

The Conference Unleashed program consists of two types of presentations: concept and context.

- The concept presentations discuss core concepts of the Control Unleashed program. These are not only important, they are necessary for understanding the context presentations so we suggest watching them first.
- The unique context talks, given by experienced Certified Control Unleashed Instructors, demonstrate how to apply the CU program to various dog sports and daily life activities.

For example, Leslie McDevitt presents an extremely detailed explanation of the Look at That game in her concept presentation. Many of the context presentations will show demonstrations of LAT used in specific dog sports and in other situations, but they will not go into the fundamentals of teaching and using LAT.

Concept Presentations

Clinical Behavioral Medicine Unleashed

Dr. Karen L. Overall, MA, VMD, PhD, DACVB

The concept that being scared can be fun has to be uniquely human. Halloween is tough on dogs for whom fear is a matter of life and death. This talk is going to focus on fear, startle, and panic associated with noises in an attempt to get people to look more deeply and more subtly at canine behaviors that we too often think are "okay." Given that 28% of humans have chronic anxiety disorders, it's amazing to think that our pet dogs – a species that has shared our lives for half the time humans have been human, and which shared with us uncanny overlap in genes controlling neurochemistry – should be supra-normal. Too often we think dogs "should" get over it, or that something wasn't "that" scary. We'll start with the evolution of the domestic dog and its neurochemistry and move through the neuroanatomy and physiology of fear and its effects on behavior. Finally, we'll talk about how insidious sensory fears are, why they matter, and what we can do about them.

Look At That Spooky Monster: The Game that Broke the Rules and Changed Everything!

Leslie McDevitt, MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

The most well-known of all Control Unleashed® games, Look At That (LAT) has helped thousands of dogs learn to have a relaxed conversation with their people about "things that go bump in the night" instead of having a reactive, aggressive, anxious, or fearful response. Leslie will teach you how she has refined and evolved the game since she wrote about it in her original, groundbreaking book. Leslie will address frequently asked questions, help you troubleshoot, and give you a new fun way to teach the game within a broader context of station training.

Spook No More: The Spell of Startbuttons

Eva Bertilsson, Emelie Johnson-Vegh, and Peggy Hogan

The term startbutton behavior came to life through Emelie, Eva, and Peggy's now-classic "Animals In Control" lecture at Clicker Expo, conceptualizing a training strategy where the

learner gets to direct the pace and progress of a procedure. In this session, the trio is back to provide you with a deeper insight into what startbutton behaviors are all about. They will share their viewpoints on the subject and help you develop procedures that maximize the value of this fascinating communication tool.

Ghosts, Ghouls & Other Specters – Like Control! Reframing Why and How We Teach for Impulse Control

Sarah Owings, KPA CTP, CCUI

Impulse control is like a specter haunting the animal training world. Often spoken of in hushed and reverent tones, no one has ever really seen it in real life. Without an MRI machine, no one can look inside their animal's head to quantify which impulses are dictating what...and yet, we still believe this specter is there. When a dog chases a rabbit or steals food from the table, we blame those behaviors on "poor impulse control." But when that same dog sits still instead of chasing or walks away instead of stealing, we say he is making "good choices." Why? Because we've always thought of behavior this way: as a ghost inside the mind, rattling its chains and making behavior happen.

From a puppy's first pet manner's class, all the way up to advanced agility training, it is still common to see people teaching for what they call impulse control via trial and error. Trial and error means the dog has to experience errors to learn what not to do. As positive reinforcement trainers, we resign ourselves to the idea that negative punishment and extinction are necessary evils. We may not like using these tools, but to get our dogs to stop eating icky things, stop chasing things, and stop jumping on people, we feel there are no other options.

