The Pandemic Handbook

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

SPRING 2020
“Life’s under no obligation to give us what we expect.”

—MARGARET MITCHELL
THE CURRENT CRISIS AROUND THE CORONAVIRUS has impacted our community in significant ways. Many if not all classes and consults are being cancelled due to social distancing, a necessary step to limiting the spread of the virus. The harm done to our community’s finances because of it, though, will take many months, or even years to resolve.

Remote training and consulting offers professionals and their clients a safe way to interact. Ironically, the order for people to work from home, limit their activities, and stay indoors in some cases may allow clients more time to practice their training skills, hold a few extra training sessions each day, and strengthen the bond between pet and human. This offers us some opportunity to reach out and continue or begin our work with them. Loans and other government programs may also offer some relief, and there are resources within our own community ready and waiting with a helping hand.

The landscape of our industry may be changed for quite some time. If there is a silver lining to the dark cloud of COVID-19, it may be that embracing remote services now will put you in a better position in the future.

The IAABC will do all we can to stand by you as we help each other through to the other side. This handbook, and the other information on our Crisis Response website page, provides you with some resources to survive and hopefully even thrive in the days to come.

With love and admiration,
The IAABC Community
TAKING STOCK OF YOUR BUSINESS

JUST LIKE DEVELOPING A TRAINING PLAN, it is important before making changes to your business to set aside some time to think through the details and issues first. While we will encourage you to jump in and get started as soon as possible, first you need to know what you are starting, and why.

Take a few moments to take stock of your business. Think about the past year or several months and ask yourself some questions:

• What services have you been offering?
• Which aspect of your business has brought in the biggest income over the past 3 or 12 months? Group classes? Private lessons? Other?
• What are your expenses?
• What expenses can you reduce or eliminate?
• What services could you expand? What new services can you add?

When reviewing your expenses, be creative. If there are things you can’t do without, consider negotiating a lower rate; even landlords may be flexible in the current climate. Also, check if you have business interruption insurance and call your insurance agent if you think you may have insurance coverage. It is not likely that a drop in business due to a pandemic will be covered, but it is possible.
COMMUNICATING YOUR PLANS WITH CLIENTS early and often can prevent headaches later on, and set up expectations in a positive way. When we lead the conversation, we have the opportunity to set the tone and avoid excessive cancellations and refund requests. Leading with confidence and offering alternative services reassures our clients that we have their best interests at heart and are doing our best to support them in trying times. While our businesses are suffering, that’s not the message to be presenting to clients. Our message should be one of support, of being there through thick and thin, and of the importance of maintaining or establishing good behaviors with their pets, even in the most difficult of situations.

The news is changing almost daily. With each new update your area receives, make sure you are communicating with clients about how your business is monitoring and adapting to the changing climate. We want to inform them of advanced safety measures and provide them with alternatives to fulfill our commitment to them and their dogs. This means giving 2 or 3 alternatives if meeting in person is no longer an option.

Once the rapid changes have been replaced with chafing at the length of this event, there are opportunities there to provide much-needed human enrichment as well as canine - training once the panic has died down but the crisis remains is a great way to build a bond with a pet and change things for the better in the home.

You can view an example communication to use or adapt to your business at the back of this booklet.
SHOULD YOU PROVIDE IN-PERSON SERVICES?

YOU MOST LIKELY HAVE ALREADY BEEN MAKING DECISIONS about whether to continue to offer in-person services or whether to suspend; that’s why you are reading this handbook! Unfortunately, decisions about whether to open or close and to what extent may have to be made again (maybe several times). We may experience many months of increasing and decreasing social distancing, as infection rates rise and fall. This means that we may constantly be reassessing whether to hold in-person services and if so in what form. Some possibilities are:

- Indoor group lessons, full-size
- Indoor group lessons, reduced-size
- Outdoor group lessons
- Private lessons, indoors or outdoors
- In-home private lessons or consultations
- Day training or board-and-train
- Animal shelter training

If you own or lease a facility, there are additional considerations, which are addressed in the next chapter. The important thing is to stay informed about your government’s advice; in the U.S. that means checking the federal government and your state or local government’s recommendations.
If it is safe and allowed to provide in-person services where you are, follow the recommendations of your national and local governments. These include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based cleaner
- Stay at least six feet away from others
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Greet others without a handshake
- You, your employees and your clients should stay home if unwell
- Avoid sharing tools and treats
- Sanitize phone and car between clients
- Be aware of how our masked human faces are perceived by our animals!

Wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19, and follow official guidelines. Be aware that not all masks are equally effective, and that wearing a mask properly is as important as wearing one at all. (WHO (COVID-19) advice for the public: When and how to use masks).
FOR THOSE WHO OWN OR LEASE A FACILITY

IF YOU OWN OR LEASE A FACILITY, you may have additional concerns.

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but studies suggest that it may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to much longer. If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with soap and warm water or a simple disinfectant. (See www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses).

Appropriate cleaning solutions:

- Regular soap and warm water
- Bleach solution (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water, or 4 tsp bleach per quart of water) Note: Bleach can discolor objects and should only be mixed with water. Mixing bleach with ammonia and other household cleaners like toilet bowl cleaner can create chlorine gas. The fumes can be fatal.
- Isopropyl alcohol cleaning solutions must be more than 70%-80% alcohol (not more as a higher percentage will evaporate too quickly). Note: Alcohol cleaning solutions can be flammable.
- Hydrogen peroxide products must not be mixed with vinegar. This creates peracetic acid, which is potentially toxic and is a strong irritant.

With the overhead of the facility, you have extra expenses, and more need for additional income. If it is safe and allowed where you are, brainstorm other ways you can use your facility to provide services that people in your area need right now:
• **Rentals** – allow clients or colleagues to rent your facility with an occupancy limit so that they can practice training or safely exercise their dog. When reaching out to past clients frame the rental around the specifics of what they were working on or need access to such as equipment etc. (for example, if your facility has mirrors to work on precision behaviors like tricks or heeling).

• **Day training** – if equipped to do so, you can offer day training on a limited basis to clients. This could be a valuable service for essential personnel who are working long hours and unable to provide exercise and training for their dogs. It is an especially good idea if you have the means to provide a no contact drop off and pick up service utilizing a kennel or tether in the lobby and maintaining safe distance.

• **Allow other trainers to rent to shoot videos.**

• **Stress the ability to work reactive dogs** in a safe setting for affordable rates.

• **Consider “reverse lessons”**, where clients rent your space and you hold virtual lessons while they are there. This would require them to be able to access your building without you present.

All of these options will require careful thought, especially about cleaning requirements. If you still cannot bring in enough income to cover the costs of the facility and provide you the income you need, communicate with your landlord or mortgage company. While most leases are landlord-friendly, in these financial times, a landlord may be willing to work with you to avoid losing a tenant.

Options could be a payment forbearance for a length of time and additional monthly payments to repay the amounts owed. In some cases, you might also be able to extend the terms of your mortgage or lease. You may also want to ask an attorney to review your lease terms so you understand what could happen in the event you cannot pay rent.

Don’t shy away from having the conversation. Even if the answer is no, at least you were proactive and know where you stand.

We’ve created sample letters for you to use and adapt for use with your own mortgage company or landlord.

*Sample letter for mortgage forbearance*

*Sample letter for rent forbearance*
THE REALITY IS THAT DEMAND for your in-person services has likely already plummeted, and you are ready to try virtual or remote offerings.

