

TABLE 3.1
Communication Tools to Use When Recommending Parasite Control

Communication tool	Description and purpose	Example(s)
Nonverbal communication	Ensuring your body position, eye contact, tone of voice, and facial expressions demonstrate attentiveness and respect for clients.	When sharing information about parasite preventives with a client, the credentialed technician sits and faces the pet caregiver and provides good eye contact and an open body posture.
Open-ended questions	Asking questions that invite more than a “yes” or “no” or brief answer.	<i>“What experience has your family had with using medication to prevent parasites for Sammy?”</i>
	Gathers more detailed information and encourages clients to share perspectives and goals.	<i>“How do you feel about using medications to help prevent flea and tick infestations for Tucker?”</i>
Reflective listening	Listening to understand and repeating back what you have heard.	<i>“It sounds like you are wondering how Simba might be exposed to parasites when she spends most of her time indoors...”</i>
Empathy statements	Demonstrating care, concern, and understanding for the family’s situation.	<i>“It can be worrisome to think about adverse reactions to medications when Rex has been sensitive to other medications in the past.”</i>
		<i>“You are doing a great job of searching for parasite control information for Peanut. Can we look together at a website I trust to provide us with sound information?”</i>
Transparency^{a,b}	Sharing truthful, accurate information about parasites and parasite prevention including costs, risks, and benefits of each option.	<i>“It’s true that the incidence of heartworm disease for dogs in our region is low, based on this map. One of the main reasons we are still concerned with heartworm prevention is that the mosquitoes that spread heartworm disease are prevalent in our area, and treatment of this disease can be costly and difficult.”</i>
Unconditional positive regard^{a,b}	Accept clients for who they are and meet them where they are, rather than holding them to impossibly high standards. ^a	When Mr. Brown calls for the third time this week with questions about the tick he found on his dog, Reggie, the veterinary technician, reminds you that Mr. Brown is very worried and has a close bond with Reggie.
Offer options	Share a variety of alternatives and explain the advantages, disadvantages, and costs of each, including expectations and evidence.	<i>“Let’s talk about some of the options we have for preventing parasites for Bella. We can discuss the costs, as well as advantages and disadvantages of oral versus topical preventive medications to help you find something that works for you and Bella.”</i>

Explore more resources and tools that can help bridge communication gaps between veterinarians and clients with diverse backgrounds in the AAHA Community Care Guidelines at aaha.org.

- Englar RE. Defining two new skills that companion animal clients value: compassionate transparency and unconditional positive regard. In: *A Guide to Oral Communication in Veterinary Medicine*. 5M Publishing; 2020:282–96.
- Englar RE. Recasting the gold standard—part II of II: communicating healthcare options along a continuum of care. *J Fel Med Surg* 2023;25(12):1–14.

2026 AAHA One Health Guidelines: Emerging Concerns in Canine and Feline Parasitology are available at aaha.org/one-health-parasitology

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