

This case study is presented as an example to help applicants understand what type of detail and depth of information is expected from application case studies within the application.

You are not required to follow this format exactly.

We have offered breakout boxes to highlight some important aspects of any case, and included citation examples.

Even if you don't currently work with dragons, this example applies equally to all species as a framework from which you can base your own work.

CASE STUDY: PUFF

Subject: Puff

Age: Unknown, mature

Species: Serpent

Breed: Flying

Sex: Presumed Male

Housing: One of 12 in a convocation of dragons

HISTORY

Presenting complaint: Aggression toward other dragons; resource guarding of children.

Acquired from, and age at time: Honalee Dragon Rescue, 1 year earlier.

Medical History: No previous history known. Dragon was adopted without a veterinary exam. No veterinary visit since adoption.

Persons involved in care: Mary - Owner (adult), Peter – Owner's husband (adult), neighborhood children, often led by young teenager Paul, 13.

Housing: Paddock only. Currently, he's housed with 3 paddock buddies. There are 12 dragons on the farm, distributed across 4 paddocks, with one additional paddock available for medical quarantine and other special circumstances.

Diet: Pasture, supplemented with once daily all you can eat breakfast buffet, and twice daily dragon pellets.

BEHAVIORAL HISTORY

Mary stated that Puff was attacking the other dragons in his paddock. When asked to elaborate, she stated that he flapped his wings menacingly at them, ears pinned back, hurled short bursts of fire at them, and occasionally body slammed them, rolling onto them with his feet in the air

while “victory roaring.” This had always happened at meal times, and along with the threatening body language, he prevented them from eating, incinerating their food tubs during meal times. He behaved the same to every dragon in his paddock.

Operationalized “aggression,” described setting events.

About a month ago Mary had tried placing Puff in a different paddock, with a different group of dragons, but his behavior was the same. Recently, Puff had victory rolled onto a smaller paddock buddy, resulting in injury to the buddy’s wing and back.

Mary did not know anything of Puff’s past but said he was emaciated when he arrived, and carried a tag around his neck engraved with the name “Jackie” encircled by a heart on it, but no one knew of such a person or organization. Attempts were made to find some meaning to the tag without success. Puff was not microchipped. Attempts to retain or remove the tag from Puff resulted in extreme aggressive displays toward whomever was reaching for it. Though Puff avoided immolating any of the staff, he’d roar, stomp his feet, and create hurricane strength wind with his wings, sending the person flying backwards up to a quarter mile or more.

Operationalized “aggressive display.”

On further discussion I found that Mary had very little experience with dragons. Her friend had owned a dragon when Mary was young but she herself had never learned to play with them, and only started caring for dragons when she’d been deeded a large property on an island approximately five years earlier and started her dragon rescue, Scale Babies International.

Knowing that Mary currently owned 12 dragons, which she referred to as her “flying foster fails,” I asked her if she had issues with any other dragons on her property. She said that while dragons as a rule tended to be pushy toward each other, injuries were rare, and Puff was upsetting the convocation. Mary also stated that while some of the dragons were very difficult for her to handle, Puff was actually quite docile most of the time, and lovely to handle. He would usually come when called, and she could lead him as necessary to other locations, which is all she wanted to be able to do.

I asked if there were any knowledgeable dragon handlers she routinely consulted for advice, but aside from a few people who had been involved in delivering the rescue dragons, she mostly relied on Facebook for help. She added that the neighborhood children, ranging in age from four to thirteen, had been very good to her, especially a young neighbor named Paul, helping move dragons from paddock to paddock and feeding them at times. Recently, however, Puff had been standing between the children and the other dragons when they approached the children and feed bins, roaring and spitting small balls of fire at his conspecifics. The children seemed quite delighted. The more the kids squealed and clapped in delight, the bigger the roaring and fireball

throwing would get. Mary was worried this could hurt the other dragons, or even a child if Puff turned his head at the wrong time.

