



MYM
MEET YOUR MATCH®

feline-ality™ manual and training guide

meet the feline-alities

I N D E P E N D E N T - G R E G A R I O U S

independent

social

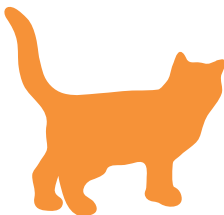
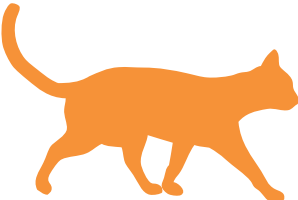
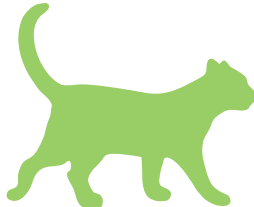
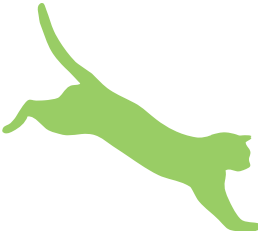
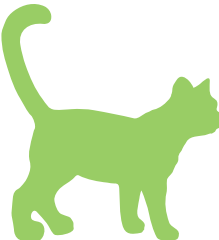
gregarious

VALLIANCE

low valiance

medium valiance

high valiance

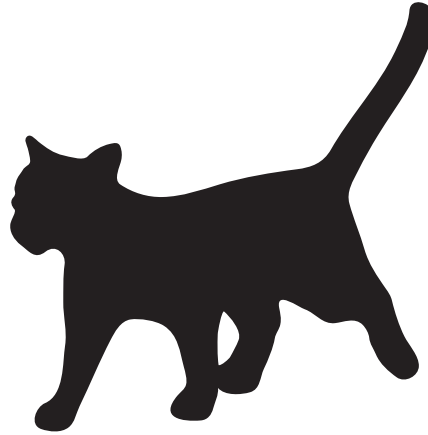
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thanks to you!

On behalf of all shelter cats throughout the nation and their soon-to-be Meet Your Match® adopters, the ASPCA® is grateful beyond words to the following organizations for opening their shelters to us. The Meet Your Match Feline-ality™ Adoption Program is the result of countless hours of data collection, beta testing, amazing insights, observations, and creative input these agencies provided. Without these organizations, and the people within them, this program would still be a dream instead of a reality.

phase I – cats with guardians

Chisholm Creek Kennels, Wichita, KS
Chisholm Trail Animal Hospital, Wichita, KS
Countryside Veterinary Clinic, Wichita, KS
Heartland Animal Hospital, Wichita, KS
Indian Hills Animal Clinic, Wichita, KS
Oakcrest Pet Hospital, Wichita, KS
Skaer Veterinary Clinic, Wichita, KS



phase II – shelter cats

Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland, Westbrook, ME
Wisconsin Humane Society, Milwaukee, WI
Hamilton-Burlington SPCA, Hamilton, ON Canada

phase III – matching cats to adopters

Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland, Westbrook, ME
Kansas Humane Society of Wichita, Wichita, KS
Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Boulder, CO
Animal Welfare Association, Voorhees, NJ
Hamilton-Burlington SPCA, Hamilton, ON, Canada

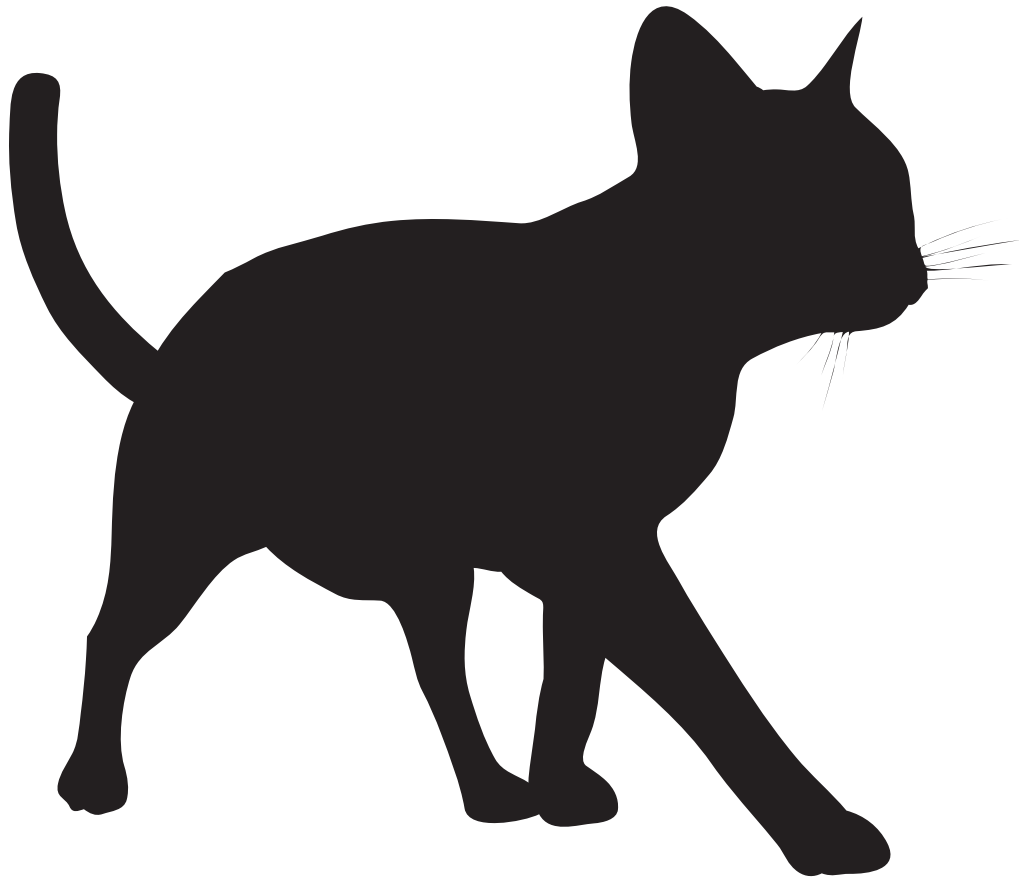
phase IV – modified assessment to fast track cats to adoption

Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Boulder, CO



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The ASPCA has made additional resources for the Meet Your Match® program available to help you implement and be successful. Visit www.ASPCApro.org where you will find FAQs, images and logos for download, Flash movie to promote MYM on your website, tools and tips for generating public awareness, and Brand Standard Toolbook.



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cats, cats and more cats!

In the United States, the number of companion cats is now significantly higher than dogs. More households than ever before own at least one cat, and the number of people who own more than one cat has greatly increased as well. While the popularity of feline companions is rising, supply still exceeds demand and animal shelters are bursting at the seams with more cats and kittens than they can adopt out. And, although there are twice as many cats as dogs in many shelters, cats are half as likely to get adopted.

Why bring feline-ality™ to your shelter?

Despite shelters' efforts, the sobering reality is that the public is more likely to bring a stray cat into their home than to adopt from a shelter. Thirty-four percent of cat guardians report acquiring their feline companion as a stray, compared to 16 percent who report adopting their cat from a shelter.

The Meet Your Match® Feline-ality™ Adoption Program increases opportunities for shelter cats to find loving homes by:

- allowing your shelter to customize and create lasting matches between adopters and cats
- helping your shelter to better market adult cats
- increasing your shelter's cat adoptions and reducing returns
- improving your customer service
- positioning your shelter to provide customized matching that new pet owners can't get anywhere else
- most importantly, increasing the likelihood that adopters will bond with their cats and truly bring them into their families



the research

Research and development of Feline-ality™ was conducted by Emily Weiss, Ph.D., CAAB, ASPCA® Vice President of Shelter Research and Development.

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developing the research

Prior to Feline-ality™, little research had been done on feline behavior assessment tools and their validity. Several animal behavior experts (Katherine Houpt, Ilana Reisner, Kathy Carlstead and others) have been doing fantastic work regarding modifying behavior, but there has been considerably less focus on the predictability of behaviors.

Just a few months before the Feline-ality™ research project was to begin, Janice M. Siegford et al published an exciting study regarding the validity of an assessment tool for cats. The paper validated components of a tool developed in the 1980's to assess the suitability of cats for placement in nursing homes.

Siegford's work became an important component to Feline-ality™. We then surveyed many shelters across the country regarding behavior assessments they were currently using for their cats. None of the facilities we communicated with had conducted formal research, but several had assessments they felt were helpful in deciding adoptability or future behavior. Many of the items were consistent from shelter to shelter, including behavior in the cage and ease of handling. We chose to investigate several of these items.

phase I: cats with guardians

The first piece of research focused on determining if we could accurately predict how a cat was likely to behave in the home based on his responses to assessment items. Our focus was whether or not there were correlations between behavior in the assessment situation and guardian reports. To facilitate this, we chose to use a population of cats with established guardians.

We identified seven cat boarding facilities in Wichita, Kansas, willing to participate in the study. Guardians were asked to participate when they made the appointment to board or dropped their cats off. Cats between nine months and 13 years of age were the focus of the study. A total of 56 cats were assessed, but six were dropped from the study because of incomplete guardian surveys.

This phase gave us the opportunity to investigate one item regarding aggression. Since these cats were from homes, we could verify whether or not the aggression we observed during assessment at the boarding facilities was also found in the home. Seven cats displayed aggression, either by attempting to bite or **swat** at the evaluator during either the cage or **novel room** components of the assessment. Six of those seven cats had no reports of aggression in the home environment. Yet all six cats were reported by their guardians to always run away when guests visited or new situations arose. This area will be investigated in the future.

Another interesting piece of information acquired during this phase of the work focused on litter box use. In our study, there was no correlation found between litter box use/non-use in the boarding environment, and litter box use/non-use in the home. We did, however, find a correlation between

swat

This distance-enhancing behavior involves the cat striking out toward the offending stimuli with one or both of his front paws.

novel room

A room that is new to the cat.

blind to survey results

Study participants are kept unaware of purpose of the assessment and/or other information in order to keep them unbiased. Evaluators or subjects that purposely have no knowledge regarding the results of a portion of the study, so as not to skew the final results.

social

A cat that is interactive with the evaluator in an affiliative manner.

cats that did not scatter their litter at all, and litter box problems in the home. We will be investigating this further in the future as well. The information gathered from the data card and assessment was compared to the guardian report. We found correlations between behavior in the assessment environment and home report regarding: affection, social interaction, reaction to novel stimuli, interaction with toys, and behavior with children and others.

Modifications to both the assessment and the data card were made based on the results of this initial study and we readied ourselves for Phase II – Shelter Cats – involving testing of the refined tool in a shelter environment.

phase I: cats with guardians

- Cage behavior data collected for three to six days after arrival
- Assessments conducted approximately 72 hours after cats entered the facilities
- Survey for guardians regarding their cat's behavior in the home
- Evaluators who were **blind to the survey results**

phase II: shelter cats

Once the assessment was pared down, we wanted to assess the efficacy of the tool in a shelter environment. There are many more variables in a shelter environment than in a boarding environment, not least of all strays. Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland in Westbrook, Maine, and the Wisconsin Humane Society in Milwaukee agreed to serve as research sites.

We were able to collect complete data for 84 cats. The cats' behaviors both in the cage and during the assessment were compared to new adopter reports. Behavior in the cage did not correlate with the adopter report as strongly as many of the out-of-cage items. In fact, many items on the data card did not correlate with the guardian report much at all. We took a closer look at the data card information, and found that behavior information collected during just the first 36 hours did in fact correlate with behavior in the home.

Just as Siegford et al (2003) found with their research, we found that many behaviors seemed stable when the cat was moved from one environment (the shelter) to a new environment (the home). For example, cats that vocalized during certain assessment items were likely to be "talkative" cats in the home. Cats that played with toys in the assessment were likely to play with toys in the home. Cats that behaved by withdrawing from novel stimuli during the assessment process were likely to withdraw from novel stimuli in the home. Further, we found certain aspects of social interaction with the evaluator were also found in the home by the new adopter.

In phase II, each shelter was asked to follow a protocol:

- Data on cage behavior was collected for at least three days
- The assessment was conducted between day three and day six
- Assessments were not shared with adoption staff to assure that adopters would not know how the cat behaved during the assessment
- Once assessed, the cats were spayed or neutered and made available for adoption
- A phone survey was conducted with new adopters three weeks post-adoption

Feline-ality™ was coming together. We needed to be able to color code our cats so that the process fit the Meet Your Match® process. We found two major scales: an **independent-gregarious** scale that measured social behavior and a **valiance** scale which measured response to novel stimuli (how the cat was likely to react in new situations). We also identified important behaviors that were stable, but did not fit into those two scales. For example, knowing whether or not a cat was vocal or playful could enhance bonding with the new pet.

valiance

Refers to the cat's response to novel stimuli. A high valiant cat is likely to approach new stimuli, while a low valiant cat is likely to retreat from novel stimuli.

independent

The low end of the independent-gregarious scale, meaning the cat does not often seek social interaction.

gregarious

The high end of the independent-gregarious scale, meaning the cat is very social and interactive.

phase III: matching cats with adopters

Now that we had a tool to assess certain feline behaviors, we needed to test several other components:

- Could we interact with the adopter in a fun and meaningful way to help guide and educate them to make a good match?
- Is the process 'do-able' for shelters? Can they make the time? Understand the components? Find the space?
- Are the expectations that the adopter develops during the adoption process ones that they actually experience once the cat is in the home?
- Do the adopters like the process?
- Would the adopters come back to a Meet Your Match shelter?

We first needed to develop the Adopter Survey to identify expectations and lifestyle in order to make the best match. When completed, we invited five shelters to help beta test the program (Animal Refuge League, Westbrook, Maine; Kansas Humane Society, Wichita, Kansas; Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Boulder, Colorado; Animal Welfare Association, Voorhees, New Jersey; and Hamilton-Burlington SPCA, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada). Three shelters tested the program first. We measured their experiences and those of their adopters, and then brought in two additional shelters after we made modifications to the process.

phase III procedure

- All cats were assessed and given a color-coded cage card based on the assessment score
- Cats were spayed/neutered and made available for adoption
- Once adopted and in the home for three weeks, an ASPCA® representative called the adopter and conducted a survey regarding both the adoption experience and the behavior of the cat
- An outside agency conducted interviews with the shelter staff regarding all aspects of their experience with the program

the adopter experience

The Adopter Survey included several questions focusing on the adoption experience.

105 out of 107 reported that they would probably choose a shelter that uses the Meet Your Match® Adoption program when adopting an animal in the future.

When asked “How did your adoption experience impact your opinion of the shelter? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being ‘very positive’, 5 being ‘no impact on your opinion’, and 1 being ‘very negative’”, the mean response was 9.13. Only one adopter rated it under 5 and the vast majority (88) rated the impact on their opinion of the shelter between 8-10.

When asked to rate how satisfied they were with the Meet Your Match Adoption Program, the average response was 8.89 out of 10. When asked to rate how well the cat they adopted exhibits the type of personality that they expected after participating in the Meet Your Match adoption program, the average response was 9.03! This is exciting because we know people adopt out of their color category (60 adopters adopted within their color and 47 outside their color), and the Meet Your Match tools helped them go home with the right expectations to make a good match regardless.

Nearly all of the adopters surveyed said they would probably select a shelter that used the Meet Your Match® Adoption Program when adopting an animal in the future.

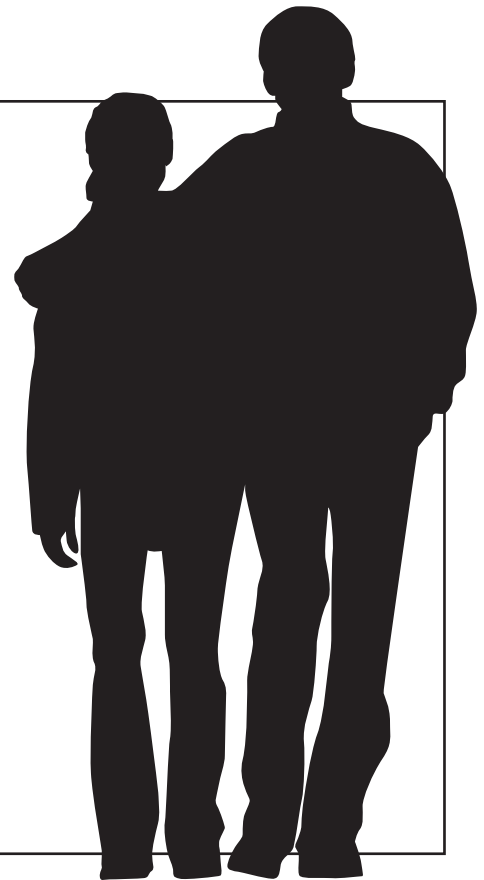
adopters told us

“Excellent program...When I went [to ARL] there were several cats available and the program helped me decide who was right for me. I could see how the cat would behave after I got her home. She acts exactly as they said she would.”

— KW adopted Annabelle from ARL

“He is not a perfect fit for our family, we should have chosen a cat in our orange category, but the kids fell in love with a purple cat...he is shy and kind of standoffish...but we love him...and will make it work.”

— SD adopted Blackie from HSBV; orange people – adopted a purple cat



stability of behavior

The overall social score was statistically significant with adopter reports of:

- Cat spending time in same room as adopter
- Response to petting
- Affiliation with children
- “My cat is constantly finding new ways to get my attention”

The social score became much more predictive when cats that scored four or lower were removed from analysis. In our sample of 107, this resulted in six cats removed from analysis. We hypothesize that cats that score this low are not behaving as they normally would – that they are “shut down” and need a bit more time to settle before they are ready for Feline-ality™.

