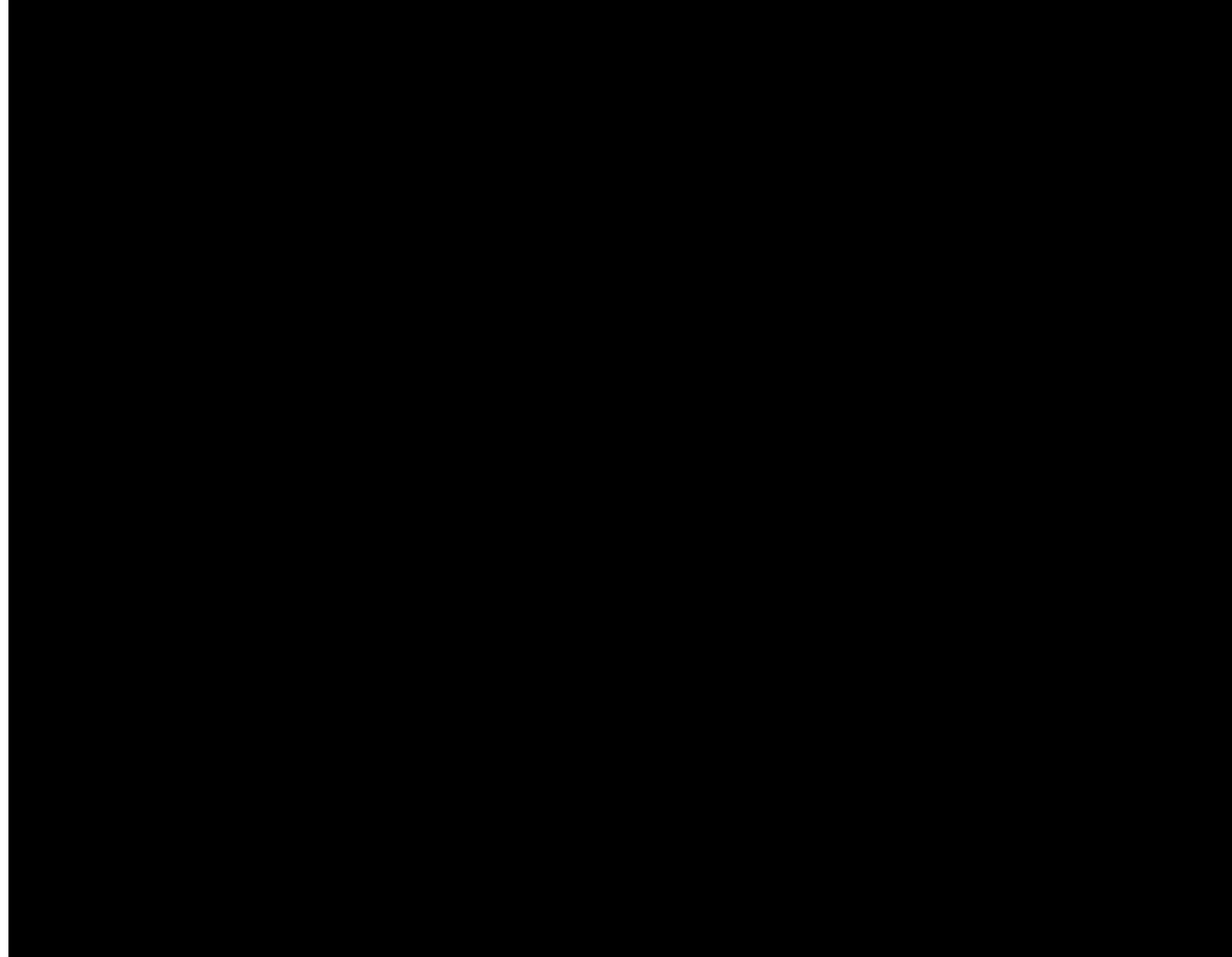
- **Clicker work**
- **Feeding puzzles or enrichment**
- **Redirect with play**
 - Always end the game
 - End visit with decreased energy
- **Outside of cage work**
 - Click to calm
 - Treats and talk
 - Read/ talk only