OBSERVATIONS

When I arrived, we got into Mary's Jeep and she took me for a tour around the property. It was magnificent. The fencing was all post and rail. Each of the 4 paddocks were about 15 acres, with a wide dirt road running between each paddock. There were multiple open, flame-resistant shelters in every paddock, and the property was beautifully kept up for dragons, with ample hills and caves in which to roam and nap, and enough open "runway" field to take off and land safely, and without harm to others.

Defined "beautifully kept up" to operationalize the description.

The 12 dragons were grouped 4 per paddock, with the groupings mainly determined by the dragon's sizes.

Mary's ultimate plan was to hire full-time help to manage the facility and re-train some of the dragons to be able to fly free and be self-sufficient. This wasn't a huge priority for Mary although she recognized that she would eventually run out of space if she kept rescuing more dragons.

The farthest paddock from the house was where Puff was housed. At this point, Puff appeared to be lazing happily close to the other three dragons. Occasionally the dragons would move next to a paddock buddy and start grooming, in the species-typical allogrooming behavior serving to reduce soot and ash from wing feathers and scales. Neither Puff nor the others appeared interested in our presence. Mary said this was unusual, as they typically all rush over for their favorite treats, beef legs filled with circus peanuts, something Peter puts together and stores in the barn's multiple deep freezer units. Normally, Mary pulls each beef leg out and asks each dragon to target a large funeral umbrella she keeps in the Jeep, but lately Puff has been attacking the other dragons when she brings out the treats, so she's stopped giving them the goodies for now.

I asked how often Mary came down to observe the dragons, and she admitted that she came home quite late each night and worked many weekends either from the house where she baked her pies, or at her pie shop in town. She stays home in the morning to do the feed run and other necessary jobs, and then her husband makes sure he's home to do the evening feed run.

I asked if anyone else observed or handled the dragons regularly, other than Peter and Paul. Mary said a maintenance woman came two days each week to look after the property, but she never really interacted with the dragons, though lately she'd been building 12 meter square file boards, as Paul had seen a Youtube video teaching dragons to file their own beaks and talons,

and he wanted to try it. I asked if anyone had ever commented on the dragons attacking each other; Mary said they hadn't ever mentioned anything.

I noticed the scorched feed tubs chained onto the fence. I questioned Mary about the dragons' diets and feeding schedule. She said she started the morning providing the truckloads of leftover Golden Griddle and Denny's breakfast items the restaurants donated to the rescue each night. In the evenings, Peter, Paul and some of the younger children would feed the dragon pellets. Mary mentioned this diet had not been designed by anyone or structured for a specific reason but rather, she'd decided on it after she'd found several of the dragons had taken the roof off her guest house, where she'd been cooking for a brunch, and eaten all the breakfast foods. That's how she knew they liked that kind of thing, and they seemed happy.

The feed bins were very close together; only about 12 meters apart along the fence line. I enquired as to the reason for their location; it was for ease of feeding. Mary could just drive up near the feeders, deliver all the food and then quickly move on to the next paddock to do the same. Also, the semi trucks could easily back up to the fence, where volunteers could then toss out the goods directly into the bins.

Mary was quite frustrated that Puff was lying around "daydreaming" while we were talking. She was adamant that he is normally "wild" and "moody," attacking the other dragons constantly these days.

As it was almost dinner time, I suggested I wait around and go with Mary on the evening feed run.

When we got to Puff's paddock he was a different dragon. Rather than lazily lying about, he was now making half-flying leaps of 20 meters or more, covering the entire distance of the feed area of the paddock and beyond. He was swinging his tail low at the other dragons, knocking them off their feet and rolling them into each other. Puff was emitting high-pitched screams, pinning his ears back. His arousal was so high that only smoke was coming out at the end of each scream, fire no longer a possibility in his state. The other dragons were not able to access the food bins because of this behavior.

WTF? What's The Function? Outlines the function of the behavior.