The overall valiance score was statistically significant with adopter reports of:

- How quickly the cat was likely to adjust to the new home
- How the cat was likely to react to guests in the home
- Comfort with handling for routine health issues

As with the earlier research, we found that certain behaviors were quite stable, such as vocal behavior, toy use, and comfort with being held.



Feline-ality™ predicts reaction to guests, vocal behavior, response to children, comfort with handling and more!

shelter statistics

Once the testing was completed, the beta test shelters were asked to compare their numbers regarding euthanasia, length of stay, adoptions and returns for the period they instituted the Feline-ality™ program, and the same time period the previous year. The following is just a taste of the results.

The Animal Refuge League reduced euthanasia by more than 45 percent and reduced the average length of stay by 20 days.

The Kansas Humane Society saw a sharp reduction in return rates — more than 11 percent — and experienced a 46 percent increase in adoptions.

The Humane Society of Boulder Valley had an average reduction of seven days in length of stay.

The percentage of cats adopted compared to intake was up 20 percent for the Animal Welfare Association while the average reduction in length of stay was 23 days.

Hamilton-Burlington saw a three percent decrease in both euthanasia and returns.

shelter experience

Since we were developing a program to be implemented by shelters across the country with varying protocols and resources, we felt it was also important to measure the experience for the employees at the five beta testing sites. In order to assure accurate reporting, interviews were conducted by an impartial third party uninvolved in the Meet Your Match® Adoption Program. All five operations managers at the beta testing sites were very positive about the overall program and the manageability of it. In fact, shelter personnel from executive directors through kennel staff were enthusiastic about the Meet Your Match Feline-ality™ program. Adoption counselors especially noted that the process improved the communications with adopters, helping new guardians better understand the animals and creating a cooperative rather than an adversarial process. The result is more successful placement of cats in homes.

The following are some of the quotes collected from the staff at our beta test facilities:

“As I’m becoming more comfortable with [the program], it has been a lot of fun. Calling it a survey instead of an application puts people immediately at ease. Then we walk the adopters over to the board to figure out what color they are and look at what areas would be good for them. They’re really excited to see which cats will match. It’s more involved, more fun, less rigid.”

“[Adopters] select a cat and they say, ‘What paperwork do I need to do?’ And we say, ‘That’s it.’ We say the best match for you is the green kitty, and they read all about the green personality on the cards. Some of them have a really good time with it. I think it’s made a difference to the adopter and the shelter.”

“I think [the Meet Your Match program] is really good. I think it’s helping matching cats to good homes. Before we had a lot of returns. Now they have a better idea of what the cat is all about.”

“I love it! It has been an incredible amount of preparation work which has ultimately been a really great exercise for the staff and volunteers and the beta testing has really forced them to look at some of their overall logistics.”

“[The adoption process] runs much smoother than the way that we were handling things before. It frees us up to spend time with the adopters and answer questions versus verifying information. It gives us more interaction with the adopter.”

“A bit more work but it’s better for adoptions. We have to do more assessments but it’s better for adoptions — increasing them. I think [cats] are getting adopted a little quicker because [adopters] feel they know about them.”

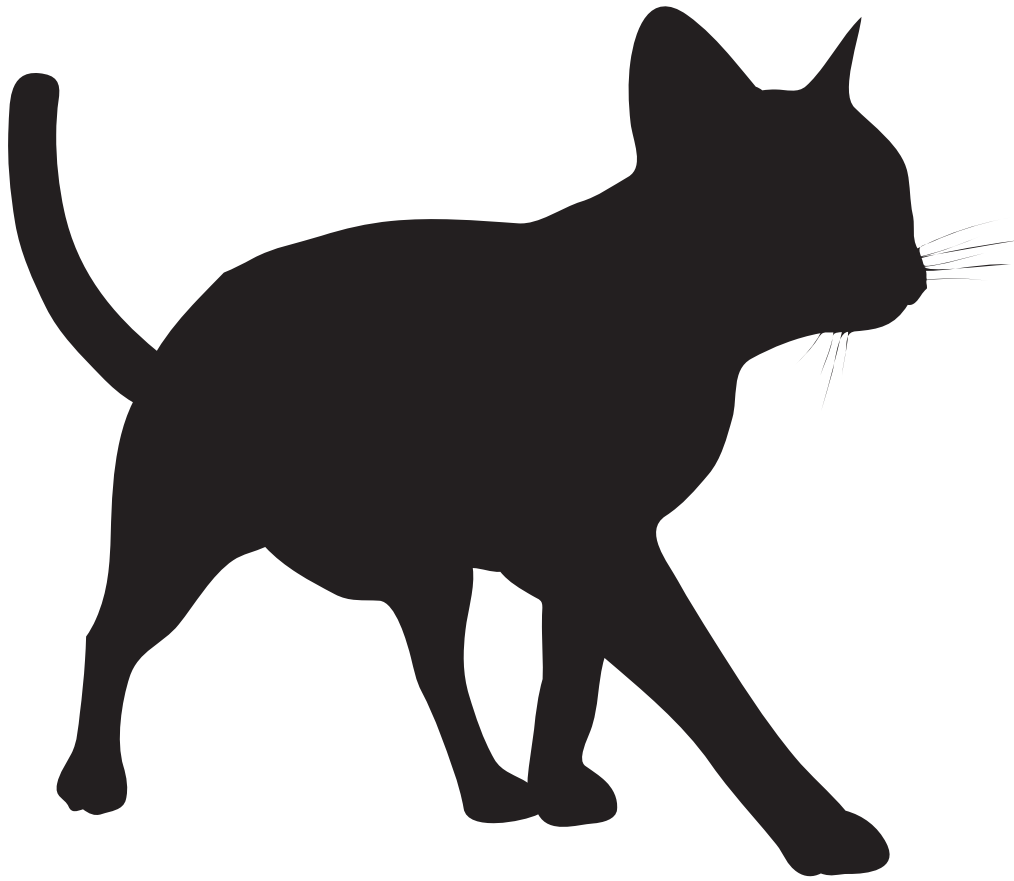
“Our behavior and health team that conducts the Feline-ality™ Assessment now has a better sense of which cats will need which forms of intervention that’s available from staff or volunteer resources to really showcase them to their best, i.e. cats that want to hide and perch versus those that thrive with play outside kennels. All felines had been getting the same intervention and we can now separate them out. Cats will be less stressed and be more comfortable and hopefully they will show better on the floor. For clients, it is a great opportunity. In July, 130-140 cats were available in Adoptions. We often heard, ‘There are so many, where do I start?’ Feline-ality™ will help answer this question.”

phase IV: modified assessment to fast track cats to adoption

A published manuscript will fully outline and describe the research on the modified Feline-ality™ Assessment.

When we began work on Feline-alityTM, we were hopeful we would be able to develop a tool to better match cats to the right adopter.

The final Feline-alityTM program has exceeded our expectations. Adopters, shelter staff and cats are all richly benefiting from the program.



requirements and equipment

what do you need?

When cats enter the shelter they should each receive an exam and vaccinations at the time of intake. Once the intake exam is complete, cats should be placed in their holding cages and be allowed to settle for at least 18 hours prior to assessment.

During the acclimation period, we recommend spot cleaning while the cat remains in the cage unless the cage is quite dirty. This will lower the cat's stress and thus, the probability of disease. Acclimation will take longer if they are removed daily for cleaning. Refrain from spaying/neutering until after the cat has been assessed and a color-coded cage card has been assigned.

storage for supplies

As basic as it sounds, the most successful Meet Your Match® facilities thought through the process of assessment to the point that all supplies were assigned specific storage spots and a specific person was made responsible for the replenishing of supplies when needed. A large Tupperware tub is ideal for storing assessment supplies in the assessment room.

storing assessments

The Feline-ality™ Assessments will be used in the adoption process. It is important that the assessments are stored where the adoption counselors can easily access them while with a client. Be sure to identify this space before implementing, and determine how the paperwork will move with the cat as he is made available for adoption.



assessment room (novel room)

The ideal assessment room size is about 10'x10'. There must not be any places where the cat can hide (such as under, inside or behind counters, desks or other locations). It is important that the area is quiet and free of distractions. Noise can ruin a cat's assessment. A sound machine (sometimes called a sleep or white noise machine) can be used to help decrease outside noise if necessary.



stopwatches (silent)

One of these watches can be attached to the clipboard, as it will be used to count down from five minutes. The second watch will be held by the evaluator. It's important that both stopwatches be silent so you can avoid distracting the cat during the assessment item.



chair

The chair should be plastic or metal so as not to absorb odor. The chair must be able to be disinfected.



cat toys

A variety of clean cat toys should always be available. Make sure your assessment kit has at least one each of the following: a toy mouse, cat charmer, feather wand, and a ball. Replace or wash toys each week depending on the number of cats assessed.



cat carrier

The cat will need to be placed into a standard airline carrier for one of the items. Be sure to disinfect the carrier as needed. Cats should be placed in carriers that are dry and have had a chance to air after disinfection.



clipboard

Using a clipboard while conducting the assessment helps to keep all the paperwork in place.

I'm an MVP.

Hi! My name is _____.

Do you seek affection? I do! If you also like petting, purrs, and paws kneading your lap, I think we might have a LOT in common. I'm looking for "someone who enjoys quiet times and togetherness." Could that someone be you?

ID # age M ☐ F ☐ breed

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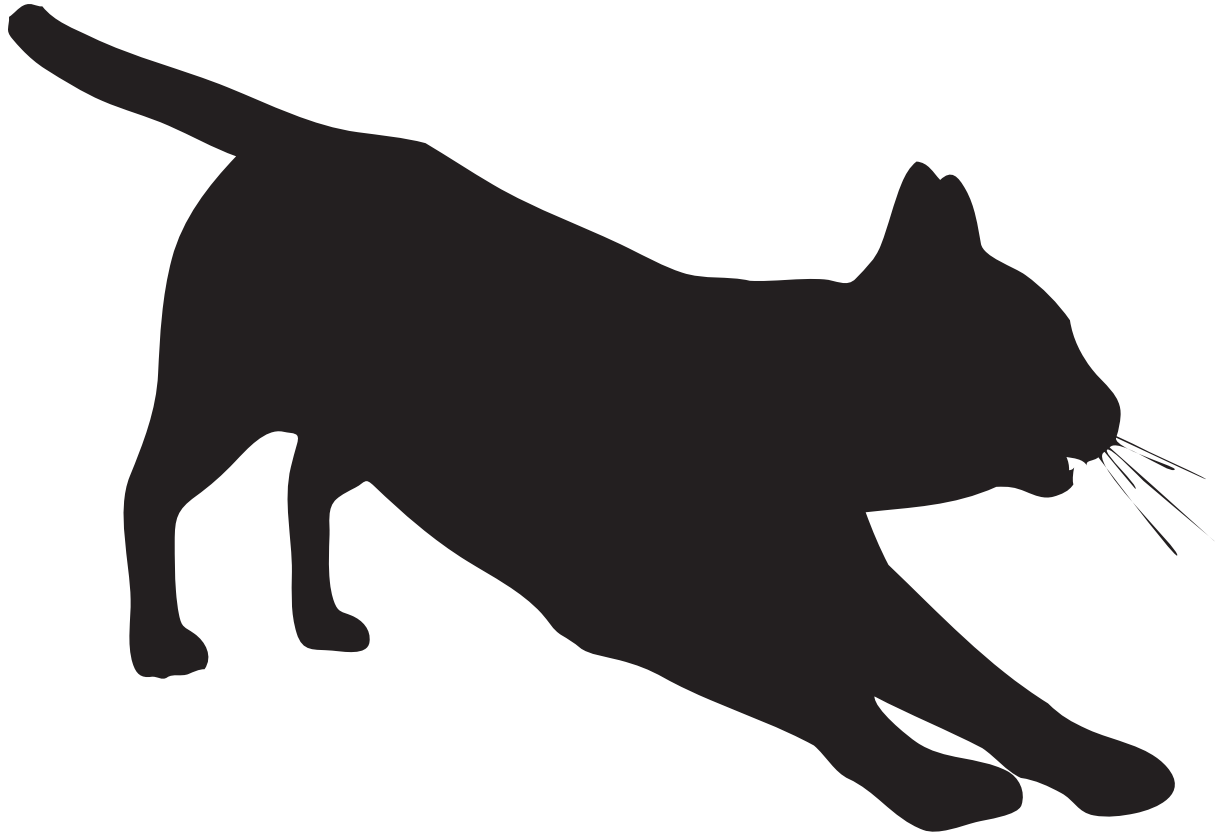
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cage card

The colored cards are an important part of the process, and even when cats are in colony rooms, you will want to display the cage cards. By affixing a small picture of the cat to its cage card, you will help adopters identify the cats within their color category — even when they are in a colony setting.

checklist

- ☐ **assessment room**
- ☐ **stopwatches (silent)**
- ☐ **chair**
- ☐ **cat toys**
- ☐ **cat carrier**
- ☐ **clipboard**
- ☐ **assessment form**
- ☐ **cage card**



the feline-ality™ assessment

the assessment

All healthy cats that can be handled and are at least nine months of age should be Feline-ality™ assessed after at least 18 hours of entering the shelter. Our recent research found that the assessment can be just as or more predictive after a stay as short as 18 hours.

Females in heat should not be assessed if it can be avoided. If you must assess them, please be aware that the Feline-ality™ assessment will be less predictive. Another assessment should be done if the cat is still in the shelter after she has come out of heat.

The assessment consists of eleven items. After the items have been administered their scores will determine their Feline-ality™ description..

Items 1-4 will occur while the cat is still in his cage. Items 5 through 11 will take place in the Novel Room. The ideal space is 10 feet by 10 feet, but a somewhat smaller or larger room will do. A room free of hiding spots is more important to the assessment process than the square footage. The area outside the room during the assessment needs to be quiet and as distraction-free as possible. Avoid areas where barking dogs, chirping birds, ringing phones, talking and high foot traffic will be audible.

All items are performed by one staff member or volunteer and are designed to determine the cat's independent-gregarious scale and valiance.

Before the assessment begins, place a chair, assortment of clean cat toys and two stopwatches in the Novel Room, so you are prepared to move immediately into items 5 through 11 when you have completed the first four items. Then, wash your hands and take a clean plastic cat carrier (crate) and a clipboard with assessment form attached into the area where the cats are housed for your first item.



novel room

item #1: body posture

The body posture assessment is designed to give us information about the cat's social behavior.

This assessment item is to be conducted in conjunction with item #2 Greeting Approach. Enter the score for item #1 and #2 after completion of the Greeting Approach.

Take a quick mental snapshot as you approach the cage. You should not call out or coax the cat, but simply look toward the cat when approaching while carefully observing his body posture.

item #1: body posture			
Choose one of the following responses:			
☐	Soft and relaxed	add 1 pt	☐
☐	Tense body with twitching tail	add 1 pt	☐
☐	Flattened body with dilated pupils	subtract 1 pt	☐
total points for item #1			☐
other observations:			

item #2: greeting approach

The Greeting Approach determines sociability toward strangers when the cat is in stressful surroundings. This item helps us determine social response (the independent-gregarious scale) and identifies cats that are likely to be vocal in the home.

After taking a brief snapshot of the cat's body posture during item #1, continue to approach the front of the cat's cage while speaking to the cat in a soft, normal tone of voice. Once in front of the cage, observe the cat's response to your presence through the closed cage door.



common errors: item #2

Evaluator speaks too loudly, stares at the cat or otherwise intimidates the cat with her body posture.

Evaluator allows others to enter the room during the observation.

Evaluator assesses too close to feeding or cleaning time.

item #2: greeting approach

Choose one of the following responses:

	At front of the cage, soliciting attention by rubbing, chirping, etc. <i>This is a confident, high-status cat that is comfortable demanding physical contact from a stranger.</i>	add 3 pts	
	Comes to front of cage after you encourage <i>This cat is a little less confident but does respond to human coaxing and seems to find human interaction motivating.</i>	add 2 pts	
	Does not approach but meows, chirps or blinks <i>This cat is social but not valiant enough to approach at this time.</i>	add 1 pt	
	Does not approach <i>This cat is displaying no motivation to interact with strangers yet is confident enough not to retreat.</i>	0 pts	
	Attempts to hide <i>This cat is fearful of strangers at the moment and looks to retreat to a safe place.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
	Hisses / growls <i>This cat is performing a distance-enhancing behavior. As long as the evaluator heeds the warning and doesn't attempt to get closer, the cat's behavior isn't likely to escalate.</i>	subtract 2 pts	
	Charges <i>The cat is not motivated to interact with the evaluator in a positive manner at this time and is attempting to drive off the evaluator. He is valiant enough to risk injury by reducing the distance between the evaluator and himself in order to do so.</i>	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #2			
other observations			

If the cat displays other behaviors than those listed, use the Other Observations section to make notes. These observations will be passed onto potential adopters by the shelter's adoption counselors when they pull the cat's Feline-ality™ Assessment and will help give a more complete picture of how this cat will initially respond in his new home.

rub

A confident affiliative behavior in which the cat makes contact with an individual with the side or bottom of his head, often followed by leaning the rest of his body against the individual while moving forward.

meow

An affiliative vocal behavior that sounds like *me-ow*. Produced while mouth is open and then gradually closed.

chirps

An affiliative vocal behavior that sounds like *chrrrt*. Mouth is usually closed for this behavior.

high-status

The high-status or high-ranking cat is the one that initiates a social situation and determines how much interaction to allow. Higher status cats are generally less anxious than those that do not initiate social interaction.

confident

The confident cat is undaunted by the assessment environment and indicates that through erect body carriage, tail held high. He approaches and rubs or head butts the evaluator with little time needed to acclimate to new surroundings or people. The confident cat may also be called bold and displays a high degree of valiance.

distance-enhancing

These behaviors are displayed in order to increase space between the cat and a perceived threat. Pilo-erection, hissing, growling, swatting, charging and light warning bites that **do not break skin** are meant to scare away or stop a particular interaction.

item #3: cage condition

Once the Greeting Approach is complete, observe the condition of the cage noting if the cage is neat and tidy, if the cat has rearranged the items, or any other cage condition changes. If you note changes other than those listed in the scoring options, note them in the space marked for other observations.

item #3: cage condition			
Choose one of the following:			
☐	Bedding/cage paper moved, cat hiding under	subtract 1 pt	☐
☐	Cage rearranged, cat on top or not hiding	add 1 pt	☐
☐	No change	no points	☐
☐	Other, please describe	no points	☐
total points for item #3			☐
other observations:			

item #4: social response when door is opened

After approaching the cage and observing the three items above, calmly and slowly open the cage door while watching the cat. This should be done without talking to the cat. Observe the cat at the moment the door is initially opened.

item #4: social response when door is opened			
Choose one of the following responses:			
☐	Remains relaxed and soft, approaches me	add 1 pt	☐
☐	Remains relaxed and soft, does not approach	no points	☐
☐	Becomes stiff with tight tail flicks and standing	add 1 pt	☐
☐	Crouches, body stiff	subtract 1 pt	☐
total points for item #4			☐
other observations:			

item #5: introduction to novel space

Introduction to Novel Space is designed to determine the cat's valiance in new situations and sociability to strangers when given some adjustment time and the freedom to approach or retreat as he wishes.

