

DEBATE PLAYBOOK COMPANION

100 Statements

Fifty pro-aversive defenses and fifty anti-force-free attacks, each paired with a mechanism-based response. Twelve recurring argument clusters with cross-references and source attributions to deploy in live debate, online exchanges, client conversations, and continuing education.

Companion to the Debate Playbook and to The Scientific Case Against Aversive Dog Training Equipment and Methods.

AUTHORED BY

Will Bangura

M.S., CAB-ICB, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, FDM, FFCP

Certified and Accredited Canine Behaviorist

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How to Use This Document

This document contains one hundred statements: fifty defenses of aversive training equipment (electronic collars, prong collars, choke chains) and fifty attacks on force-free, reward-based, positive-reinforcement training. Each statement is paired with a response.

The statements are grouped into twelve recurring argument clusters. These clusters do not represent independent lines of evidence. They represent repeated rhetorical strategies used to reframe aversive stimulation, minimize welfare concerns, challenge reward-based training, appeal to emergency safety, and question the validity of the scientific literature. Categorizing these statements is useful because many apparently different claims rely on the same underlying premise. The claim that an e-collar is communication, the claim that it is like tapping the dog on the shoulder, and the claim that it is just an extension of the leash all belong to a broader communication-reframing cluster.

Source attribution is included only when a response cites a specific peer-reviewed study or named institutional position. Most responses are mechanism-based and do not require citation. Secondary counters are included only when they add something the primary response does not.

The Reverse Lookup Index at the end of the document allows lookup by source-document position (Set 1 #1 through #50, Set 2 #1 through #50) for cases where the cluster is not immediately obvious. This document is a companion to the Debate Playbook, intended to compress the time between hearing a statement in conversation and locating the response designed to answer it.

Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling

Statements that redefine the function of the tool so it is not perceived as punishment, negative reinforcement, pain, fear, or discomfort. The rhetorical move is to shift language away from shock, correction, aversive, or punishment and toward softer terms such as communication, tapping, attention, information, guidance, cueing, or feedback. The scientific question is not what the trainer calls the stimulus. The question is what contingency makes the behavior change.

#	Statement	Response
S1.1	<i>"The e-collar is not a shock collar. It is a modern communication tool."</i>	A label change does not change a procedure. The device emits an aversive electrical stimulus that the dog modifies behavior to avoid or terminate. That is the operant definition of a punisher or a negative reinforcer. The communication-tool framing describes the trainer's intent, not the contingency the dog is acquiring.

#	Statement	Response
S1.6	<i>"The e-collar is just an extension of the leash."</i>	A leash is a physical restraint that prevents the dog from leaving a defined area. An electronic collar delivers an aversive event the dog learns to avoid through behavioral compliance. The two devices share the property of operating at distance. They share nothing else. Distance is the modality. Aversive contingency is the mechanism. Conflating them is a vocabulary move that hides what the welfare evidence is concerned with.
S1.7	<i>"It lets me communicate with the dog off leash."</i>	Communication describes a signal whose meaning has been associated with an outcome. With an e-collar, the outcome attached to the signal is aversive stimulation. The dog learns the signal because the alternative is the stimulus, not because the signal carries information independent of the contingency. Off-leash recall and proximity can be built with reinforcement-based marker systems and long-line work without an aversive backstop.
S1.8	<i>"It is like tapping the dog on the shoulder."</i>	A shoulder tap is not contingent on behavior, not progressive in intensity, and not adjustable on a dial. An e-collar stimulus is all three. The shoulder-tap analogy describes how the trainer wants the procedure framed socially. It does not describe the procedure delivered to the dog.
S1.9	<i>"It gets the dog's attention when food or toys are not enough."</i>	Attention is reliable when the alternative behavior has been built to a level that competes with the distraction at hand, or when the antecedent arrangement keeps the dog under threshold. Adding an aversive does not teach attention. It teaches the dog to suppress the distraction-following behavior to avoid the stimulus. Those are different procedures with different welfare profiles. The attention vocabulary describes the trainer's framing, not the operant function.
S1.10	<i>"It interrupts the dog's thought process."</i>	An interruption that the dog does not work to avoid is unlikely to interrupt anything for long. An interruption the dog does work to avoid is a positive punisher or a negative reinforcer by operant definition. The interruption vocabulary describes the trainer's intent. It does not describe the procedure the dog is acquiring.
S1.11	<i>"It is not punishment if the dog has been conditioned properly."</i>	Conditioning a dog to expect the stimulus does not change what the stimulus is. If the conditioned signal predicts an aversive event the dog modifies behavior to avoid, the procedure is escape or avoidance learning. Calling the conditioned predictor communication does not subtract the unconditioned aversive that gives the predictor its meaning.

#	Statement	Response
S1.37	<i>"The prong collar mimics the way dogs correct each other."</i>	Conspecific corrections in canine social behavior are bite-inhibited, communicative, contextual, and embedded in an existing relationship the dog has with the corrector. A prong collar is a mechanical aversive applied by a leash without an inhibition mechanism, without communicative intent the dog can read, and without a relationship-based context. The mimicry framing is anthropomorphic projection onto a piece of hardware. It relabels a mechanical aversive as natural correction without changing the procedure being delivered.

Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims

Arguments that concede the tool produces a sensation but minimize its welfare significance. These claims compare electronic collar stimulation to human experiences, imply that the intensity is too low to matter, or use the visible behavior of the dog to claim that no welfare cost is occurring.

#	Statement	Response
S1.2	<i>"Modern e-collars use low-level stimulation, not pain."</i>	<p>The level required for behavioral suppression is the level that is aversive to that dog at that moment. Lines, van Driel, and Cooper (2013) documented an 87-fold range in delivered stimulus across thirteen commercial e-collars at maximum settings, with 81-fold variation within collars across user-dial settings. The dial is not a reliable proxy for what is reaching the animal. Whether the speaker calls it stimulation or pain is a vocabulary choice; whether the dog modifies behavior to avoid it is the operant question.</p> <p>Source: Lines, van Driel, and Cooper 2013, <i>Veterinary Record</i>.</p>
S1.3	<i>"It feels like a TENS unit or muscle stimulator."</i>	TENS units are designed for therapeutic muscle and nerve stimulation in a clinical setting where the user controls placement, intensity, and duration. An e-collar is designed to deliver an aversive stimulus contingent on behavior the trainer wants to suppress. The hardware similarity is not a clinical equivalence. The procedure and the purpose are different.

