

The Behavioural Medicine Service at UPEI's Atlantic Veterinary College Veterinary Teaching Hospital

What do we do:

The AVC Behavioural Medicine Service was created to address the needs of animals ranging from those with mildly annoying behavioural problems to profound aggression. We see all species of companion and sport animals, and frequently consult on behavioural issues that affect or mirror welfare concerns in production animals.

The most common patients seen in the Behavioural Medicine Service are dogs. Regardless of species, behaviourally troubled patients suffer because of their fears, phobias, and anxieties which often result in aggression or other concerns.

We are committed to the concept that no animal or human should experience mental and emotional suffering, and our consultations and treatment plans are designed to redress such suffering. We use only humane, distress and fear reducing handling techniques and all of our behaviour modification is tailored to the needs of the species and the individual. We take a whole-animal care approach to healthy bodies, minds and families.

We see all kinds of patients:

- those with established behaviour problems,
- those whom the clients worry might be developing a behaviour problem,
- new puppies whom people wish to ensure get a head start on learning the 'right stuff' that will allow them to grow into happy, nicely behaved adults,
- recently rescued dogs whom people wish to give the right start to their new, and sometimes complex lives,
- dogs and cats living with people who are pregnant or adopting a baby or child and want to ensure that they understand and mitigate any potential risk for concern,
- dogs and cats who are afraid of going to the vet,
- or just dogs and cats whom people wish to ensure will be okay with a new schedule, job, move, family addition, pet, et cetera.

Treatment is individual but is usually multi-modal, involving some form of anti-anxiety medications, behavioural modification, environmental management or change, and possibly protection of the patient as they improve. Our over-arching goal is to keep all of our patients happily and safely in households where they can become their best versions of themselves.

We understand how difficult it is to live with a companion with behavioural problems, and try to support clients through the treatment process by ensuring that they understand the behavioural, neurochemical, genetic and environmental contributions to the condition(s) and working with them, within the constraints of their households, to formulate creative solutions that work.

Who we are:

The AVC Behavioural Medicine Service is overseen by Dr. Karen Overall, Professor in Health Management at AVC. Dr. Overall and her resident, Dr. Camille Squair, are responsible for assessing and treating all the patients. Dr. Overall is a board certified specialist in veterinary behavioural medicine and

Dr. Squair is participating in an American College of Veterinary Behaviorists conforming residency program through AVC that will eventually allow her to also become a board certified specialist (www.DACVB.org).

Drs. Overall's and Squair's short biographies follow.

Drs. Overall and Squair tailor the appointments to the needs of the individual clients, and see patients in-person and through online distance consults, world-wide, for those unable to bring the patients to AVC. All patients receive a detailed and lengthy consult/discharge instructions. Additionally, unless the clients request that we do not do so, all of the patients' veterinarians receive the discharge instructions and a referral letter. The types of appointments available, what they entail, and the costs are covered in the Services Offered section. Because AVC has a Veterinary Teaching Hospital we often have students with us in the appointment and they are a valuable addition to the consultation.

Biography for Dr. Karen Overall



Dr. Overall and Hamilton

Dr. Karen L. Overall has BA, MA and VMD degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She did her residency training in veterinary behavioural medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviourists (DACVB). She ran the Behaviour Clinic at Penn Vet for more than a dozen years. Dr. Overall lectures at veterinary schools world-wide and is a Professor at Atlantic Veterinary College, UPEI.

Dr. Overall has given hundreds of national and international presentations and short courses and is the author of over 100 scholarly publications, dozens of textbook chapters and the texts ***Clinical Behavioural Medicine for Small Animals*** (1997; Elsevier) and ***Manual of Clinical Behavioural Medicine for Dogs and Cats*** (2013; Elsevier) and of the DVD, ***Humane Behavioural Care for Dogs: Problem Prevention and Treatment*** (2013; Elsevier). She is the editor-in-chief for ***Journal of Veterinary Behaviour: Clinical Applications and Research*** (Elsevier).

Dr. Overall has been named the North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC) Small Animal Speaker of the Year, has been awarded the Cat Writer's Association Certificate of Excellence for "The Social Cat" column in *Cat Fancy Magazine*, and in was named one of The Bark's 100 Best and Brightest - *Bark*

Magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the dog world over the past 25 years.