I asked Mary if she could move the feed tubs if I distracted Puff. She nodded yes, and pulled heavy chains and a heavy S hook out of the back of her Jeep, latching them onto the first feed tub. I told her to spread the feed tubs out by 50 meters apart, minimum. I grabbed the funeral umbrella from the Jeep, along with a large tub of pellets and the-big box-store pallet of frozen Chicken Kiev I'd brought with me, now partially thawed. As upset as he was, I was able to focus Puff on the targeting exercise, and after a few gallons of pellets and 4 dozen 12-packs of Chicken Kiev, he was considerably calmer.

Mary had succeeded in widening the space between the feed tubs, and the other dragons had eaten their food. Puff was now lying with the other dragons. He was attempting to groom them, his forked tongue smoothing their wing feathers, but they were not as relaxed. Though his paddock buddies didn't move away, all three were displaying the stiff neck and Kraken eye of a dragon worried about its environment.

When all the dragons had been fed, Mary and I headed back to the house to formulate a plan.

ASSESSMENT

As feed runs were the only real time Mary spent with the dragons recently, she believed the behavior was constant, and hadn't realized the issue was centered around feeding. To compound the confusion, whenever she did go to the paddocks, no matter what time of day, she always arrived in the Jeep usually containing their pellets and snacks, such as the circus peanut-stuffed beef legs. Both she and her vehicle, therefore, were triggering Puff's aggressive displays and meltdowns, and the other dragons rushing to the feed tubs expectantly. Additionally, Puff's emaciated state when arriving on the island indicated a possibility that his nutritional needs were greater than were being addressed.

The dragons hadn't been triggered when Mary and I had first arrived to see them, because I'd been there and wasn't yet associated with feeding or food treats. Other vehicles they'd seen over time, such as fence builders, maintenance workers and parents dropping their kids off after school, hadn't been associated with food, and so it was primarily Mary's Jeep and the tractor trailers carrying the breakfast donations that triggered the outbursts.

The feeding ritual was clearly the primary issue needing to be addressed. It was clearly a huge issue in Puff's group, but our tour of the property had shown it to be a slight issue in every paddock, with more feeding-time-dominant dragons, the larger, faster, more confident ones, subtly blocking other dragons from the feeders, and some submissive dragons, those less confident, smaller and newer to the paddock, barely eating at all.

Defined "submissive" and "dominant" in this context.
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The behaviors being exhibited by Puff, and to a lesser extent the other dragons, were largely to be expected given the feeding arrangement and the mixed social skills and backgrounds of the rescue dragons. Dragons in the wild do not show aggression associated with food (Ruby, Artz et al., 2018, "Feeding Patterns Among Modern Dragons") Nourishment is consistently available as their flight distances allow free ranging between continents. Most aggression between dragons, defined as ritualistic or even injurious displays and body contact, occurs in the air, often between Western dragons while defending or threatening royalty. Eastern dragons are more commonly benevolent, bringing good luck to humans and pets, ranging in mountains, forests

and oceans, and do not typically engage in ritualistic fighting or concern over resources. In the captive setting, however, dragon to dragon aggression associated with resources is quite common, particularly concerning food or humans they're attached to.

Defined "aggression" in this context

Mary stated that Puff been aloof when he'd first arrived, keeping to himself, away from the other dragons and the keepers. She said he'd looked "heartbroken." Once the children had started interacting with him, however, Puff had seemed much happier, even performing flying flips while the smallest children clapped and jumped up and down in delight. Puff had found this to be a strong reinforcer, performing more and more tricks, until Mary and Peter had asked the kids to keep away for a few weeks so he could "calm down." That's when Puff's guarding and bullying had started up in earnest.

