

Certification in Low Stress Handling of Cats and Dogs

INFORMATION GUIDE



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THE ART & SCIENCE OF ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

Dr. Sophia Yin's Pet-Friendly animal handling techniques are shaping the new standard of care for petcare professionals. Low Stress Handling leads to safer and more satisfied staff, efficient workplaces, lowered liability, loyal clients, and of course, happy animals!

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About This Program

Veterinary hospitals and individuals can earn Dr. Yin's Certification in Low Stress Handling through online training sessions and testing. Silver-Level Certification involves online coursework and testing. Future endeavors include Gold-Level and Instructor-Level Certification which will require the ability to articulate the information efficiently and accurately as well as evaluation of hands-on skills.

A. Introduction

The purpose of this Certification in Low Stress Handling is to provide the teaching content needed to understand and improve the individual or hospital's ability to create a low stress environment and handle animals in a less stressful manner. Coursework for this Certification goes beyond the teaching available from Dr. Yin's book/DVD *Low Stress Handling, Restraint and Behavior Modification of Dogs & Cats* and related training videos. While those sources include improvements to the hospital's design, to its preparation of and for the patient prior to a visit, and to its use of tools and sedative agents, a large portion of Low Stress Handling relies on the development of important hands-on skills. Among these are the abilities to:

1. Recognize the overt and subtle signs of fear and anxiety in dogs and cats and identify the common mistakes people make when approaching and greeting pets that makes the animals more fearful or aggressive. Learn to approach and handle pets in a relaxed, non-threatening manner.
2. Learn how the sights, sounds, smells, and surfaces in your practice may be increasing the stress in your patients. Discover ways to create a calmer, safer, and more secure environment.
3. Learn 5 methods for controlling the rear and 7 for controlling the front end. Determine which directions (front, back, right, left, up and down) each hold controls. Evaluate which restraint hold is best for a given dog and procedure.
4. Understand how every interaction – how you approach, pick animals up, move them from place to place, or restrain them – affects the animal's perception of you and their willingness to cooperate. Learn how to position your body and adjust your movement to provide the direction and guidance the animal needs.

B. Benefits of Hospital or Pet Care Business Certification

1. **Improved client confidence:** Staff project that they are both caring and skilled, rather than projecting a desire to rush through their visits to earn more money.
2. **Lower anxiety for staff and clients:** Clients know their pets will be handled in a caring and calm manner. Staff know they won't have to struggle with or fight the animals, since they understand how to get patients to comply willingly to procedures.
3. **Increased staff efficiency and higher productivity:** Less staff time is spent on restraining animals, due to increased skill.
4. **Lower injury rates and fewer worker's compensation claims:** Improved handler skill results in a decrease in animal-induced injuries.
5. **Higher job satisfaction:** Better training leads to lowered stress in staff.

C. Additional Benefits of Individual Certification

- 1. Resume-building:** Clients, employers, and potential employers know that the certified individual has added a valuable skill set.
- 2. Continuing Education Units:** Coursework earns 20 AAVSB-approved CEU. CCPDT and IAABC CEU are also available.
- 3. Educate Others:** Trainers and technicians with Gold-Level Certification can help coach other staff members as well as clients. Those attaining Instructor-Level Certification have the credibility to work as a consultant teaching lectures, labs and other forms of staff training as well as having the full ability to lead hospitals and businesses through development and ongoing improvement of their business-wide Low Stress Handling plan.



Silver-Level Certification: Coursework & Online Testing



Individual Certification at this level demonstrates to clients and employers the individual's dedicated interest in Low Stress Handling. Hospital Certification at this level demonstrates to clients and staff the hospital's commitment to appropriately training staff in Low Stress Handling methods.

A. Requirements

1. Individual Certification Requirements

Certification requires that each individual take the following 10 lecture and lab courses in the pre-determined order. The classes are taken online, via an easy-to-use portal (hosted by VetMedTeam). After each lecture, the individual takes an online multiple-choice examination. After passing all 10 multiple choice quizzes and a final multiple choice exam scoring 90% correct or higher, the individual receives Certification in Low Stress Handling, Silver-Level. This program is open to all individuals, including pre-veterinary students, technician students, groomers, dog trainers, etc.