Dr. Overall shares her life with her husband, Dr. Art Dunham, and their 4 Australian shepherds. They have been taking in rescued Aussies for more than 20 years and their dogs frequent feature in lectures and writings. They all love living on PEI and living on the beach. Dr. Overall spent a lot of her childhood in Quebec and is delighted to be back in Canada.

Dr. Overall's research focuses on neurobehavioural genetics of dogs, the development of normal and abnormal behaviours especially with respect to early experience, assessment of behaviour, with an emphasis on working dogs, truly humane routine behavioural care and psychopharmacology.

Biography for Dr. Squair



Dr. Squair and Brigus

Dr. Camille Squair received her DVM from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 2019. Following this, she completed a one year rotating small animal internship at the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC), working as part of the Emergency, Internal Medicine and Surgery services. In September 2020 she began AVC's first residency in Behavioural Medicine with Dr. Karen Overall. Together they launched the Behavioural Medicine Service at the AVC, the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada.

In conjunction with her residency, Dr. Squair is completing a Master of Science degree at the University of PEI. Her thesis research project, funded by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre, will look at physical examination and routine blood draw in canine patients and investigate if alterations in handling and examination techniques help to reduce canine stress and fear during veterinary visits. Dr. Squair has a passionate interest in improving pet's and their family member's experience at veterinary clinics through research, engagement, and education within the veterinary and pet owner communities.

Dr. Squair is originally from Winnipeg, MB; however, she does not miss the winters and has loved living on the east coast. She has one cat, who loves eating and clicker training.

Services Offered:

The services offered are included in the table below, along with the costs and a short description of what's involved in the appointment. If you have questions please email us at:

AVCBehaviouralMed@upei.ca.

BASIC DOG APPOINTMENTS	
Initial <i>in person</i> appointment dogs	\$500 2.5-3 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 30-60 minute Zoom follow-up in 3 weeks. • Includes ongoing email follow-up as needed. • Includes option for re-exams (see costs below). • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian along with a copy of the consult.
Re-exam <i>in person</i> appointment for dogs*- dog has been seen within the past 6 months	\$150 1 hour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Re-exam <i>in person</i> appointment for dogs*- dog has NOT been seen in the past 6 months	\$250 1.5 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Touch-up re-exam for dogs <i>in person</i>	\$75 30 minutes to focus on specific issue/behaviour mod <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Initial <i>distance/telemedicine</i> appointment dogs (Zoom and local veterinarian is veterinarian of record)*	\$350 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 30-60 minute Zoom call after formal consult completed. • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Re-exam <i>distance/telemedicine</i> appointment dogs (Zoom and local veterinarian is veterinarian of record)* – dog has been seen within the past 6 months	\$150 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 60 minute Zoom call • Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Re-exam <i>distance/telemedicine</i> appointment for dogs (in person)*- dog has NOT been seen in the past 6 months	\$250 Includes 1.5 hour Zoom call Includes detailed referral letter to patient's veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
OTHER TYPES OF DOG APPOINTMENTS	
Additional pets who are actively involved in the concern and/or who have a contributing behavioural diagnosis where the primary patient is a dog; <i>this does not include pets present for company, general observation or because they may</i>	\$100-150

<p><i>suffer from the other pet's attentions. There is no charge for these other dogs. We encourage companion dogs to come to the appointment</i></p>	
<p>Puppy (10 months or less) assessment – “Head Start” - appointments (2 at least 2 weeks apart).</p> <p>The point of these appointments is: (1) to help first time dog or breed owners to prevent puppy and young dog behaviour problems and/or (2) to address problems or potential problems as soon as they appear, rather than encouraging the client to hope that the dog will grow out of it. Most dogs do not grow out of problematic behaviour.</p>	<p>\$250 for both weeks 1 hour each visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
<p>Adopted/rescue dog assessment- “Right Start” - appointment (2 at least 2 weeks apart).</p> <p>The point of these appointments is to help people who have taken rescue or shelter dogs to understand problems that these dogs commonly come with and those that often develop within the first few months. Prevention and early intervention are the foci.</p>	<p>\$250 for both weeks 1 hour each visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
<p>Puppy (10 months or less) assessment – “Head Start” and Adopted/rescue dog assessment- “Right Start” RECHECKS</p>	<p>\$75 30-45 minutes Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.</p>
<p>BASIC CAT APPOINTMENTS</p>	
<p>Initial appointment cats – All of these will be distance consultations where the local veterinarian is veterinarian of record unless there is a compelling reason not to do this. This decision is to reduce the stress and distress of the cat.</p>	<p>\$325</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes 60-90 minute Zoom call or equivalent in-person appointment. Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
<p>Re-exam cats - All of these will be distance consultations where the local veterinarian is veterinarian of record unless there is a compelling reason not to do this. This decision is to reduce the stress and distress of the cat.</p>	<p>\$125</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes 30-60 minute Zoom call or equivalent in-person appointment. Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
<p>Additional pets who are actively involved in the concern where the primary patient</p>	<p>\$50-150</p>