#	Statement	Response
S1.4	<i>"Most humans can barely feel the working level."</i>	<p>A self-test on the human forearm or wrist systematically underestimates what the canine nervous system receives. Canine haired-skin epidermis is approximately three to five cell layers thick, considerably thinner than human epidermis. Lines (2013) also documented manufacturing faults in two of thirteen collars, including one that delivered a maximum-strength impulse regardless of user setting. The I-can-barely-feel-it demonstration tells you what the speaker's forearm felt at one moment with one collar.</p> <p>Source: Lines, van Driel, and Cooper 2013; Affolter and Moore 1994.</p>
S1.5	<i>"The dog decides the working level, not the trainer."</i>	<p>The working level is the level at which the stimulus is sufficient to change behavior through escape, avoidance, or suppression. Calling that level what the dog decided describes the same procedure with the agency rotated. The dog is not a co-author of the contingency. The dog is the subject of it. Lines (2013) further documented that the user dial is not a reliable proxy for delivered stimulus, so even the level being attributed to the dog is a number whose physical meaning is unknown to the trainer at the point of use.</p>
S1.38	<i>"A prong collar is not cruel when fitted correctly."</i>	<p>Fit determines the distribution of the aversive. It does not change the operant function. A correctly fitted prong collar still delivers the contingent neck pressure that the dog modifies behavior to avoid. The fit argument moves the conversation from mechanism to fit. Mechanism is the question.</p>
S1.43	<i>"Balanced training builds confidence, not fear."</i>	<p>Confidence in behavioral terms is observed as approach behavior, exploratory behavior, sustained engagement under novel conditions, and recovery from setbacks. None of those are produced by escape-avoidance contingencies. The confidence claim names a desired outcome and assigns it to a procedure whose mechanism is incompatible with producing it.</p>
S1.44	<i>"Look at the dog. He is happy, confident, and not shut down."</i>	<p>Visible behavior under a contingency the dog has learned to comply with does not establish the absence of stress. Casey et al. (2021) and Vieira de Castro et al. (2020) documented welfare-cost markers in dogs trained with aversive methods that visual inspection does not capture. The look-at-the-dog test is what the trainer sees in that moment with that camera. It is not a welfare assessment.</p> <p>Source: Casey et al. 2021; Vieira de Castro et al. 2020.</p>

#	Statement	Response
S1.45	<i>"If the dog were harmed, he would not be wagging his tail or working happily."</i>	Tail wags occur in multiple emotional states including conflict and appeasement. Operant compliance under an aversive contingency does not require the absence of stress; it requires the dog to have learned which behavior terminates the stimulus. The behavior the camera records is what avoidance looks like when it is working. It does not establish that there is no welfare cost.

Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments

Statements that frame aversive tools as morally and behaviorally neutral. The claim is that the tool itself is not the issue, only improper use. The argument redirects the debate away from mechanism, welfare risk, and population-level harm toward individual trainer competence. Skill may alter timing, intensity, or predictability, but it does not change the quadrant or the welfare-relevant contingency.

#	Statement	Response
S1.12	<i>"The problem is not the tool. The problem is misuse."</i>	For most safety equipment the misuse argument is sound because the tool's function is non-aversive and the failure mode is operator error. For aversive equipment the tool functions through aversive contingency at every setting that produces behavioral change. There is no use mode that is not aversive. The misuse argument does not survive contact with the operant function.
S1.13	<i>"Any tool can be abusive in the wrong hands."</i>	Tools whose normal mechanism of operation is non-aversive can be misused into aversive applications by skilled abuse. Tools whose normal mechanism of operation is aversive operate aversively in skilled hands. The categorical sameness asserted by the argument does not survive the distinction between mechanism of operation and mechanism of misuse.
S1.14	<i>"A flat collar can hurt a dog too."</i>	Anything that contacts a dog can be misused to cause harm. The relevant distinction is between equipment whose normal operating mechanism is non-aversive and equipment whose normal operating mechanism requires an aversive event to produce its training effect. A flat collar does not work through aversive contingency. A prong, choke, or e-collar does. The tool-equivalence argument depends on collapsing that distinction.

#	Statement	Response
S1.15	<i>“Leashes and collars are force too, so force-free is not really force-free.”</i>	Force-free is a methodological commitment to avoid procedures that work through pain, fear, or escape-avoidance contingency. A leash and a flat collar prevent the dog from leaving an area. They do not produce behavior change through aversive contingency. The semantic challenge collapses physical management with aversive procedure. The two are not the same operant category.
S2.1	<i>“Force-free training is not really force-free because a leash, collar, crate, gate, or harness still uses control.”</i>	Force-free is a methodological commitment to avoid procedures that work through pain, fear, or escape-avoidance contingency. A leash, crate, gate, or harness prevents the dog from leaving an area or accessing a stimulus. They do not work by aversive contingency. The semantic challenge collapses physical management with aversive procedure. The two are not the same operant category.
S2.40	<i>“Force-free trainers misrepresent e-collars and prong collars.”</i>	Misrepresentation is a citation question. Specific claims can be checked against the cited source. Generalized accusations of misrepresentation without a named claim and a named source are not arguments. They are suspension moves intended to discredit the welfare critique without engaging with its content.
S2.41	<i>“Force-free trainers only show the worst examples of tool use.”</i>	Selection-of-evidence accusations are testable against named claims and named sources. Generalized versions of the accusation, applied without specifics, function as a suspension move rather than as a substantive critique. With a named claim and a named source the accusation can be evaluated. Without one it cannot.

Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and “Dogs Need No” Arguments

Arguments that reward-based training is incomplete because it allegedly uses only one quadrant, while balanced training is framed as more complete because it uses all four quadrants. The argument borrows the vocabulary of operant conditioning but treats the quadrants as if ethical or clinical validity requires using all of them. Method quality is evaluated by efficacy, welfare impact, risk, side effects, generalization, durability, and suitability for the learner, not by quadrant inventory.

#	Statement	Response
S1.16	<i>“Dogs need both yes and no.”</i>	The yes-and-no vocabulary collapses two separate questions: is the dog acquiring the alternative behavior, and is unwanted behavior being prevented from rehearsal. Reward-based protocols handle both. The yes side is differential reinforcement of the alternative. The no side is antecedent management, prevention of rehearsal, and withholding the reinforcer. The vocabulary is operant on both sides; it does not require an added aversive consequence.
S1.17	<i>“Positive reinforcement tells the dog what to do, but corrections tell the dog what not to do.”</i>	Differential reinforcement tells the dog what to do and what not to do simultaneously. The behavior that is reinforced strengthens. The behavior that is not reinforced extinguishes. Antecedent arrangement and withholding the reinforcer cover the not-to-do side without the welfare cost of an added aversive.
S1.50	<i>“Balanced training is not abuse. It is using all four quadrants of learning theory.”</i>	The four-quadrants framing inventories all available operant procedures. Whether to deploy each is a clinical question, not an inventory question. Method quality is evaluated by efficacy, welfare impact, risk, side effects, generalization, durability, and suitability for the learner, not by quadrant inventory. Reward-based training also uses operant procedures. The decision to add positive punishment and escape-avoidance negative reinforcement is the procedural choice that produces the welfare costs the comparative literature documents.
S2.4	<i>“Force-free training only uses one quadrant of learning theory.”</i>	Reward-based training uses positive reinforcement, negative punishment (withholding the reinforcer), and extinction. That is at minimum three operant procedures, plus respondent counterconditioning and antecedent management. The one-quadrant claim is technically false.

