

## Improper Psychological Environment as a Form of Animal Abuse

### Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society supports animals being raised and kept in an environment that promotes and maintains the emotional and psychological needs of the animal, in addition to the physical needs.

### Definition:

Psychological wellbeing: An animal with a healthy psychological wellbeing is free from distress most of the time, is in good physical health, exhibits a substantial range of species-specific behaviours, and is able to deal effectively with environmental stimuli.

### Rationale

- Mental health in animals is an important medical facet that should be evaluated by veterinary and behaviour experts.
- Animals need companionship (human and/or animal, depending on the species), care, exercise, and attention. Animals can only be in a state of “psychological well-being” if their emotional and psychological needs are being met.
- Animals who are not having their psychological needs met can exhibit signs of distress (e.g. behavioral issues, depression, etc.)
- Although current Animal Protection Laws do not allow the Edmonton Humane Society to charge owners for psychological abuse, the Society still considers this a form of abuse.
- The Edmonton Humane Society supports the Five Freedoms of animal welfare adopted by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies [CFHS], which includes the following:
  - Freedom from Hunger and Thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
  - Freedom from Discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
  - Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
  - Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour – by providing space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.
  - Freedom from Fear and Distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

### References

1. Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. “Animal Welfare Defined: the Five Freedoms.” CFHS. Accessed October 9, 2015. [http://cfhs.ca/info/understanding\\_animal\\_welfare](http://cfhs.ca/info/understanding_animal_welfare).
2. Farm Animal Welfare Council. “Five Freedoms.” FAWC. Last modified April 16, 2009. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121007104210/http://www.fawc.org.uk/freedoms.htm>.