In the chapter "Leave It Without Tears" in Control Unleashed 3: Reactive to Relaxed, Leslie McDevitt talks about her own evolution on this topic. Back in the day, she gave us kinder alternatives to the harsh corrections people were using to get dogs to avoid or ignore environmental distractions. At that time, switching from positive to negative punishment was a huge step forward. But the exciting thing about evolution is it never ends. Many of us in the Control Unleashed community are now asking important questions about impulse control yet again. Is it possible to teach dogs to be safe and reliable using positive reinforcement and errorless progressions, instead of negative punishment and extinction? Can we truly teach Leave It without tears? Come join the discussion! Let's use the science of learning and behavior to shine some light on old ghosts.

Cognition Unleashed: Thinking Dogs & Transforming Behavior the CU Way

Dr. Laura Donaldson, PhD, CDDBC, KPA CTP, CCUI

Control Unleashed® is simply one of the most effective behavior change programs currently available for dogs and, more recently, horses as well as other animals. This begs the question of why CU is so successful. While most discussions of CU have focused on implementing popular individual protocols such as Look at That, my presentation will examine the major underlying reasons for CU's success, and that is, Control Unleashed is actually Cognition Unleashed.

Cognition is best described as information processing because it functions as a variety of mechanisms like perception, learning, memory, and decision-making that enable animals to

acquire, process, store and act on input from the environment. Dogs (and all animals, including humans) then use this information to make decisions about their behavior. CU enhances several of these mechanisms, especially the last one: decision-making. One of the keys to how the CU program teaches dogs (and other animals) enhanced decision-making processes is through its emphasis on default behaviors. Default behaviors such as reorienting to the handler or looking calmly at a trigger are not cued, and dogs offer them voluntarily 24/7 because they have become second-nature behavior patterns. The CU emphasis on default behaviors produces thinking dogs, that is, dogs who can problem-solve, think in arousal, and take their newly honed decision-making skills into any context, whether or not they have ever been in that environment previously.

My presentation will explore how CU helps dogs learn enhanced decision-making skills and how CU teaches dogs what I describe as decision rules for optimism. While this concept does not appear in any of the Control Unleashed books, I argue that it insightfully captures not only the crux of what dogs learn when they go through a CU program but also how the program actually transforms canine behavior.

Pumpkin, Vampire, Zombie. Pumpkin, Vampire, Zombie: Patterns Are Powerful!

Leslie McDevitt, MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

This is the essential introduction to the why and how of Leslie's Pattern Games, which are described in her latest book, Control Unleashed 3: Reactive to Relaxed. Whether you're new to the awesome power of the CU Pattern Games or it's time for a refresher, this is the place to be. Learn how to use these simple, highly effective counter conditioning games to teach dogs to: walk calmly past spooky things, work for you off-leash near spooky things, and focus and do complex tasks like agility near all the spooky things. Teach your dog they have the power to integrate stuff that could worry or distract them into a safe, reliable pattern that they can control!

Magic Mats: Stations in the Conversation

Julie Daniels, CCUI

We'll quickly review the four steps of Control Unleashed® mat work, and then we get to enjoy creative ways to use it! Taught the CU way, mats and stations have a magical ability to impart feelings of safety, confidence, and optimism about the environment. Good stationing practices help your CU dog think clearly and operate from cortex pathways, even in places that would otherwise be too challenging.

It's fun to explore the versatility of Where to be, When to go, and What to do, all from the touchstone of your magic mat!

Undead and Unhelpful: Human Distractions Don't Have to Be a Nightmare

Hannah Branigan, CCUI

The power of patterns is integral to Control Unleashed® methodology, and it's not just for the dogs! Join Hannah as she explores how to set up a pattern that will help the human part of the team be as clear and reliable as possible. Hannah will help you set up a training session so that

your behavior cues your learner's behavior effortlessly and without pressure. The magic of using patterns is in the interaction—come find out how!

Context Presentations

Little Goblins! Puppy Training & CU

Marge Rogers, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CCUI

Control Unleashed® is a big part of Marge's puppy training program. It is not enough to teach puppies behaviors when they are calm and on-leash. Let's face it—there will be a lot of times when your puppy is not calm or not on-leash. CU incorporates important behavioral components that give your puppy skills that will help him throughout his life.