Virtual consulting means working with your animal training and behavior clients without being in the same space as they are. The work of training is done by the client, with the consultant being available for creating behavior plans, assessing progress, problem-solving, and giving advice on techniques. This can be one-on-one lessons in real time, group lessons in real time, or you can provide written instruction to your clients and have them submit a video for you to review and comment – your imagination is the limit! Common ways of doing this include instant messaging, video chat, email correspondence, social media groups, sharing pictures and videos, etc.

We will review private consultations, group classes, and memberships separately and in detail, but a few general guidelines apply to all remote learning.
IN GENERAL
It is impossible to exactly replicate the classroom experience. This means you need to rethink design and format, and sort through different scenarios of how you will accomplish your course goals.

For example, in the classroom you may be able to speak passionately about your dog training experiences and hold attention for a long period of time, but keep in mind that in that venue you are communicating with more than your voice and can also receive clear signals from your learners about their level of interest.

Planning
• Review your lesson plans and adapt or rewrite as necessary.
• Consider creating a handout/explainer of how you need your clients to set up their video, what platform they can use to upload video if appropriate, what kinds of cameras you recommend (or if a phone is fine to record video) any other tech requirements you have of them.
• Have a backup plan in case of tech failure

Be inclusive
• Use tools that your clients will likely be able to use easily.
• Not all clients are also familiar with, or interested in using, the latest platforms. If step one is to ask a client to create an account on a platform they’ve never heard of, then abandon that choice or offer it along with alternatives.
• Don’t underestimate the benefits of simple email communication! It is accessible and can be very effective.
• Many free content hosting, learning management, and communication platforms provide exactly what you need to ensure everyone can participate.

Provide easy access to content
Avoid sending large files as email attachments. There are many free online services to store your content: Google Docs, YouTube, Dropbox, WordPress, Wix, to name a few.

Even with hosted content you need to consider the format and file size of any materials you intend for clients for download. Most students will be able to read on the web or download a PDF. Other less common file formats should be reconsidered. Ideally, your hosted materials have options for both viewing online and downloading.
Delivery
• Use headings to break up the information
• If you mention a resource available on the Web, link to it rather than explain how to find it. Starting out you might include navigation tips, but fade these out over time for the sake of brevity.
• Keep your writing crisp and concise
• Use bullet points instead of long paragraphs
• Use visuals to convey information quickly
• Any important details that students might need to revisit, such as due dates, should be in written text (not video!)

EQUIPMENT
While you can likely provide virtual training services with the technology you already have available at home – your cell phone and/or laptop – here are a few suggestions of tools and equipment that will increase the quality of your video and audio.

Web camera
While most computers and laptops have a webcam already installed, you might find yourself wanting a higher quality camera for your videos. If your video recordings are grainy or choppy, then opt for an external webcam such as the Logitech HD Pro Web-cam C920 or Logitech C922 Pro Stream Webcam.

A good quality webcam could be the only extra you need for now.

Microphone
An external microphone can increase sound quality so that you can be heard more clearly. While a good set of wired headphones are a great budget option, for more professional sound you’ll want an external microphone.

The Blue Snowball USB microphone is a great affordable option with high quality sound.

A step up from the Blue Snowball is the Blue Yeti Microphone which has more advanced features for even better sound.

Microphones for phone or camera
Alcoxcon Wireless Lapel Mic
Rode VideoMicro
Wireless Microphone System with Headset
Lighting
There are lots of great options for lighting in various ways. For best lighting, you’ll want natural light and artificial light to be located behind the camera.

For full room brightening, you’ll likely opt for a photography lighting kit such as Emart’s 600W Photography Photo Video Portrait Studio Day Light Umbrella Continuous Lighting Kit.

Additionally, this Neweer 2 Pack Dimmable LED video light is a compact way to bring lots of light into your space.

Ring lights and directional lights can also remove shadows in videos, especially when you are sitting close to the camera for a consulting call such as this 8” Selfie with Ring Light with Tripod and Cell Phone Holder.

All of these tools are optional but can make your videos and calls appear more professional. The important thing to remember is to do the best you can with what you have even if adding additional equipment isn’t in the budget right now.

This Youtube video on How to Look Good on Video Calls is helpful!

PRIVATE LESSONS OR CONSULTATIONS
It may be necessary to move some, or all, of your private lessons and consultations to an online format. While this might feel overwhelming, it can be really easy and fun to do!

Make sure that you are setting aside at least 15 minutes before your lesson is about to begin to get settled and make sure that all of your technology is working properly, and to get your dogs settled to reduce distractions.

If you can, set up a quiet room in your house as an in-home studio – that makes it easier to be ready to jump in and work. Don’t forget to test your camera angles, and consider using painters tape or furniture to mark where you are in view.

You’ll want to plan your lessons and consultations out much the same way as you would when conducting them in person. Just because we are now behind cameras, we don’t want to lose the personal touch that our clients love from us.

Spend the first few minutes asking your clients to review how things have been since the last time you met. Don’t forget to ask leading questions that help you to get a full picture of what life has been like, especially in regards to the behaviors that you are working on.
Once you’ve connected with and caught up with how your client’s doing, go over your first part of the lesson. Come prepared with three or four behaviors/techniques that you’d want to teach and discuss. A short overview of the behavior, demo and discussion about how this behavior plays a role in the overall goal of training.

For example, if we were working on excitability at the door for a young teenage dog, we might be working on a “go to bed” behavior when the stimulus of the doorbell is added.

I would discuss with the pet parent that this behavior is desirable because it prevents the dog from rushing guests at the door, running out the opened door and promotes relaxation.

I would then demo how to send my dog to their bed from 2-3 feet away or show them a video highlighting the exercise should I not have a demo dog available.

Then I would invite them to try the exercise with the goal of 10 successful repetitions before moving on to the next level of difficulty. I would watch and coach while they practice just as I would in real life. Then once again reconvene to ask how the exercise felt, what did they find challenging and work on addressing any of those elements together.

At left and on the following page is a list of the tools that you can use to make virtual lessons and consultations easier.

It is important that you do not upload videos directly to your website. Videos require a lot of storage space which can slow websites down and affect performance.

Now is a good time to keep in contact with past and present clients. Don’t hesitate to reach out via email newsletters, email messages or even phone calls to check on progress and offer assistance if they could use a refresher.
GROUP CLASSES

Setting up group classes for online learning could be a great way to connect with several clients at one time. This could also be a low cost way for you to stay connected with clients and keep them working towards their goals.

For classes that meet at a specific time each week, you’ll want to use a live meeting option such as those mentioned on the previous page (Zoom, Skype, etc.). These would work much like an in-person class where the instructor provides a lesson plan and demonstrates the exercises to be completed. Students then work through the exercises at the same time and the instructor guides each pair individually.

These classes could be supplemented with a Facebook group or other online learning platform for notes, discussion and additional feedback, but that isn’t necessary.

ONLINE COURSES

Another option for providing learning for multiple students is either a guided or self-study course for pet parents. If you think you want to create a course, it is important to remember that the course should be in easy to understand terms and facilitate a transformation that the pet owner can achieve either on their own or with a little support.

Examples of good topics for online courses could be:

- Rapid Recalls in 30 Days or Less
- 10 Tricks to Teach Your Dog in Quarantine
- Creating Calm Canines
- 5 Cooperative Care Exercises To Do at Home

Options for creating online courses that require little effort to get up and running:

- Facebook group & units
- Teachable
- Gumroad
- Easycourse
- Google Classroom
- Thinkific
- Membervault
MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

One more way to provide instruction and feedback to your clients and make some income is membership groups. In this model, clients pay a fee to belong to the group, and you provide information and support within the group. The most popular membership groups are Facebook Groups and Patreon for YouTube.

The membership model can look a number of different ways as long as it is adding value to the client’s life.