#	Statement	Response
S2.5	<i>“Balanced training uses all four quadrants, so it is more complete.”</i>	Completeness across the four operant quadrants is not a treatment outcome. The question is whether the protocol resolves the case at lower welfare cost. Reward-based protocols use positive reinforcement, negative punishment, and extinction, plus respondent counterconditioning and antecedent management. The methodological-completeness claim describes the inventory of procedures the trainer is willing to deploy, not the outcome the dog gets.
S2.6	<i>“Positive reinforcement teaches what to do, but it does not teach what not to do.”</i>	Withholding the reinforcer, extinction, antecedent management, and prevention of rehearsal teach what not to do without an added aversive. The does-not-teach claim is technically false within any standard treatment of operant conditioning. The procedure being demanded is positive punishment; the missing-quadrant framing is making that demand sound like a structural gap rather than a deliberate addition.
S2.7	<i>“Dogs need both yes and no.”</i>	A no in operant terms is the absence of reinforcement, not the presence of an added aversive. Reward-based protocols deliver no through extinction, antecedent rearrangement, and withholding the reinforcer. The dog reads each of these. The argument substitutes a categorical claim for an operant one.
S2.50	<i>“Balanced training is mostly positive reinforcement anyway, but with accountability when needed.”</i>	The methodological signature of balanced training is the inclusion of positive punishment and escape-avoidance negative reinforcement, regardless of whether positive reinforcement is also used and regardless of what proportion the aversive procedures represent. The convergent welfare evidence applies to any methodology that includes aversive procedures, not only to methodologies in which aversive procedures predominate. The mostly-positive-with-accountability framing dilutes the methodological commitment vocabulary while preserving the procedure that the welfare research is concerned with.

Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications

Arguments that aversive consequences reduce confusion, create clearer expectations, establish boundaries, or reduce anxiety because the dog knows the rules. The core claim is that aversive feedback is clearer, fairer, or psychologically stabilizing.

#	Statement	Response
S1.18	<i>"Rewards alone do not teach boundaries."</i>	Boundaries in operant terms are differential reinforcement of an alternative, antecedent management, prevention of rehearsal, and withholding the reinforcer for the unwanted response. Reward-based training uses all four. The argument is using the word boundaries rhetorically to mean aversive consequences. That is a vocabulary choice, not an analytic point.
S1.40	<i>"It is clearer than nagging leash pressure."</i>	Leash nagging is a technique problem. The fix is teaching the dog what behavior produces release of pressure, not adding an aversive stimulus to the same dog. Clarity comes from contingency. A reward-based system delivers contingent clarity through marker work and differential reinforcement. The clarity argument concedes that the aversive system requires technique to be clear; it does not establish that the aversive system is clearer than a competently delivered reward-based one.
S1.41	<i>"Corrections reduce confusion."</i>	Confusion is a training-design issue. It reflects a contingency the dog cannot detect, a criterion that shifted, or a reinforcer that did not arrive when expected. The fix is to clean up the design. Adding an aversive on top of a confused dog produces a dog that is both confused and avoiding, not a dog that is clear.
S1.42	<i>"Clear consequences reduce anxiety because the dog knows the rules."</i>	Predictability of an aversive event does not eliminate the welfare cost of the event. Human neuroimaging research (Limbachia et al., 2021) and the broader fear-conditioning and stressor-controllability literature show that controllable and predictable aversives still recruit threat-system activation, and the predictability dimension reduces a specific component of the response without making the contingency neutral. The rule-learning vocabulary describes the dog's acquisition of the avoidance contingency, not the welfare profile of the contingency itself.

Source: *Limbachia et al. 2021.*

#	Statement	Response
S2.8	<i>"Force-free training avoids telling the dog when it is wrong."</i>	Telling the dog something is wrong requires a vocabulary the dog can read. Reward-based protocols use a no-reward marker, antecedent rearrangement, withholding the reinforcer, and prompting an alternative behavior. The dog reads the absence of reinforcement and the redirection. The dog does not need an aversive event to detect that the contingency is not paying.
S2.9	<i>"Force-free training is unclear to the dog."</i>	Clarity is a function of contingency design, not of whether the consequence is appetitive or aversive. A clean differential reinforcement protocol with a marker, an antecedent arrangement, and a clearly delivered reinforcer is unambiguous to the dog. The clarity-by-aversive argument trades information clarity for compliance under threat. The dog is clear under the second protocol because the alternative is the aversive, not because the dog has learned the contingency more cleanly.
S2.10	<i>"Corrections are fairer than letting the dog keep guessing."</i>	A dog that is guessing has a training-design problem. The intervention is to break the criterion down, lower the difficulty, or rearrange the antecedent so the correct behavior occurs and can be reinforced. Adding a correction to a guessing dog does not clarify the criterion. It punishes the guess, which suppresses behavior at the threshold where guessing was the data the trainer needed.
S2.46	<i>"Force-free training creates dogs with no boundaries."</i>	A dog that has been trained on differential reinforcement of an alternative, antecedent management, and prevention of rehearsal has every operant marker of a trained dog with clear behavioral expectations. The no-boundaries claim describes a dog that has been under-trained, not a dog that has been trained without aversives. The argument is conflating skill failure with method failure.

Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and “Cookies Don’t Work” Arguments

Arguments that rewards fail when the dog is not food motivated, is over threshold, is highly aroused, or encounters something more valuable than the reinforcer. The cluster has a kernel of truth: poorly selected reinforcers, poor timing, inadequate distance, or working over threshold can absolutely cause reward-based training to fail. That is a failure of training design, not of positive reinforcement as a scientific principle.