- a. **How much time do I have to complete the course?** Four months. Individuals who have not completed the course after four months must re-enroll to get certification.
- b. **How long does certification last?** Like Board Examinations for Veterinarians or the Veterinary Technician National Examination, Certification in Low Stress Handling is a one-time process.

2. Hospital Certification Requirements

Certification requires that over 50% of staff (including part-time) become certified in Low Stress Handling as described under the Individual Certification section.

- a. **How long does my hospital have to complete certification?** Once a hospital registers to begin the certification process, it has four months for over 50% of its staff to complete the course. It has the option to apply for ONE two-month extension.
- b. **How long does certification last?** Unlike individuals, hospitals must re-certify every three years. The majority of veterinary hospitals see a 30% or higher staff turnover rate each year—meaning that even after just two years, only 30%-45% of the original team members may remain.
- c. **What is the process for hospital recertification?** To re-certify, hospitals must re-establish that over 50% of current staff is Certified in Low Stress Handling.
 - i. At 2.5 years, the hospital receives notification that it's time to re-certify. Only staff members who are not Certified in Low Stress Handling need to take the course.

For example: When first certifying, a hospital has 51 staff members out of 100 become certified. Over the next 2.5 years, they lose 30 staff members and must rehire. With the turnover, now only 40 LSH certified individuals remain on staff. To re-certify, this 100-employee hospital will need to certify at least 11 additional staff members in order to fulfill the “over 50%” requirement.

- ii. Note that a certified hospital may decide to make it standard policy for all new technicians and staff to receive Certification in Low Stress Handling as part of safety training. In that case, those employees join the hospital's roster of certified staff members as they become certified. As a result, when it's time to re-certify the hospital may easily still retain over 50% of certified staff, even with normal staff turnover.
- iii. Note that during the three-year period, a certified hospital may hire new technicians and assistants who completed their Certification in Low Stress Handling elsewhere. When it's time to re-certify, those new certified employees are counted toward the "over 50%" requirement.

	DVD	Lecture	Time (min)	CE Units
1		Recognizing Brewing Fear and Aggression in Dogs and Cats (Lecture 1 in <i>Creating a Pet-Friendly Hospital, Animal Shelter or Petcare Business</i>)	78 min	2
2		Rapid Reversal of Fear and Aggression in Dogs and Cats (Lecture 2 in <i>Creating a Pet-Friendly Hospital, Animal Shelter or Petcare Business</i>)	75 min	2
3		Low Stress Handling and Restraint of Difficult Dogs and Cats (Lecture 3 in <i>Creating a Pet-Friendly Hospital, Animal Shelter or Petcare Business</i>)	75 min	2
4		What Giraffes, Dogs, and Chickens Have in Common—Training Techniques that Work for All Creatures (Lecture 1 in <i>Pet Dogs, Problem Dogs, High Performance Dogs: How Science Can Take Your Training to a New Level</i>)	96 min	2
5		Towel Wrap Techniques for Handling Cats with Skill and Ease (from DVD of the same title)	80 min	1.5
6		Kitty Kindergarten: Creating the New Improved Cat Through Early Socialization (Lecture available through Vimeo on Demand: \$5 for 48hr rental or \$20 for purchase to own at https://vimeo.com/ondemand/20769)	96 min	2.5
7		Essential Exercises for Moving Dogs from Place to Place (From <i>Handling, Moving, and Restraining Dogs in Stressful Environments, Part 1: A Workshop on Essential Exercises with Special Techniques for Medium and Large Dogs</i>)	98 min	2
8		Handling and Restraining Medium-sized and Large Dogs with Skill and Ease (From <i>Handling, Moving, and Restraining Dogs in Stressful Environments, Part 1: A Workshop on Essential Exercises with Special Techniques for Medium and Large Dogs</i>)	69 min	1