After item #4 has been completed, place the carrier on the floor so that the open door faces up and put the cat inside back end first. Secure the door and move to the Novel Room. Once inside, ready the two stopwatches and as soon as you open the carrier door, start the first stopwatch. Be seated with hands at your side for five minutes. Hold on to the second stopwatch so you can keep track of how long it takes the cat to exit the carrier as well as capture the total length of time the cat engages in cat-evaluator interactions. Click on the second stopwatch whenever an interaction begins and click it off once the interaction ends. Watch closely and include all social behaviors: meows, chirps, rubbing against evaluator, touching, looking at evaluator, or hopping onto lap. Include those made while inside the carrier after the door has been opened.

Other than eye contact, do not initiate, engage in or respond to any of the cat's behaviors during these five minutes.



item #5a-b: introduction to novel space

Choose one:

	Exits carrier in 25 seconds or less with tall body posture	add 1 pt	
	Exits carrier in 25 seconds or less with crouched body posture	add 1/2 pt	
	Exits carrier within 25 seconds and quickly scoots to hiding place, keeping body low to the ground	subtract 1/2 pt	
	Does not exit the carrier (choose one): ____ within 25 seconds, or ____ at all	0 pts	

Choose one (if applicable):

	Investigates room while standing tall	add 1 pt	
	Investigates room in a low body posture	add 1/2 pt	
	Races out of carrier to one spot in the room and stays there	subtract 1/2 pt	

total points for item #5a

Fill in information:

	Time spent interacting with the evaluator (as determined by second stopwatch)		
	Time not spent interacting with the evaluator		

Choose one:

	Interacts for more than 60 seconds	add 1-1/2 pts	
	Interacts for 30-60 seconds	add 1 pt	
	Interacts for less than 30 seconds	0 pts	

total points for item #5b

other observations



common errors: items #5a and #5b

Crate placed so that the evaluator cannot see into the crate.

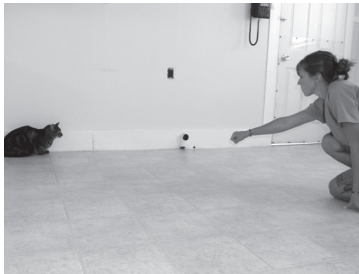
Evaluator attempts to the cat.

Evaluator ends assessment before the five minutes are up.

item #6: call and approach

The Call and Approach Item is designed to rate how the cat responds when the evaluator attempts to engage the cat, using voice and an extended fist. This item focuses on both social behavior and valiance, as well as whether or not the cat will be “talkative” in the new home. The cat that quickly approaches is likely to be socially motivated and quite bold.

At the end of the Introduction to the Novel Space assessment, write down the score, leave your chair and move to within



five to six feet of the cat. Crouch down opposite the cat, start the stopwatch and softly call him several times using his name or an endearment. Extend a closed hand toward the cat and observe his response. Stop the clock when the cat approaches and

makes contact with your hand or other body part. Allow the cat up to 30 seconds to approach before ending this item.

head butts

This behavior is often observed as part of a greeting between cats, or a cat and a human. The cat will approach, and push his forehead (not his cheeks or shoulder) into a fist, hand, or body part. Often, a head butt will be followed by the cat rubbing the side of his face and his body against the area he head butted.

conflicted

The conflicted cat is torn between advance and retreat, so he stays in place. He may be a social cat that needs time to warm up to strangers or a new environment. He is likely anxious. During the Feline-ality™ Assessment, the conflicted cat is likely to roll on his back or roll over.

item #6: call and approach

Check all behaviors that occur.

Makes eye contact <i>The cat is seeking out a social connection with the evaluator.</i>	add 1 pt	
Does not make eye contact <i>Either the cat is more independent in nature or he is too nervous to make social contact at this point in time.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
Approaches <i>The cat is social and confident.</i>	add 3 pts	
Sniffs or head butts <i>The cat is social and high status.</i>	add 3 pts	
Rolls on back or rolls over <i>Cat is social but conflicted about the contact.</i>	add 2 pts	
Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply) <i>Cat is social and vocal.</i>	add 1 pt	
Watches with no approach <i>Cat is reserved in new situations and may need more time to warm up or is more independent in nature.</i>	add 0 pts	
Retreats <i>If he walks away with a high body posture, the cat is independent; if he walks away using low body posture, he is likely fearful.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
Hisses / growls <i>Cat wants to put a halt to the approach and interaction. May aggress if warning is not heeded.</i>	subtract 2 pts	
total points for item #6		
other observations		



note

If the cat did not exit the carrier during item #5, you will first need to gently tip the carrier until the cat exits, then shut the carrier door.



common errors: item #6

Evaluator comes on too strong, using a loud voice and/or forceful body language.

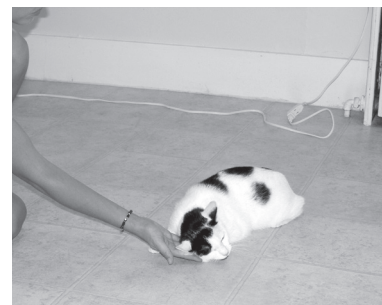
Evaluator sets up too close or too far away from the cat.

Evaluator doesn't keep encouragement up for full 30 seconds.

Shelter environment outside of the Novel Room is loud and distracting to the cat.

item #7: open hand

The Open Hand Item expands on item #6. Crouch next to the cat, extend an open hand (palm up) and observe the results. Wait up to 10 seconds for contact. If the cat approached you during item #6, the only change is the position of the hand. If the cat did not approach you, walk over to the cat, crouch next to him and extend an open hand. Your hand should be held below the cat's head. Keep hand extended for two seconds when the cat chooses to be in contact, then note response. Do not talk to the cat during this part of the Feline-ality™ Assessment. This item focuses on forced interaction and is predictive regarding the cat's valiance score.



item #7: open hand

Check all behaviors that occur.

	Sniffs or head butts <i>The cat is social and high status.</i>	add 3 pts	
	Licks or rubs on hand <i>A social approach.</i>	add 3 pts	
	Rolls on back or rolls over <i>The cat is conflicted but accepting of the evaluator's behavior.</i>	add 2 pts	
	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply) <i>Cat is in a contented state and interacts through vocalization.</i>	add 2 pts	
	Retreats/defensive position <i>The cat is likely fearful and is trying to put some distance between the evaluator and himself.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
	Hisses / growls <i>The cat is motivated to try to cease interaction with the evaluator.</i>	subtract 2 pts	
	Swats/attempts to swat hand <i>The swat is the physical equivalent to a hiss. Back off and nobody needs to get hurt!</i>	subtract 2 pts	
	Bites/attempts to bite hand <i>The cat has likely previously learned that a bite attempt will result in ending an interaction.</i>	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #7			
other observations			



common errors: item #7

Evaluator does not keep her hand below the cat's head.
Evaluator leans over the cat.



note

If the cat has not displayed any overt aggression during the first seven items, proceed with items 8-11. Those cats that have displayed aggression are not ready to be part of the Meet Your Match® Feline-ality™ Adoption Program at this time.



Depending on your organization's resources, you may try to give those cats more time to settle in, place them in experienced foster homes, work with them in-house or remove them from the adoption pool. Our research indicates that feline aggression shown in boarding facilities and shelters is seldom indicative of aggression in the home once the cat has settled in. However, we understand that supervisors must protect staff, volunteers and potential adopters from aggressive cats while they are on the premises.

item #8: stroking

The Stroking Item is designed to determine the cat's tolerance/enjoyment of petting. Defensive behaviors during this item correlate with difficulty in handling for veterinary care, grooming and the like. Cats with high scores are likely to be easier to handle.



Take a comfortable position by sitting, kneeling or crouching on the floor near the cat. Begin stroking the cat. Cup your hand slightly and give the cat four or five long, slow strokes beginning at the head and ending at the base of the tail. Stop if at any point you get an aggressive response.

item #8: stroking			
Check all behaviors that occur.			
☐	Rubs against legs or hand <i>The cat is motivated by the interaction and stays around for more.</i>	add 3 pts	☐
☐	Head butts <i>Cat is likely high status and confident.</i>	add 3 pts	☐
☐	Circles you attentively <i>The cat is social.</i>	add 2 pts	☐
☐	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply) <i>Cat is in a contented state and interacts through vocalization.</i>	add 2 pts	☐
☐	Rolls onto back or rolls over <i>The cat is conflicted but accepting of the evaluator's behavior.</i>	add 2 pts	☐
☐	Shows initial fear but then relaxes <i>The cat is social but lacks confidence.</i>	0 pts	☐
☐	Retreats/defensive position <i>The cat is fearful and is trying to put some distance between the evaluator and himself.</i>	subtract 1 pt	☐
☐	Hisses / growls <i>The cat is bold enough to hold his ground and want the evaluator to back off in order to avoid an aggressive interaction.</i>	subtract 2 pts	☐
☐	Swats/attempts to swat hand <i>The swat is the physical equivalent to a hiss. Back off and nobody needs to get hurt!</i>	subtract 2 pts	☐
☐	Bites/attempts to bite hand <i>The cat has likely previously learned that a bite attempt will result in ending an interaction</i>	subtract 3 pts	☐
total points for item #8			
other observations			

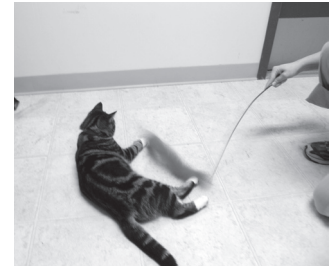
common errors: item #8



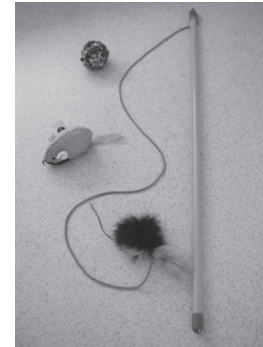
Evaluator strokes the cat more than five times.
The evaluator begins by touching the back end of the cat as opposed to behind the ears.

item #9: play

Some adopters prefer cats that are very playful, while others are not that interested in frequent play sessions with their cat. The Play Item determines the cat's playfulness, sociability, and toy preferences. This item also correlates with activity level in the home. Cats that actively engaged in play during this item were more likely to display high activity levels in their new homes.



Beginning a couple of feet away from the cat, slowly move a piece of string/yarn along the floor to initiate play. Observe the cat's reaction. Then try to engage the cat in play with two other toys from the following list (for a total of three different toys): Ball, Toy Mouse, Cat Charmer, and Feather Wand. **Do not use catnip toys during the Feline-ality™ Assessment.** Some cats become wildly stimulated by catnip and the items would not be valid. Circle the toy preferences on the score sheet so the adopter will know which toys the cat prefers, if any.



item #9: play

Check all behaviors that occur.

	Watches toy intently <i>The cat is attracted by the toy's movement, but may be too cautious to engage/pounce at this time. However, this cat is likely to play with toys in the new home.</i>	add 3 pts	
	Chases toy <i>The cat is motivated by movement and social interaction to chase and play. This cat is likely to play with toys in the new home.</i>	add 3 pts	
	Comes back for stroking <i>The cat is more motivated by touch and social interaction than by movement and interactive play.</i>	add 2 pts	
	Ignores toys <i>The cat is not motivated by interactive play or is too inhibited by his current situation to engage in play.</i>	0 pts	
	Attends to something else <i>The cat may be more interested in other things in his environment than he is to engage in interactive play. This cat is less likely to engage in play with toys in his new home.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
	Avoids eye contact <i>The cat chooses not to socially engage. This cat is less likely to engage in play with toys in his new home.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
	Bites/attempts to bite hand <i>The cat has likely previously learned that a bite attempt will result in ending an interaction</i>	subtract 3 pts	
		total points for item #9	
other observations			



common errors: item #9

Evaluator does not try to engage the cat with three different toys.
Evaluator moves too quickly and intimidates the cat.

item #10: hug

Some cats tolerate handling well, while others resist being confined or restricted in any way. The Hug Item is employed to determine the cat's comfort level with being picked up and held. Based on the original research, cats with high positive scores are more likely to be tolerant of the sometimes-clumsy handling by children and higher amounts of physical affection and cuddling some adopters expect from their cats. A cat with a lower score will appeal to adopters who prefer a more independent cat.



Call the cat over to you or approach him slowly if he doesn't respond. While standing, stroke the cat a few times. If he is calm, pick him up and hold him upright with the side of his body held against your chest. Lightly hug the cat for two full seconds and then gently return him to the ground. Score the cat and remember to mark all that apply.

item #10: hug			
Check all behaviors that occur.			
☐	Is relaxed <i>Cat is social and likely to be tolerant of handling.</i>	add 3 pts	☐
☐	Extends paw to evaluator's neck or shoulder in an affiliative manner <i>The cat is tolerant and interactive when held.</i>	add 3 pts	☐
☐	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply) <i>The cat is in a contented state and is interacting socially through vocalizations.</i>	add 2 pts	☐
☐	Accepts hold but remains a bit tense <i>While this cat is displaying some discomfort stemming from being held, he is still likely to behave in a social manner in his new home.</i>	add 2 pts	☐
☐	Struggles to escape <i>This cat resists being held and is likely to be more independent in the new home than those cats that accept hugging.</i>	subtract 1 pt	☐
☐	Hisses / growls <i>The cat resists being held and is warning off the handler. This cat is more likely to be independent in the new home.</i>	subtract 2 pts	☐
☐	Stiffens and extends claws <i>The cat resists the hug and may use aggression to gain release. This cat is likely to be independent in the new home.</i>	subtract 2 pts	☐
☐	Swats/attempts to swat <i>The cat resists the hug by warning off the handler with a physical threat.</i>	subtract 3 pts	☐
☐	Bites/attempts to bite <i>The cat has previously learned that a bite attempt puts an end to an interaction.</i>	subtract 3 pts	☐
total points for item #10			
other observations			



common errors: item #10

Evaluator holds the cat on his back.

Evaluator holds the cat too tightly or for too long.

item #11: sensitivity

The final item determines the cat's sensitivity to mildly objectionable handling. Based on the original research, this item correlates with affectionate behavior, acceptance of handling, tolerance for young children and desire to be held.

Once again, sit on the ground and allow the cat to approach if it chooses. Wait at least 60 seconds, then stroke the cat along the back to the base of the tail. Once there, firmly but gently grasp the base of the tail. Pull up with a steady pressure that is just enough to almost, but not quite, move the back feet off the floor. Hold for one second.



item #11: sensitivity

Check all behaviors that occur.