Some examples of what to include in membership programs:

- Twice weekly short video instructions released on a schedule.
- Clients have the ability to post 30 second videos for feedback.
- Exclusive ebooks or handouts.
- Members can ask two questions in the membership group each week.
- Members get access to exclusive offers and discounts.
- Members have access to weekly office hours if they need to chat.

You can also form a “club” for behavior clients working through similar issues, say leash reactivity.

- Clients pay some dollars a month for access, say between $20 and $50 depending on what your market is.
- They offer each other support and form a supportive community in which to share stories, struggles and victories.
- You offer daily guidance in the form of exercises, videos, written material or just comments and advice to specific questions.
- Once life gets back to normal you can offer “training parties” or supportive exercises for this new community.

Building engagement in any community takes time and effort. The amount of enthusiasm that you hold will be contagious and will get people excited to interact. The more interaction that your content receives, the more that other people will see it.

Don’t be discouraged if you aren’t receiving immediate feedback in the form of a lot of comments in interaction. While most people are reading, absorbing and doing the things you provide, the majority of members in a group will be silent by nature. That doesn’t mean you aren’t doing a good job or providing value.

This should be a lower cost way for people to interact with you, and benefit from your expertise and advice. Set your pricing according to the amount of time and effort that you are putting in.
WAYS TO CREATE ENGAGEMENT

Plan your activities and your communication around a schedule. For example, consider a Sunday “Get ready for…” sneak preview of the week, or a short weekly recap video. Use your imagination and keep it the same each week. The more we build anticipation in our courses the stronger the engagement will be.

Some interactive topic examples to generate engagement include canine fitness, daily enrichment, puppy socialization, dogs and kids, cooperative care, and boredom busters.

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
BEST PRACTICES FOR REMOTE CONSULTATIONS

REMOTE CONSULTATIONS are obviously going to be different than in-person sessions. Understanding what is happening with behavior cases requires new investigative skills, and a really great intake form asking questions that operationalize behaviors, rather than just labeling them. And no, we do not need to see the dog growling at the baby to understand the issue!

You are also not there physically to demonstrate to clients the mechanics of training. So how do you still teach your client the skills from your computer screen?

See our Crisis Response website page for videos on this and other subjects regarding remote consulting.

It’s critical that in cases of potential danger to dogs or people, the first step is to have clients arrange the environment for as much safety as possible. That needs to be first and foremost.
Here’s how to organize your remote session:

**History taking**

Whether you’re meeting with a client because their dog has a bite history or because they want to teach their puppy to sit, you still need to take a detailed history.

- Use an intake form to get an idea of what your clients perceive as issues, what their training goals are, the family dynamic and who their dog is.
- In your first session, have your intake form handy. Either print it out so that you are able to refer to it, have it separate on your tablet or another monitor, or have it easily accessible to review.
- With your list of behavior-related questions, take a full history. Make sure you cover:
  - The dog’s history, if known.
  - The dog’s medical history
  - Family history
  - Training history
  - Investigate the behavioral issues including antecedents and consequences: what prompts this behavior, in what setting, around whom or what stimuli?
- Clients may decide they would like to show you a video of the concerning behaviors before you meet. If this is a behavior that they have already captured on video, then that’s fine. If not, let your clients know that it’s not always necessary for you to see the behavior in order to help them.
- In the case of potentially dangerous (to the dog or to humans) behavior, the first thing to address is the physical safety and environmental management of the space, especially at a time when tensions are running high and distance may not be possible.

**Create a plan.**

This should include the steps that you will take to help the clients reach their end goals. Think about:

- What foundation behaviors are important for your client?
- What behavior modification will be needed?
- What management will be needed?
- How will this unfold and over approximately how many sessions?
- Be very clear about what you will provide for your client.
- Be very clear about what you expect from your client and the daily commitment they will need to achieve their goals.
**Teach**

Teach your clients the mechanical skills needed to achieve their training goals. Without being physically there to demonstrate, use some different virtual options:

- **Videos.** Record some basic skills such as how to use a clicker, how to use a lure, or how step-by-step to teach a new skill.
- **Interactive games.** For example, when teaching your clients to time their click, have them click every time you say the word “now.” (Be aware that time delays can be an issue at times.)
- **Use pre-recorded videos** from your favorite YouTube channel to supplement any information you may not have recorded yourself.
- **Create some canned “how-to” written instructions** for your clients to walk them through how to teach specific skills such as mat training or targeting. Include pictures where you can. You can also pair this with your how-to videos.
- **Create quizzes** for your clients. A quiz about body language, for example, can help your clients engage with the additional materials and keep them on track.
- **Provide homework.** Write out a specific set of instructions such as (for example):
  - Practice mat training 1-2 times per day. During week one, we will concentrate on capturing and naming this behavior.
  - Practice leash skills 3-4 times per day. Practice your loose leash walking in the house. Include stopping, starting, and several changes of direction.
  - Complete “Manners” quiz.

**Use video**

Have your client record a few of their sessions and send them to you before your next appointment. This way, you can review the video with your client and provide them with valuable feedback on what is working and what needs improvement.

**Use a journal**

For more complex behavior issues, a journal can help your client keep track of their progress and can help you to see where things are going right and where things may need extra work or revamping.
Follow-up
Follow-up sessions can be scheduled in advance. This helps your client to stay on track. In your follow-up, you can do the following:

- Check-in. How did things go? Were there any problems or concerns?
  What went well? What didn’t go well? How do you think your dog is feeling about the lessons?
- Review videos they have sent
- Review their journal
- Discuss the goals for the week
- Discuss the skills needed for this stage of their goals
  - Send videos
  - Send hand-outs
  - Send homework
- Repeat having your client video a few sessions

Of course, you can tailor your sessions to meet the needs of each client and dog. Some clients may need regular email support in-between their sessions, others may not. Some clients may be happy to meet once a week, others may only need you every two to three weeks.

“If you’re reading this... Congratulations, you’re alive. If that’s not something to smile about, then I don’t know what is.”

—CHAD SUGG
HOW TO MARKET

THE BIGGEST CHANGE IN MARKETING is the fact that face to face marketing is severely limited if not allowed at all.

Let’s begin with what marketing is.

According to The American Marketing Association, marketing is “The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”

In other words, presenting something - a skill or a product - in a way that lets people know what you have to offer, and why they want to buy it.

To start, it’s important to make sure that you’re creating and completing weekly, if not daily activities whose goals are to increase awareness of your brand and service offerings.

If you have not made your marketing processes clear before, now is the time to do so.
Make a list of all forms of marketing you are currently engaged in. For each marketing channel create a tracking chart.

Include days and times that you will dedicate to work on each channel as well as metrics to track how things are going with that specific channel of marketing. Looking at your conversion rate, for instance, lets you know the percentage of visitors to your website that take you up on what you’re offering.

The important thing is that you are committing to consistent action to spread the word about your service. The more people you reach the higher the probability of landing a client.

Understanding who needs your service is important in being able to craft messaging that speaks to those people. When we understand who we are talking to we can better grab their attention.

When creating your strategy for marketing keep in mind the following:

- What is it you are offering?
- Who are you and why should they care?

When creating content to answer these questions your focus is awareness. You want to use things like blogs, ads, and social media channels.

Your content’s focus is to demonstrate what it is you do and how it helps their life.

- Who needs what you are offering?
- Why do they need what you are offering?

When creating content to address these questions your focus should be to clearly define who you are speaking to. Your content is more educationally focused on why they need your service; not to solve their problem but to teach them about their problem.