Sample visits

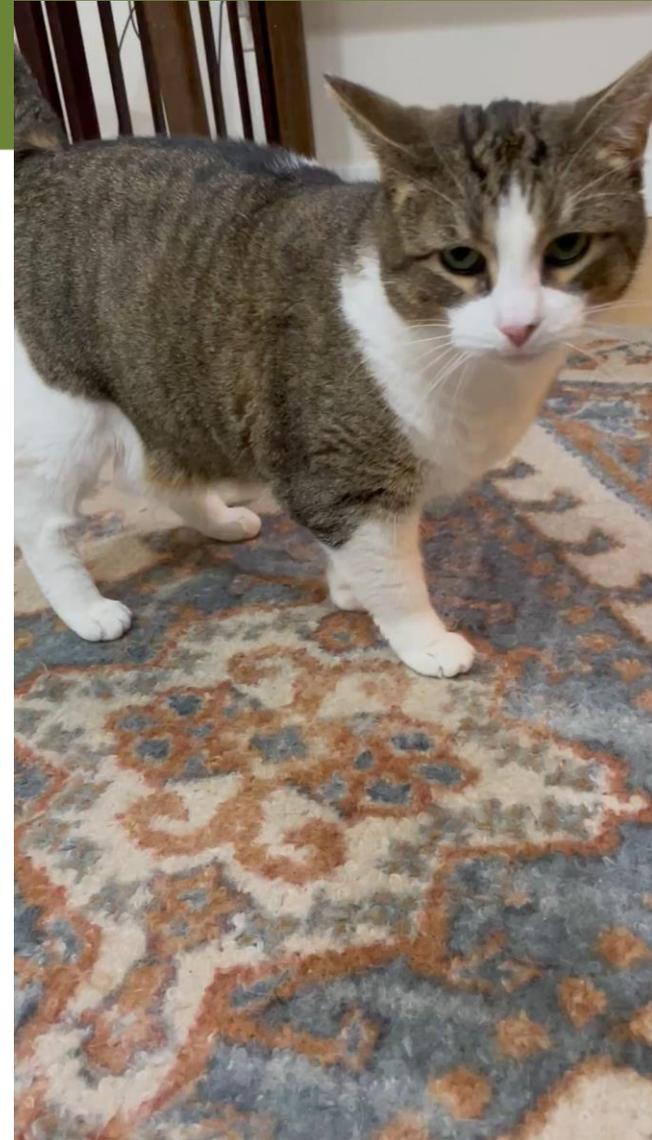


Sample visits



Sample visit

- **Limited handling**
- **Let them decide!**
- **Toys, touch, treats**
- **It's ok to talk only!**



Toys and games

- Wand toys!
- Anything that rolls or crinkles
- Toy mice
- Enrichment
 - Paper balls
 - Aluminum balls
 - Cardboard to chew on or tear up
- Hide and seek



Door dashing and cat reactivity

- Toss treats
- Toss toys
- Block with body
- Towels to limit stimulus
- Redirection will be key



