



Petco Encourages Pet Parents to Consider Their Pets' Mental Health, Offers FREE Virtual Training Amid Changing Routines for the Whole Family

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The health + wellness company teams up with actress, mental health advocate and animal lover Olivia Munn to help raise awareness for this critical need

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 9, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Petco Health and Wellness Company, Inc. (Nasdaq: WOOF) today launched a free virtual training seminar intended to help pet parents support pets facing new routines after a year and a half spent mostly at home. Available at petco.com/mentalhealth for free beginning Sept. 9 through the end of September, the new seminar will help pet parents recognize signs of stress in their pets and learn relaxation techniques and enrichment solutions to help them adjust as the world around them continues to change.



"Our pets, including the more than 11 million new furry friends and counting that came into our homes during the pandemic, have unquestionably been our emotional saviors for the last 18+ months, and now it's our turn to be theirs," said [Ron Coughlin](#), Chairman and CEO of Petco. "As our routines begin to change, whether it's returning to school, work, travel or more social gathering – it's more critical now than ever for pet parents to understand how these changes can affect their pets' wellbeing and what we can do to help them adjust in a healthy way."

According to a new Petco survey, 72% of dog parents and 51% of cat parents believe their pets have exhibited symptoms of anxiety, but less than 25% of them can correctly identify all the physical symptoms of mental health issues.* Additionally, 60% of dog parents and 48% of cat parents say not having the right resources – like knowing where to get help and information about their pet's mental health and how to prepare them to spend more time alone – is an obstacle in helping their pet adjust to the return to normal.

Recognizing this gap, Petco is doubling down on its commitment to pet mental health with the launch of the free one-hour interactive training seminar, titled "[Well-Adjusted Dog: Preparing for Separation and Social Anxiety](#)," as well as a newly released four-week separation anxiety training for pet parents looking for additional training education. The new training seminar will bring to life the brand's [Four-Week Guide to Helping Your Pet Deal with a New Routine](#) with actionable steps to help ease pet separation and social anxiety. The class will be led by Petco's certified dog trainers in small group Zoom sessions. Within the sixty minutes, pet parents will learn how to recognize the escalation from excited to anxious and be introduced to relaxation techniques to help deescalate their pets.

"The animals we live with essentially helped to care for us – providing companionship and cheer – in this time of the pandemic and social isolation. Many people saw their animals like never before," said Dr. Alexandra Horowitz, MS, PhD, a member of the Petco Pet Wellness Council and senior research fellow, adjunct associate professor and head of the Horowitz Dog Cognition Lab at Barnard College. "As our society shifts to spending less time at home, it is critical that we return the favor, appreciating their point of view and caring for their mental health as they're left at home without us. Petco's initiative helps us do exactly that."

In addition to the free seminar and to further support pet parents as they may spend more time away from home, on September 1, Petco launched the "[Separation Anxiety Training Course](#)," developed in partnership with Petco National Dog Training Manager, Darris Cooper, and Fanna Easter, a certified separation anxiety trainer. Broken into four one-hour sessions, the course covers topics including mat training, relaxation protocol, product spotlights, real-life applications and more. The course is available to pet parents for \$99 both online and in-person at Petco pet care centers.

"With the free training seminar, we're providing pet parents with an overview of pet mental health tools, including preparing the home environment and utilizing calming and enrichment solutions, which will help ease the transition as changing routines take form," said Cooper. "It's important for pet parents to pay close attention to their pets and be able to identify the warning signs they demonstrate when they feel anxious. The full four-week separation anxiety class builds upon the core teachings of the seminar and provides pet parents with actionable learnings that will be essential to

successfully navigating new routines."

Today Cooper will co-host an Instagram Live with actress, mental health advocate and animal lover Olivia Munn to discuss pet anxiety and what resources are available at Petco. As the first official "Well-Adjusted Dog" seminar participant and pet parent to rescue pups Frankie and Chance, Olivia will answer questions about the new free seminar and her pack's experience with anxiety. Pet parents can tune into the Instagram Live on Petco's official [Instagram channel](#) today, Sept. 9, at 5 p.m. PST.

As part of the new pet anxiety training offerings, Petco will also be dedicating partner resources on Saturday, Sept. 18 at Petco pet care centers nationally to help pet parents find solutions specific to the mental health issues their pets are facing. With Petco's help, every pet and their parent can find the mental health solution they need through a wide variety of calming and anxiety relief supplies, including [calming oils](#), [thunder suits](#) and [toys](#) available at Petco and [petco.com](#).

The new training courses debut alongside the latest chapter in the brand's "It's what we'd want if we were pets" platform, featuring a [new campaign](#) revealing what changes in human routine look like from the pet perspective.

To learn more about Petco's mission to support pet mental health or sign up for the latest trainings, visit [petco.com/mentalhealth](#) and [petco.com/dogtraining](#).

**Statistics from 2021 Petco consumer survey of 1,000 U.S. dog and cat parents.*

About Petco, The Health + Wellness Co.

Petco is a category-defining health and wellness company focused on improving the lives of pets, pet parents and our own Petco partners. Since our founding in 1965, we've been striving to set new standards in pet care, delivering comprehensive wellness solutions through our products and services, and creating communities that deepen the pet-pet parent bond. We operate more than 1,500 Petco locations across the U.S., Mexico and Puerto Rico, including a growing network of more than 150 in-store veterinary hospitals, and offer a complete online resource for pet health and wellness at [petco.com](#) and on the [Petco app](#). In tandem with [Petco Love](#) (formerly the Petco Foundation), an independent nonprofit organization, we work with and support thousands of local animal welfare groups across the country and, through in-store adoption events, we've helped find homes for more than 6.5 million animals.

Contact:

Yvonne Tarrab
Yvonne.Tarrab@petco.com



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