- Why is it important to purchase your service? What are the pitfalls of skipping training, especially for behavior cases? What can be the downside to never seeking help? Content to address this question would sound like “Adolescence can be a nightmare for dog owners, especially those with less experience training. This can lead to human and canine frustration, destructive behavior, and in worst-case scenarios, relinquishment."

- What are their options for dealing with this problem? Here is where you show them the light. You can go Live on Facebook or host a webinar to explore their options. You want to validate that your service helps them to find relief from the problem they are experiencing.

- Why should they choose you? This is the sales part. Use convincing content, great reviews, client testimonials to prove that you are the right choice for them. The more confident they feel in your ability to help them the more likely they will be to hire you.
These questions can be addressed in multiple pieces of content spread out or in a simple email to potential clients.

Make sure that your process is clear to you and that you have dates for each piece that you are putting together.

Take advantage of warm leads; those are people who have expressed an interest in your business through social media, email, referral or other platforms.

Friends, family and past clients are great ways to sell your services. Do not hesitate to reach out to them. It’s ok if they say no or they are not interested. They may know someone who is.

The tough part about this is that you don’t just reach out to sell. Reach out to genuinely connect and also offer a service that maybe you crafted just for them.

**How to Market – Takeaways**

- Define your process
- Document your actions for each marketing channel
- Assess what is working
- Reach out to warm leads
- Follow the above format to be sure you are making the most of your efforts

**EMAIL MARKETING**

Email marketing is still a must for businesses. This means sending out communication via an email marketing system to potential and past clients for the purposes of staying top of mind, offering new services and continuing to provide value and support.

Additionally, a relevant and active email list is one of the most valuable assets in any business. The larger the list, the more revenue that can be generated from that list.

The best way to encourage people to join your email list is by offering a lead magnet. A lead magnet is something of value that solves a need for a potential customer such as an ebook, handout or video. You are providing that value to a customer in exchange for their email address so that you can continue to build a relationship with them and sell to them down the road.
You should be continuing to use email to keep in touch with past clients. Having them on your general email distribution list helps you to stay at the top of their mind so that they can reach out to you if they are experiencing changes in behavior. Additionally, by continuing to provide them with value in the form of tips, tricks and other information, they are more likely to recommend you to friends and family.

When you keep an active and engaged email list, it is easier to fill new services by sharing them with past clients. Generally, individuals who have already bought your services are the most likely people to support you again. Don’t be afraid to reach out to past clients and see if there is a way to work with them right now!

Email marketing systems

Mass email and newsletters should be sent using an email marketing system and should not be sent from your everyday email client (Outlook, Google). The benefit is the marketing system has the ability to keep and update a centralized list that can be segmented and organized. Using segments and tags, you can make sure you are sending relevant and relatable messages to the people who care about it.

SOCIAL MEDIA

This is an unprecedented time where people are spending even more time than usual on social media, creating a wonderful opportunity to provide value that grows your business. To capitalize on this focused attention, be sure to remain on top of your messaging.

• Be active on your social media at least once per day.

In addition to your usual posts, include personal posts about your life and how you are doing.

• People are looking to connect with others that can take their minds off of what is going on. Share parts of your life that are a little vulnerable and silly or fun.

• We have seen free training done through live sessions with virtual tip jars and weekly challenges
that are held in private Facebook groups. There are so many ideas that are great ways to connect and spread the word on social media.

- The important thing is that you are choosing something and sharing it with as many people as you can.
- Do not overlook the importance of reaching out to individuals via messenger, IG Direct Messages or any other social platform messaging system.
- Create as many conversations with past clients and potential clients as you can handle right now.
- Make it a goal to start two new conversations a day.
- Go into the conversation with zero expectations aside from establishing a relationship with that person.
- These conversations and relationships are valuable to both parties. They are also how you are going to build referral sources that actually care about you, because you care about them.

**Strategy**
Strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a goal. Create a strategy for your time on social media and stick to it.

- Give yourself one week to execute and at the end of that week measure its effectiveness.
- If you are seeing traction in engagement and sales, great! Keep it up. If you are not seeing an increase in engagement, adjust what you are doing.
- Do not get caught up in vanity metrics.
- More followers and likes does not mean more money.

If your market is dog owners in your local area but you have a lot of dog trainers from around the world liking and following your page or profile. Your message will be shown more to dog trainers than it will to dog owners. This can be detrimental to your marketing efforts.

The metrics you want to pay attention to are clicks on posts and engagement to include conversations. On the back end make sure you are asking people who purchase your service if they found you on social media or interacted with any of your content.

We are constantly surprised at how many people consumed years worth of our content, never interacted (liked, shared or commented) with any of it, and purchased our services. The content we produced let them get to know us better and that ultimately drove them to working with us.
• In your strategy be sure to speak to your target audience. If you are not narrowing down the “who” then you are spraying your message into the wind hoping it will land on kind ears.

• The more specific you are about who you are talking to the better the message lands.

• Figure out what content those people like and do your best to create that type of content.

• When evaluating your strategy you may need to face the hard truth that your content simply is not good.

If this is the case, now is not the time to entertain defeat and sadness. Dust yourself off and try again. Ask for feedback from peers and clients about what people didn’t like or just wasn’t attractive, and try again.

It’s not personal. It’s the world of entertainment. Ultimately that’s what we are doing; entertaining an audience and doing our best to keep their attention.

### Things that you should be doing for your followers on social media:

- Free resources
- Challenges
- Tips
- Inside look posts
- Stories
- Highlights
- Social proof posts
- Be engaging, be yourself

### Weekly series

A weekly series is a great idea because it gives people something to look forward to. It also allows for more prep time for you.

• Think of how a new show on television is teased and advertised, then released and advertised. A weekly series on your social channels can benefit from that same strategy.

• Be consistent and show up when you say you are going to.

• Be creative and do not hold back. Do not lose time to the “what if” monster. Just get creating.

• The more content you put out, the better off you are.
RELATIONSHIPS

There is no stronger lead than someone who already feels like they can trust you. That’s why referrals are so powerful – someone the client trusts told them about you. With more time on our hands we have more time to reach out.

- Be sure that you are creating two new relationships a week with other business owners in your area.
- Complementing fields like fence installers, pet stores, groomers, etc. are priority. However don’t overlook the value of a hairdresser or grocery store worker.
- People who talk and are outgoing are the people you want to connect with. These people are the ones who will spread the word if they like you.

With social media you can passively reach out and start building relationships right away.

Relationship Building Tips

- Be more interested in them than you are in talking about yourself.
- Go into the relationship with an open mind.
- Ask them how you can help their business.
- Don’t be a one and done friend.
- Mark on your calendar when you will follow up.

HOW TO PRICE YOUR SERVICES

Always be sure to prove your services based on data and not by simply looking around at what other people are doing. We should all have a general idea of what a billable hour of our time should cost. If you don’t, you’ll want to determine that for yourself.

We determine our billable hours by adding our personal expenses, business expenses, taxes and desired profit together to get our gross revenue needed. Once you know your gross revenue number, you can divide that by the number of hours that you spend working with clients each week to get a base billable hourly number.

You’ll need to do some market research to determine if that is a truly sustainable number in your demographic. If it is, that is the least amount we should be charging per client having an hour.

Our administrative hours are already included in that number.
Using that billable hour charge as a base, we can build our pricing according to the amount of time we are working with clients.

For example, if our membership group is expected to require four hours of our time each week, we would want to be sure that our fees can cover our billable amount times four per week.

You can read more about using data to determine pricing here.

**HOW TO SELL**

Selling during a crisis requires that we are exactly what the client is looking for in a leader.

Ask yourself what you want in a leader and write those qualities down on paper.

As you create and practice your sales pitch incorporate messaging that conveys those leadership qualities you identified – not to the degree that it’s overtly obvious what you are doing, but to the extent that the listener understands what is important to you.