is a cat; this does not include pets present for company or general observation. There is no charge for accompanying pets and if it will help the cat we encourage their attendance.	
BASIC HORSE APPOINTMENTS	
Initial <i>in-person</i> appointment	<p>\$500 (plus any AVC travel fees) 2.5-3 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 30-60 minute Zoom follow-up in 3 weeks. • Includes ongoing email follow-up as needed. • Includes option for re-exams (see costs below). <p>Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian along with a copy of the consult.</p>
Re-exam <i>in person</i> appointment for horses	<p>\$150 (plus any AVC travel fees) 1 hour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Initial <i>distance/telemedicine</i> appointment horses (Zoom and local veterinarian is veterinarian of record)*	<p>\$350</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 30-60 minute Zoom call after formal consult completed. • Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
Re-exam <i>distance/telemedicine</i> appointment horses (Zoom and local veterinarian is veterinarian of record)* –	<p>\$150</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 60 minute Zoom call • Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult.
MISCELLANEOUS APPOINTMENTS	
<p><i>Pre-natal dog or cat assessment</i></p> <p>These appointments are for people who have learned they are pregnant of adopting a human baby or a young child when their first children may have fur. The intent of these appointments is to assess risk and help with adjustment to the impending arrival so that everyone is safe, and the children and furred ones have a healthy, happy relationship.</p>	<p>\$200</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes 1.5 hour Zoom call or equivalent in-person appointment. • Includes detailed referral letter to patient’s veterinarian with a copy of the consult. • May result in a recommendation for a full appointment
<p><i>Creating “Happy vet visits”</i></p> <p><i>Interventional package to help dogs and cats who fear or are difficult during vet appointments:</i> This intervention package is designed to assess fears, phobias, avoidance and aggression exhibited by cats and dogs in veterinary settings. Over the course of</p>	<p>\$350 for 4 appointments</p> <p>1 hour visit at the initial appointment 30 minute appointments 2-4; these appointment occur every 2-3 weeks.</p> <p>Additional 30 minute appointments available after the 4 appointments in the package: \$50 each.</p>

<p>4 visits (one 1-hour visit where 30 minutes will be devoted to the dog's history and three 30-minute visits) dogs and cats will be assessed and a strategy maximizing kindness, fear reduction and teaching the patients how to work with the vet will be developed. Topical medication will be used. As needed, preventative, interventional, and long-term medication to redress fear and anxiety may be recommended.</p>	
<p>The adopted AVC teaching beagle appointment: For behavioural appointments with adopted AVC teaching beagles, only: Up to 6 appointments in the first 6 months</p> <p>These appointments are the same as the basic dog appointments but are focused on issues affecting the teaching beagles and are only for those who adopt AVC beagles</p>	<p>\$0 – first 6 hourly appointments in the first 6 months \$75 – any hourly appointments after the first 6 appointments or after 6 months through year post adoption.</p> <p>Appointments post-1-year adoption are the financial responsibility of the client.</p>

*(NOTE: clients having distance/Zoom appointments as their initial appointment can have an in-person re-exam, and clients having an in-person initial appointment can have a distance/Zoom re-exam)

How to make an appointment:

Because of the need to have videos made and history forms completed **before** the appointment, the Behavioural Medicine Service makes its own appointments by email (avcbehaviouralmed@upei.ca). You are welcome to have your veterinarian contact us and refer you and send all medical records, but you do not need a referral from a veterinarian to make an appointment. Just email us. We ask that prior to any appointment you complete the relevant history forms (see links below), send us or have us sent the veterinary records, and send us all relevant videos.

We can either schedule your appointment when you first contact us – in which case you MUST return your materials at least 48 h prior to the appointment (or on Friday for a Monday appointment) - OR - we can wait until we have all of your materials and then schedule your appointment. The decision is yours but if we do not have your history forms, video and vet record at least 48 h prior to your scheduled appointment, that appointment will be rescheduled. Appointments are filled on a rolling basis and there can be a 3-4 week wait.