☐	Rolls onto back or rolls over <i>The cat is tolerant of unpleasant handling and is likely a social cat.</i>	add 3 pts	
☐	Shows no reaction <i>The cat is tolerant of unpleasant handling.</i>	add 3 pts	
☐	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply) <i>The cat is tolerant of the handling.</i>	add 1 pt	
☐	Struggles/tries to escape <i>The cat is uncomfortable and possibly fearful, and is choosing to retreat.</i>	0 pts	
☐	Hisses / growls <i>The cat is bold and holds his ground and wants the evaluator to back off so as not to provoke an aggression escalation.</i>	subtract 1 pt	
☐	Swats/attempts to swat <i>The cat does not tolerate rough handling and is bold enough to physically warn the handler to stop.</i>	subtract 2 pts	
☐	Bites/attempts to bite <i>The cat is not tolerant of rough handling and has learned in the past that biting is a way to stop objectionable behaviors from people.</i>	subtract 3 pts	
		total points for item #11	
other observations			

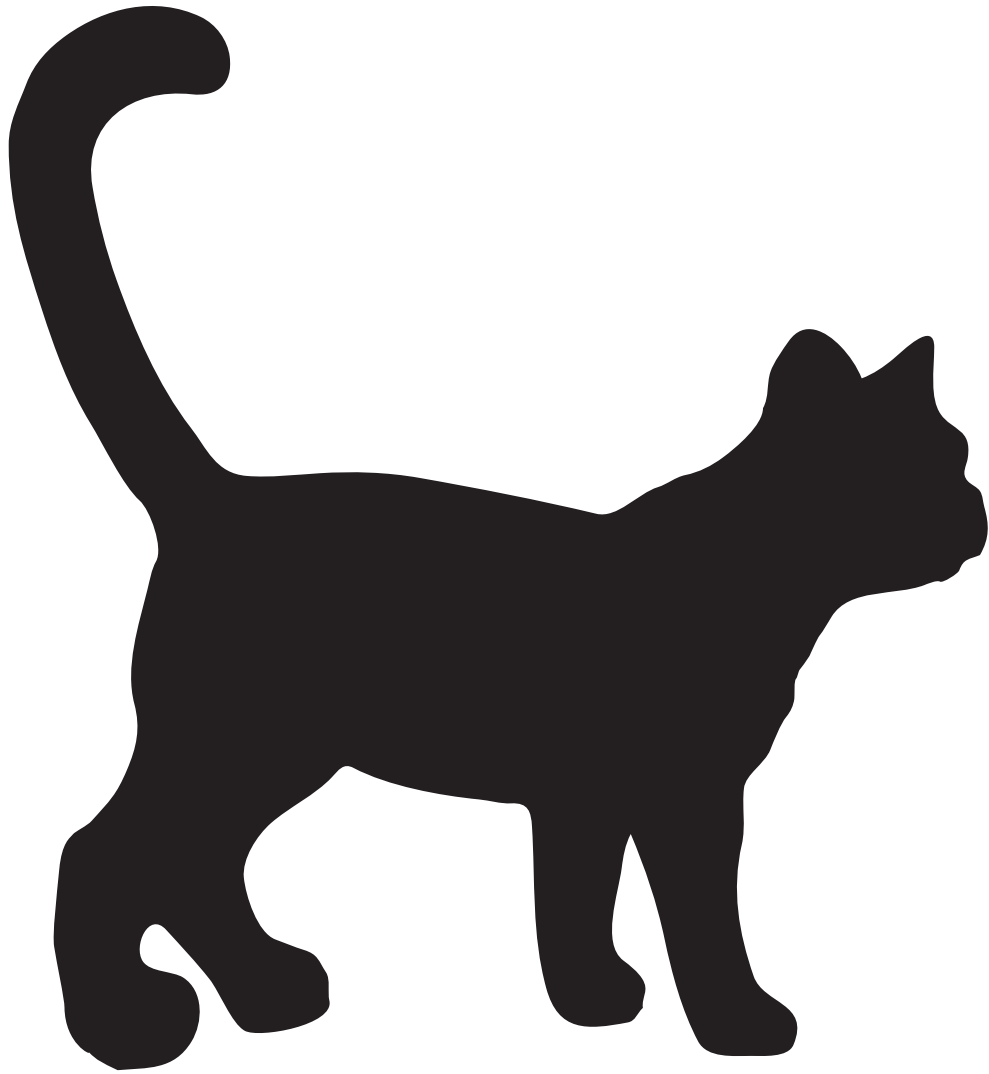


common errors: item #11

Evaluator grasps tip of tail instead of base.

Evaluator tries to pull the cat backward.

Evaluator grasps the tail without first stroking the body.



selecting a feline-ality™

the distribution

Cats are more likely to score as orange (medium valiance) than any other color. However, you will likely see a fair number of purples and greens as well. Our beta test sites found that there can also be fewer orange independent cats (Executives) and green independent cats (MVPs) represented on the adoption floor.

what is the valiance scale?

When Phase II of the research was completed, we found that two major scales had developed. One incorporated how the cat was likely to react when new things occurred. For example, it measured how the cat reacted when first brought home (hid for a few days, was initially wary, immediately adjusted, etc.) or the response when guests came over (hid until the guests were gone, initially hid but then approached, etc.). This was described as “response to novel stimuli” – not a phrase most of our adopters could easily grasp or appreciate.

We chose the word **valiant** after several brainstorming sessions, as it was not a word weighted down by negative connotations. We did not want adopters to perceive that scoring high on the scale was either better or worse than scoring low on the scale. It was just a matter of how that behavior would fit into their lifestyle. Low valiant cats were not fearful all the time. In fact, when they perceived the environment as no longer new, they were quite comfortable. One would have difficulty telling the difference between a low valiant cat and a high valiant cat when the low valiant cat was in a familiar situation.

The fact that these low valiant cats will gain confidence while in your shelter is important. If you have a low valiant cat as a long-term resident, it is likely that someone will question whether he is in fact low valiant, as his behavior in a familiar environment will be fairly outgoing and confident. Our beta testers ran into this dilemma, but found that when brought into a new environment (such as a novel room in another area of the building), the cats proved very apprehensive – just as you would expect a low valiant cat to behave.

what is the independent-gregarious scale?

The second scale that developed was a scale measuring social behavior. Specifically, this scale measures the likelihood that the cat will: spend most of his time in the same room as the adopter and family; solicit and/or accept petting; be friendly with children; and work to find new ways to get attention.

Again, we carefully chose the language we used, as some adopters are seeking cats that are more likely to behave as described above, while others appreciate a more independent cat. It was important for both ends of the scale to be perceived as equal – so the adopter is not influenced by anything other than their lifestyle and preferences.

Cats that score fewer than two points on the independent-gregarious scale are not ready to be part of the adoption pool. They will need a day or two more of adjustment time in your facility, or even a foster option. We hypothesize that cats that score this low are not behaving as they normally would – that they are “shut down” and need a bit more time to settle before they are ready for Feline-ality™.

which color cage card do I use?

The cat's color assignment is based on the valiance scale. In order to choose whether a cat is purple, orange or green, add up assessment items 3, 5(a), 6, 7, 8, and 9.

a total of 0-13 = low valiance

this is a purple cat

a total of 14-28 = medium valiance

this is a orange cat

a total of 29-43 = high valiance

this is a green cat

which feline-ality™ description do I use?

Once the cat's Meet Your Match® color category has been identified, the next step is determining which of the three Feline-ality™ descriptions within that color category is most appropriate for the cat. The specific Feline-ality™ description is based on the independent-gregarious score.

To determine whether a cat is independent, social or gregarious, add up assessment items 1, 2, 4, 5(b), 6, 9, 10, 11.

a total less than 2 = cats with a score lower than 2 are not yet ready to be a part of the Feline-ality™ program. We suggest making sure these cats have places to hide, and enrichment opportunities (such as food-filled items, large stuffed toys and toy mice) for 48 hours post assessment before attempting to assess again. If foster is an option, this cat would benefit from a foster opportunity.

a total of 2-10 = independent

a total of 11-20 = social

a total of 21-32 = gregarious

For example, a cat whose valiance score is 28 and independent-gregarious score is 31 would be given the "Personal Assistant" cage card. Use the chart on page 34 to select the cage card representing the cat's valiance and independent-gregarious scores.

overall score

item #1		
item #2		
item #3		
item #4		
item #5a		
item #5b		
item #6		
item #7		
item #8		
item #9		
item #10		
item #11		
	independent-gregarious	valiance
total score		

assessment score worksheet

I'm an MVP.

Hi! My name is _____.

Do you seek affection? I do! If you also like petting, purrs, and paws kneading your lap, I think we might have a LOT in common. I'm looking for "someone who enjoys quiet times and togetherness." Could that someone be you?

ID #

age

M F

breed

MYM

MEET YOUR MATCH

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cage cards

The Feline-ality™ description, printed on the appropriate colored paper, is placed on the cat's cage for adopters to see. For cats in multi rooms, the color-coded cage card should also have a picture of the cat attached, so adopters can easily identify cats with their matching color.

Templates are provided in the appendix of this guide for you to photocopy onto colored paper. They can be laminated and used multiple times, or they can be inserted into a clear plastic page protector so they are clearly visible to the public. Any additional paperwork can be slipped behind the Feline-ality™ description card.

VALIANCE

low valiance

medium valiance

high valiance

NOTE: See the second page of this guide for a “meet the feline-alities” reference sheet.



the adopter survey

what does the adopter survey tell you?

The adopter survey is designed to provide information about the adopter's:

- expectations for social interaction
- preferences regarding certain behaviors, such as vocalizations and play behavior
- home environment
- experience with cats
- best color match

about the adopter survey

Using the term “survey” is integral to Meet Your Match®. It conveys the importance of the adopter's expectations about their new cat, as well as their perspective and experience in the matching process. The term “survey” also conveys that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to the questions being asked. By contrast, the term “application” is associated with “pass/fail”.

Questions #1-6 tell us about a) the adopter's expectations regarding their new cat's level of valiance, and b) the level of household activity their new cat should expect.

QUESTIONS 1- 6: Add the number of responses circled in each column

		Purple	Orange	Green	(Neutral)
1	I would consider my household to be like	A library	Middle of the road	A carnival	
2	I am comfortable with a cat that likes to play “chase my ankles” and similar games	No	Somewhat	Yes	
3	I want my cat to interact with guests that come to my house	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
4	How do you feel about a boisterous cat that gets into everything?	Love them but rather not to live with them	Depends on the situation	Fine by me	
5	My cat needs to be able to adjust to new situations quickly	Not important	Somewhat	Yes	
6	I want my cat to love being with children in my home	It's not important whether my cat loves being with children	Some of the time	Most of the time	Children do not often come to my house
VALIANCE		4	2	0	

1 thru 6

Write the total for each column in the gray row below question #6

To score this section of the survey, add the number of responses circled in each column. Write the total in the gray row below question #6.

Responses in the first (far left) column indicate the adopter's level of compatibility with low valiant, or purple cats. Responses in the next column correspond to the adopter's compatibility with medium valiant, or orange cats. The third column represents responses that are most suited to a high valiant, or green cat.

Responses in the far right column are neutral and for information-gathering purposes only. They do not affect the adopter/cat compatibility regarding valiance.

The column with the most circled responses tells us which color category the adopter is most compatible with. In the “For Office Use Only” section at the bottom of the Adopter Survey, circle the color that the adopter is most compatible with.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	RECOMMENDED COLOR MATCH:	PURPLE	ORANGE	GREEN
	RECOMMENDED FELINE-ALITY™ (IES)			

In the example on page 36, the adopter is most compatible with a low valiant cat – their household is fairly quiet, and they are looking for a cat that is moderately interactive with her environment. After completing the scoring of the adopter’s survey, the adoption counselor will give this adopter a Purple Guest Pass. **See page 38 to learn more about guest passes.**

The next section, **questions #6-9**, provides information about the adopter’s expectations regarding their new cat’s level of interaction with people. **Note: To correctly score this section, you will count responses in question #6 again.** Write the totals for questions #6 through #9 for each column in the blank row under question #9. This set of questions will tell you whether the person is most likely to be compatible with an independent, social or gregarious cat.

! ADD responses circled in Question 6 again!

QUESTIONS 6 - 9: Add the number of responses circled in each column.

6 - 9	6	I want my cat to love being with children in my home	It's not important whether my cat loves being with children	Some of the time	Most of the time	Children do not often come to my house
	VALIANCE 4 2 0					
	7	My cat needs to be able to be alone	More than 9 hours per day	4 to 8 hours per day	Less than 4 hours per day	
	8	When I am at home, I want my cat to be by my side or in my lap	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
	9	I want my cat to enjoy being held	Little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	
		INDEPENDENT-GREGARIOUS 1 2 1				

Write the total for each column in the gray row below question #9

In this example, the adopter scored highest (2) with a social cat.

QUESTIONS 10-15: These are for information-gathering purposes, and do not affect the adopter’s score.

INDEPENDENT-GREGARIOUS 1 2 1					
10	I need my cat to get along with (circle all that apply)				Dogs Cats Birds Other
11	My cat will be	Inside	Inside and Outside	Outside	
12	I have lived with cats before	No		Yes	Currently
13	I prefer my cat to be talkative	No		Yes	It's not important if my cat is talkative
14	I want my cat to play with toys	Little of the time	Sometimes	Often	
15	I want my cat to be active	Not very active at all	Somewhat	Yes, very	

Questions #10-15 are for information-gathering purposes to help with the match (such as I want my cat to play with toys), but do not count in the scoring process.

In the “For Office Use Only” section, write in the Feline-ality™ the adopter is most compatible with, based on his or her score for questions #6 through #9 and your discussions with the adopter.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	RECOMMENDED COLOR MATCH: PURPLE ORANGE GREEN
	RECOMMENDED FELINE-ALITY™ (IES) <u>Secret Admirer</u>

The final question #16 is also for information-gathering purposes only and will help open the conversation with the adopter about the kind of cat they visualize living in their home.

16	It is most important to me that my cat _____ (fill in the blank)
----	---

The assessment should be reviewed for the individual cat that the adopter is interested in, and the areas of compatibility versus challenges should be clarified and discussed. It is important to have a very good understanding of the assessment process when counseling. We strongly recommend that counselors assess the cats when possible.

If an adopter chooses a cat outside of their color category, question #16 can be used to help guide them in their decision making process. As Feline-ality™ predicts two scales, independent-gregarious and valiance, an adopter may find one of these scales much more important for their lifestyle. We know that a cat in their color category will be the best match, but if they are considering a cat outside of their category, having an overall understanding of how they feel about these two general categories will help the counselor have a meaningful discussion with the adopter.

As an example, let's say an adopter scored purple on their Adopter Survey, meaning they are most compatible with a low valiant cat. Their responses to questions six through nine indicate they prefer a social cat. They would be successful with any of the cats with purple cage cards, and most specifically a "Secret Admirer" (low valiant/social). For question #16, they wrote, "is friendly". Now let's say they've looked at the cats in the adoption area and have fallen in love with a cat with an orange cage card. If the cat is a "Sidekick" (medium valiant/social), then they are still likely to be a good match because the cat's level of independence matches the adopter's preference. This cat will be a bit more valiant than the adopter prefers, but the adopter's response to question #16 tells us the independent-gregarious scale is more important than level of valiance.



guest passes

After the adopter's survey is tallied and talking points discussed, the adoption counselor provides the adopter with a color-coded guest pass matching the level of valiance they are most compatible with. Remember, the color of the each cat's cage card is also determined by their valiance score during their assessment.

By color coordinating the Feline-ality™ descriptions and the guest passes, adopters and shelter staff focus on the cats most likely to be the perfect match.

IMPORTANT: Providing a Meet Your Match® Guest Pass may seem like an "extra," however, it is critical to helping adopters focus on the Feline-ality™ of the cat that best suits their lifestyle. The color-coded pass acts as a physical representation of similarities and helps adopters make the connection between meeting their own needs and those of the cats at your shelter. Observe how adopters use the pass. Don't be surprised if you see them holding it up in front of them, looking for that matching piece of the puzzle!

beyond the valiance and independent-gregarious scale: vocal behavior, playfulness and tolerance for handling

The Feline-ality™ Assessment should be reviewed for the individual cat the adopter is interested in. This is an important opportunity to clarify and discuss compatibility and/or challenges with the adopter/cat match. It is important to have a very good understanding of the assessment process when counseling. It is strongly recommended that counselors are trained to assess the cats and actually do so when possible.

■ **vocal behavior**

survey question #13: I want my cat to be talkative.

Greeting Approach (Item #2)

This item helps determine social (the independent-gregarious scale) response — but it is also important to note the cats that vocalized during this item are likely to be vocal in the home. When communicating with the adopter, be sure to look at their survey (question #13) to see if they would like a “talkative” cat.

Call and Approach (Item #6)

This item, as with the greeting approach, is a good predictor of vocal behavior. Cats that meow or chirp here are likely to do so in the home. Again, check question #13 on the survey to see if the adopter would like a “talkative” cat.

Note: In the original version of the Feline-ality™ program with the use of the Data Card, the Greeting Approach and Call and Approach items were predictive of vocal behavior in the home. These items proved not to be predictive in phase IV. Information regarding vocal behavior of the cat should only be shared with the adopter if he continues to be vocal after the assessment.



■ **playfulness**

survey question #14: I want my cat to play with toys

survey question #16: It is most important to me that my cat...

Play Item (Item #9)

This is a very predictive assessment which shows the cats that play during the item, or watch the toy intently, are more likely to play in the home. Further, the toys the cat prefers during this item are likely to be preferred in the home as well. Look at question #14 on the survey and discuss the client's desires compared to the cat's behavior. Be sure to communicate with your client not just about play in general, but also which toys are likely to be best for their cat. If there is a retail store in your facility, make sure to keep it stocked with the toys used in this item so you can send the adopter home with a successful way to engage their cat.

This item also correlates with activity level in the home. Cats that actively engaged in play during the item were more likely to have a high activity level in the home. Refer back to question #16 on the adopter's survey and then discuss the client's expectations.



tolerance for being handled

survey question #6: I want my cat to love being with children in my home

survey question #9: I want my cat to enjoy being held

Hug Item (Item #10)

This item correlates with the cat's tolerance for being handled and held. It also correlates with how affectionate the cat is and the degree to which he will tolerate children. Cats with high scores are more likely to be more tolerant and more affectionate. Some clients will love a cat that is not very tolerant because such a cat would best fit their lifestyle. Look for the client's response to question #6 on their survey. Remember, a gregarious cat might not like being held, so be sure to check the individual cat's response, and your adopters expectations regarding this behavior (question #9).

