

Mindset

The “Power Switch” for achieving No Kill

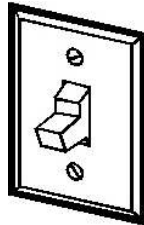
The Mindset is a critical factor in the achievement of No Kill. No amount of budgetary allocation, additional personnel, sweeping changes in programs, will make a difference without the appropriate Mindset. Progress will not be achieved in spite of ambitious goals, when faced with the obstacle of the High Kill Mindset.

The transition from the High Kill to No Kill approach is seldom achieved by a change in the mindset of the leadership. It is almost exclusively a result of a change in personnel.

This paper is a contrast of the High Kill vs. the No Kill Mindset. Which do you observe?

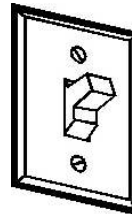
High Kill Mindset

(Life-Saving Power OFF)



No Kill Mindset

(Life-Saving Power ON)



General:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> People are fundamentally bad, with a few exceptions. | <input type="checkbox"/> People are fundamentally good, with a few exceptions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Most people do not care about their pets. | <input type="checkbox"/> Most people love their pets. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Most people are thoughtless and will often neglect their pets. | <input type="checkbox"/> Most people will do the best they can to take care of their pets, based on their understanding and resources. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals should not be adopted into less-than-perfect homes. They are better off if we perform “humane euthanasia”. | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no perfect homes, but it is our responsibility to provide the resources to improve the quality of pet ownership in the County. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There might be something in the No Kill approach that we could ADAPT to Prince George’s County. | <input type="checkbox"/> In order to be successful in saving lives, the No Kill approach should be ADOPTED, and each aspect should be implemented as soon as possible. |

- The No-Kill approach might work elsewhere, but it will not work in Prince George's County. We are different.

- The No-Kill approach has been adopted in more than 100 jurisdictions around the U.S. and abroad. They are urban and rural, wealthy and poor, and in all geographic regions.

Volunteers:

- Volunteers are a headache that get in the way.
- Volunteers waste time when they ask why we do certain things the way we do.
- If a volunteer criticizes shelter policy, they should be dismissed, because they will soon be talking about the policy on the outside.

- Volunteers are an asset that allow us to save more lives.
- Volunteers can be creative and offer suggestions for improvement.
- Constructive criticism should be encouraged, and volunteers should be engaged in progressive improvements.

Shelter Intake:

- When a person brings an animal to the counter, it is a sign of an uncaring owner.
- On intake, we should take the animal as quickly as possible to get it away from a person who would give up a pet.

- When a person brings a pet to the counter, the person generally thinks that there is no alternative to surrender.
- On intake, we should make every effort to solve problems so that the pet can stay in the home.

Adoptions:

- If the adoption process takes a long time, we can avoid impulse adoptions.
- We have to do our best to keep animals out of less-than-perfect homes.
- If an adoption does not work out, it is a reflection of the failure of the adopter and we should not adopt another animal to them.

- If we speed up the adoption process, people will have a pleasant experience and want to adopt from us in the future.
- We have to do our best to get animals into homes and provide information and other services, as necessary.
- If an adoption does not work out, we need to learn from the experience and do a better job of matching the pet with the adopter, in the meanwhile, we gained the use of shelter space temporarily, and the pet had an opportunity for socialization.

Laws/Enforcement:

- We need tough laws with stiff penalties plus a larger budget for law enforcement in order to keep bad people under control.
- Nobody can take care of more than 4 pets, so they should be prohibited from having more.
- We need to limit the number of pets in a household in order to prevent cruelty.
- It's good to spay/neuter pets, so it should be required.
- People who do not spay/neuter are irresponsible.
- Animals that are not spayed or neutered should be impounded and their owners fined.
- We need to provide community services with educational material in a variety of formats so that people can learn how to best take care of their pets.
- Some people have a capacity of only one or two pets, but others feel comfortable with many more. Individual capabilities should determine the number that is appropriate.
- Cruelty, which rarely occurs, may be in a single-pet household. Our strong cruelty laws apply when cruelty does occur.
- Most people (90%+) in households with income of above \$35,000/yr, have pets that are already spayed/neutered.
- People in lower income households would have their pets spayed or neutered, if it were less expensive and more available.
- We should subsidize spay/neuter procedures and facilitate transportation.

Shelter Performance:

- If our adoption rate is low it is because people do not care about animals.
- If our adoption rate is low it is because we have not done enough to engage the community.

Rescue Groups:

- An increase in transfers to Rescue Groups means that we are more effective.
- A high rate of transfers to Rescue Groups means that we are not adopting as many as we should.

- We should strive to get more Rescue Groups to take animals from us.

- We should work to set up relationships in which we can cooperate with Rescue Groups in the placement of animals and other activities.

The Public:

- There are many ways in which the public should help us.
- The public should help us because the need is so great.

- We should look for ways to provide a service to the public.
- We should create a positive atmosphere in the facility which will cause the public to want to come in.

TNR/Feral Cats:

- Feral cats are a nuisance.
- Feral cats are an invasive species.
- The only way to deal with feral cat populations is to catch-and-kill.

- Feral cats are a natural rodent control.
- Feral cats have been in our environment for at least 500 years – since the Western Europeans invaded the Americas.
- The way to stabilize feral cat populations is through TNR.

Transparency:

- We should not publish our outcome data, because we will be criticized for not doing better.

- We should publish our outcome data, because we will be able to engage the community in improving our performance.