Most major pet insurance companies pay for behavioural medicine consults with a board certified specialist. This means that most people with pet insurance who come to see us are covered. If you are concerned, contact your insurance company.

What we need *before* your appointment:

To proceed with your appointment, we will the following materials sent to us via email (preferred) or post **before** your appointment:

1. We will need a completed set of the relevant history forms. ***Please note that these can be completed electronically as a Word document and attached to an email.*** Also please note that it will take you 20-40 minutes to complete these forms, depending on the level of detail.
2. We will need a video of the behaviours that concern you. Please note, *if the behaviours about which you are concerned are not ones that are likely to be seen in public and we do not have a video we cannot do the best possible job.*

The video should:

- show the behaviour(s) about which you are concerned, *excepting any injurious behaviour,*
- give a brief tour of the dog's environment (house/apartment and yard), and
- show any other relevant facets of the patient's life (e.g., where your dog or cat sleeps, sits, eats, drinks, walks, plays, interaction with other animals, et cetera).

If aggression with injury is one of the complaints, ***please do not provide a video of the dog biting someone, and do not put the dog in a situation where any aggression may be provoked or which may scare or distress the dog or anyone else.*** If aggression is a concern, other behaviours will be indicative of it. Please do not scare or put anyone at risk to make a video.

Videos can be provided in the following formats:

- via a downloadable link (such as WeTransfer.com which is free, secure and easy to use) – ***OUR PREFERRED FORMAT***
- Email attachment
- YouTube link
- DVD
- Flash drive

Please note that our formats are mpeg, MP4 and avi.

Please keep a copy of the videos since *they will not be returned.* Videos and/or photos may also be taken during the appointment. Any videos/photos used to evaluate the patient, including those you have taken, become part of the record and may be used *anonymously* in all modes of teaching (including teaching staff or other clients) and/or research. You can opt out of allowing us to use any videos or photos for teaching/research and this decision will not affect your dog's care. Just tell us that you opt out.

3. We will need a copy of your dog's medical record, including proof of vaccination for rabies (or an adequate titer), or a letter from your veterinarian summarizing the important medical history and providing proof of vaccination for rabies (or an adequate titer).
4. A signed copy of the Informed consent statement (see links).

All documents are to be sent to avcbehaviouralmed@upei.ca to the attention of Dr. Karen Overall or Dr. Camille Squair.

What to expect when you come for your in-person appointment:

Upon arrival, if you have a smaller companion animal (dog, cat, bird, rat, lizard, pygmy goat, miniature horse, mini-pig) we will meet you in the parking lot or in the waiting room and escort you to our consult room. If the prospective patient is aggressive or very loud and active in new circumstance – please stay in the car until we come to get you. Our consult room is quiet and away from most of the hospital patients and we will manage your transfer to it to minimize distress to everyone.

The initial appointment will generally take 2.5 hours, but will not take more than 3 hours. If the appointment is too complex to complete within this time (*very rare*), a re-exam will be scheduled for further follow-up so that we do not interfere with appointments scheduled for other clients.

During the consultation session we will listen carefully to your concerns and impressions, review your history with you, physically examine the dog (or other species) – if we are able, discuss our observations with you, outline the plans for treatment and get your input about how to best adapt these into your household, and try to start to teach the dog some skills that will help him or her improve. We will also interpret the dog's behaviour and help you to understand which signals can be helpful for change.

If we take a video of us showing you how to do something with your companion animal, you will receive a copy. If we create schedules, drawings or schematics for you, these will appear in your discharges. You will receive any prescriptions for medication at the appointment. You will receive the consultation/discharges via email, usually the next day, but occasionally – especially if students are involved – it will take us a few days to email the consult to you. If there is going to be a delay, we will let you know.

Our written consults are long because we try to address all the concerns you may have so they may include links to useful websites, handouts, sources for information or materials, et cetera. We view these as reference documents to which you can return repeatedly during treatment. We stage what we wish you to do so always explain where the initial efforts should be placed.

Please note: we use fear-reducing and minimizing, no distress, no restraint handling techniques for all of our procedures. This means that we may or may not touch your dog, cat, et cetera and because we will need to work with them over time, we attempt to do no behavioural harm or engage in anything that could adversely affect their mental health. We further provide such recommendations to your veterinarian as part of the discharges and in referral letters.