For example, honesty:

“*There will be times in training when I need to point out things you are doing that need to be corrected. I want you to know that I will do so as I feel it is required. Can you do me a favor? When you feel like something isn’t working you will let me know so that we can fix it together?*”

The above paragraph displays open and honest communication. This type of message lets the client know that you value honesty and are open to hearing their feedback.

The same type of thing can be done with every other quality you identify as important to you.

- Work it naturally into your conversation.
- Acknowledge the negative but focus on the positive.

In your sales conversations you want to acknowledge negative feedback or mindset from the potential client.

Immediately after the acknowledgement focus on the positive that will come from working with you. This makes the client feel heard and allows us the opportunity to influence them toward a wise decision. For example:

Client: “*I’ve worked with trainers before and what they taught me worked at first but over time things slacked and my dog still jumped on people.*”

Trainer: “*I understand the feeling of frustration that comes from paying for something and not getting the results you expect. With my programs you will have*”
access to everything we work on as well as an accountability group that helps you to stay motivated to make the change you are looking for to stick.”

Client: “I don’t think I can afford this at the moment.”

Trainer: “I totally get it. Money is tight and times are tough right now. I have really enjoyed our conversation and would love the opportunity to help you. Can we explore some options that you will be able to afford? Excellent. Let’s start with your budget. What is within your budget at this time?”

Keeping the conversation going beyond the negative allows us the opportunity to figure out how to position our services in a way that the client can afford.

Don’t be afraid to dive deeper into the “negative” to figure out the positive you have that will lead to signing up the client.

Playful imagination leads to higher success rates. Before your sales calls or consults. Imagine what it will feel like when the client says yes. Rehearse the feeling of working with the client and seeing how happy they are when they achieve the results they are looking for with you.

The more you do this the more likely you are to steer yourself to the vision you had imagined.

**Tips for consults if you are uncomfortable selling at your normal rates:**

- Ask the potential client what their current budget is before delivering price shock.
- Work off of what they can afford and tailor an offering specifically for their budget.
- Get comfortable creating on the fly.
- Practice your pitch and ask.
- Having confidence in the benefits of the program is a must.

For more information on sales, you can visit: [https://dogtrainersumbrella.com/blog/why-sales-feels-sleazy/](https://dogtrainersumbrella.com/blog/why-sales-feels-sleazy/)
IF YOU AREN’T ALREADY ACCEPTING ONLINE PAYMENTS in your business, you will likely need to begin to do so. There are a number of options available for receiving payments that are not cash or check. We’ve collected the most used options below so that you can make the best choice for your business:

**Online Payment Options**

**PAYPAL FOR BUSINESS**
- PayPal offers both business and personal type accounts
- You can set up and send invoices for the desired amount – people do not need a PayPal account to pay you via the invoice
- Gives the sense of security and confidentiality
- Create a customized PayPal.Me link for clients to pay you directly via the link
- Setting up a business account also offers Seller Protection for if a client doesn’t pay you or in the case of a return needed
- Offers a card swiper for on-the-go
- Allows money to withdraw immediately for a 1% fee or no-fee within 1-3 business days
- Provides business owners with a 1099-K come tax season
- Signup is free

**SQUARE**
- Take payments in person, over the phone or send an electronic invoice
- Gives the sense of security and confidentiality
- Create an online store
- Money is deposited next day into your bank account
- Has a business debit card for immediate access to funds
- Allows money to be deposited immediately for a 1% fee
- Signup is free
- Offers many more services as well such as scheduling, marketing, and more
- Square also offers a gift card program. Suggesting that clients offer friends and relatives gift cards for “make-up” or new training can help with the post-pandemic recovery time.

*continued...*
Online Payment Options continued...

STRIPE
- Another form of credit card processor – includes a card swiper to attach to phone, tablet, etc.
- Stripe works with many small companies and takes a 3% credit card processing fee
- Allows money withdrawn immediately for a $2.50 fee or no-fee within 5-7 business days
- Provides business owners with a 1099-K come tax season
- Signup is free

VENMO FOR BUSINESS
- Can send payment via phone number, email or personalized Venmo link
- Owned by PayPal
- Uses the third-party processor Braintree for processing
- Requires proof of business entity for use

DONORBOX
- For use with nonprofit and for-profit businesses
- Designed to have an account set up to donate
- Account is free if you receive less than $1,000 per month in donations, a 1.5% fee is charged if you receive more

Other processing options:
- Facebook, Apple Pay, Google Wallet

Please note that some payment options may not allow for business use and can close your account if found using for business reasons. These processors are not set up for business use and do not offer anything for businesses at this time.
- Bank transfer or ACH

Understanding fees
All online processing programs come with fees, do research on which processor would work best with your pricing.
- Fees range from anywhere from 1.5% to 5% per transaction
- Fees also vary differently by each processor program:
  - Percentage fees
  - Dollar amount fees
  - ACH check fees
  - Money withdrawal fees

Be aware that some credit card software used occasionally go through a third-party processor for payments (Stripe, WePay, Braintree, etc).
Accounting Information (USA)

Online processors for businesses do send 1099-K’s come tax season. Depending on your state you may receive the 1099-K after less or more income than another state (i.e. Massachusetts receives a 1099-K after $600 of income via PayPal). Finding a knowledgeable Accountant or using Quickbooks is necessary for both remote work and in the field work.

All processors require an EIN (Tax ID) or proof of the type of business (i.e. Limited Liability Corporation, S-Corp, DBA, etc). You can acquire your Letter 147-C for proof with your EIN via the IRS at https://www.irs.gov or by calling 1-800-829-4933 between the hours of 7 am to 7 pm of your local time.

“You don’t get paid for the hour. You get paid for the value you bring to the hour.”

— JIM ROHN
ADDING AN AFFILIATE PROGRAM to your website can bring in extra revenue. The below, provided by Dogwise, is a great explanation:

Do you have a website dedicated to the enrichment of people and their pets? Would you like to have an extended network of books, videos, and a knowledgeable staff available for your serious dog enthusiasts? With extra time in your schedule you should consider signing up as an affiliate and creating your own online bookstore or linking recommended books to your social media posts. By creating an affiliate linked bookstore your efforts will continue to bring in income well beyond this pandemic crisis.

If you’re not familiar with Affiliate Programs they are referrals of customers you generate through your website or social media posts to eCommerce businesses like Dogwise. For that referral you earn a sales commission on what that person purchases. The great thing about this is you can offer eCommerce on your website without having to stock inventory, ship orders or be a customer service agent. Your clients, subscribers, or website visitors click on the products you have listed on your website or post and they are sent to that company’s eCommerce site. This link has a special code built into it so when the customer purchases the product you earn a percentage of the sale. Each affiliate program is different in how much they pay, when they pay and what they pay on. Some affiliates only pay a commission on the items that were linked. In the case of Dogwise you earn 8% on the customers ENTIRE purchase.

There are a couple of ways for you to create links on your website or social media post. One is to add a logo to your page, however, we find the most successful affiliates are the ones who take the time to create a listing of specific titles with book covers and descriptions.
The Dogwise Affiliate Program is free and commissions are paid on a quarterly basis. The affiliate signup is a simple two step process. First you fill out the registration form online and agree to the Terms of Use. The next step is to get approval. This step may take a day or two to get approved but once complete, you will be ready to login with your email and password you created on the registration form.

The login link is: https://www.affiliatly.com/af-106043/affiliate.panel

When you login you will see tabs for the Info Page, Link Generator, Orders, Payments and Banners. The first thing you want to do is make sure you set the payment method. Your choices are by PayPal or Check.