Sensitivity Item (Item #11)

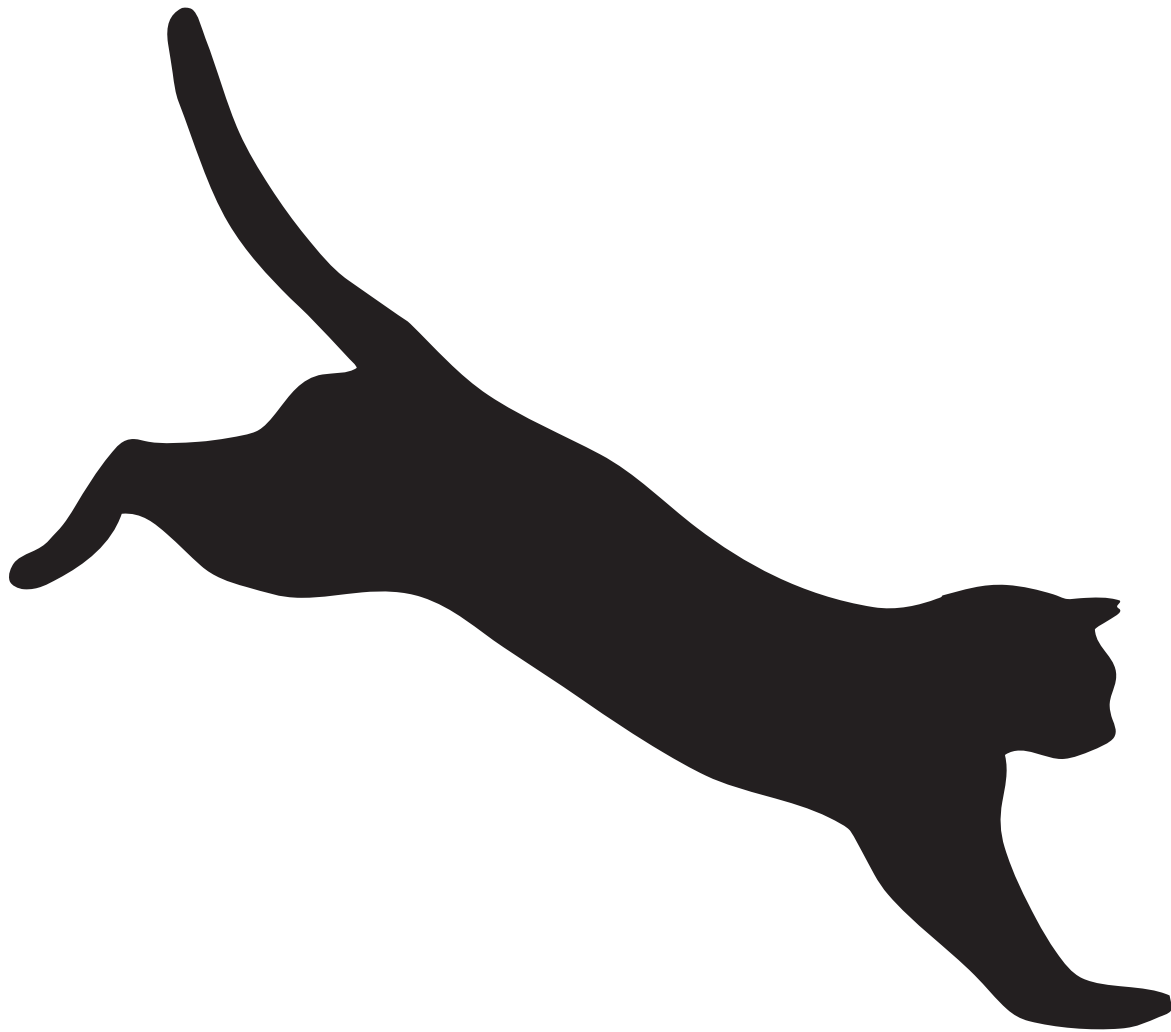
This item is correlated with affectionate behavior, tolerance for handling, tolerance with children, and desire to be held. Cats with high scores are more likely to be more tolerant and more affectionate. Be sure to discuss these specific responses, and what they are likely to mean for the potential adopter.



Note: The research of the original Feline-ality™ program utilizing the Data Card found the Hug and Sensitivity items predictive of tolerance of handling and children. The sample of observed behavior around children in the phase IV research was too small to provide an indication of predictive value of these two items.

! note

On the final page of the Assessment, you'll see cues about talkativeness, comfort in being held and playfulness. Be sure to visit these topics to give your adopter more information about the specific cat they're interested in adopting.



feline-alityTM in action

putting it all together: helping adopters meet their match

The Meet Your Match® Feline-ality™ Assessment, Adopter Survey, Cage Cards, and Guest Passes provide a fun and informative framework by which adoption counselors and adopters work together to find the right match for adopter and cat. When an adopter chooses a cat from a different color category, the counselor has the necessary tools and information to help the adopter make an educated decision. Using the talking tips creates a positive relationship between the adopter and counselor – even if the adopter chooses not to adopt. Regardless of the outcome, when a decision is reached through amicable dialogue based on relevant information, the result is a win-win situation for the cat, adopter, counselor, and agency.

matches

The following two scenarios are designed to help you put all the pieces of the Meet Your Match Feline-ality™ Adoption Program together. The first scenario, “When Steve Met Sally”, walks you through an adoption and demonstrates how the information from the Feline-ality™ Assessment and Adopter Survey work together for an adopter and cat who fall into the same color category – a match.

mismatches

The second scenario, “When Steve Met Martina”, illustrates how to use the information in the Adopter Survey and Feline-ality™ Assessment to help an adopter make the right decision when the cat chosen doesn’t fall into the adopter’s color category – a mismatch.

The second scenario also introduces five talking tips to improve the communication between you and adopters. These tips are helpful in any conversation, so use them with all your adopters, and co-workers too. You’ll notice your conversations are less stressful and feel better.

when Steve met Sally



The shelter is very busy when Steve arrives on a Saturday afternoon. Amanda, a staff member, shows him the way to the cat adoption area and offers to answer any questions he might have. Steve indicates he’d prefer to “just look” for the time being.



Walking through the rows of cat cages, Steve finds a cat named Sally who piques his interest. He lets Amanda know he's interested in learning more about Sally. Amanda explains how the Meet Your Match® program works, and suggests that Steve fill out an Adopter Survey to help determine which cat will be the best match for him.

cat adopter survey

MYM
MEET YOUR MATCH

first name	Steve	last name	Argent	date	9/2
address	123 Lake Ave, Apt 4	city	Portland	state	ME
home phone	(207) 555-0987	work phone	(207) 555-7890	email	none

1	I would consider my household to be like	A library	Middle of the road	A carnival	
2	I am comfortable with a cat that likes to play "chase my ankles" and similar games	No	Somewhat	Yes	
3	I want my cat to interact with guests that come to my house	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
4	How do you feel about a boisterous cat that gets into everything?	Love them but rather not to live with them	Depends on the situation	Fine by me	
5	My cat needs to be able to adjust to new situations quickly	Not important	Somewhat	Yes	
6	I want my cat to love being with children in my home	It's not important whether my cat loves being with children	Some of the time	Most of the time	Children do not often come to my house
3 2 0					
7	My cat needs to be able to be alone	More than 9 hours per day	4 to 8 hours per day	Less than 4 hours per day	
8	When I am at home, I want my cat to be by my side or in my lap	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
9	I want my cat to enjoy being held	Little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	
1 2 0					
10	I need my cat to get along with (circle all that apply)				Dogs Cats Birds Other
11	My cat will be	Inside	Inside and Outside	Outside	
12	I have lived with cats before	No		Yes	Currently
13	I prefer my cat to be talkative	No		Yes	It's not important if my cat is talkative
14	I want my cat to play with toys	Little of the time	Sometimes	Often	
15	I want my cat to be active	Not very active at all	Somewhat	Yes, very	
16	It is most important to me that my cat is easy to live with (fill in the blank)				
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		RECOMMENDED COLOR MATCH: PURPLE ORANGE GREEN RECOMMENDED FELINE-ALITY™ (IES) Secret Admirer or Love Bug			

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**Steve's
adopter
survey**



Amanda reviews and scores Steve's Adopter Survey, and explains that he's most compatible with cats that have purple cage cards – Secret Admirers, Private Investigators or Love Bugs. Sally appears to be a good fit – she's a Secret Admirer! Amanda suggests Steve spend some time visiting in a get-acquainted room with Sally, and to expect her to be a bit shy in the room at first since Secret Admirers need some time to get comfortable in new spaces.



After Steve has visited with Sally for a while, Amanda reviews Sally's Feline-ality™ Assessment with Steve and compares it to his preferences indicated in his Adopter Survey. They learn what makes Sally compatible with Steve and identify any challenges that need to be addressed.

Sally's feline-ality™ assessment

item #2: greeting approach



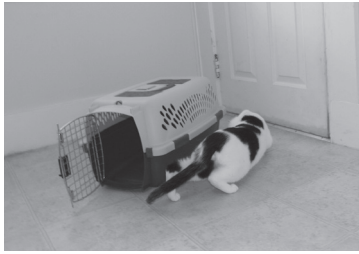
1 point

Does not approach but meows, chirps or blinks.

match!

Sally would do best in a 'Library' type home environment – like Steve's.

item #5: introduction to novel room



0.5 points

(item 5a): Exits crate in 25 seconds or less with low body posture.



1.5 points

(item 5b): Interacts for more than 60 seconds total.

match!

Steve and Sally will be a good fit since Sally will be friendly with her guardian and Steve is looking for a moderately social cat.

item #6: call and approach



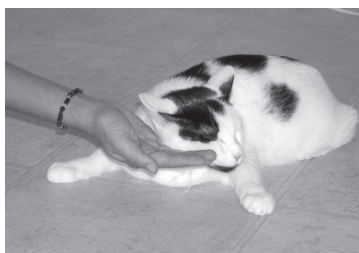
2 points

Makes eye contact, chirps and watches with no approach.

match!

Steve indicates in his survey that he wants a cat who is able to be alone more than nine hours a day, prefers a cat who will be by his side some of the time and enjoys being held some of the time.

item #7: open hand



3 points

Licks or rubs body on hand.

match!

Sally shows motivation for social interaction and is also low valiant, making Steve's 'library' home environment a good match for her.

item #8: stroking



0 points

Shows initial fear,
then relaxes.

match!

Steve describes his house as 'Library', without a lot of activity or interaction. Sally wants a moderate amount of attention and a stable environment.

item #9: play



3 points

Watches toy intently.

match!

Neither Steve or Sally are looking for lots of play time.

item #10: hug



3 points

Relaxes.

match!

This behavior is common for the low valiant cat that is motivated by social interaction. She is likely to become more comfortable in her home.

item #11: sensitivity



3 points

Shows no reaction.

match!

Sally is likely to accept most handling and is also likely to be moderately social, making her a great 'first cat' for Steve.

Steve has met his match



Sally's total score is social on the independent-gregarious scale, and low on the valiance scale, making her a Secret Admirer.

match!

Steve's Adopter Survey indicates he's most compatible with a purple cat.

! note

Not all of Sally's assessment items were represented on the previous pages.



Amanda discusses cat care basics with Steve, and after the paperwork is completed, gets Sally ready to go to her new home.

when Steve met Martina

Now let's look at how to use the Meet Your Match® Feline-ality™ Assessment and Adopter Survey when an adopter is interested in a cat that falls into a different color category. Our goal is to help the adopter learn how the cat differs from what they are looking for and understand the adjustments he will need to make in order to accommodate the cat's needs. Some adopters may be willing to make adjustments and still want to adopt the cat while others may decide to look for a more compatible cat.

talking tip

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it! In this scenario, look for talking tips that will help you keep the discussion relaxed and positive – even if you're recommending the adopter not adopt a particular cat.



Steve has arrived at the shelter to find out about the Meet Your Match Feline-ality™ Adoption Program and see if the shelter has the right cat for him. After looking at the cats in the adoption area, he decides he's interested in learning more about Martina.

Martina's total score is 30.5 (gregarious) on the independent-gregarious scale, and 40 (high) on the valiance scale, making her a green Leader of the Band.



Steve is still interested in Martina and asks to spend some time with her.



Amanda and Steve compare his Adopter Survey and Martina's Feline-ality™ Assessment, discuss how they're compatible and where there are challenges. Amanda and Steve discuss ways he can accommodate Martina's needs.

! note

not all of Martina's assessment items are shared on the following pages.

Martina's feline-ality™ assessment

item #2: greeting approach



3 points

At front of the cage, soliciting attention by rubbing, chirping, etc.

mismatch!

Steve indicates in his survey that he wants a cat who is able to be alone more than nine hours a day, prefers a cat who will be by his side some of the time and enjoys being held some of the time. Martina is a high status cat who will likely demand lots of physical contact.

talking tip

How can Amanda bring up the issue of Martina needing more time and attention than Steve has indicated he wants to provide — without putting Steve on the defensive or just “yes-ing” Amanda? Amanda could say, “Martina is the type of cat who’s going to need more time and attention than you probably want. Are you OK with that?” However, this comment followed by a closed-ended question could be perceived as a challenge and judgmental. It doesn’t provide Amanda with enough information to feel confident about Steve’s understanding of Martina’s needs. A more effective technique is to ask open-ended questions which engage the other person because they solicit more than a simple yes or no answer. They also convey your interest in helping to troubleshoot. For example, Amanda could ask, “Martina is going to want lots of attention from you when you’re home. What are the best times for you to spend some one-on-one time with her?”

item #5: introduction to novel space



1 point

(item 5a) Exits crate in 25 seconds or less with tall body posture



1.5 points

(item 5b) Interacts for more than 60 seconds total

mismatch!

Martina would do best in a ‘Festival’ type home environment – unlike Steve’s ‘Library’.

talking tip

Amanda wants to address the challenge of providing Martina with the environmental stimulation she'll need. She can open the dialogue with some information about Martina's confidence and curiosity by stating, "Martina is a curious cat and loves investigating and exploring new things. I'm gathering from your Survey that you lead a fairly quiet lifestyle?"

What do you think about providing her with a variety of interactive toys to keep her occupied?" Amanda is using three techniques: **ascending tone of voice** — turning a statement into a question causes her voice to rise at the end and is generally perceived as non-judgmental and cooperative; **paraphrasing** — repeating back in her own words the content of what Steve has said in order to confirm she understood him correctly and to show her interest in his information, ideas, and suggestions; and asking an **open-ended question**.

How would the degree of compatibility between Martina and Steve change if Steve responded by saying, "Well, I have friends who come over a couple of times a week and we watch TV or just hang out."?

What other questions and comments could you make using an ascending tone of voice, paraphrasing, and open-ended questions?

item #6: call and approach



10 points

Makes eye contact; approaches, sniffs or head butts hand, rolls onto back or rolls over, meows.

match or mismatch?

Martina is a bold cat and very socially motivated. Steve prefers a cat that requires less attention than Martina will demand. However, Steve also wants a cat that will interact with guests when they visit. Steve will need to consider which is most important to him.

talking tip

How might you use ascending tone of voice, paraphrasing, and open-ended questions to help Steve clarify what's most important to him?

item #7: open hand



10 points

Sniffs or head butts hand, licks or rubs body or hand, rolls onto back or rolls over, chirps.

mismatch!

Steve is looking for a moderately social cat who can be alone for over nine hours a day. Martina is highly social and confident and would do best in a household with more activity and interaction.

**talking
tip**

Steve states, "I thought cats were pretty low maintenance and slept most of the time. I'm sure Martina will just adapt." Amanda can respond by using a technique called the "service no" that maintains a respectful dialogue, provides Steve with options, and doesn't compromise Martina's needs. A "service no" incorporates two elements, the first being an offer of what you can do, and the second being a request or suggestion for the client to do.

Amanda replies using the "service no" by saying, "Adult cats do sleep a lot. When Martina isn't sleeping, though, she's going to be pretty active. What I can do is give you some tools and tricks to keep her busy and out of trouble. Then you can decide if those are doable for your situation."

item #8: stroking



8 points

Rubs against legs or hand, head butts, circles you attentively.

mismatch!

Steve describes his house as a 'Library', without a lot of activity. Martina would need more variation throughout the day.

**talking
tip**

What suggestions for environmental stimulation could you make to Steve? How would you use paraphrasing, open ended questions, "service no's", and ascending tone of voice to help Steve make an educated decision about adopting Martina?

item #9: play



8 points

Watches toy intently, chases toy, comes back for stroking.

mismatch!

Martina is looking for a playful companion, and Steve prefers a cat that is less active and only mildly interested in play.

talking tip

After talking with Amanda, Steve understands Martina's need for play and how he can meet most of her needs with interactive toys and enrichment devices. He is a bit hesitant though about establishing regular time in his schedule to meet Martina's needs for attention and affection. Amanda wants to highlight the importance of providing Martina with one-on-one time, and introduce the topic by avoiding the words "but" and "why". When we use the word "but", it has the effect of negating the statement that preceded it. Think about how these two statements feel different: "She'll demand one-on-one time with you but she'll also play with her toys." and "She'll demand one-on-one time with you and she'll also play with her toys."

In the first statement, the last phrase stands out, and the first phrase is all but forgotten. In the second statement, "but" is replaced with "and". The result is that both ideas exist simultaneously.

Questions beginning with the word "why" often come across as accusatory, judgmental, or confrontational and can put people on the defensive. Phrasing questions using "when", "how", or "what" are neutral in tone, convey respect for the other person's perspective, and are more likely to elicit honest answers. For example, read these two questions. Notice how the second question is more open-ended and neutral than the first question. "Why are you concerned about Martina's need for one-on-one time?" and "What are your concerns about Martina's need for one-on-one time?"

item #10: hug



-1 point

Struggles to escape.

mismatch!