#	Statement	Response
S1.19	<i>“Some dogs are not food motivated.”</i>	<p>Almost every healthy dog is food motivated under the right conditions. What varies is the value of the food relative to competing stimuli, the dog's arousal state, and the antecedent setup of the training session. Dogs presented as not food motivated are usually over-aroused, anxious, full, working in a low-value reinforcer with high-value distraction, or under-skilled. The procedural fix is to address those variables, not to override them with an aversive.</p> <p>Secondary: <i>Reward-based training is also not limited to food. Play, access to environment, and social engagement function as reinforcers when correctly identified.</i></p>
S1.20	<i>“Some dogs blow through treats when they are over threshold.”</i>	A dog over threshold is a dog whose arousal has exceeded the level at which learning can occur. Adding an aversive event at that arousal level does not produce new learning either. It produces suppression of the visible behavior with conditioned emotional response to whatever stimuli are present. The procedural fix for over-threshold arousal is sub-threshold work, not an aversive override.
S2.15	<i>“Treats work until the dog sees something more valuable.”</i>	A high-value distraction is a training criterion the dog has not yet been brought to. The reward-based procedural answer is to build the alternative behavior to that level under graduated criteria, with antecedent management while the dog is still acquiring skill. The argument treats a missing training step as a methodological failure.

#	Statement	Response
S2.16	<i>"Food will not stop a dog chasing a squirrel into traffic."</i>	<p>Predatory chasing is a serious behavior and safety concern, and it is not solved on the spot by waving a cookie at a dog already in pursuit. The reward-based answer is differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior trained at sub-threshold distance, secure off-leash environment during training, and long-line management until reliability is established. China et al. (2020) tested off-lead behavioral problems including chasing and found reward-based training produced equivalent or better outcomes than electronic-collar training without the welfare cost.</p> <p>Source: <i>China, Mills, and Cooper 2020.</i></p>
S2.17	<i>"A happy voice and a cookie will not stop predatory drive."</i>	<p>Predatory drive is captured and redirected through differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior trained sub-threshold, not stopped at the trigger by a happy voice. The procedural strawman makes reward-based training sound like one-shot bribery at the trigger when the actual protocol is graduated and antecedent-managed.</p>
S2.18	<i>"Some dogs are not food motivated."</i>	<p>Repeat of Set 1 #19. The premise is empirically thin once arousal, antecedent, and reinforcer value are controlled. The dog is rarely the variable. The training design is.</p>
S2.49	<i>"Redirecting with food is bribery, not training."</i>	<p>Bribery is an antecedent transaction with a reasoning agent. Reinforcement is a consequence-driven procedure that increases the future probability of the reinforced behavior. Where food appears before the behavior in the absence of contingency, the procedure has design problems. Where food is contingent on the behavior, it is positive reinforcement. The argument is using kitchen-table vocabulary against textbook procedure.</p>

Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments

Arguments that reward-based methods may work for easy dogs, puppies, or basic manners, but not for serious dogs, high-drive dogs, protection dogs, police dogs, hunting dogs, aggression cases, or reactivity cases. The cluster creates a hierarchy: reward-based training is portrayed as acceptable for low-stakes cases, while balanced training is positioned as necessary for the real cases.

#	Statement	Response
S1.21	<i>“Some dogs have too much drive for positive-only training.”</i>	Drive is a motivational property that reward-based training is built to capture. The dog with high drive for the trigger is a dog whose attention is available for whatever produces the reinforcer when the criterion is delivered cleanly. The procedural answer is to use the drive, not to override it with an aversive.
S1.22	<i>“High-drive working dogs need tools.”</i>	The tool category in this argument is aversive equipment. High-drive sport, detection, herding, and protection programs train at international competition level using reward-based marker work, prey-drive engagement protocols, and clear differential reinforcement. The argument treats aversive equipment as a category requirement when the working-dog literature shows the actual requirement is good reinforcement design.
S1.23	<i>“Police dogs, protection dogs, and hunting dogs cannot be trained reliably with cookies.”</i>	The relevant comparison is not cookies versus electricity. It is reward-based marker training using high-value primary reinforcers and prey-drive engagement, against escape-avoidance training using an aversive backstop. Working-dog programs at international level operate on the first protocol. The cookies framing is rhetorical.
S1.24	<i>“Pet dogs with aggression need consequences, not just redirection.”</i>	Aggression cases are handled by the veterinary behavior specialty, the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, without aversive equipment as standard of care. ACVB Diplomates use functional behavior assessment, antecedent management, differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior, and psychiatric medication when clinically indicated. The clinical record of the specialty that handles the most severe aggression cases shows the consequences-are-required argument is empirically wrong.

Source: ACVB letter to AVMA, December 2025.

#	Statement	Response
S1.25	<i>"Force-free trainers fail the hard cases."</i>	<p>The veterinary specialty that handles the hardest cases, the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, treats severe aggression, anxiety, fear, and predatory cases without aversive equipment as standard of care. The hard-case-failure claim is contradicted by the clinical record of the specialty whose patient population is defined by the hard cases.</p> <p>Source: ACVB clinical standard.</p>
S2.19	<i>"Some dogs are too high-drive for reward-only training."</i>	Repeat of Set 1 #21. Drive is a property reward-based training captures, not a property aversive training is required to override. The high-drive working-dog literature operates at international competition level on reward-based marker training.
S2.20	<i>"Working dogs cannot be trained reliably with cookies."</i>	Repeat of Set 1 #23. The cookies framing is rhetorical. Reward-based marker training with high-value primary reinforcers and prey-drive engagement is the standard at international working-dog level.
S2.21	<i>"Police, military, hunting, herding, and sport dogs need more than treats."</i>	Repeat of Set 1 #23 across additional working domains. The cookies framing is rhetorical. Reward-based marker training is the standard at international working-dog level across the domains named.
S2.22	<i>"Force-free trainers are fine for puppies and basic manners, but not serious behavior problems."</i>	The scope assertion is empirically contradicted by the standard of care of the veterinary behavior specialty. ACVB Diplomates treat the most severe canine cases without aversive equipment. The scope-limit argument is a rhetorical concession that protects the aversive-equipment claim by retreating to the serious-cases reserve. The actual evidence does not support that reserve.
S2.23	<i>"Force-free trainers fail aggression cases."</i>	Aggression is the case category the veterinary behavior specialty handles, and they handle it without aversive equipment as standard of care. The aggression-failure claim is empirically false at the level of the specialty defined by aggression cases.
S2.24	<i>"Force-free trainers fail reactivity cases."</i>	Reactivity is treated through systematic desensitization, counterconditioning, and differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior at sub-threshold distance. The procedure is established in the veterinary behavior literature. Reactivity-failure claims describe poorly implemented reward-based protocols, not the methodological standard.