	DVD	Lecture	Time (min)	CE Units
9		Handling and Restraining Fearful, Aggressive or Difficult Dogs with Skill and Ease <i>(From Handling, Moving, and Restraining Dogs in Stressful Environments: Part 2 A Tutorial on Counterconditioning and Low Stress Handling with Special Techniques for Small and Medium-sized Dogs)</i>	136 min	2
10		Desensitization and Counterconditioning: Teaching Dogs to Willingly Accept Medical Procedures <i>(From Handling, Moving, and Restraining Dogs in Stressful Environments: Part 3 A Tutorial on Counterconditioning and Low Stress Handling with Special Techniques for Small and Medium-sized Dogs)</i>	160 min	3

B. Process

1. Individual Certification Process

- a. **Step 1: Register.** Go to <http://drsophiayin.com/lowstress/certification> and enroll in the Low Stress Handling Certification Course.
 - i. Note that if you are seeking certification, you must enroll in the entire Low Stress Handling Certification Course. You will not receive certification if you enroll in the component classes individually.
- b. **Step 2: Complete the coursework and exams.** Watch the lectures and lab videos in the predetermined order. Take the multiple-choice examination at the end of each lecture or lab. For the five labs, we recommend that you practice the skills as you are working through the videos. We also strongly recommend that you download the accompanying Low Stress Handling Certification Workbook (<http://drsophiayin.com/lowstress/certification>) and read the Study Tips ahead of time so that you will know how to get the most out of this program. The discussion questions, practice exercises, and Gold-Level Rubric sections will be especially important if you are planning to go on to a higher level of certification. Note that you will also have the option to enroll in discussion sessions supervised by Dr. Yin and her Low Stress Handling Staff. See the schedule and cost on the Low Stress Handling course enrollment page.
 - i. After you successfully pass each multiple-choice test (scoring 90% correct or higher), you automatically move on to the next course in the series.
 - ii. After you complete the entire series and pass all of the tests, you receive a certificate of completion with your CE units listed (AAVSB for veterinary staff, IAABC or CCPDT for members of those organizations). If you have requested CCPDT units, these units will be added to the CCPDT website within 30 days of your completion.
- c. **Step 3: Publicize your accomplishment.**
 - i. You receive an official electronic certificate of completion that you can print out to display on your wall.



- ii. We include your name on our website's listing of certified individuals.
- iii. You may add to your e-mail signature and website the words "Low Stress Handling Certified—Silver" and the year of certification. You may include the Low Stress Handling Certified—Silver logo on your website, along with a link back to the Certification in Low Stress Handling page, so your clients can see what the certification means.
- iv. You may tell clients that you have been trained in Low Stress Handling via seminar and online lecture and testing, or that you are Certified in Low Stress Handling.
- v. You may NOT claim to be certified to teach Low Stress Handling. You may NOT claim that you have been "certified as having Low Stress Handling skills."

Individual

For pricing, go to www.vetmedteam.com/low-stress-handling.aspx

LOW STRESS HANDLING TESTIMONIALS

As a volunteer foster, I deal with many different dogs. This info will help me assess and work with my dogs. I now have better recognition of how dogs learn and how to avoid unknowingly teaching inappropriate behavior. — Kathi Kelley, Rescue Worker

2. Hospital Certification Process

- a. **Step 1: Register and set up an account.** Go to <http://drsophiayin.com/lowstress/certification> and click on “Enroll Now.” This will take you to the VetMedTeam host site where you will be asked to submit the following information:
 - i. Hospital information: Hospital name, hospital address, name and job title of the hospital member who will be our primary contact, phone, fax, and e-mail. (Note that you will have four months for staff to complete the course, with one two-month extension available if needed).
 - ii. Staff information: Number of staff working 8 or more hours per week. At least 51% of employees work more than 8 hours a week must pass the certification course regardless of their hospital duties.
 - iii. Enrollee information: Number of employees who will be taking the certification course. Per-person cost for the hospital varies depends on the number of staff registered. See the price and discount table at the end of this document.
 - iv. Payment is 100% in advance via credit card or check.
 - v. Enrolling additional staff members after initial registration: If you decide to add more staff members, you can enroll them at the same per-person rate by contacting Low.Stress.Handling@VetMedTeam.com.
 - vi. VetMedTeam will respond to the form submission within 48 business hours to answer any questions and to provide a personalized fee quote. Once the business indicates they want to proceed, VMT will help them with payment and team enrollment.
- b. **Step 2: Individual students will receive a welcome email from VetMedTeam that tells them how to access courses.**
- c. **Step 3: Individual staff members complete the course.**
 - i. What individuals need to do: Individual staff members watch the lectures and lab videos in the predetermined order, and take the multiple choice examinations. For the five labs, we recommend that participants practice the skills as they are working through the videos. We also strongly recommend that they download the accompanying Low Stress Handling Certification Workbook (<http://drsophiayin.com/lowstress/certification>) and read the Study Tips ahead of time so that you will know how to get the most out of this program. The discussion questions, practice exercises, and Gold-Level Rubric sections will be especially important for those planning to go on to a higher level of certification. Remember that students can be enrolled in online discussion sessions supervised by Dr. Yin and her Low Stress Handling Staff. See the schedule and cost on the Low Stress Handling course enrollment page.
 - ii. Once the staff member has completed the entire course and passed all of the tests, he or she receives a certificate of completion and a clip-on badge/nametag to wear with the Low Stress Handling Certified—Silver logo. These will be sent once the minimum required number of staff members have completed their Silver Certification.