Martina prefers affection on her own terms and Steve prefers a cat who likes to be held some of the time.

talking tip

How would you discuss this difference with Steve using some of the talking tips? Compare the rest of the information from Martina's Feline-ality™ Assessment with Steve's Adopter Survey. Where are they compatible? Where are the challenges? How would you utilize open-ended questions, "service no's", paraphrasing, ascending tone of voice, and avoiding "but" and "why"?

item #11: sensitivity



3 points
No reaction.

match!

Martina accepts most handling, making her a good candidate for a first-time cat guardian like Steve.

match or mismatch?

Martina adjusted quickly to her new environment at the shelter and has a high need for social interaction and play. She's likely to adjust well to Steve's home although she will need more attention and play than Steve would prefer.

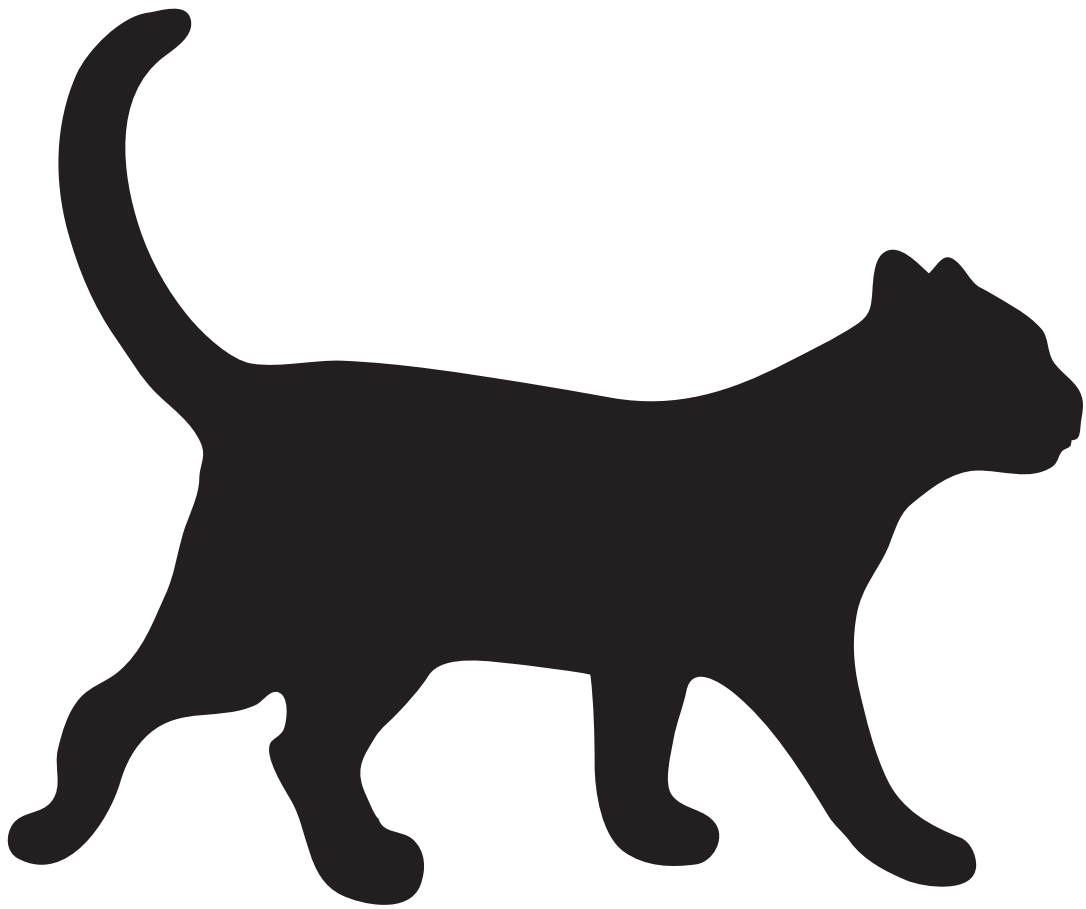
Steve didn't meet his match



Steve considers what he's learned about Martina's Feline-ality™ and the adjustments he'd need to make in his daily routine to accommodate her needs and prevent potential behavior issues. After talking with Amanda, he decides that while Martina is a great cat, she's probably not the best match for him.



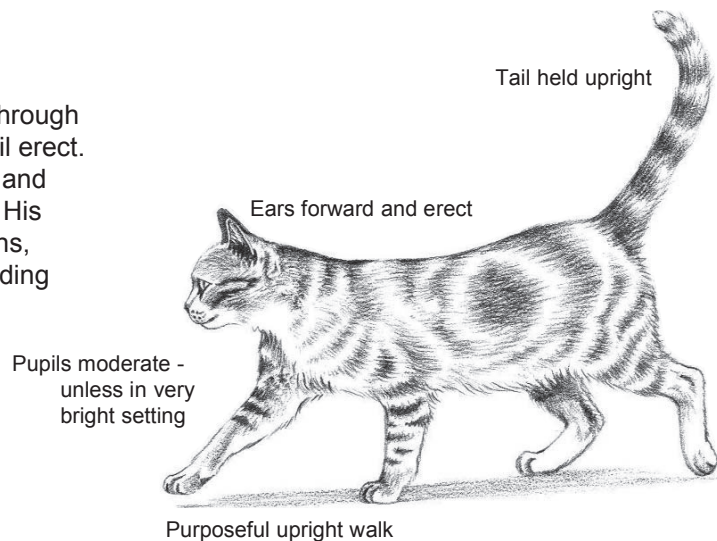
Steve has a better understanding of what Feline-ality™ characteristics are most important to him, and looks at the cats with purple cage cards. He asks Amanda if he can visit with Sally...



body posture

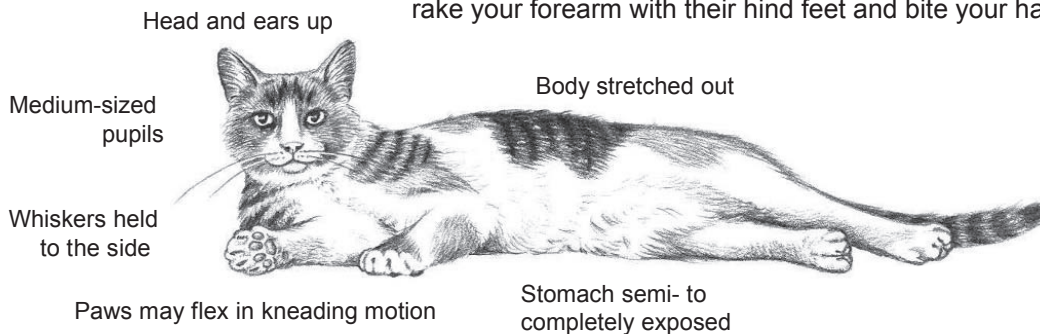
the confident cat

The confident cat purposefully moves through space, standing straight and tall with tail erect. He is ready to explore his environment and engage those he meets along the way. His upright tail signifies his friendly intentions, while his ears are forward and erect adding to the cat's alert expression.



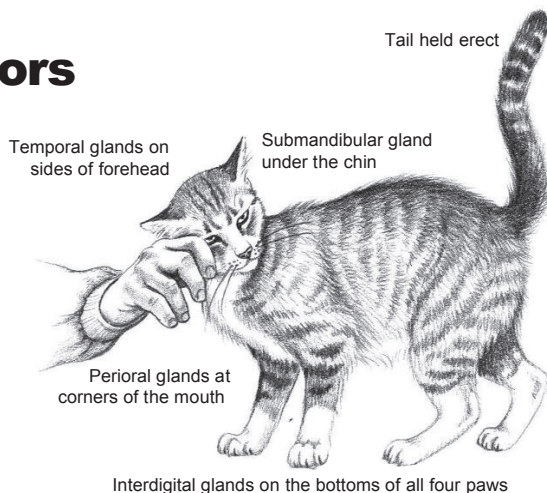
the confident cat at ease

When relaxed, a confident cat stretches out on his side or lies on his back exposing his belly. He is in a calm but alert state and accepts being approached. His entire posture is open and at ease; but beware, not every cat that exposes his abdomen will respond well to a belly rub. Some will grasp your hand with their front paws, rake your forearm with their hind feet and bite your hand.



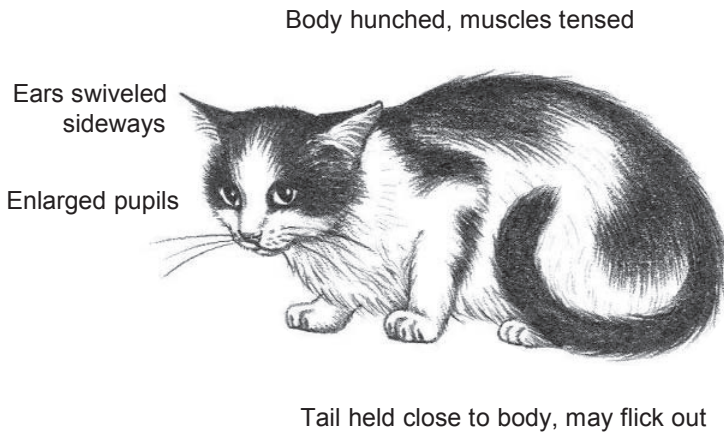
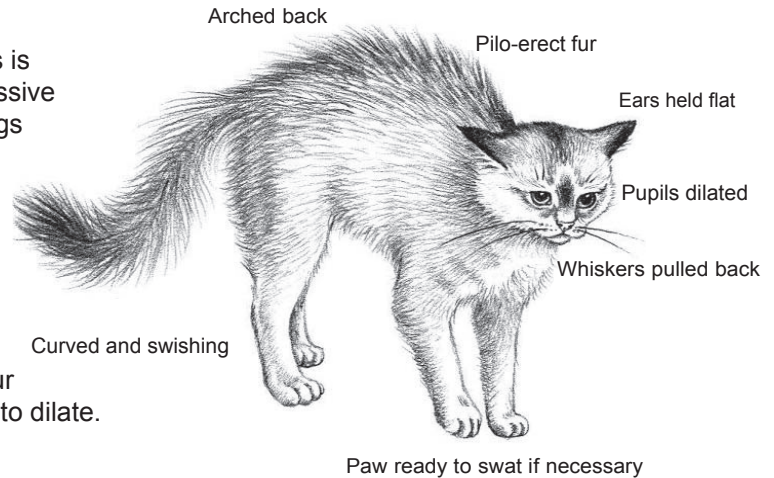
distance-reducing behaviors

Distance-reducing behaviors encourage approach and social interaction and are meant to telegraph to others that the cat means no harm. The act of rubbing against a person's hand or another cat (scent marking) to distribute glandular facial pheromones from the forehead, chin or whisker bed is calming and seems to guarantee friendly interaction immediately afterward. The tail is usually held erect while the cat is scent-rubbing.



distance-increasing behaviors

The goal of distance-increasing behaviors is to keep others from coming closer. Aggressive interactions are avoided when the warnings are heeded. Conflicted cats lack the confidence to stare down and charge others. Instead, they assume a defensive threat posture, warning others away by appearing as formidable as possible by arching their backs, swishing their tails, and standing sideways and as tall as possible. Fear and arousal causes their fur to stand on end (pilo-erection) and pupils to dilate.

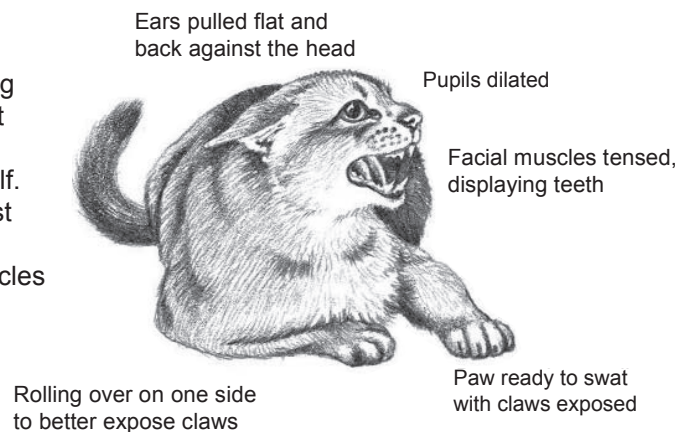


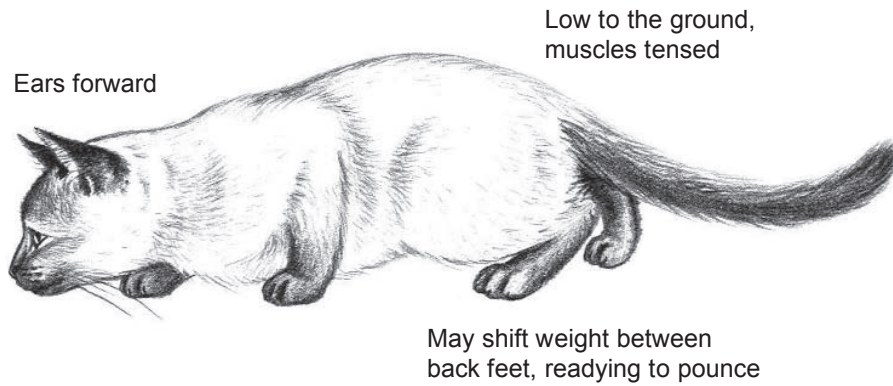
the anxious cat

When a cat becomes anxious, he crouches into a ball, making himself appear smaller than usual. Muscles are tensed and the cat is poised to flee if necessary. The tail is held close to the body, sometimes wrapped around the feet. The head is held down and pulled into the shoulders.

defensive aggression

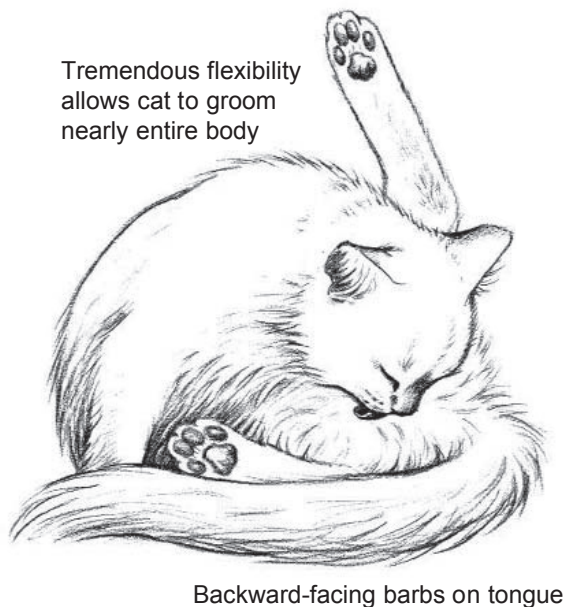
The pariah threat is another distance-increasing posture. When a cat determines that he cannot escape an unwanted interaction with a more dominant animal, he prepares to defend himself. The ears are pulled back and nearly flat against the head for protection and the head and neck are pulled in tight against the body. Facial muscles tense, displaying one weapon - the teeth. The cat rolls slightly over to one side in order to expose the rest of his arsenal - his claws. He is now ready to protect himself.





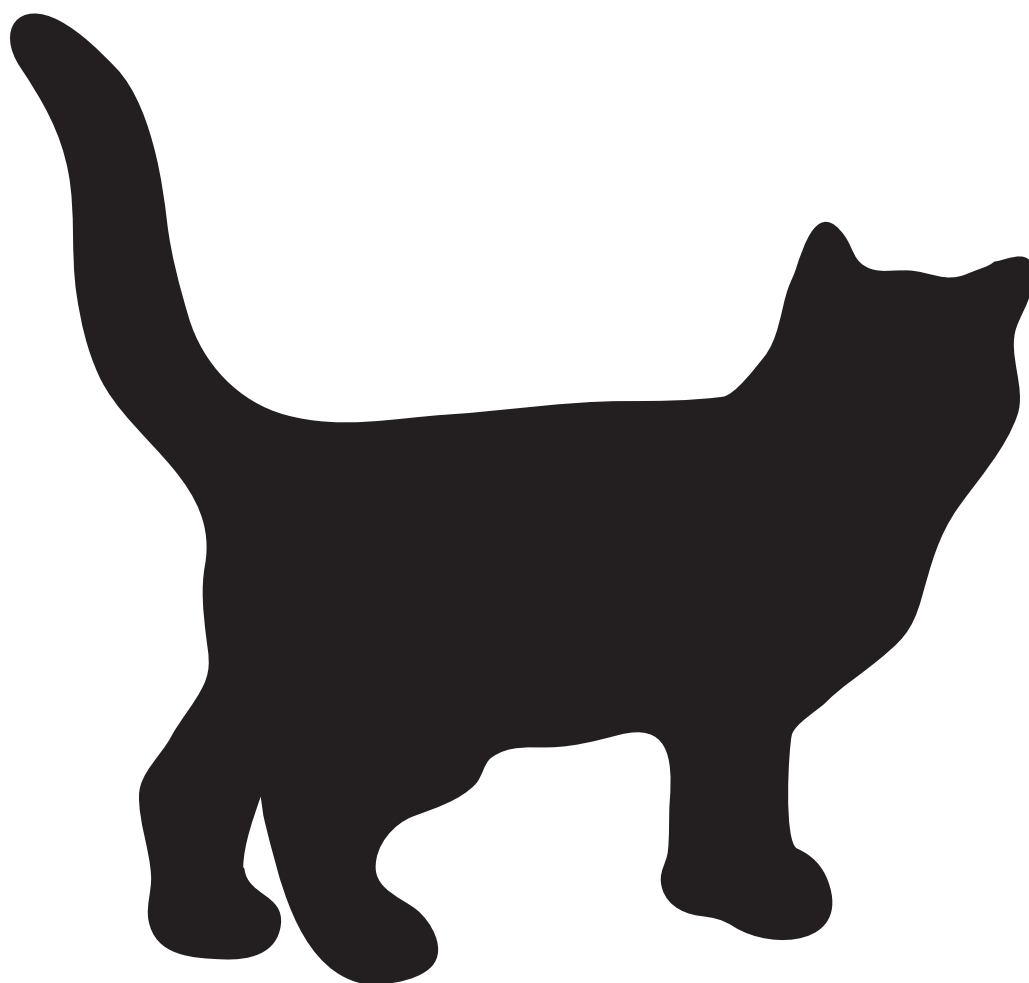
the predator

Even when fed two meals a day, cats are still predators. The predatory sequence is stalk, pounce, kill, remove, and eat. When stalking prey, a cat may stealthily move forward or lie in wait, shifting his weight between his hind feet. When movement is detected, the cat pounces on his prey and delivers a killing bite. He may then take the fresh-killed prey to a quiet place to eat – or a female may take it to her kittens. Even cats that don't hunt for their meals still enjoy chasing moving objects, including toys and, in some cases, human body parts.