Fearful cats

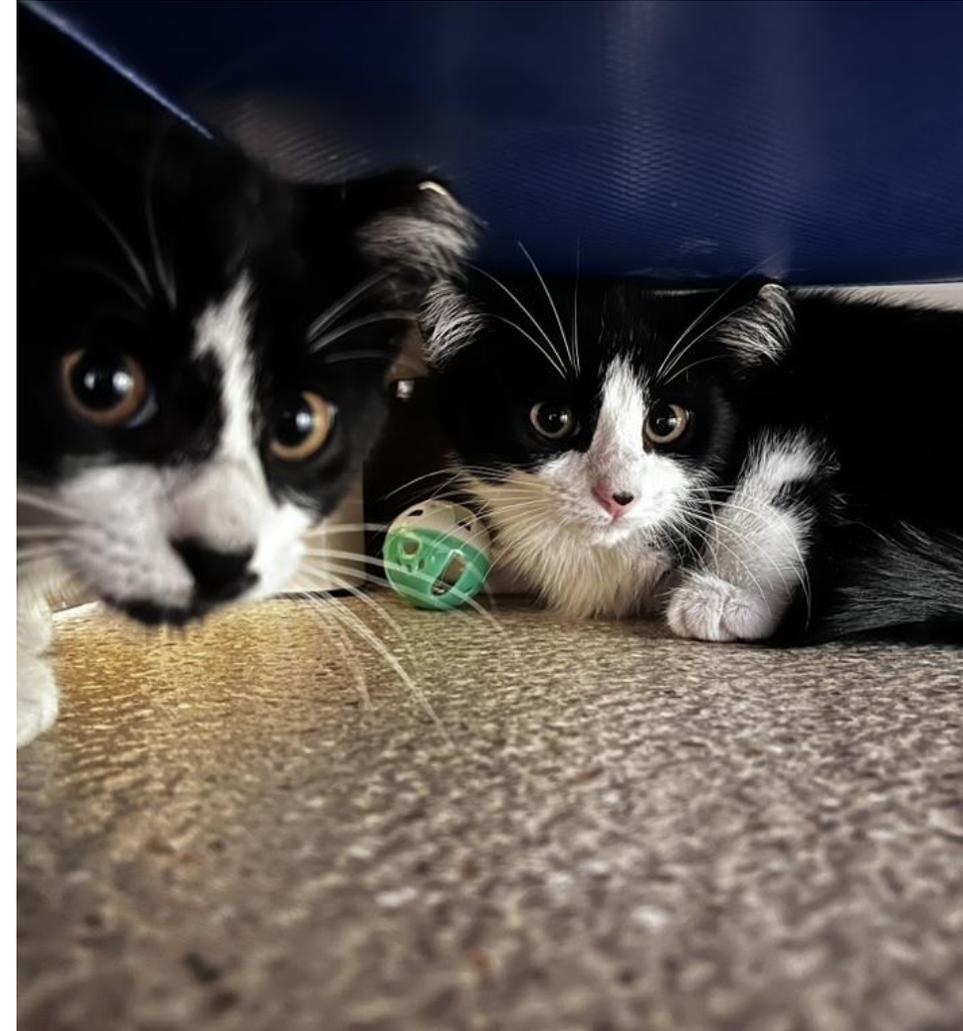
- **Typical behavior**
 - **Hiding**
 - **Clenched**
 - **Frozen**
 - **Pretending to sleep**
 - **Staring**
 - **Buried or burrowed in bedding**
 - **Avoidant**
 - **Quick to flight**
 - **Not responsive to toys or food**



Fearful cats

- **Typical body language**
 - Dilated pupils
 - Body tension
 - Tail and legs pulled close
 - Ears alert or down to head
 - Whiskers flat to face or fanned out

- Listen for vocalizations



How to respond

- **Quiet, slow interactions**
- **Mindful approach**
 - Your body language is as important as theirs
- **Touch only when requested**
 - "test the waters"
- **Offer treats or wet food**
- **Talk only**
- **Reward for brave choices**
- **Everything is at their pace, at their request**



Sample visits



Sample visits



Sample visits



Reporting behavior

- **Blue Dot comforting binders**
 - Uptown
 - Downtown
 - Condos
- **BOH clipboards**
- **Individual cat page**
 - Objective, observed behavior and body language
- **Behavior alert board**
 - In cat kitchen



Goal for all cats, but Blue Dot especially:

- Keep them below threshold for arousal and fear
- We do this by heeding body language cues
- Less is ALWAYS more
- Learn trust and confidence through mindful handling and interactions



Questions?

**THANK
YOU!!**