- iii. Monthly milestone reports: You'll receive "monthly milestones" e-mails documenting the percentage of your enrolled staff members who have completed the various classes and how many have completed the entire certification, so that hospital administration can ensure staff is keeping up. Graphs illustrating this information can be posted online or on an office wall.
- iv. How management can facilitate the learning process: We recommend that the hospital uses the Low Stress Handling Certification Workbook discussion questions and practice exercises to help facilitate learning. Weekly meetings to discuss the questions or practice exercises can help keep members on track and ensure that the process is a group effort.
- v. Minimum requirements for certification: When over 50% of staff completes the program, the hospital receives certification. For example: If 12 are on staff but only 10 employees work over 8 hours/week, then only 6 must complete the training (see p. 9, 2.a.ii).

d. Step 4: Publicize your accomplishment.

- i. Within 6 weeks you receive an official certificate of completion that you can display in your lobby, stating that the hospital is "Certified in Low Stress Handling—Silver" (with expiration date) because over 50% of staff are certified via online course. To help you generate client awareness and interest, you also receive a window sticker with the certification mark, and ID badges for all certified staff with their names and the certification mark. The certification mark includes the URL www.lowstresshandling.com, where the public can learn about Low Stress Handling and find out what your certification means.
- ii. Your hospital is listed as Certified on www.lowstresshandling.com (including expiration date and number of certified employees), along with a link leading back to your own website.

Hospital Pricing

For pricing, go to www.vetmedteam.com/low-stress-handling.aspx



Veterinary Students Practicing Low Stress Handling Techniques

LOW STRESS HANDLING TESTIMONIALS

For me, the way to approach a patient was very helpful. That is something never addressed during tech school. It was always “use common sense”. Having a specific technique that has been proven to work, is great. This will help me in making my patients more comfortable on arrival. — Rebecca Carman, RVT



C. Payment Information

Payment is 100% in advance. MasterCard, Visa and Discover accepted via VetMedTeam's secure online payment system. Checks cut on USA banks in US dollars also accepted. Specific information and assistance regarding payment is provided by VetMedTeam.

1. Is Certification Cost-Effective?

Compare the cost with other CE: Hiring a lecturer to come out to present 20 CEU hours of lectures (two days) to your entire staff can easily cost \$6,000.00. The cost of closing your hospital for two days and losing those days of revenue, while paying staff to take the two days of CE, could run as high as \$75,000.

2. Additional Discounts for Individuals.

- a. Individuals, including staff members of hospital certifications who attend one of Dr. Yin's 1- or 2-day seminars in which at least three of the Certification in Low Stress Handling lectures are given (same length) can receive a 20% discount on enrolling in LSH Certification. To receive the discount, they must sign the roll sheet at the seminar to confirm they attended, then enroll in the certification program within 30 days.
- b. Individuals who have taken three or more of the Certification in Low Stress Handling online classes within the last four months can receive a 20% discount on enrolling in LSH certification. To receive the discount, they must inform us of the previous coursework prior to enrolling.