the groomer

Cats spend 30 to 50 percent of their waking time grooming. Backward-facing barbs on the tongue act as a comb to loosen tangles and remove some parasites. Beyond maintaining the cat's coat, grooming also relieves tension and promotes comfort. Licking also facilitates cooling off in warm weather.



glossary

affiliative

Literally defined, it means to *connect oneself to*. Behaviors such as blinking are called affiliative because the cat uses them to make a positive social connection with the evaluator or other human.

aggression escalation

Aggression (biting, fighting, using claws to protect oneself) is risky behavior. When a cat engages in aggression, he risks serious physical injury. To avoid injury, the cat employs warning signals to prevent an aggressive interaction. Aggression escalation refers to those warning behaviors a cat will utilize when trying to increase the distance between himself and a threat. These behaviors might include pilo-erection (hair standing on end, giving the appearance of being a much larger foe), hissing, swatting, and charging.

blind to survey results

Study participants are kept unaware of purpose of the item and/or other information in order to keep them unbiased. Evaluators or subjects that purposely have no knowledge regarding the results of a portion of the study, so as not to skew the final results.

chirp

An affiliative vocal behavior that sounds like *brrrrt*. Mouth is usually closed for this behavior.

confident cat

The confident cat is undaunted by the assessment environment and indicates that through erect body carriage, tail held high. He approaches and rubs or head butts the evaluator with little time needed to acclimate to new surroundings or people. The confident cat may also be called bold and displays a high degree of valiance.

conflicted

The conflicted cat is torn between advance and retreat, so he stays in place. He may be a social cat that needs time to warm up to strangers or a new environment. He is likely anxious. During the Feline-ality™ Assessment, the conflicted cat is likely to roll on his back or roll over.

distance-enhancing

These behaviors are displayed in order to increase space between the cat and a perceived threat. Pilo-erection, hissing, growling, swatting, charging and light warning bites that **do not break skin** are meant to scare away or stop a particular interaction.

distance-reducing

These behaviors are those meant to close the distance between the cat and another subject to encourage social contact. Head butting and rubbing facilitates social interaction.

gregarious

The high end of the independent-gregarious scale, meaning the cat is very social and interactive.

head butt

This behavior is often observed as part of a greeting between cats, or a cat and a human. The cat will approach, and push his forehead (not his cheeks or shoulder) into a fist, hand, or body part. Often, a head butt will be followed by the cat rubbing the side of his face and his body against the area he head butted.

high status

The high status or high ranking cat is the one that initiates a social situation and determines how much interaction to allow. Higher status cats are generally less anxious than those that do not initiate social interaction.

independent

The low end of the independent–gregarious scale, meaning the cat does not often seek social interaction.

meow

An affiliative vocal behavior that sounds like *me-ow*. Produced while mouth is open and then gradually closed.

novel room

A room that is new to the cat. (See guide for details of room set up.)

rub

A confident affiliative behavior in which the cat makes contact with an individual with the side or bottom of his head, often followed by leaning the rest of his body against the individual while moving forward.

social

In Feline-ality™, social is defined as a cat that is interactive with the evaluator in an affiliative manner.

soft

A relaxed body, including relaxed ears, and relaxed tail without stiffness.

stiff

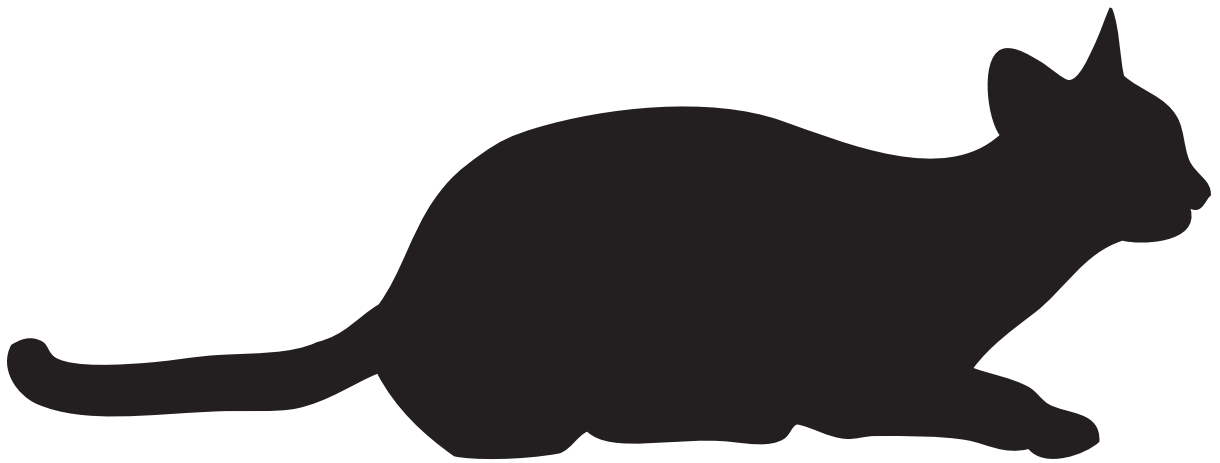
A tense body, often with ears flattened, or ears quite erect, tail flicking and body generally not relaxed.

swat

This distance enhancing behavior involves the cat striking out toward the offending stimuli with one, or both, of his front paws.

valiance

Refers to the cat's response to novel stimuli. A high valiant cat is likely to approach new stimuli, while a low valiant cat is likely to retreat from novel stimuli.



trademarks

Meet Your Match® trademarks

So you're ready to implement Meet Your Match® at your facility. You and your staff have mastered the ins and outs of the program, and you're excited and raring to go! But, before you begin to paper your shelter in all shades of purple, orange and green, please take a few minutes to learn how to correctly present Meet Your Match at your facility to ensure you don't violate the ASPCA®'s trademark or copyrights.

trademarks, copyrights and registered symbols

So what is a trademark, what is a copyright, and why do they matter? This section of the Feline-ality™ Manual and Program Guide provides a brief overview of trademarks and copyrights and explains why they're both important in terms of Meet Your Match.

We've all seen the copyright notice in the first few pages of our favorite book, and we've likely noticed the little trademark symbols next to product names, such as Coca-Cola® and Google™. Why is one designation used over another? A copyright protects original work of authorship such as a picture, drawing, graphics, software program, written work, sculpture, song, or photograph. Copyright law prevents someone from copying another's copyrighted work.

Trademark protection, on the other hand, is designed to protect a word, phrase, symbol or design (or a combination of words, phrases, symbols or designs) that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods or services of one person or company from those of others. Essentially, a trademark is someone's name or brand. Both a ™ and an ® designate a trademark. The difference between the two symbols? An ® means a trademark is registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and a ™ means the goods or services provider claims trademark rights based on use in commerce, although the mark may not be registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.



things to remember

Meet Your Match needs to be used in its entirety, as provided to you. It's not possible to use some parts of the program and discard others. For example, it's not permissible to use the cage cards or the colors associated with Meet Your Match if you're not implementing all aspects of the program such as Feline-ality™ assessments and the Cat Adopter Survey.

The templates provided to you need to be used without altering their content or appearance. This includes guest passes, cage cards, and any other materials. For electronic versions of the reproducible forms, email meetyourmatch@aspc.org.

Feel free to add your organization's name and logo to the materials.

However, please be sure to keep the ASPCA®'s name and logo intact as they appear on the materials.

Use the program's name correctly. The first time the program's name appears in any of your materials, it should be referred to as Meet Your Match®. After that point, you can refer to it as MYM.

examples of copyright infringement

Here are some visual examples of trademark logos for Disney®, Coca-Cola® and Nike®.



Here are some examples of copyright infringement – which occurs when a person or an entity violates the exclusive rights of the copyright holder. This might be using a magazine’s “look and feel” while changing the content, as an ad for a movie does in this case:



Or, copyright infringement might be changing the logo of a well-known search engine to advertise for a product.



Meet Your Match® trademarks

So what does any of this have to do with Meet Your Match? Meet Your Match is registered with the United States Patent and Trademark office. Therefore the program materials need to be presented correctly with the correct credit given to the creators and sponsors.

Users of the program have permission to reprint the elements as they are presented in this guide, solely for the purpose of implementing the Meet Your Match Feline-ality™ Adoption Program in its entirety. The program was designed to be used in its entirety and so it is only effective when used as such. You cannot simply use a portion of the program, nor can you change any of its elements (i.e. the name of the program, cage cards, color assignments and specifications, Feline-ality™ Assessment, or the Adopter Survey).

Please note that Pillsbury® did not produce this logo – it was found during an Internet search for examples of copyright infringements.

examples of what not to do

example 1 information on website

what's wrong?

Is incorrectly using the program's name (does not have ® after the Meet Your Match name/logo.)

Did not give credit to the program's creator (ASPCA®.)



example 2 downloadable adopter survey

what's wrong?

Has no Meet Your Match® information on its site. The only reference to the program comes when clicking on “Animals for Adoption” link – which leads to this downloadable Adopter Survey – with no further explanation about the program or how the Survey fits in.

Does not include any Meet Your Match branding (name of program, logo, colors, etc.)

The template of the Adopter Survey provided to shelters includes the Meet Your Match logo and an ASPCA copyright message. Both that copyright message and the MYM logo have been removed from this document.

cat adopter survey

first name		last name		date	
address		city		state zip	
home phone () - () - ()		work phone () - () - ()		email	

1	I would consider my household to be like	A library	Middle of the road	A carnival	
2	I am comfortable with a cat that likes to play "chase my ankles" and similar games	No	Somewhat	Yes	
3	I want my cat to interact with guests that come to my house	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
4	How do you feel about a boisterous cat that gets into everything?	Love them but rather not to live with them	Depends on the situation	Fine by me	
5	My cat needs to be able to adjust to new situations quickly	Not important	Somewhat	Yes	
6	I want my cat to love being with children in my home	It's not important whether my cat loves being with children	Some of the time	Most of the time	Children do not often come to my house
7	My cat needs to be able to be alone	More than 9 hours per day	4 to 8 hours per day	Less than 4 hours per day	
8	When I am at home, I want my cat to be by my side or in my lap	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
9	I want my cat to enjoy being held	Little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	
10	I need my cat to get along with (circle all that apply)				Dogs Cats Birds Other
11	My cat will be	Inside	Inside and Outside	Outside	
12	I have lived with cats before	No		Yes Date _____	Currently
13	I prefer my cat to be talkative	No		Yes	It's not important if my cat is talkative
14	I want my cat to play with toys	Little of the time	Sometimes	Often	
15	I want my cat to be active	Not very active at all	Somewhat	Yes, very	
16	It is most important to me that my cat _____ (fill in the blank)				

examples of what to do

example 1 information on website

- Use of Meet Your Match® logo.
- Identifies MYM as a program of the ASPCA®.
- Uses correct trademark symbols when identifying program.



example 2 information on website

- Use of Meet Your Match® logo.
- Use of Meet Your Match® images/silhouettes.
- Use of bright, cheerful Meet Your Match colors helps to draw attention to the program and the shelter.
- Website generates excitement by giving visitors the opportunity to complete the cat adopter survey and receive their score so they can begin to look for their match.

The screenshot shows the ASPCA Meet Your Match website. The header includes a search bar and navigation links: ABOUT ARF, ANIMAL PROGRAMS, PEOPLE PROGRAMS, HOW YOU CAN HELP, RESOURCES & LINKS, PRESS ROOM, and ARF MERCHANDISE. A sidebar on the left contains links for DONATE NOW, PAWS PRESS, ADOPTABLE PETS, VOLUNTEER, CLASSES FOR KIDS, and ARF U - DOG TRAINING EVENTS. The main content area is titled "Adoption Programs" and features the "Meet Your Purr-fect Match!" section. This section includes a paragraph about the program, a "What's your Feline-ality?" graphic with a cat silhouette, and a "Find out here" button. Below this are two cat profiles: "love bug" and "secret admirer", each with a silhouette and a description. On the right, there is a list of "ADOPTION PROGRAMS" with links to Adoption Program, View Available Dogs, View Available Cats, Special Needs Animals, Locations and Times, Meet Your Match™, Pets for Seniors, Private Adoption Program, and Recent Adoptions. At the bottom right, there is information about "Adoption Hours at ARF" and "Adoption fees".

ADOPTION PROGRAMS

- [Adoption Program](#)
- [View Available Dogs](#)
- [View Available Cats](#)
- [Special Needs Animals](#)
- [Locations and Times](#)
- [Meet Your Match™](#)
- [Pets for Seniors](#)
- [Private Adoption Program](#)
- [Recent Adoptions](#)

Adoption Hours at ARF
2890 Mitchell Drive
Walnut Creek

Thursday and Friday
3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday
Noon - 4:30 p.m.

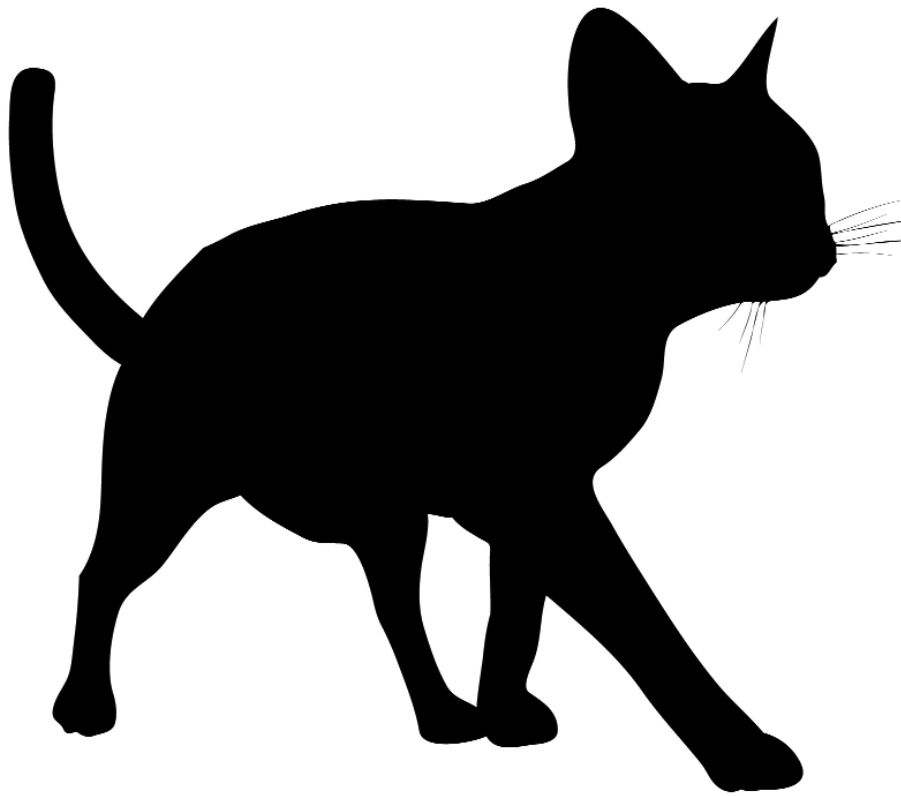
Adoption fees:
Cat \$50
Kitten under 6 months \$125
Dog \$225
Puppy under 20 weeks \$250
Dogs and puppies include one 7 week training class

love bug
Do you seek affection? I do! If you also like petting, purrs, and paws kneading your lap, I think we might have A LOT in common. I'm looking for "someone who enjoys quiet times and togetherness." Could that someone be you?

secret admirer
When it comes to relationships, I'm very level-headed. I don't leap in paws first, if you know what I mean. But give me a little time, and then I'll shower you with purrs, head-butts, and plenty of lap time. In the meantime, you may not see a lot of me - but I'll be thinking a lot of you.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us at meetyourmatch@aspca.org. If you'd like to run something by us to see if it's okay, please send us what you have so we can take a look at it and give you an informed answer.