Clearly, the current feeding program at the rescue was not setting Puff and the other dragons up for success. To address these behaviors associated with feeding in a group setting, it is best practice to separate the feeding locations by at least four dragon lengths, and to provide continuous access to fruit and vegetables throughout the day. (Drogo, Targaryen et al. 2012, Rhaegal, Rhaegal et al. 2016). Accordingly, widening the space between feeding tubs, and providing healthier, fresh grazing food throughout the day were my immediate recommendations to Mary.

In resource-related cases, I like to confirm that the aggression is indeed dragon-to-dragon and not also dragon-to-human. Dragon-to-human behavioral issues associated with feed typically develop from unintentional rewarding of an unwanted behavior (Cerberus, 900 BCE, "Human Worthiness as Providers of Sustenance). After discussion with Mary and my own observation it was apparent that this case was purely a dragon-to-dragon issue.

Though I had only been contacted about Puff, and not the other dragons on the property, I felt it was appropriate to discuss group selection with Mary and to highlight some other issues I had observed that could easily be addressed. There were clearly some paddocks where the very food-submissive dragons simply stayed away from any risk of interaction. One dragon had multiple bite marks of varying stages of healing. He appeared unresponsive to other dragons' cues; his apparent ignoring of the younger, super confident dragon in his paddock was resulting in him being bitten. I suggested Mary consult her local veterinarian to assess what might be going on.

Negative Indications:

- Puff was being overtly aggressive around feeding time. His actions were capable of causing serious injury to another dragon or inadvertently to a human if he was out of control.

Describes condition with behavior. Behavior never

happens in a vacuum.

- Puff's excitement level about, and attachment to the kids was growing stronger.
- Mary had little-to-no knowledge of dragons. Her lack of ability to differentiate between normal, abnormal and even dangerous behavior reflected this.
- Mary had no current access to experienced, capable dragon people, leaving her susceptible to misinformation from poor, if well-meaning sources on the internet. This quality of information can easily lead to further behavior issues.

Positive Indications:

- Puff's behavior appeared to be isolated to feeding times and around children, but he wasn't threatening the well being of the kids, and, while the opportunity for serious harm certainly existed, there had only been one injury, caused by Puff rolling on a much smaller dragon.
- Puff appeared relaxed in his paddock when I observed him (without feed delivery).
- Mary was very passionate about the dragons. She was eager to learn and had the financial resources to manage the dragons appropriately.
- Mary was willing to hire someone experienced to better manage the dragons and teach her how best to manage their care.

INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Consult #1

Safety:

- I recommended that Mary seriously consider acting on her plan of having a full time, experienced dragon keeper on the property to help with handling the dragons. I felt this was crucial, as it would allow Mary to develop the knowledge required to appropriately and safely manage this collection of dragons, and to help with her busy schedule.
- Mary's passion for dragons, which she considered to be beautiful, harmless individuals every one, neglected to consider that they'd come from unknown backgrounds, and that she should always be careful when handling them, especially given her lack of handling experience. Her strong belief in the popular saying, "Invoke, Don't Cloak" meant that she rejected the push to breed teacup dragons to be "accessory" house pets (spawning a new line of dragon hats, gloves and cloaks modeled after the latest designer fashions), preferring instead to have them arrive out of the sky either when conjured or through happenstance. This filled Mary's rescue with the wilder, larger, free-roaming dragons that others were rejecting in favor of the more popular "designer dragons."
- Dragon safety must be considered here in addition to human safety. Puff's aggression was getting to the extreme end of the spectrum at times, and though only one dragon in his paddock had been injured at this point, there was clear potential for a more catastrophic injury in the future if this was not addressed.

Veterinary:

- While Puff and the other dragons seemed fairly healthy, I recommended Mary hire a veterinary specialist to come in and examine the dragons to get a baseline and look for any presenting issues she might be unaware of.