Now you are ready to start building your bookstore. Go to the Link Generator to create links for your social media posts and website. You can generate a link to Dogwise.com or paste the URL from the Dogwise site of the specific product. It will create the HTML code for you to use if you manage your own website and social media sites or to give to your webmaster and social media manager.

So give it a try. Sign up. Start out simple. Write a post with a favorite book recommendation, then login and generate a link to add to it and publish your post. You are on your way. As you become more comfortable with this process then build your online bookstore (or talk to your webmaster). For the really ambitious person check out other affiliate programs and offer other products.

Your clients, subscribers and website visitors will love the easy access to the resources you recommend. Earning a little extra cash right now and down the road is even better and time well spent.

Amazon and other larger retailers also have affiliate programs available, as do some other commerce sites.
WHILE THERE IS A PLACE for one-to-one communication with individual students, this is simply not scalable in most online courses – unless you’re specifically offering this kind of model. You will soon run out of time if you try to respond to questions and provide feedback to each student. Instead, consider that all students will benefit from hearing the questions and answers that emerge throughout the course.

• Publish a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page that you can add to over time and re-use in future courses.
• Build a database of “canned” responses over time to avoid re-writing the same information.
• Depending on your strengths and skills, it can be less time-consuming to create short explainer videos than to write everything out.
• Make good use of any scheduled time with your students. If you plan to lecture, consider recording that and instead use “real time” for discussions and other activities.
• Always create content with the idea it can be reused in future courses.
RESOURCES FOR FINANCIAL RELIEF

THERE IS NO DOUBT, even taking all the steps we have outlined here, that a natural disaster can take a toll on your business and personal finances. In the US, there are some resources for self-employed and small business owners, including federal and state funding and programs that were passed in March in response to the coronavirus pandemic. If you are suffering financially because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is assistance available. The process is likely to be unpleasant and difficult, but it is surmountable. Reach out for help if you are not able to see your way through.

While information is developing, below are a few of the major programs. (IAABC members may access the IAABC Crisis Response Facebook Group as a resource. The group is for IAABC members only.)
Direct payments to taxpayers
The U.S. stimulus package includes direct payments to taxpayers as soon as April and May of 2020. This will provide one-time payments to those who filed tax returns in 2018 or 2019.

Grants and low-interest loans guaranteed by the SBA
The Small Business Administration (SBA) is making loans available known as Economic Injury Disaster Loans. The Economic Injury Disaster Loans provide relief for qualifying businesses in the form of low interest rates and long-term repayment plans, some of which may not have to be repaid. If you apply for an EIDL you may be eligible for a grant for small businesses up to $10,000. (SBA Loans and Grants)

The SBA is also providing loans that can be forgiven through the Paycheck Protection Program. This program can help you cover business expenses if you have employees and other business expenses like rent or mortgage payments.

Unemployment
In the United States, part of the stimulus package passed by the federal government is expanded unemployment benefits. If you apply for and qualify for state unemployment benefits you will be eligible for an additional $600 per week on top of what your state would normally provide. Also, self-employed and independent contractors will be eligible for unemployment, even though they would not have been eligible before. Because these programs will be administered through the states, it may take a little time for the states to adjust their websites and applications, so applicants need to monitor the situation.

Personal finances
In times of economic uncertainty, we need to make informed decisions about our spending. It is wise to defer or pause non-essential payments at this time. This includes recurring monthly subscriptions that are not absolutely necessary for your survival or your business. Consider cancelling cable television, radio subscriptions, streaming services, etc. Many of these services may offer free or reduced fee services when you call to cancel.

To find and reduce monthly subscriptions that you may have forgotten about, review at least your last four months of bank statements.

Priority should be on saving as much cash as you can. Payment plans can often be arranged with your utilities, landlord, mortgage company, credit cards and loans.

We should be sure that we have enough cash on hand to keep ourselves clean and fed first and foremost. Secondly, we should be keeping up with insurance payments to keep our benefits and coverage.
If you expect to have trouble with any of your bills, reach out to those companies sooner rather than later to make alternative arrangements.

During this uncertain time, we might need to reach out to our lenders, creditors and other companies that we pay bills to for some leniency. Remember that a majority of the world is feeling the same stress right now and that there is no reason to not ask for some help.

It is important that you don’t just stop paying these bills but that you contact the companies responsible for collecting payment and discuss alternate plans with them.

You’ll want to make sure that your communication remains professional, kind and clear during these uncertain times. Starting with a conversation can be difficult but is often a good step. Some things to remember when approaching these conversations:

- Be sure to keep a written timeline of communication
  - Include names, dates, times and any pertinent details discussed
  - Keep everything in one place
  - Confirm contact information for who you talked to
  - Ask for an email summary or send one yourself
- Remember that the person you are speaking to likely isn’t responsible for making the decisions but they are there to help you
- Have a plan already in mind when you begin the conversation

How to start the conversation

No matter if you are reaching out by phone or in writing, remember to keep your communication professional and factual. In addition to giving the reasons why you won’t be able to pay for services as expected, make sure that you explain how you expect to be able to afford it in the future.

Start the conversation by explaining the situation:

“Hi Mr Smith, I am reaching out to you today to discuss options for paying my bill with your company. Due to the worldwide pandemic, my company and means of income have been required to temporarily close by the government. This has resulted in personal financial hardship as I am not able to generate revenue as I once was and hope to be able to do again soon.

Payments that likely can and should be deferred in your area:

- Electric
- Gas
- Water
- Mortgage/rent
- Health Insurance
- Student loans
- Car payments
- Credit cards
- Other loans
I am working on options to continue my business virtually but it is taking some time to build and market my new services. Is your company offering any relief measures for individuals impacted by COVID-19?”

They may have programs already in place. If they do not, then don’t be afraid to ask if there is a way to make payment arrangements and to offer solutions instead of asking for them.

Some examples of payment plans to offer:
- Reduced or no interest during “stay at home” orders
- No fees or penalties for late payments until [date]
- Repayment of missed payments in equal amounts of 3, 6 or 12 months
- Reduced payments until [date] with repayment terms of 3, 6 or 12 months

Bankruptcy

This topic can evoke strong emotions. Many of us see bankruptcy as an absolute last resort and wish to avoid it at all costs. Bankruptcy laws were created to protect good people from losing everything in times like this.

Cash is more important during times of crisis than our credit. Filing for bankruptcy is a serious decision and not the first option for relief but it is important to know when you’ve exhausted all other options that this is a viable option to save what you’ve worked so hard for.

The CARES Act has a provision in it for bankruptcy filings for small businesses that’s new. They have relaxed requirements to file under a new SubCategory that helps you recover faster if this ends up being a route you need to go.

A good article to reference is: Legal Review of Bankruptcy Options under CARES Act to understand how it works.
SUPPORTING CLIENTS AND THEIR DOGS THROUGH TRANSITIONING BACK TO WORK AFTER THE QUARANTINE

ONCE THE QUARANTINE HAS BEEN LIFTED and those who have been home go back to work, there is a likelihood that new behavioral challenges will present in canine companions that have been introduced to a completely new routine with their owners during quarantine. The reason this may lead to issues such as separation anxiety is that the work force most likely will not be staggered back, rather, the floodgates, so to speak, will be opened and everyone will be allowed to resume prior working hours all at once. As we know abrupt changes in routine and family dynamics can cause stress in our dogs. Stress can lead to behavioral changes.

Here are a few tips to help you prepare quarantined clients for returning to work and helping their dogs transition as smoothly as possible.
Start now!

• Reach out to current clients and ask them if they have a plan for returning to work.