All first and full re-exam appointments will result in letters being sent to your veterinarian unless you explicitly ask us not to send a letter. We understand the personal nature of appointments in veterinary behavioural medicine and respect your privacy. Many of our clients prefer to work with a treatment

team, including their vet and a trainer. We are happy to facilitate these types of teamwork efforts and welcome vets or trainers at the consultation, but can also simply copy them on the discharges. We have a list of trainers with whom we regularly work and who understand behavior modification and our approach to behavioural medicine appointments that we can share with you.

What about other pets?

If additional pets are actually directly involved in the problem or have problems of their own there will be an additional charge of \$100-150 pet, depending on level of complexity.

*Pets who are simply accompanying the patient, which may be a good idea, or who do not require separate histories, diagnoses, and treatment protocols are seen at **no additional charge**. Accompanying dogs are welcome. We treat the family.*

A short comment about follow-up and re-exams:

For all in-person appointments we schedule an hour long, virtual, Q & A session at about 3 weeks to ensure that treatment has begun smoothly and any initial questions have been answered. The cost of this Q & A via Zoom is included in the original appointment.

We recommend a short follow-up appointment at 8 weeks. We chose 8 weeks because this is the first time that we can determine that some medications are not helping and because it gives you enough time to implement changes and behaviour modification that may be causing assessable change. The cost of this 30-45 minute appointment is \$75.

The cost of the appointment includes *all* telephone, email and electronic follow-up. We have learned that the vast majority of these cases do extraordinarily well with email follow-up, many of them over years. Follow-up may involve sending video (we love WeTransfer – WeTransfer.com – since it is free, friendly and can send large files) or using Zoom/Skype/Google Hangouts.

Sometimes it is clear that the best practices in the field dictate that a full re-exam is necessary. If so, one will be recommended and encouraged. Of course, clients are also welcome to schedule a re-exam anytime they think it will help them and their dog. We have some clients we see 2-3 times a year simply because this is what works best for them.

Some clients feel that they do not need re-exams. This can be a fine decision if clients understand that a re-exam is always an option and if they keep communicating by email. Any time someone has a question, a problem, a worry, or there has been a behavioural change that doesn't make sense - we need to hear from you. Mental health care is an ongoing process. If you need a re-exam, we will schedule one. Otherwise, we urge you to take 'virtual' advantage of behaviour mod re-exams by emailing us the question and attaching a video or some drive link (WeTransfer.com is very simple to use and free).

Re-exams vary in time and content. For dogs who have been seen within the previous 6 months, re-exams are scheduled for an hour and cost \$150. For dogs who have not been seen in the last 6 months, re-exams are scheduled for 1.5 hours and cost \$250. Re-exams are recommended for anyone who is struggling, afraid, have had a set-back (and it could be 2 years after the initial appointment) or just not seeing the progress they wished.

Regardless, we recommend a re-exam annually – either virtually or in person.

Finally, any dog who is taking medication should have a full annual laboratory evaluation done (lab work) that includes a complete blood count (CBC), chemistry panel and urinalysis (UA). This lab work must be done within the 3 months before the appointment. ***This can be done by your referring veterinarian and you can email us the results before the appointment (preferred) or bring the results to your re-exam.*** Clients who are physically too far away for annual re-exams should email updates and their annual lab work results. Referring veterinarians should feel free to email questions.

What to expect for your Zoom distance consult:

Distance consults are good choices for clients who cannot be seen in person at AVC. The evaluation process using history forms, veterinary records and videos is the same as it is for the in-person appointments. What we are missing is the in-personal evaluation and interaction component. Your veterinarian can see the dog and can contribute to that portion of the appointment. Additionally, in a distance consultation, your veterinarian is the veterinarian of record and they are responsible for prescribing all medications that are discussed.

Once we have your history form, videos and the veterinary record we will write your consult. The consults will be the same as those for in-person appointments. We will then send you – the client – the consult and schedule the 1-hour Zoom discussion. During this discussion we will assess anything we missed, answer questions, have our questions answered by you, and adjust the consult as needed. After the Zoom meeting we will send the revised consult to you and to your veterinarian. Your veterinarian is welcome to email us or to have a Zoom consult with us if they have any questions. They, of course, can also attend the original Zoom consult, although most do not.

After the initial Zoom discussion we are happy to follow up via email and through video, but clients should also know that we can schedule either or both Zoom rechecks or in person rechecks (both are the same price). If we get to a point where we think we will need a consult, we will tell you, or you can reach out to us at any time.