Environmental Modification Feeding Practices:

- Feed tub relocation must occur as a priority in every paddock.
- Although not specific to Puff's behavior, changes to group structures on the property could result in healthier social interactions for every dragon, rotating between paddock buddy groups to give them larger social support structure among conspecifics. Though the dragons all know each other casually, a formal introduction of new paddock buddies must be carried out, with the traditional paddock house gift of 12 king-sized mattresses being offered by the arriving buddy as an acknowledgement of the importance of good sleep, and an agreement to respect sleeping buddies in a cathemeral paddock. (Beagz, 2017, "The Importance of Sleep and Comfort in the Animal World.")

Citations provided for intervention and assessment conclusions.

- A complete overhaul of the feeding practice was required. Puff was in good condition and I suggested that pellets may not be necessary in addition to the breakfast foods (Butterworth and Marmite, 1972, "Effectiveness of Breakfast Foods on Dragon Wellbeing and Nutrition"). Instead I recommended using organic kale, Romaine lettuce and snap peas, for texture and variety, frozen in 50 pound blocks of ice to provide roughage as well as relief to the sore throat fire-breathing dragons commonly suffer (Geoffrey, 1998, Effects of Combustion on Dragon Pharynx, Esophagus, Larynx, and Trachea). Ideally, these would be delivered to the paddocks regularly throughout the day so they were never entirely consumed before the next feed. It was essential that the "Green Pops" be spread out over a large area, with 20 metres or more between each block of frozen greens. I recommended the addition of blood oranges to the pops whenever possible to prevent scurvy.

Skill Building and Behavior Modification:

I discussed the behavior changes Mary had described in Puff. He'd arrived as an aloof, depressed dragon, and then seemed to find engaging with the children a very rewarding experience. Once she removed the children, he not only lost this positively reinforcing activity and treasured resource, he also lost a great outlet for releasing energy, and, combined with his possible ambivalence towards the other dragons, this likely manifested as redirection onto them. We agreed to set up a two-pronged approach: a safe way to bring the children back, and desensitization and counterconditioning exercises regarding his fellow dragons. Mary promised to have the children meet us at the outside gate before our next consultation.

Consult #2

I returned the next day and we discussed body language and how important it is to stand at certain angles to a dragon at all times, both to make sure they can see you, and also to always be in a safe place in relation to the directionality of their fire-breathing apparatus. Mary did very well.

We walked from paddock to paddock to change some of the dragons' housing, avoiding the feed vehicle being involved. This visit gave me a further opportunity to confirm that Puff's behavior was appropriate with his paddock buddies when not presented with food delivery. Puff and the other 3 paddock buddies lazed and rested without incidence. The dragons' proximity to each other varied throughout the day. Puff and another dragon were seen participating in allogrooming at one point. I pointed out Puff's behavior to Mary and she was very surprised. She had been convinced that he no longer interacted in positive ways with the other dragons. She was relieved to know that the behavior was isolated to feeding, and that with a few changes all of the conclave would be happier and more relaxed.

Skill Building and Behavior Modification:

The children were tremendously excited to see Puff again and we set up simple rules that they would need to follow:

They were each given several buckets of Extra Hot Cheetos, something they knew Puff enjoyed as they'd often bring him snacks from their school lunch boxes. They were to stand at a safe distance when interacting with the dragon (a chalk line was laid down that they must not cross).

The behaviors we chose for Puff to perform were jumping straight up in the air; turning in a circle, only to the left for the time being; and the flying flips that he'd had previously been delighting the kids with.

Whenever Puff did one of these behaviors, or even started to do one, the children were to yell "Yes!" and shoot him a few hands full of Cheetos from the small air cannons provided by me for the session. If he started to do something they did not like or become overly excited, Mary would shift his focus to targeting the funeral umbrella, "re-setting" the training session, and then reduce the training criteria to ensure Puff could be successful each time. Peter, Paul and Mary would also work with Puff individually to teach him more simple skills, such as "show me your wing," to increase the number of reliable behaviors they could ask Puff to perform rather than shooting fireballs or getting too close to the children.

