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Show respect for patients in the words you use

By Brendan Howard

Great medical care is a gift you give patients every day. But do you respect your canine and feline charges? Nothing riles up Janice Reilly, LVT, clinical coordinator at Valley Cottage Animal Hospital in Valley Cottage, N.Y., like hearing team members belittle patients. She tells of a day when a tired team member said a dog had "pissed" in its cage. Reilly turned to the technician and asked, "If your grandmother was in the hospital, would you want a nurse saying that about her?"

Therefore, she recommends talking to clients and colleagues about pets in the manner you'd want someone to speak to you about your hospitalized grandmother or another family member. This includes talking as respectfully of pets in the back rooms and treatment areas as you do in the waiting area and exam rooms, Reilly says. Another must-do: Never dismiss pets' problems as troublesome or irritating.

Honoring pets at all times not only keeps you tuned in to the task at hand—caring for patients—but it also elevates your profession. "If veterinary team members want the respect that human-health care nurses receive, we need to act on the same level as them all the time," Reilly says. For more ways to earn and keep respect on the job, read "8 Ways to Earn the Respect You Deserve."



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