• Supply content via your website and social media channels to raise awareness about the possibility of behavioral problems surfacing when work schedules normalize and that you are there to help them mitigate that concern.

• Outline and plan what your virtual supportive sessions will look like to support clients that may experience this issue.

• Have specific examples of exercise and mental stimulation to provide for clients.

Client advice (before they return to work)

Try to keep a very similar routine:

• Wake up at the usual time you would to prepare for work.
  (We know you won’t do this, but it’s great advice!)

• Keep feeding times the same.

• Keep exercise the same, (if you walk, play fetch, or run with your dog after you get home in the evening – keep those activities around the same time).

• Use your extra time with your dog during the day to work on new training skills or mentally stimulating and fun activities.

• Continue using the crate throughout the day for rest periods to keep crate routine and the crate a positive place.

• If your dogs are not crated while you are at work, give them time away from you throughout the day.

Client advice (after they return to work)

• Stagger your hours back if you can, whether it’s fewer hours (preferable) or fewer days to start than full-time and gradually increase your work hours so this change is not as abrupt for your dog.

• If you go immediately back to full-time and the house is empty, consider hiring a dog walker to help with the transition.

• Use frozen Kongs® or special higher value safe treats that they don’t get when you are home to put in the crate or with your dog when you leave for work.

• Consider getting a camera so that you can monitor your dog and throughout those first days to check on his welfare.
• Keep the excitement level down when you enter and exit the home, but don’t ignore him – how weird would it be if your spouse came home each evening and ignored you for ten minutes?

• Plan for continued routine exercise and one-on-one time with your dog. Some workloads and work stress may increase with return so make sure you still block off some time for your best friend.

Walk your clients through these ideas and explain how they relate in terms of preventing unwanted behaviors, and enhancing desirable ones in spite of abrupt changes and stress. Explaining how actions and behaviors are linked in a succinct way can lead to a higher likelihood of client compliance, and ultimately, less stress on their canine companions.

As the quarantine lifts, touch base with your clients to let them know that you are there for them for regular training, and in the event that their dogs experience any signs of stress or frustration. Keep open dialogue on social media channels as the first few weeks unfold to keep your pulse on potential new clients who may be expressing concerns for their pets transitioning.

“I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.”

—THOMAS JEFFERSON
SELF CARE – MAKING SURE YOU TAKE CARE OF YOU DURING CRISIS

SELF-CARE HAS BECOME A BUZZWORD in social media. We’re all supposed to practice it, but what is it, exactly? The answer is different for everyone, but the need for self-care is not. Without adequate attention to your own needs and possible limitations in the moment, the less likely it is for plans to succeed.

There are five types of self-care to be aware of:
- Physical
- Emotional
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Professional

Physical self-care doesn’t need to mean hours at the gym, though it can. It can also mean taking naps, watching TV, or walking your dog. Physical self-care also means doing things for yourself that make you feel good: ironing your clothes, getting your roots and nails done, shaving, putting on makeup, or anything that leaves you feeling better about yourself.
Emotional self-care can be challenging – most of us don’t remember to check in with ourselves to see what’s motivating what we’re doing, and how we’re doing it. Building the habit of checking in can make a huge difference.

Set a timer on your phone for every 90 minutes for a few days during the work day. Each time the timer goes off, ask yourself: How am I feeling right now? Tense? Rushed? Annoyed at the stupid timer? If so, why? How is how I’m feeling manifesting? Am I being grumpy to colleagues and staff? Do I hate my clients right now? Do I love them?

Likewise, emotional self-care means allowing your feelings to be expressed. Laughing, crying, making time for friends and family all count as self-care.

Psychological self-care can certainly mean seeing a therapist, but that’s not nearly the whole of it. Psychological self care means tending to your own needs. If you’re more aware of how you’re feeling from your emotional self care, you can now act on that through psychological self care.

Emotional: I feel swamped.
   This is overwhelming me.
   I feel like crying, I am so sad.

Psychological: No, I’m sorry, I don’t have the bandwidth to help you right now.
   I need some fresh air and perspective.
   I’m going for a walk to listen to an audio book.
   I need to call a friend or colleague and share a bit.
   I need a reminder that life is more than the work in front of me, even if that work is critical.
   I’m going to read a book, go to a concert, or take piano or French lessons for an hour a week or a day.

The difference between emotional and psychological self-care is really about noticing your own feelings, and then acting on those feelings in a way that helps you.
**Spiritual self-care** isn’t about religion, it’s about nurturing your sense of giving, of receiving, and of community. Maybe it’s about caring for others or volunteering somewhere or for something. Maybe it’s about existing in the natural world with a hike or a swim, or through song or poetry, tap dancing or journaling. Spiritual self-care is making sure the non-tangible thing that fills you in some way is able to be replenished.

**Professional self-care** can be thought of as “in the office” awareness and adjustments that help you be and feel successful.

Checking in with your co-workers or staff or leadership just to say hello, or to find out how they really are. Hard times are hard on everyone. Joining professional groups in person and online where you can meet others in the field and gain insight and community. This can be really important if you’re feeling alone and overwhelmed.

If you are feeling out of control or are significantly disrupted, please do seek the help of a licensed therapist. This is a lot for all of us. Take care of yourself please.

“**Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”**

— AUDRE LORDE
EXAMPLE OF CLIENT COMMUNICATION

Dear Client,

What a crazy time this is! I know that the growing concern of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is probably taking up lots of space in your world.

I wanted to reach out to you so you know that ABC Dog Training is doing our part to keep our clients and our community safe.

Option A – if you are staying open:

At this time, we are proceeding with all planned training programs but are taking the following extra precautions to keep you safe:

• Trainers will be washing hands and sanitizing their keys, car and phone between each session.
• Trainers will remain a safe distance from clients and will refrain from touching your dog’s leash or handing you treats so please come prepared.
• We are currently limiting lessons to two family members.
• We will be relaxing our cancellation policy to allow for clients who feel ill or might have been exposed to the virus to reschedule without penalty.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled sessions or feel unsafe doing so, we are happy to provide the following options:

1. Virtual lessons may be scheduled during your lesson time to take place via Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or other video conferencing software. This option can be as good as having me in person. All that is needed is a strong internet connection and a smartphone or webcam. A tripod might also be a good tool to have but is not necessary. Or,

2. We are also happy to place a hold on your account and to reschedule your lessons for when the restrictions are lifted. This will extend your program expiration date by the length of time that lessons are postponed.

Option B - if you are closing:

At this time, we will be temporarily closing our business as an abundance of caution and out of concern for our community. During this time, we are still available to support you in the following ways:

1. Email: Please feel free to email us with questions or concerns about your dog’s training and we will provide instruction within 24 hours.
2. Phone: We are also happy to set up phone calls at scheduled times for those who wish to speak to their trainer.
3. Virtual: Virtual lessons may be scheduled during your lesson time to take place via Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or other video conferencing software. This option can be as
effective as having me in person. All that is needed is a strong internet connection and a smartphone or webcam. A tripod might also be a good tool to have but is not necessary. Or,

3. Reschedule: We are also happy to place a hold on your account and to reschedule your lessons for when the restrictions are lifted. This will extend your program expiration date by the length of time that lessons are postponed.

We have set up a Facebook group for our clients to continue to connect with us and other community members during this time of social isolation. We will be sharing enrichment and training tips to keep your dog on the path of progress.

You can join the group here: {link}

We look forward to continuing to support you and your dog during this time and look forward to when we can continue with our in person training.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at {email}

All the best,
{signature}

Example Courtesy of Dog Trainer’s Umbrella, LLC

**WEEKLY/DAILY ACTION PLANNER**

Start with smaller projects first. This helps achieve a sense of accomplishment and provides motivation for more complex projects.