Provided Differential Reinforcement of an Alternative/Incompatible behavior.
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We'd practice "ending the session" exercises. The children would give Puff a cue (All done for now Puff!), tell him he was a good boy, and end the session by giving Puff a special toy, Cavalier in a Cage, to play with when they left. The 3 meter shark cage with the suit of armor locked in it was a favorite of all dragons, Puff included, as they roared, hurled, bashed and bit at the cage, breaking the armor into pieces as they "killed" the knight inside.

The session with the children went very well. After just a few repetitions, Puff was clearly understanding how to play this game. His body also demonstrated "Dragon Joy," the well-known phenomenon in dragons of reverse rippling along the spine, and eyes changing color rhythmically. He no longer seemed as anxious or panicked, eyes a deep avocado, irises turned to a vertical position, "stuttered," short breaths, when the children walked away.

Operationalized the labels "joy" and the "anxiety."

We decided to start introducing one dragon at a time to Puff's training time with the kids. Peter or Paul would train the additional dragon while Mary and the kids continued their now-familiar training with Puff a hundred meters away. That was a starting point distance, and would be adjusted, either giving more space, or in closing increments depending on Puff's body language. Should Puff start to display any of the stuttered breathing or verticalizing of pupils classic of a stressed dragon, more space would be required. Should his breathing remain deep and flowing, pupils on the horizontal, the commissure of his mouth slightly turned up in a smile, all was well, and increments of proximity could begin. The purpose was to help Puff be relaxed when other dragons were present when the children were visiting. This part of the plan would be contingent upon his progress of the following exercise outlined below.

The children left, and we let the dragons settle for about an hour before beginning the next session. The focus on this exercise was to improve Puff's emotional response, and therefore behavior toward his paddock buddies, especially around resources.

The exercise consisted of setting Mary up with a large bucket of Puff's other favorite treat, cotton candy mixed with desert toads. We started by moving his paddock buddies to the spare paddock for a while to provide a low-stress training environment.

We then began our "Glare At That" training protocol (A. McDevitt, D. McDevitt, Control Unwinged, 2012).

First, we taught Puff, who already knew to target on the funeral umbrella, to target a large pair of fuzzy dice. As dragons and good luck are often tied, these was seen to be a neutral, or even positive stimulus.

We began the exercise in earnest with a 5 meter blow up pumpkin, the interior fan turned off so as not to put the pumpkin into motion and scare Puff. Whenever Puff looked at or focused on

the pumpkin, Mary would say, "Good luck!" and Puff would turn to target the fuzzy dice, immediately being reinforced with a large heap of cotton candy toads.

Once he was comfortable and fluent with this we removed the pumpkin, and in its place we propped up an 8 foot cutout of Saint George about 50 meters away from where we were standing.

Working in small increments, Mary reinforced Puff for looked at or toward the cutout without swelling his chest, lowering his neck, pinning his ears or any other indication of aggression or discomfort.

Again it was amazing how quickly Puff caught onto this new game, and within a few short sessions we moved the other dragons back into the paddock. Quickly, he was deliberately glaring at the other dragons, hearing Mary's "Good luck!" marker and eating the cotton candy. We continued playing the GAT for another 10 minutes, moving slightly closer and then backed up again, giving more distance and being sure to end the session on a good note.

Mary's instructions for next time are to continue as we just did, but to work on getting a bit closer. Next, she will move back to the original point and have her employee drive the feed truck very slowly into view and continue the game. I explained that if Puff seemed even a little disturbed by this, to wait until our next consult where I could instruct her. The point of this exercise was to build ease with proximity to other dragons around food or cues associated with the delivery of food, such as the food delivery truck, or even Mary.

