Rethinking cruelty and neglect

Cruelty and neglect does exist - let’s agree on that, shake on it and move on to some critical discussion.
LEGALLY, WHAT IS CRUELTY? WHAT IS NEGLECT?

- Cruelly
- Intentionally
- Maliciously
- Wantonly

WHAT IF?

- Prejudices, life experiences or even a bad mood impact how cruelty or neglect are determined?
- We are all guilty sometimes of making it more about ourselves instead of the animal or pet owner?
- There are larger societal norms and systemic injustices that we aren’t even thinking about?
- There is a different and more effective way to serve animals and people at the same time?
WHAT IF?

- There is more to consider, more to understand?
  - 23 million pets in poverty
  - Systemic poverty
  - Lack of access
  - Lack of engagement

- We are increasing intake by looking for cruelty?

- We are disproportionately looking in certain areas?
  - Becomes face of cruelty
  - Confirmation bias
WE’RE ON THIS JOURNEY TOO

animalsheltering.org/expo
#AnimalCareExpo
WE’RE ON THIS JOURNEY TOO
Most people are not criminals. Most people care, especially when given the opportunity and support.

Punitive measures destroy trust.

Building positive relationships in the community creates long term change.

To become a resource not an enemy.
ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

- What is effective at the end of the day?
- What is actually best for the animal?
- What challenge and barriers are the people facing?
- Am I using ‘cruelty’ to make money?

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN IN REALITY?
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COMMON SCENARIOS

- Mange
- Intestinal worms
- Age
- Masses/Cancer
- Fleas/ticks
- Unwanted/unplanned pregnancies
- Shelter
- Tied out
- Struggling with food
- Lack of information

HOW TO EVALUATE AND ENGAGE

- Genuinely care and ask questions
- Consider the human situation
- Start with a positive assumption – that people care and want the best for their pet
- Be asset focused, not deficit focused
- Must have resources to provide
- Be supportive and understanding
- Follow through
DON’T LET PERFECT BE THE ENEMY OF GOOD