Clear out, tidy, or decorate your office or workspace, training bag or car.

Acknowledge and start to work your way through the “avoidance list” of things you know need to get done: paper work, client reports, reordering materials, paying a few bills, or even calling creditors to discuss terms.

Professional self-care also means scheduling in breaks for yourself, and it means incorporating the insight you’ve gained from the other aspects of self-care into your work. With greater balance and awareness comes reduced stress and better output and productivity. Allow yourself to take a mental health day once in a while. That will vary for each of us. Upholding the ethics of our field can be draining. Recognize when you need to take that professional break, and let yourself breathe and relax as much as possible. It’s natural to be stressed and worry, but it doesn’t solve anything, and can hamper productive thinking.

Bottom line, lots of change requires stepping back regularly and assessing, then acknowledging what you feel and need. Not a bad idea anyway, but especially in times of real stress it’s imperative. You have a tribe in IAABC and other training and behavior groups. Don’t be afraid to lean on your tribe!
Using this planner

Priority
• Set the priority of a task for how it feels now. The priority might change, and that’s fine.
• Set your tasks as: 4 - I’m stuck, I need help, 3 - High, 2 - Medium, and 1 - Low.
• We all have #4 tasks. Reach out to your community for help when you’re stuck or overwhelmed, and be there for others when they need it in return.

Project
• Is this relating to finance? Tech? Client communication?

Task
• What exactly do you need to do? If there are many steps, jot them down in approximate order.
• If it feels like too many steps, make each one a task so you can see you’re getting somewhere as you check them off.

Due
• When does this need to be completed?

Time
• It’s incredibly important that you estimate time in minutes. No one can complete 4,000 minutes of work a day or a week.
• By writing down estimated time, you can distribute tasks throughout the week to set reasonable time goals for each day.
• 5 hours max

E/N/D
• Will this task Energize you? Is it Neutral? Will it Drain you?
• Just like with time, you need to distribute the quality of tasks throughout a week or day so that you’re not left completely drained without anything that energizes or reinforces you also in that time period.

Assessing priority
It’s very easy to feel like everything is high priority and on fire. It’s also easy to feel like there’s no point in even trying sometimes.

Just like with training, it’s important to remember that successive approximations are the easiest, best way to succeed. Break things down into doable increments. Check them off as you go – that’s the best part, and really reinforces all the hard work you’re doing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>TIME EST. (minutes)</th>
<th>DUE</th>
<th>E/N/D</th>
<th>DONE</th>
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PET CARE PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

It is a topic we prefer not to think about, but it’s important to address the needs of the pets in the event of an emergency, sickness, or other unforeseen circumstances.

The questions are simple, but the answers are not, necessarily.

• What happens to your pet(s) if you get sick or are otherwise unavailable?
• Do your clients have a plan for their pets, and if not, can you help them develop one?
• Do your trainers or staff have a plan, and can you help them develop one?

The answer to any of those questions will look different for all of us, and may differ depending on the circumstances and length of time required.

• Ideally we have a primary and a backup plan: friend Jack will take my pets in the event that I can’t care for them; friend Jill will take care of them if Jack is unavailable.
• It’s not just a matter of “who“.
• Do you have documentation somewhere that your caregivers know about with detailed information about each pet, such as veterinarian contact information, food and schedules for walking and feeding?
• Are there instructions for medicating your pets, along with plenty of medication, clear dosages and how and when to administer each?
• Is there cash, or do your caregivers have access to money they may need to cover food and veterinary expenses?
• How will they get into your house if you’re not able to let them in?
• Will your animals handle those people coming in, or are there precautions or steps your caregivers should take to successfully enter your home and take your pets somewhere else if need be?

This type of planning also might include factoring in different lengths of time. Jack might be great for an overnight, while Jill, who lives farther away, might be best for a longer period of time. Think in terms of different scenarios:

**Short-Term:** A time period in which you might be late getting home, your flight is delayed, or perhaps you’re having a day or overnight procedure done at the doctor’s office. There’s a big difference between letting the dog out because you’re a few hours late, and taking care of pets overnight, but this is still a short-term problem to solve.

**Medium-Term:** A finite period of time, say a couple of days to a couple of weeks, in which you need help.
**Long-Term:** Any extended period of time in which you’ll be unable to care for your pets. This might include illness, injury, work reassignment, or deployment that takes you away from home.

**Relinquishment:** There are some sad instances in which you won’t be able to care for your pets any more. In the event of your death or drastic changes in circumstances, if at all possible it’s best to have a plan in place.

Once you have these plans in place for yourself, it’s beneficial to help others in your immediate community also prepare.

It’s important to remember that, while you’re helping others prepare for these instances, it’s not your job to care for others’ pets. Don’t volunteer to be the go-to person unless you have the mental and physical space to handle it.

Especially in the case of clients, this can significantly confuse boundaries, leading to misunderstandings, assumptions of “friendship” and responsibility for them that is inappropriate and harmful. Helping people prepare isn’t the same as being the person who shoulders everything.

On the following page is a form you can distribute to clients and staff, as well as implementing for your own family of course. Attach to it (in paper form or as a document online) all special instructions needed for each pet, such as food brand, feeding schedules, medications, medication schedules, favorite toys, beds and quirks, and other details to help your pet weather this upsetting situation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
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<tr>
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**TOTAL NUMBER OF PETS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD:**

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<tr>
<th>PET 1</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED?</th>
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<th>PET 2</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED?</th>
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<tr>
<th>PET 3</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED?</th>
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<td>VETERINARIAN</td>
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**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH PET:**

...
SAMPLE LETTER FOR MORTGAGE FORBEARANCE

{Name}
{Business}
{Address}
{Phone}

{Date}

Dear {Mortgage Company},

I am writing this letter to request a forbearance plan that would allow me to financially recover from the forced closure of my business under the state’s stay at home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of the order, my business and source of income has been indefinitely closed. Additionally, I am unable to secure another means of securing income during this time of economic and physical hardship in the country.

In consideration of the granted forbearance period for mortgage loans by the United States government, I am requesting a temporary pause on payments effective {April 1}, 2020 and continuing while under the stay at home order. Payments shall be reinstated in full on the first of the month after the order has been lifted.

Repayment of the amounts due will be made in {$500/$1,000} increments with monthly rent until paid in full.

I understand that this is not a release from my obligation from the amounts owed but an opportunity to secure my ability to return to normal payment terms as soon as physically and financially able to do so.

Please contact me at {email address} or {phone number} should you require additional information.

Thank you,

{Name}
{Business}
SAMPLE LETTER TO LANDLORD FOR RENT FORBEARANCE

{Name}
{Business}
{Address}
{Phone}

{Date}

Dear {Landlord},

I am writing this letter to request a rent forbearance plan that would allow me to financially recover from the forced closure of my business under the state’s stay at home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of the order, my business and source of income has been indefinitely closed. Additionally, I am unable to secure another paying job during this time of economic and physical hardship in the country.

In consideration of the granted forbearance period for mortgage loans by the United States government, I am requesting a reprieve in terms of reducing rent payments to 50% effective {April 1, 2020} and continuing while under the stay at home order. Rent shall return to full payment the first month after the order has been lifted.

Repayment of the rents due will be made in {$500} increments with monthly rent until paid in full.

I understand that this is not a release from my obligation from the amounts owed but an opportunity to secure my ability to return to normal payment terms as soon as physically and financially able to do so.

Please contact me at {email address} or {phone number} should you require additional information.

Thank you,

{Name}
{Business}
“The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater.”

—J.R.R. TOLKIEN