



APDTNZ Position Statement

Proposed Jeff Gellman Seminar in New Zealand 2020

As the established national New Zealand body representing progressive dog trainers, the Association of Pet Dog Trainers New Zealand Inc (APDTNZ) is unable to support or agree with the training methods used and taught by Jeff Gellman of Solid K9 Training.

Mr. Gellman of Solid K9 Training in Rhode Island is scheduled to travel to Auckland for a two-day workshop on July 4th and 5th, 2020 as a part of an international tour. His intention is to promote methods that include the use of electronic collars, prong collars, dominant (choke) collars and aversive punishment techniques, among other outdated and non-evidence-based methodologies of animal training and behaviour.

A video has surfaced recently of Mr. Gellman hitting a dog with a tightly rolled towel over the head with his full force at a similar workshop last



August. This is a technique that Mr. Gellman has coined as “Bonking”. In this video, and in a subsequent video where he attempts to explain his reasoning for his actions, Mr. Gellman’s lack of understanding of learning theory is further demonstrated which has resulted in the unsubstantiated and dangerous training techniques practiced by Mr. Gellman.

It is obvious from reviewing the video that when Mr. Gellman “bonks” the dog, he himself is afraid to then move close to the dog to retrieve the rolled towel for fear of retaliation by the dog. However, he does not advise the workshop attendees, or the people watching the video, of the likely risk to their safety should they use this method.



The punitive methods used by Mr. Gellman use force, fear, intimidation, and pain, and are psychologically damaging to dogs. They are abusive and inhumane. They also carry a high fallout rate, potentially increasing **aggressive behaviour, anxiety, and fearfulness**. They are physically damaging, can **cause undue stress and pain** to the animal and can encourage owners to actively pursue an increasingly violent and punitive approach when training their dog. These methods are **not humane**, and they pose a major welfare concern.

Furthermore, Mr. Gellman's approach is inconsistent with the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the NZ Code of Welfare – Dogs, in particular

Minimum Standard 19 – Aids for Behavioural Modification (a)

Training aids,, must not be used in a way that causes unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress to the dog.

Minimum Standard 18 – Training – Recommended Best Practice (h)

The owner's dominant position should be enforced calmly and patiently using recognised techniques that provide positive reinforcement for acceptable Association of Pet Dog Trainers NZ Inc Page 2 of 2 APDTNZ Position Statement – Gellman Seminar in NZ 2020 behaviour as part of the training process. Dominance should not be established by physical punishment or processes that are psychologically harmful to the dog.

The APDTNZ strongly discourages the public's attendance of Mr. Gellman's workshop. There are many qualified, educated, and professional trainers, behaviour consultants, and veterinary behaviourists throughout New Zealand that can help guide owners and dogs using humane methods of training and behaviour modification to address the most severe behaviour issues.