#	Statement	Response
S2.25	<i>"Force-free trainers manage aggression rather than fix it."</i>	Management is a component of treatment in any evidence-based behavior modification protocol. The argument treats management as a treatment failure rather than as the antecedent control that allows behavior modification to proceed at sub-threshold intensity. The veterinary behavior specialty uses management as standard of care precisely because it is what makes the modification possible. Management is not the alternative to fixing it. Management is part of fixing it.
S2.48	<i>"Ignoring behavior does not work for dangerous behavior."</i>	Reward-based behavior modification for dangerous behavior is not ignoring. It is functional behavior assessment, antecedent management to prevent rehearsal, differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior trained sub-threshold, and psychiatric medication when indicated. The ignoring framing is a strawman of how reward-based protocols handle severe cases.

Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims

Claims that aversive tools are necessary to prevent death, injury, surrender, euthanasia, traffic accidents, livestock chasing, wildlife chasing, or loss of off-leash control. The implicit frame is that the tool may be uncomfortable, but the alternative is death. These should be treated as empirical claims requiring data, not slogans.

#	Statement	Response
S1.26	<i>"Balanced trainers get the dogs after positive trainers fail."</i>	Selection bias produces this pattern in any direction. Balanced trainers see dogs that did not improve under their previous trainer. Force-free trainers see dogs that did not improve under their previous balanced trainer. The pattern is not asymmetric in the direction the argument assumes; it is the artifact of being the next stop after any unsuccessful protocol.

#	Statement	Response
S1.27	<i>"Some force-free trainers recommend euthanasia, but balanced training saves those dogs."</i>	Behavioral euthanasia is a clinical judgment made jointly by the family and the veterinary team, not a methodological position. The framing assumes that recommendations made by individual trainers represent the methodological standard, which they do not. The veterinary behavior specialty handles severe cases without aversive equipment and produces resolution rates that contradict the lifesaving narrative.
S1.28	<i>"E-collars save lives."</i>	The lifesaving claim asserts that aversive equipment is necessary to prevent surrender or euthanasia. The veterinary behavior specialty handles the case categories most often invoked under this claim and does so without aversive equipment as standard of care. The clinical record of the relevant specialty contradicts the necessity claim. ACVB stated this directly to AVMA in December 2025. Source: ACVB letter to AVMA, December 2025.
S1.29	<i>"Prong collars save lives."</i>	The lifesaving claim is the same in structure as the e-collar version, asserted for the prong rather than the e-collar. The clinical record of the specialty that handles severe-case behavior medicine without prong collars as standard of care contradicts the necessity claim across both equipment categories.
S1.30	<i>"A correction is better than surrender or euthanasia."</i>	The argument assumes a binary that the clinical record does not support. The veterinary behavior specialty handles severe-case aggression, anxiety, and reactivity without aversive equipment and does not produce the surrender or euthanasia rates the argument predicts. Correction-versus-surrender is a false choice constructed from outside the clinical literature.
S1.31	<i>"The dog would have more freedom with an e-collar than living on leash forever."</i>	The argument proposes a binary between aversive-collar off-leash freedom and lifelong leash. Reward-based recall training, long-line work, and graduated exposure to off-leash environments produce off-leash reliability without an aversive backstop. The freedom argument is constructed by removing the third option from the menu.
S1.32	<i>"A reliable off-leash recall is a safety issue."</i>	Recall reliability is a real welfare issue, and reward-based recall protocols using high-value primary reinforcers, marker work, graduated exposure, and management with a long line during acquisition produce reliable off-leash recall. The safety framing is not at issue. The procedural answer to the safety issue is the part the argument misstates.

#	Statement	Response
S1.33	<i>"The e-collar prevents dogs from chasing deer, livestock, cars, or wildlife."</i>	<p>Predatory chasing is a serious safety concern, and the necessity claim for electronic collars in this category is contested in the peer-reviewed literature. China et al. (2020) directly tested off-lead behavioral problems including chasing and found reward-based training produced equivalent or better outcomes than electronic-collar training without the welfare cost. The non-aversive procedural toolkit includes desensitization to the trigger at distance, differential reinforcement of an incompatible behavior, secure off-leash environments during training, and long-line work in graduated exposure.</p> <p>Source: <i>China, Mills, and Cooper 2020.</i></p>
S1.34	<i>"It is safer than letting the dog run into danger."</i>	<p>The relevant comparison is not aversive collar versus loose dog. It is aversive-collar protocol versus reward-based recall protocol with appropriate management during acquisition. The safety framing assumes the only alternative to the e-collar is no training.</p>
S2.29	<i>"Force-free training can lead to surrender because families need results."</i>	<p>Families do need results, and the veterinary behavior specialty produces them in severe cases without aversive equipment. The argument assumes that surrender is the alternative to aversive equipment when the clinical literature shows the actual alternative is competent reward-based behavior modification with appropriate adjuncts including medication. The framing constructs a binary the clinical record contradicts.</p>
S2.30	<i>"Force-free trainers would rather see a dog euthanized than made uncomfortable."</i>	<p>Behavioral euthanasia is a clinical judgment made by the family and the veterinary team, not a methodological position. The veterinary behavior specialty that handles the most severe cases treats them without aversive equipment and does not produce the euthanasia rate the argument assumes. ACVB stated explicitly to AVMA in December 2025 that shock collars are not medically necessary, are not evidence-based for preventing euthanasia, and are not aligned with the standard of care for veterinary behavior medicine. The framing assumes a binary the clinical record contradicts.</p> <p>Source: <i>ACVB letter to AVMA, December 2025.</i></p>
S2.31	<i>"Balanced trainers save the dogs force-free trainers give up on."</i>	<p>Selection bias produces dogs arriving at any practitioner after a previous practitioner did not produce resolution. The narrative attributes a pattern of practitioner sequence to a methodological asymmetry that the case data does not support.</p>

Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques

Arguments that force-free training may work in theory but is too slow, too fragile, too dependent on skilled implementation, or too impractical for ordinary pet parents. The primary issue is feasibility, speed, and human compliance, not immediate danger. The argument is often used to position balanced training as more realistic for everyday families.

#	Statement	Response
S2.11	<i>"Force-free training relies too much on management."</i>	Antecedent management is a recognized component of every evidence-based behavior modification protocol, including the protocols used by ACVB Diplomates in severe-case clinical practice. Preventing rehearsal of unwanted behavior, controlling environment and triggers, and arranging conditions for the alternative behavior to be reinforced are not substitutes for treatment. They are part of treatment, and they are the foundation that allows behavior modification to proceed at sub-threshold intensity.
S2.12	<i>"Management fails in the real world."</i>	Management is one component of the protocol, not the protocol. When management fails, the failure is in the implementation or in the gap between the dog's current skill and the demands of the environment, not in the principle. The fix is better implementation or sub-threshold work to close the skill gap, not removal of management as a treatment component.
S2.13	<i>"You cannot control every variable in real life."</i>	Behavior modification does not require control of every variable. It requires control of enough variables to produce successful repetitions of the target behavior, which then generalize as variables are added back in. Generalization is built; it is not assumed. The argument is asking for a guarantee no behavior protocol provides.
S2.14	<i>"Force-free works in the living room but not in the real world."</i>	Generalization is a training criterion, not a methodological limit. Reward-based protocols generalize through graduated exposure to novel environments, distractions, distances, and durations. A protocol that has not generalized is a protocol that has not yet been generalized. The argument is treating an early-stage skill as the methodological ceiling.

