

FREE GUIDE · 100%



Signs your pet needs an ethologist

Free guide for dog and cat owners

Learn to recognize when your pet needs ethological care.

Before we begin...

As a clinical ethologist, the most common mistake I see is always the same: owners wait too long before seeking help. Sometimes they wait until the problem is impossible to ignore. Sometimes they try solutions that don't work — or worse, that make things worse.

This guide exists to help you identify, before it's too late, whether your pet is showing signs that they need ethological care. Behavioral problems are treatable. The sooner they're addressed, the better the results — for your pet and for your whole family.

— Dr. Gina Rumbos, MVZ · Clinical Ethologist

In this guide you'll find:

- 1 Aggression toward people or other animals

- 2 Separation anxiety

- 3 Extreme fears and phobias

- 4 Repetitive or compulsive behaviors

- 5 Territorial marking inside the home

- 6 Conflict between pets in the household

- 7 Unexplained behavioral changes

1

AGGRESSION

Aggression toward people or other animals

Your dog or cat growls, shows teeth, snaps, or has bitten without the threat level justifying it. Aggression is not a character flaw or “meanness” — it is the expression of an emotional state (fear, pain, frustration, territoriality) the animal cannot manage any other way. Without professional treatment, episodes become more frequent and intense over time.

WHY YOU CANNOT IGNORE THIS:

If your pet has already bitten or hurt someone, seek ethological help immediately. Aggression is treatable, but requires a professional diagnosis to identify the specific type and exact cause.

2

ANXIETY

Separation anxiety

When you leave, your pet destroys furniture or walls, vocalizes continuously, has accidents inside the home, or tries to escape. This is not anger or stubbornness — the animal is genuinely suffering in your absence. Separation anxiety is one of the most common and most treatable conditions in clinical ethology, but it worsens significantly if ignored or punished.

WHAT MOST OWNERS GET WRONG:

Punishing the animal when you return home does not work and makes the problem worse. Punishment doesn't teach what to do differently — it only increases fear and confusion in the animal.

3

PHOBIAS

Extreme fears and phobias

Panic at thunder, fireworks, visitors, the vet, or everyday objects. An occasional fear response is normal; a phobia is different — the response is disproportionate, lasts a long time, and affects quality of life. Animals with untreated phobias also develop physical health problems: ulcers, a weakened immune system, and premature aging from chronic stress.

BEWARE UNSUPPORTED ADVICE:

Home “desensitization” without professional guidance can worsen a phobia. Incorrect exposure to the feared stimulus reinforces fear rather than reducing it. Always seek expert guidance.

4

COMPULSION

Repetitive or compulsive behaviors

Chasing the tail uncontrollably, licking until wounds form, circling, eating non-food objects (pica), or barking at nothing. These behaviors signal deep psychological distress. They often begin as stress responses and settle into compulsive habits the animal can no longer voluntarily control — similar to human OCD.

WHO CAN HELP:

A general vet can rule out medical causes, but treating animal compulsions requires a clinical ethologist. Specific behavioral modification is the most effective intervention available.

5

MARKING

Territorial marking inside the home

Your pet urinates in small amounts on furniture, walls, or personal items — even after being spayed or neutered. Territorial marking is communication: the animal is trying to “regulate” its environment because it feels insecurity, stress, or a perceived threat. Spaying/neutering reduces hormonal marking but not anxiety-based marking. Identifying the cause is essential for correct treatment.

WHAT NEVER TO DO:

Cleaning with ammonia or bleach worsens marking because it intensifies the urine smell for the animal. Use pet-specific enzymatic cleaners while you seek ethological treatment.

6

CONFLICT

Conflict between pets in the household

Constant fights or permanent tension between two or more animals living together: dogs with dogs, cats with cats, or dogs with cats. Sometimes it begins when a new pet arrives; sometimes it appears suddenly between animals that previously got along fine. Multi-pet dynamics are among the most complex cases, and among those that most affect the whole family's quality of life.

REINTRODUCTION REQUIRES A PROTOCOL:

Correct reintroduction between conflicting animals follows a specific protocol that takes weeks. Attempting it without guidance can result in serious injuries or make the conflict permanent and irreversible.

7

CHANGES

Unexplained behavioral changes

Your pet is no longer themselves: more aggressive, more withdrawn, more destructive, not eating well, no longer playing, or their routines have changed. The vet checked and found no medical cause. These personality changes with no visible physical origin are exactly where clinical ethology can diagnose what conventional medicine did not detect.

THERE IS ALWAYS A CAUSE:

“Reasonless” changes almost always have a reason — it's just not a medical one. A change at home, a trauma, a loss, or new noises can be triggers the owner doesn't connect to the behavior.

Your pet doesn't have to keep suffering.

Behavioral problems are treatable — and the sooner, the better the outcome.

Book a clinical ethology consultation

In person in Mexico City, or via Zoom from anywhere in the world.

The first session includes: **a complete diagnosis + a personalized treatment plan.**

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Dr. Gina Rumbos, MVZ · Postgraduate in Clinical Veterinary Ethology (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) · 15+ years of clinical experience.