

# Language That Harms Cats

Discussing appropriate words that build a positive culture for cats

## 1 Words matter - to build a positive culture around cats, let's choose our words appropriately.

### Start a discussion 🐾

Many of the words we use are deeply embedded in our work and our lives. Changing how we talk about cats will be an evolution - a work in progress.

### Words have the power to shape culture and instigate change.

Words we use help create a narrative; they are part of the story we tell.


There are correct and incorrect ways to use any word.

Words reflect how people think.


Words have different meanings to different audiences.




## 2 STOP saying START saying

**feral** adjective of, relating to, or suggestive of a wild beast  
feral |  \ fir·ə; fer·əl | not domesticated : wild


\* *Feral is an adjective, not a noun. Feral is a temperament, not a breed of cat, and not a species. It does not mean a cat that lives outdoors. The word sounds scary - wild and ferocious*

**stray** noun a domestic animal that is wandering at large or is lost  
stray |  \stɹə\

\* *Practically, this means a cat who has gone astray or is lost, but many call all friendly outdoor cats "stray" cats. Stray is not a temperament. Let's use appropriate ways to talk about lost or community cats.*

**colony** noun a distinguishable localized population of a species or type of organism  
col·o·ny |  \kə'lɒ-nē\

\* *This evokes images of swarms of cats, infestations, and huge groups. This is not how cats live. It is racially insensitive and colonial, and supports the concept of cats as "invasive".*

**cage** noun a box for confining or carrying animals  
kāj |  \kāj\ a barred cell for confinement

\* *This presents a human dominating the cat by confining it, sometimes in very unnatural or inhumane conditions. When confinement is necessary, the enclosure should not be a prison. The Five Freedoms should be followed to allow the cat to express normal behaviors, and be free from fear and distress.*

**TNR** noun "Trap-Neuter-Return" describes a community cat that has been spayed or neutered and returned to field.

\* *TNRM show that Community Cats have a better quality of life and live longer when they have a dedicated caretaker to ensure they have shelter, fresh food and water, and vet care.*

**Community Cat** as a noun

**Unsocial, Shy, Fractious** as adjectives

**Lost/Abandoned or Community Cat** as a noun

**Group** as a noun

**Enclosure** as a noun

**TNRM** ADD THE M! Help the community take responsibility for "Monitoring" after TNR