3. Cost for Enrolling Additional Staff Members

After initial registration, hospitals may enroll additional staff members or decide to certify new staff as part of regular staff training even after the hospital is certified. Hospitals will only be charged the \$5 individual set up cost plus the discounted individual certification price per additional staff member.

4. Cost for Recertification

The only cost associated with recertification will be to enroll additional hospital staff in order to meet the minimum certified staff requirement.



Gold-Level Certification: Skills-Based Certification – Future Endeavor



Individuals that have achieved Silver-Level Certification can progress to Gold-Level Certification through rigorous personalized assessment of their hands-on skills. Hospitals can achieve Gold-Level Certification if they have employees who have achieved Gold and Instructor-Level Certification such that they can lead the hospital through the Hospital Certification process. For more information contact us by e-mail at info@drsophiayin.com.

A. Overview – Future Endeavor

1. Individual Certification

Certification requires each individual to demonstrate mastery of a wide variety of Low Stress Handling skills and articulate understanding of low stress handling methods, such as performing both classical and operant counterconditioning of fearful cats and dogs; performing specific handling procedures; knowing the common mistakes and how to fix them; choosing the right procedure, tool, technique, or product for each patient; and assessing the effect that choice has on the animal's behavior and state of mind. Individuals will not only be tested in person or via video submission on each of the exercises listed in the Gold Scoring Rubric, but will also participate in an oral test based on the discussion questions. Discussion questions and scoring rubrics can be found in the Low Stress Handling Certification Workbook which you can download from <http://drsophiayin.com/lowstress/certification>. Additionally, individuals will submit two case studies that detail how an individual animal has been handled in a low stress manner at each stage of the visit (e.g. a Low Stress Handling Plan).

To prepare for testing, we recommend that individuals:

1. Review the Silver-Level Certification lectures, labs and discussion questions.
2. Participate in our online team-run discussion sessions so that we can assess readiness for an oral examination
3. Practice the exercises while having someone score you on the rubrics and practice coaching others while scoring them

Gold-Level Certification testing as well as additional information to help you prepare, will be available in 2015. For updates, please visit www.lowstresshandling.com.

2. Hospital Certification

- a. One employee must be certified at the Instructor-Level.
- b. Ten percent (10%) of the handling staff who work over 10 hours a week (veterinarians, technicians, kennel workers) must be individually certified at the Gold-Level.
- c. The hospital must submit 30 client evaluations that provide a favorable review.
- d. Hospitals must provide photos and video that illustrate how their hospital environment and practices meet specific criteria designed to decrease stress. This includes practices related to the sights, sounds, scents, surfaces and animal encounters during a visit.
- e. Hospitals must detail their Low Stress Handling Plan for difficult cats and dogs.

B. What Enrollees Who Complete the Course Get

1. A Certificate of Gold-Level Certification
2. Listing on our www.lowstresshandling.com page
3. Individuals receive nametags with Certified-Gold



4. Individuals and Hospitals will have access to order the Gold Certification logo screen printed onto scrub tops or lab coats.
5. Permission to use the Certified-Gold mark on your web page and in your email signature.

Jane Doe, DVM

Low Stress Handling Certified Gold, 2014

www.lowstresshandling.com



Gold-Level Hospital Testing as well as additional information to help hospitals prepare, will be available in 2015. For updates, please visit www.lowstresshandling.com



Instructor-Level Certification: Learn to Teach – Future Endeavor



Individuals who have received Gold-Level Certification can take it one step further and learn how to officially pass the knowledge on to others in an accurate and efficient manner. At this level individuals gain the credibility to work as consultants teaching lectures, labs and other forms of staff training. They will have the full ability to lead hospitals and businesses through development and ongoing improvement of their business-wide Low Stress Handling plan.

A. Overview – Future Endeavor

Individuals who have received Gold-Level Certification can take it one step further and learn how to officially pass the knowledge on to others in an accurate and efficient manner. Individuals must demonstrate their ability to teach all of the lab exercises, recognize handler errors and lead discussion sessions. They will be required to make detailed scripts of the exercises demonstrated in the Silver-Level certification labs as well as justifying each line of text spoken and each demonstration or step performed. Refer to the Low Stress Handling Certification Workbook for more detail on how this is done.