What to Expect from Your RBVH Behavior Consultation

The initial consultation for a pet with an existing behavioral problem typically lasts between one and three hours and consists of three parts.

**Part 1: Making a Diagnosis**
In order to best help you and your pet, it is important that we understand the underlying causes of your pet's problem behavior(s) and determine any factors that may be reinforcing or aggravating those behaviors. This requires a detailed behavioral history, observations of your pet and of your interactions with your pet during the visit, review of your pet's medical history, and review of any videos or journals of your pet's behavior that you provide. In some instances, where a medical cause for the behavior is suspected, your appointment may also involve a physical examination, further diagnostic testing such as blood work, urinalysis, X-rays or ultrasonography, or a consultation with another specialty service.

**Part 2: Discussion of Diagnosis & Prognosis**
Once all information has been collected, the doctor will explain her diagnosis to you, review your goals and expectations, and discuss your pet's prognosis.

**Part 3: Treatment Plan**
The clinician will outline a treatment plan tailored to your individual pet and household situation. In most cases, the treatment plan will consist of a combination of behavioral and environmental modifications and, in some cases, prescribed psychoactive medications or pheromones. Behavior modification techniques used at the RBVH Behavior Service are based on positive reinforcement training and *not* on physical punishment or coercion. The doctor may also recommend the use of training tools such as head halters, basket muzzles, clickers, and deterrent devices as part of the treatment plan, which the staff will demonstrate to you. At the end of the appointment, you will be provided with a written summary of your pet's treatment plan, which is also forwarded to your veterinarian.

**Follow-Up Care**
In order to achieve the best success, it is critical that you follow-up with the RBVH Behavior Service after your appointment to update us on your pet's progress and to ask any questions that arise during implementation of the treatment plan. Six months of free phone or email follow-up are included in the appointment fee.

**How Many Appointments Will My Pet Need?**
During the initial appointment, the doctor will formulate a diagnosis and provide you with a plan for the first one-to-two months of treatment. In some situations, this will be all that your pet requires; in many cases, however, we recommend additional recheck appointments. The number of rechecks will vary depending on the complexity of the case, your consistency in following the recommended plan, your goals for treatment, and your pet's response to the treatment program. Typically, dogs require between one and three rechecks, while cats can often be managed in just one or two visits. If your pet is receiving medications as part of the treatment plan, a recheck visit will be required every six months to carefully re-evaluate the efficacy and need for therapy.

**Will You Contact My Primary Care Veterinarian?**
After your appointment, Dr. Kroll contacts your pet's primary care veterinarian and any referring veterinarians to update them on the case. This ensures the best continuity of care for your pet.