For additional resources for the program, visit www.ASPCApro.org. There you can find FAQs, images/logos for download, Flash movies, Brand Standards Toolbook, etc.



reproducible forms and templates

Animal adoption agencies have permission to reprint the following program forms and templates. The templates provided need to be used without altering their content or appearance. Should you have any questions about formatting of these forms, please contact meetyourmatch@aspca.org.

cat adopter survey



first name	last name	date
address		apt. #
city	state	zip
home phone ()	work phone ()	email

1	I would consider my household to be like	A library	Middle of the road	A carnival	
2	I am comfortable with a cat that likes to play "chase my ankles" and similar games	No	Somewhat	Yes	
3	I want my cat to interact with guests that come to my house	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
4	How do you feel about a boisterous cat that gets into everything?	Love them but rather not to live with them	Depends on the situation	Fine by me	
5	My cat needs to be able to adjust to new situations quickly	Not important	Somewhat	Yes	
6	I want my cat to love being with children in my home	It's not important whether my cat loves being with children	Some of the time	Most of the time	Children do not often come to my house

7	My cat needs to be able to be alone	More than 9 hours per day	4 to 8 hours per day	Less than 4 hours per day	
8	When I am at home, I want my cat to be by my side or in my lap	Little of the time	Some of the time	All of the time	
9	I want my cat to enjoy being held	Little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	

10	I need my cat to get along with (circle all that apply)				Dogs Cats Birds Other
11	My cat will be	Inside	Inside and Outside	Outside	
12	I have lived with cats before	No		Yes Date _____	Currently
13	I prefer my cat to be talkative	No		Yes	It's not important if my cat is talkative
14	I want my cat to play with toys	Little of the time	Sometimes	Often	
15	I want my cat to be active	Not very active at all	Somewhat	Yes, very	

16	It is most important to me that my cat _____ (fill in the blank)
----	---

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	RECOMMENDED COLOR MATCH: PURPLE ORANGE GREEN
	RECOMMENDED FELINE-ALITY™(IES) _____

feline-ality™ assessment

MYM
MEET YOUR MATCH®

about the cat

shelter

evaluator

date of arrival to shelter

date of assessment

time

☐ a.m.
☐ p.m.

☐ M ☐ MX ☐ F ☐ FX

sex

cat's name

age

ID #

breed

color

☐ Y ☐ N

declawed

facility requirement checklist

The Novel Room must be free of hiding areas (such as under counters, desks, behind items, etc.)
The room should ideally be 10' x 10', but can be slightly bigger or smaller if necessary. It is important that the area is quiet and free of distractions.

☐ clean hands ☐ chair ☐ cat toys ☐ stopwatches (2) ☐ clipboard



All cats to be assessed should have been housed for at least 18 hours post-intake.
Cats should be assessed before spay/neuter surgery.

item #1: body posture

Items # 1 and 2 are to be conducted simultaneously. Be sure to read about how to conduct both items.

Quietly approach the cat's cage door and while standing in front of the cat's cage, take a quick mental snapshot of the cat's body posture.

Choose one of the following responses:

☐	Soft and relaxed	add 1 pt	
☐	Tense body with twitching tail	add 1 pt	
☐	Flattened body with dilated pupils	subtract 1 pt	
total points for item #1			

other observations:

item #2: greeting approach

Immediately after taking a mental snapshot of the cat's body posture during item #1, begin to speak to the cat in a soft, normal tone of voice. Observe the cat's response to your presence through the closed cage door.

Choose one of the following responses:

	At front of the cage, soliciting attention by rubbing, chirping, etc.	add 3 pts	
	Comes to front of cage after you encourage	add 2 pts	
	Does not approach but meows, chirps or blinks (circle all that apply)	add 1 pt	
	Does not approach	0 pts	
	Attempts to hide	subtract 1 pt	
	Hisses or growls	subtract 2 pts	
	Charges	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #2			

other observations:

item #3: cage condition

While quietly standing in front of the cat's cage, observe and note its condition.

Choose one of the following:

	Bedding/cage paper moved, cat hiding under	subtract 1 pt	
	Cage rearranged, cat on top or not hiding	add 1 pt	
	No change	no points	
	Other, please describe	no points	
total points for item #3			

other observations:

item #4: social response when door is opened

After completing items 1 through 3, calmly and slowly open the cage door while watching the cat. This should be done without talking. Observe the cat at the moment the door is initially opened.

Choose one of the following responses:

	Remains relaxed and soft, approaches me	add 1 pt	
	Remains relaxed and soft, does not approach	no points	
	Becomes stiff with tight tail flicks and standing	add 1 pt	
	Crouches, body stiff	subtract 1 pt	
total points for item #4			

other observations:

item #5a-b: introduction to novel room

Take the cat out of the cage and place him into a plastic crate (cleaned and allowed to air) for transport to the Novel Room. Ideally the cat should be loaded into the crate from above (turn crate so door is facing the ceiling). Throughout this item, you will be recording the amount of time the cat is either interacting or not interacting with you. In order to obtain an accurate assessment of time spent in each activity, use two stopwatches — one to keep the total time (start when you open crate door, end at five minutes), and the second to keep track of time interacting with you. Click on the second stopwatch whenever an interaction begins and click it off once the interaction ends.

IMPORTANT: OTHER THAN EYE CONTACT, DO NOT INITIATE, ENGAGE WITH OR RESPOND TO THE CAT. INTERACTION INCLUDES EYE CONTACT OR OTHER BEHAVIOR EVEN WHEN THE CAT IS IN THE CARRIER.

Interactive behaviors include meows, chirps, looks, blinks, rubbing against you, touching you, and being in your lap. Be sure to include those behaviors made while inside the carrier after the door has been opened.

Choose one:

	Exits carrier in 25 seconds or less with tall body posture	add 1 pt	
	Exits the carrier in 25 seconds or less with crouched body posture	add ½ pt	
	Exits carrier within 25 seconds and quickly scoots to hiding place, keeping body low to the ground	subtract ½ pt	
	Does not exit the carrier (choose one): ____ within 25 seconds, or ____ at all	0 pts	

Choose one (if applicable):

	Investigates room while standing tall	add 1 pt	
	Investigates room in a low body posture	add ½ pt	
	Races out of carrier to one spot in the room and stays there	subtract ½ pt	

total points for item #5a

Fill in information:

	Time spent interacting with the evaluator (as determined by second stop watch)		
	Time not spent interacting with the evaluator		

Choose one:

	Interacts for more than 60 seconds	add 1½ pts	
	Interacts for 30-60 seconds	add 1 pt	
	Interacts for less than 30 seconds	0 pts	

total points for item #5b

other observations:



If at the end of item #5 the cat is in the carrier, gently and slowly tip the carrier until the cat exits. Close the carrier door so the cat cannot reenter the carrier, then proceed to item #6.

item #6: call and approach

Crouch down on the opposite side of the room from the cat and about five to six feet away, start the stopwatch, and call the cat several times. Extend one hand, closed in a fist, toward him. Stop the stopwatch when the cat approaches and makes contact with your hand or body. Allow the cat up to 30 seconds to approach. Be sure to talk softly and encourage forward with voice. **Check all behaviors that occur.**

Makes eye contact	add 1 pt	
Does not make eye contact	subtract 1 pt	
Approaches	add 3 pts	
Sniffs or head butts	add 3 pts	
Rolls on back or rolls over	add 2 pts	
Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply)	add 1 pt	
Watches with no approach	add 0 pts	
Retreats	subtract 1 pt	
Hisses and/or growls	subtract 2 pts	
total points for item #6		
other observations:		

item #7: open hand

While still crouching, extend an open hand to the cat. Your hand should be lower than the cat's head. If the cat did not approach you in item #6, walk toward and crouch next to the cat. **Check all behaviors that occur.**

Sniffs or head butts	add 3 pts	
Licks or rubs on hand	add 3 pts	
Rolls on back or rolls over	add 2 pts	
Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply)	add 2 pts	
Retreats/defensive position	subtract 1 pt	
Hisses and/or growls	subtract 2 pts	
Swats/attempts to swat hand	subtract 2 pts	
Bites/attempts to bite hand	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #7		
other observations:		



If the cat has been approached and shown no aggressive behavior, proceed.
Stop the evaluation if cat displays aggressive behavior.

item #8: stroking

While talking to the cat, use your open hand, slightly cupped, to stroke the cat in long strokes along the head, back and sides. Continue for 4-5 long slow strokes if possible. **Check all behaviors that occur.**

	Rubs against legs or hand	add 3 pts	
	Head butts	add 3 pts	
	Circles you attentively	add 2 pts	
	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply)	add 2 pts	
	Rolls onto back or rolls over	add 2 pts	
	Shows initial fear but then relaxes	0 pts	
	Retreats/defensive position	subtract 1 pt	
	Hisses and/or growls	subtract 2 pts	
	Swats or attempts to swat hand	subtract 2 pts	
	Bites or attempts to bite hand	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #8			
other observations:			

item #9: play

Beginning a couple of feet away from the cat, slowly move a piece of string/yarn along the floor to initiate play. Observe the cat's reaction. Then try to engage the cat in play with two other toys from the following list (for a total of three different toys): Ball, Toy Mouse, Cat Charmer, and Feather Wand. **Do not use catnip toys during the Feline-ality™ Assessment.**

Check all behaviors that occur. Circle the toy preferences on the score sheet so the adopter will know which toys the cat prefers, if any.

	Watches toy intently	add 3 pts	
	Chases toy	add 3 pts	
	Comes back for stroking	add 2 pts	
	Ignores toys	0 pts	
	Attends to something else	subtract 1 pt	
	Avoids eye contact	subtract 1 pt	
total points for item #9			
other observations:			
toy preference:			
BALL TOY MOUSE CAT CHARMER FEATHER WAND NONE NO PREFERENCE LIKES ALL OTHER			

item #10: hug

Call the cat again until he approaches, or approach him slowly yourself. Begin to stroke the cat again and if he is calm, gently pick him up and cradle him against your chest, his body sideways to your chest for a full two seconds.

Check all behaviors that occur.

	Is relaxed	add 3 pts	
	Extends paw to evaluator's neck or shoulder in an affiliative manner	add 3 pts	
	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply)	add 2 pts	
	Accepts hold but remains a bit tense	add 2 pts	
	Struggles to escape	subtract 1 pt	
	Hisses/growls	subtract 2 pts	
	Stiffens and extends claws	subtract 2 pts	
	Swats/attempts to swat	subtract 3 pts	
	Bites/attempts to bite	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #10			
other observations:			

item #11: sensitivity

Sit on the ground and allow the cat to approach if he chooses. Wait at least 60 seconds before you stroke the cat along his back and gently grasp the cat's tail firmly at the base and pull up with a steady pressure just enough to almost, but not quite, move his back feet off the floor. Hold for 1 second. **Check all behaviors that occur.**

	Rolls onto back or rolls over	add 3 pts	
	Shows no reaction	add 3 pts	
	Meows, purrs and/or chirps (circle all that apply)	add 1 pt	
	Struggles/tries to escape	0 pts	
	Hisses/growls	subtract 1 pt	
	Swats/attempts to swat	subtract 2 pts	
	Bites/attempts to bite	subtract 3 pts	
total points for item #11			
other observations:			

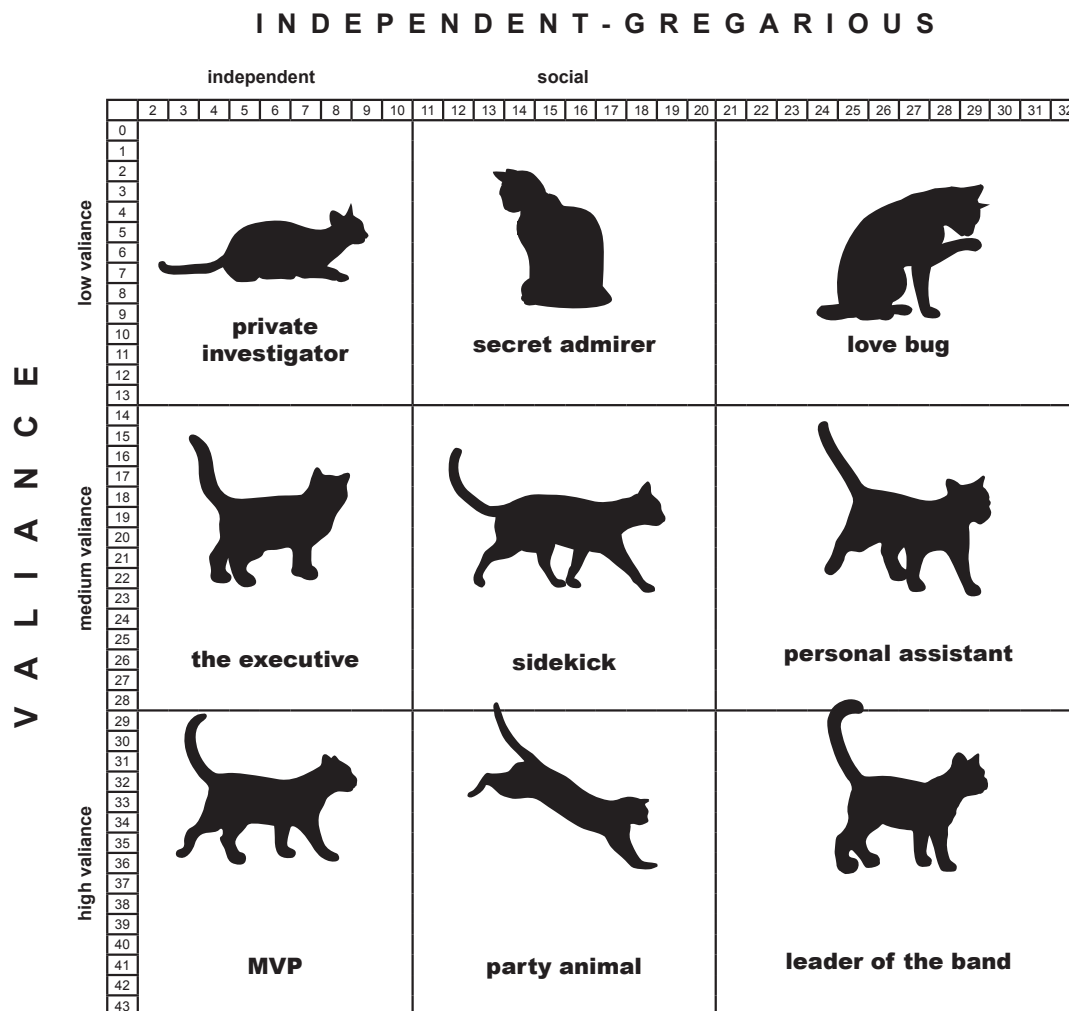


Allow the cat to settle before returning to the cage.

decreasing stress, and reassess in 48 hours.

item #1		
item #2		
item #3		
item #4		
item #5a		
item #5b		
item #6		
item #7		
item #8		
item #9		
item #10		
item #11		
	independent-gregarious	valiance
total score		

Circle the cat's independent-gregarious score and valiance score. Where the two scores intersect determines the cat's Feline-ality™.



I'm a Personal Assistant.

Hi! My name is _____.

You're working on the computer? Let me press the keys.
Reading the paper? I'll hold the pages down for you.
Watching TV? I'll just plop in your lap so you can pet me.
I love an orderly household, don't you? I'll help you with all
your chores, and I'll help you relax when we're done. You'll
wonder how you ever managed without me.

ID #	age	M F	breed
------	-----	-----	-------



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wonder how you ever managed without me.

ID #	age	M F	breed
------	-----	-----	-------



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I'm a Love Bug.

Hi! My name is _____.

Do you seek affection? I do! If you also like petting, purrs, and paws kneading your lap, I think we might have a LOT in common. I'm looking for someone who enjoys quiet times and togetherness. Could that someone be you?

ID #	age	M F	breed
------	-----	-----	-------



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ID #	age	M F	breed
------	-----	-----	-------



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I'm the Leader of the Band.

Hi! My name is _____.

I'm a cat who does everything in a big way. I not only like to be in the middle of things - I like to lead the parade. I'm an adventurous cat, but I'll still make plenty of time to show you my affectionate side. I'm the demonstrative type, you might say. Want a cat who's brimming with confidence? That's me.

ID #	age	M F	breed
------	-----	-----	-------



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Hi! My name is _____.

I'm a cat who does everything in a big way. I not only like to be in the middle of things - I like to lead the parade. I'm an adventurous cat, but I'll still make plenty of time to show you my affectionate side. I'm the demonstrative type, you might say. Want a cat who's brimming with confidence? That's me.

ID #	age	M F	breed
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I'm a Party Animal.

Hi! My name is _____.

I'm a cat on a mission: PARTY! I love to play and explore and test my limits. I'd love to play with you, but I can make a toy out of anything: pencils, post-it notes, potatoes. If you're looking for some laughs and someone to liven up the party, think about inviting me.

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I'm a Sidekick.

Hi! My name is _____.

Like all sidekicks, I'm just plain good company. I like attention, and I also like my solitude. I don't go looking for trouble but I'm no scaredy-cat, either. If you are looking for a steady companion to travel with you on the road of life, look no further.

ID #

age

M F

breed

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I'm a Secret Admirer.

Hi! My name is _____.

When it comes to relationships, I'm very level-headed. I don't leap in paws first, if you know what I mean. But give me a little time, and then I'll shower you with purrs, head-butts, and plenty of lap time. In the meantime, you may not see a lot of me – but I'll be thinking a lot of you!

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I'm an MVP.

Hi! My name is _____.

I'm a savvy cat who knows the score. I'm pretty unflappable, too. I don't mind entertaining myself, but a human companion at the other end of the couch and a nice scratch behind the ears always make my day. If you're looking for a resourceful addition to your team, think about signing this Most Valuable Pussycat.

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I'm an Executive.

Hi! My name is _____.

I have to say, I'm a busy cat. First, I've got to check out what's happening out the window. Next, I'll see if any closets or cupboards need looking into. And then there are my naps—can't be late for those. I can fit a little socializing into my schedule. Shall we plan on breakfast and dinner? I hope you like kibbles.

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M F

breed



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I'm a Private Investigator.

Hi! My name is _____.

I'm working undercover to keep an eye on you and your household. You may not even know you're under surveillance. I can vanish into thin air if anyone or anything interferes with my investigation. If you need a cat who knows how to stay out of trouble and will always keep your secrets, I just might take your case.

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