#	Statement	Response
S2.26	<i>“Force-free training takes months or years when balanced training can solve the problem faster.”</i>	Speed of behavioral suppression is not the same as resolution. Aversive contingencies can produce visible behavior change quickly because the dog learns to avoid the stimulus. The underlying emotional state and the conditioned emotional responses to the trigger and to the trainer remain. Reward-based behavior modification builds new conditioned emotional responses, which is slower because the affective change is the actual outcome.
S2.27	<i>“Most pet parents will not maintain the level of management force-free training requires.”</i>	Compliance with management is improved by giving pet parents protocols that fit their lives, not by adding aversive equipment to the protocol. The compliance argument is sometimes legitimate as a coaching problem and sometimes deployed as a justification for abandoning the welfare standard. The first is solved by better client work. The second is not a methodological argument against reward-based training.
S2.28	<i>“If the plan is too slow, the pet parent gives up.”</i>	Plan pacing is a clinical skill. Plans that match the family's bandwidth, that produce visible early wins, and that are scaffolded with management while skill is being built do not lose families because they are reward-based. They lose families when they are designed badly. The slow-equals-failed argument is a coaching critique, not a methodological one.
S2.47	<i>“Force-free dogs are allowed to rehearse bad behavior.”</i>	Prevention of rehearsal is a standard component of reward-based behavior modification. Antecedent management exists for exactly this purpose. The argument describes a poorly designed reward-based protocol, not the methodological standard. A dog rehearsing unwanted behavior under a competent reward-based plan is a coaching failure, not a methodological one.

Cluster 10. Mechanical Control, Handler Safety, and Physical Leverage Arguments

Arguments that aversive tools are needed because some dogs are physically too strong, especially for smaller handlers, elderly pet parents, or people with physical limitations. This cluster is about mechanical management of the dog's body, not necessarily behavior modification. Balanced-trainer rhetoric often blends acute restraint, training, and emotional change together.

#	Statement	Response
S1.35	<i>"The prong collar gives small handlers control over large, powerful dogs."</i>	Handler-size mismatch is a real safety problem with several non-aversive solutions: front-clip harness, head halter trained with positive associations, two-point management with a leash on each, and antecedent control until loose-leash skill is built. The prong delivers physical control through aversive contingency. The same physical control is achievable through equipment that does not work by aversive mechanism.
S1.36	<i>"A prong collar distributes pressure more evenly than a flat collar."</i>	The peer-reviewed measurement literature does not support the claim. Carter, McNally, and Roshier (2020) tested seven collar types under realistic pull forces and found peak pressures ranging from 83 to 832 kPa across collar types, none low enough to mitigate injury risk. Pauli, Bentley, Diehl, and Miller (2006) documented that collar pressure during ordinary pulling significantly elevates intraocular pressure while harness pressure does not. The mechanical argument does not survive peer-reviewed measurement. Source: Carter, McNally, and Roshier 2020; Pauli et al. 2006.
S1.39	<i>"The dog self-corrects on a prong collar."</i>	The collar produces neck pressure when the leash tightens. The dog modifies behavior to reduce or avoid the pressure. That is escape-avoidance learning, with the trainer as the contingency designer and the prong as the contingency device. The self-correction vocabulary rotates the agency without changing the procedure.

Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training

Statements that attack the perceived motives, competence, honesty, or ideology of force-free trainers rather than defending a tool. The cluster reframes the debate as practical professionals versus emotional ideologues. The rhetorical move attacks credibility rather than evidence.

#	Statement	Response
S1.49	<i>“Positive-only ideology is emotional, not realistic.”</i>	The position rests on more than a hundred peer-reviewed studies in canine welfare, learning theory, and affective neuroscience; the unanimous joint position of the FVE, FECAVA, FEEVA, and WSAVA (2024); the position statements of every major North American and European veterinary association that has formally reviewed the evidence; and the standard of care of the veterinary behavior specialty for severe-case clinical practice. Calling that body of evidence emotional or ideological is not an argument. It is an attempt to substitute a temperament label for an engagement with the literature.
S2.2	<i>“Positive-only training is a myth.”</i>	The label challenge is rhetorical. Force-free is a methodological commitment to avoid procedures that work through pain, fear, or escape-avoidance contingency. The use of physical management equipment that does not work by aversive contingency does not violate that commitment. The label-versus-practice framing collapses two separate things to make the methodology sound dishonest.
S2.3	<i>“Nobody trains purely positively, so force-free trainers are being dishonest.”</i>	Force-free is not a claim that no extinction or no negative punishment occurs in training. It is a commitment about which procedures are excluded, specifically those that work through pain, fear, or escape-avoidance contingency. The dishonesty framing fails on the same definitional ground as the myth claim.
S2.32	<i>“Force-free trainers recommend medication instead of training.”</i>	Pharmacological support in evidence-based veterinary behavior medicine is prescribed when the dog's affective state, anxiety load, or threat-system reactivity is high enough that learning is impaired and behavior modification cannot proceed effectively without medical support. Medication is not used instead of training. It is used to make training accessible to a dog whose nervous system would not otherwise be able to acquire new associations. The argument substitutes instead-of for to-support.