Consult #3

Two weeks later I revisited the property. Mary had consulted her veterinarian and she'd declared most of the convocation to be in great shape. There was one youngster who needed more weight put on him, and that the oldest dragon, Daddy, the one with a large number of bite marks on him, had severe vision impairment. He was treated by the veterinarian, and bright lights were being installed atop the fencing of his paddock to ease both take off and landing on the night flights he seemed to enjoy. Reptilian Ranging Dysfunction was not thought to be an issue at this time, but Mary was told to watch for signs such as irritability, altered sleep patterns, loss of appetite, or confusion at arched castle drawbridges. (Potter et al, 2010)

The new group structures appeared to be working well. Mary said she now walked around occasionally to observe the dragons unrelated to feed run times. I had suggested she make time for this in order to better recognize dragon behaviors, both normal and abnormal. Combining these observational periods with lots of reading and watching Youtube videos on dragons, would help Mary begin the process of recognizing problems in her convocation. Mary had not seen any further aggression from Puff. She said he always trotted over at green pop delivery time and occasionally tossed his head and put his ears back but that it was not

directed. The other dragons sometimes walked over and sometimes didn't, but she had seen all of them wandering over and eating at other times. Mary had been doing a great job of really separating out the pops, so the dragons could eat simultaneously and be well apart from each other.

The changes to the feed quantity, type and presentation had significantly eased the issues Mary had first contacted me about. The additional changes to group structure had reduced the stress levels of other dragons on the property and had improved social interactions and dragon welfare overall.

Mary reported that Puff was really doing well with the behavior modification exercises. She described how the children now could direct him with hand signals alone, and how focused and responsive he had become. As far as her own exercises, she stated that she could now stand with Puff during an entire feeding, tossing him clumps of toad-laden cotton candy randomly as reinforcement for his good behavior. Puff now gets excited and turns in circles when the feed truck comes in anticipation of playing the game, and exhibits positive body language while the other dragons are being fed.

CONCLUSION

My final recommendation to Mary was that she continue her education on dragon psychology, body language, social structures, natural dragon behavior and common problems associated with domestic dragon management. I also encouraged her to investigate behavior modification and training topics such as; rewards-based training, positive reinforcement techniques, target training and marker training. This would not only help her personally, but allow her to better assess the skills of anyone she hired to help around the island.

I offer a few data collection options for clients, from narratives, to charts, to specific yes / no answers through an online survey application measuring behaviors and aspects of each individual client's case. By maintaining a dragon's eye view of the baseline, intervention and maintenance of a case, we can more accurately measure progress, or lack of it, and make adjustments as need be to the plan.

WTD? What's The Data? Without data, conclusions are subjective.
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Because Mary was a baker, used to checking off items on order and ingredient charts, I left Mary with a link to my "Puff Data" folder in Google Drive. In it were record keeping sheets, and I'd printed out a few sheets for her to start with. I asked her to keep filling them out for a month. Mary and I had decided on charting aspects most important for safety: Puff's behavior around the other dragons at feeding time, and his excitement around the children. We focused on measurable behaviors such as number of vocalizations when other dragons were in the vicinity of food, in order to properly assess progress.

Though there was a setback with Paul went away to college, Mary reached out and we discussed increasing the training sessions and other enrichments. Puff adjusted well with the additional attention and training.

Mary and I remained in touch for several months as Puff continued to improve with some minor adjustments to the plan, such as increasing distance between green pops. I check in with all my clients annually, and at last report all of the dragons were doing well. Mary has seen no further issues around feeding among the convocation.

FURTHER REFERENCES

Gurla, J.-B., A. Ostertag, A. Patt, I. Bachmann and E. Hillmann (2016). "Effects of feeding management and group composition on agonistic behavior of group-housed dragons." Applied Animal Behaviour Science 176: 32-42.

Flureispry, C., M. Bourgade, S. Henrietta, C. Monkey and M. Hamberger (2012). "Exploring aggression regulation in managed groups of dragonus giantus." Applied Animal Behaviour Science 138(3): 216-228.

For real information on assessing, understanding, tracking and resolving behavior: Behavior Works http://www.behaviorworks.org/htm/articles_behavior_change.html