#	Statement	Response
S2.33	<i>“Force-free trainers pathologize normal behavior.”</i>	Functional behavior assessment distinguishes species-typical behavior in an appropriate context from clinically significant fear, anxiety, aggression, or compulsive behavior. The pathologizing accusation describes practitioners who fail at that distinction, not the methodological standard. Veterinary behavior medicine has clinical criteria for when a behavior is pathological, and those criteria are based on welfare, function, and the dog's ability to live a stable life.
S2.34	<i>“Force-free trainers are ideology-driven.”</i>	The ideology label is applied to a body of work that includes more than a hundred peer-reviewed studies, the standard of care of the veterinary behavior specialty, and the unanimous position of every major veterinary organization that has formally reviewed the evidence. The label is doing all the rhetorical work. The literature is doing none of it.
S2.35	<i>“Force-free training is emotional, not realistic.”</i>	The argument is a relabeled version of the temperament-substitution move. Calling the position emotional is not an engagement with the evidence. It is a substitute for that engagement.
S2.36	<i>“Force-free trainers care more about philosophy than results.”</i>	Results in behavior modification are measured in resolution of the clinical case at the lowest welfare cost. The veterinary behavior specialty produces those results in severe cases without aversive equipment. The philosophy-versus-results framing assumes that aversive equipment produces better results, which the comparative literature does not support.
S2.37	<i>“Force-free trainers are dogmatic.”</i>	A position grounded in convergent peer-reviewed evidence, the standard of care of a veterinary specialty, and unanimous international consensus is the opposite of dogmatic. The dogmatism label is most often deployed against the position that has the broadest evidentiary base in the field. The accusation describes the rhetorical move; it does not characterize the position.
S2.38	<i>“Force-free trainers follow rules even when the dog is not improving.”</i>	A dog that is not improving on a reward-based protocol is a coaching question. The procedural answers are functional behavior reassessment, criterion adjustment, antecedent rearrangement, reinforcer audit, and where indicated, psychiatric medication and referral to a veterinary behaviorist. The protocol has internal procedural answers when progress stalls. Adding an aversive is not one of them.

#	Statement	Response
S2.39	<i>"Force-free communities shame people who use tools."</i>	Social-conduct accusations describe the conduct of individuals, not the methodology. Civility in public discussion is a real and separate question. The methodological argument about aversive equipment is settled by the comparative welfare literature regardless of how individuals on either side conduct themselves.

Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty

Arguments that challenge the evidence base against aversive tools by claiming the studies are flawed, incomplete, biased, or not representative of modern balanced training. The cluster targets the scientific foundation directly. It does not say tools work; it says the evidence against tools is invalid, incomplete, or ideologically selected.

#	Statement	Response
S1.46	<i>"The science against e-collars studies bad training, not proper modern training."</i>	Cooper et al. (2014) and China et al. (2020) used industry trainers operating under best-practice conditions defined in advance. The studies were not designed to capture poor technique. They were designed to capture the procedure trained competently. The bad-training claim is not supported by the methodology section of the studies it dismisses. Source: Cooper et al. 2014; China, Mills, and Cooper 2020.
S1.47	<i>"The studies do not include skilled e-collar trainers."</i>	Cooper (2014) and China (2020) used industry-recommended trainers. The argument requires the literature to operate under standards more demanding than those applied to any other intervention in canine welfare research before counter-evidence is acceptable. That is a methodological double standard.
S1.48	<i>"The studies do not test the way we actually use the tools."</i>	The studies that tested industry-best-practice deployment found welfare costs and equivalent or worse training outcomes. If actual practice differs from the way the studies tested, the burden is on proponents to publish that practice under controlled conditions. Naming a methodological objection without producing the comparison study is not a counter to the existing literature.

#	Statement	Response
S2.42	<i>"The studies against aversives only test bad trainers or bad tool use."</i>	<p>Cooper (2014) and China (2020) used industry-recommended trainers operating under best-practice conditions defined in advance. The bad-trainer claim is not supported by the methodology of the studies it dismisses.</p> <p>Source: <i>Cooper et al. 2014; China, Mills, and Cooper 2020.</i></p>
S2.43	<i>"The studies do not include skilled balanced trainers."</i>	<p>The argument requires the comparative literature to operate under standards more demanding than those applied to any other welfare-relevant intervention in canine practice before counter-evidence is acceptable. That is a methodological double standard.</p>
S2.44	<i>"The science is not settled."</i>	<p>Science is rarely settled in the absolute sense, and policy and clinical decisions are made on convergence, not on certainty. The convergence here spans more than fifteen peer-reviewed welfare studies across multiple methodologies and countries, a unanimous joint position from the FVE, FECAVA, FEEVA, and WSAVA (2024) calling for a complete ban on electric pulse training devices, and rejection statements from every major veterinary and behavior organization. Demanding a higher epistemic standard for aversive-equipment policy than for any other welfare intervention in canine practice is not a scientific objection. It is a delaying tactic.</p> <p>Source: <i>FVE/FECAVA/FEEVA/WSAVA 2024; AVSAB 2021; ACVB 2025.</i></p>
S2.45	<i>"Force-free trainers cherry-pick studies."</i>	<p>The convergent body of evidence consists of more than fifteen peer-reviewed studies across multiple methodologies and countries, plus the unanimous position of every major veterinary organization. A position grounded in convergence is the opposite of cherry-picking. The accusation is most often deployed against citation of the broadest-based body of evidence in the field.</p>

Reverse Lookup Index

Lookup by source-document position. Use this when the original statement number is known but the cluster is not.

Set 1. Defenses of Aversive Training Equipment

#	Statement	Cluster
1	<i>"The e-collar is not a shock collar. It is a modern communication tool."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
2	<i>"Modern e-collars use low-level stimulation, not pain."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
3	<i>"It feels like a TENS unit or muscle stimulator."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
4	<i>"Most humans can barely feel the working level."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
5	<i>"The dog decides the working level, not the trainer."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
6	<i>"The e-collar is just an extension of the leash."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
7	<i>"It lets me communicate with the dog off leash."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
8	<i>"It is like tapping the dog on the shoulder."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
9	<i>"It gets the dog's attention when food or toys are not enough."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling

#	Statement	Cluster
10	<i>"It interrupts the dog's thought process."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
11	<i>"It is not punishment if the dog has been conditioned properly."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
12	<i>"The problem is not the tool. The problem is misuse."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
13	<i>"Any tool can be abusive in the wrong hands."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
14	<i>"A flat collar can hurt a dog too."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
15	<i>"Leashes and collars are force too, so force-free is not really force-free."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
16	<i>"Dogs need both yes and no."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments
17	<i>"Positive reinforcement tells the dog what to do, but corrections tell the dog what not to do."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments
18	<i>"Rewards alone do not teach boundaries."</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
19	<i>"Some dogs are not food motivated."</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and "Cookies Don't Work" Arguments
20	<i>"Some dogs blow through treats when they are over threshold."</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and "Cookies Don't Work" Arguments
21	<i>"Some dogs have too much drive for positive-only training."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments

#	Statement	Cluster
22	<i>"High-drive working dogs need tools."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
23	<i>"Police dogs, protection dogs, and hunting dogs cannot be trained reliably with cookies."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
24	<i>"Pet dogs with aggression need consequences, not just redirection."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
25	<i>"Force-free trainers fail the hard cases."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
26	<i>"Balanced trainers get the dogs after positive trainers fail."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
27	<i>"Some force-free trainers recommend euthanasia, but balanced training saves those dogs."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
28	<i>"E-collars save lives."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
29	<i>"Prong collars save lives."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
30	<i>"A correction is better than surrender or euthanasia."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
31	<i>"The dog would have more freedom with an e-collar than living on leash forever."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
32	<i>"A reliable off-leash recall is a safety issue."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
33	<i>"The e-collar prevents dogs from chasing deer, livestock, cars, or wildlife."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims

#	Statement	Cluster
34	<i>"It is safer than letting the dog run into danger."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
35	<i>"The prong collar gives small handlers control over large, powerful dogs."</i>	Cluster 10. Mechanical Control, Handler Safety, and Physical Leverage Arguments
36	<i>"A prong collar distributes pressure more evenly than a flat collar."</i>	Cluster 10. Mechanical Control, Handler Safety, and Physical Leverage Arguments
37	<i>"The prong collar mimics the way dogs correct each other."</i>	Cluster 1. Communication Reframing and Euphemistic Relabeling
38	<i>"A prong collar is not cruel when fitted correctly."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
39	<i>"The dog self-corrects on a prong collar."</i>	Cluster 10. Mechanical Control, Handler Safety, and Physical Leverage Arguments
40	<i>"It is clearer than nagging leash pressure."</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
41	<i>"Corrections reduce confusion."</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
42	<i>"Clear consequences reduce anxiety because the dog knows the rules."</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
43	<i>"Balanced training builds confidence, not fear."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
44	<i>"Look at the dog. He is happy, confident, and not shut down."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims
45	<i>"If the dog were harmed, he would not be wagging his tail or working happily."</i>	Cluster 2. Aversiveness Minimization and Benign-Stimulus Claims

#	Statement	Cluster
46	<i>"The science against e-collars studies bad training, not proper modern training."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
47	<i>"The studies do not include skilled e-collar trainers."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
48	<i>"The studies do not test the way we actually use the tools."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
49	<i>"Positive-only ideology is emotional, not realistic."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
50	<i>"Balanced training is not abuse. It is using all four quadrants of learning theory."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments

Set 2. Attacks on Force-Free Training

#	Statement	Cluster
1	<i>"Force-free training is not really force-free because a leash, collar, crate, gate, or harness still uses control."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
2	<i>"Positive-only training is a myth."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
3	<i>"Nobody trains purely positively, so force-free trainers are being dishonest."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
4	<i>"Force-free training only uses one quadrant of learning theory."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments
5	<i>"Balanced training uses all four quadrants, so it is more complete."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments

#	Statement	Cluster
6	<i>“Positive reinforcement teaches what to do, but it does not teach what not to do.”</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and “Dogs Need No” Arguments
7	<i>“Dogs need both yes and no.”</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and “Dogs Need No” Arguments
8	<i>“Force-free training avoids telling the dog when it is wrong.”</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
9	<i>“Force-free training is unclear to the dog.”</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
10	<i>“Corrections are fairer than letting the dog keep guessing.”</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
11	<i>“Force-free training relies too much on management.”</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
12	<i>“Management fails in the real world.”</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
13	<i>“You cannot control every variable in real life.”</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
14	<i>“Force-free works in the living room but not in the real world.”</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
15	<i>“Treats work until the dog sees something more valuable.”</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and “Cookies Don’t Work” Arguments
16	<i>“Food will not stop a dog chasing a squirrel into traffic.”</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and “Cookies Don’t Work” Arguments
17	<i>“A happy voice and a cookie will not stop predatory drive.”</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and “Cookies Don’t Work” Arguments

#	Statement	Cluster
18	<i>"Some dogs are not food motivated."</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and "Cookies Don't Work" Arguments
19	<i>"Some dogs are too high-drive for reward-only training."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
20	<i>"Working dogs cannot be trained reliably with cookies."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
21	<i>"Police, military, hunting, herding, and sport dogs need more than treats."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
22	<i>"Force-free trainers are fine for puppies and basic manners, but not serious behavior problems."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
23	<i>"Force-free trainers fail aggression cases."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
24	<i>"Force-free trainers fail reactivity cases."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
25	<i>"Force-free trainers manage aggression rather than fix it."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
26	<i>"Force-free training takes months or years when balanced training can solve the problem faster."</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
27	<i>"Most pet parents will not maintain the level of management force-free training requires."</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
28	<i>"If the plan is too slow, the pet parent gives up."</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
29	<i>"Force-free training can lead to surrender because families need results."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims

#	Statement	Cluster
30	<i>"Force-free trainers would rather see a dog euthanized than made uncomfortable."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
31	<i>"Balanced trainers save the dogs force-free trainers give up on."</i>	Cluster 8. Safety, Survival, Euthanasia, and Harm-Reduction Claims
32	<i>"Force-free trainers recommend medication instead of training."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
33	<i>"Force-free trainers pathologize normal behavior."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
34	<i>"Force-free trainers are ideology-driven."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
35	<i>"Force-free training is emotional, not realistic."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
36	<i>"Force-free trainers care more about philosophy than results."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
37	<i>"Force-free trainers are dogmatic."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
38	<i>"Force-free trainers follow rules even when the dog is not improving."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
39	<i>"Force-free communities shame people who use tools."</i>	Cluster 11. Ideology, Identity, and Credibility Attacks on Force-Free Training
40	<i>"Force-free trainers misrepresent e-collars and prong collars."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments
41	<i>"Force-free trainers only show the worst examples of tool use."</i>	Cluster 3. Tool-Neutrality, Misuse, and False Equivalence Arguments

#	Statement	Cluster
42	<i>"The studies against aversives only test bad trainers or bad tool use."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
43	<i>"The studies do not include skilled balanced trainers."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
44	<i>"The science is not settled."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
45	<i>"Force-free trainers cherry-pick studies."</i>	Cluster 12. Evidence Dismissal, Methodological Objections, and Manufactured Uncertainty
46	<i>"Force-free training creates dogs with no boundaries."</i>	Cluster 5. Clarity, Boundary, and Predictability Justifications
47	<i>"Force-free dogs are allowed to rehearse bad behavior."</i>	Cluster 9. Practicality, Speed, Generalization, and Compliance Critiques
48	<i>"Ignoring behavior does not work for dangerous behavior."</i>	Cluster 7. High-Drive, Working-Dog, and Severe-Behavior Exception Arguments
49	<i>"Redirecting with food is bribery, not training."</i>	Cluster 6. Reinforcer Failure, Competing Motivation, and "Cookies Don't Work" Arguments
50	<i>"Balanced training is mostly positive reinforcement anyway, but with accountability when needed."</i>	Cluster 4. Four-Quadrant Completeness and "Dogs Need No" Arguments