In "Little Goblins! Puppy Training and CU" you'll see Marge's favorite CU puppy training games and how Marge and her clients apply those games into real-world puppy raising.

Bewitching Your Horse with Pony Pattern Games

Jen Digate CBCC-KA, CCUI, MaryKay Hasseman KPA CTP, CCUI & Leslie McDevitt

What do these three situations have in common?

Leading a newly tamed mustang out of their pen and into the wider world for the first time without stress or conflict?

Bringing a nervous horse into an indoor arena for a training session or a lesson and being able to help them relax and be ready to learn?

Cultivating focus and energy in your horse both on the ground and under saddle without any aversive?

All of these scenarios are made possible with Control Unleashed® pattern games. Well known in both behavior and sport circles in the dog world, CU has made the leap to bewitch equines as well. In this presentation, Jen Digate, a dog behavior consultant and horse trainer synthesizes her understanding of pattern games from canines and systematically takes you through the species-specific application for horses. Drawing on her unique background of a commitment to ABA principles, dog sports skills training, positive reinforcement horse training, mustang taming, and academic art form riding, Jen will show you how and when to use the different CU pattern games with your horse. She will leave you with an understanding of each game as it applies to horses, horse appropriate modifications, and criteria for which game to choose to support your horse/create motivation, as well as a rough progression.

In addition, MaryKay Hasseman explains how she uses the 1-2-3 Game for riding and groundwork, and to help relax a horse, focus a horse's attention on the right thing, deeply connect the relationship, condition and make a horse more fit, develop foundation skills for dressage and any riding discipline, improve balance for safety and performance, and teach rider balance and position.

Learn how the CU program provides a whole new level of behavioral support and fun for you and your horse.

Freestyle Unleashed

Nina Haaland, CCUI

Freestyle, like Halloween, can be too much for many dogs. Other participants can wear costumes and use props that may frighten dogs, there's loud music, and it's an audience-friendly dog sport so there are people watching, cheering, and applauding. All of these stimuli can overwhelm dogs, and we get barking, reactivity, and other behaviors. In this session, we'll discuss how to use pattern games, the mat, and other Control Unleashed® exercises in both training and competition to make Freestyle a better sport for your dog.

Vampire Bats, Black Cats & Helpful RATs: Cooperative Counter Conditioning Putting the Learner in Control

Ameera Skandarani & Angie Madden, CPDT-KA, CCUI

In this session, we'll discuss techniques shared in Leslie's latest book, Control Unleashed 3: Reactive to Relaxed, that are designed to give the dog control over their behavior modification. The focus will be on Requested Approach Training (RAT), for dogs who are anxious about ghouls and ghosts approaching them, and Voluntary Sharing, for dogs with trouble sharing food or taking turns. These two "games" use startbutton behaviors to take the horror out of triggers and empower dogs to take control of their counter conditioning experience. It is sure to be a scary good time.

Agility Unleashed: Approaching the Dragon's Lair

Cindy Carter, CCUI & Leslie McDevitt MLA, CDBC, CPDT-KA, TAGteach Level 2

Now that you know all of the Control Unleashed® games, are you wondering how to apply them to your agility experience? Join Cindy and Leslie as they take you on a CU agility journey. You'll learn how to use Look At That to help your dog point out things of interest or concern in the environment. You'll learn about applications for the 1-2-3 Game to navigate outside the ring or in a class, and how to use the chair game as a stationing behavior while making your way to the entrance gate.

We'll take a look at using Give Me a Break games and mats to navigate short sequences in class. You'll learn how to combine games like up and down with Look At That or the chair game to help maximize your team experience and how to use Take a Breath as part of your ringside or entry plan to help both members of the team settle for a great run.

Avoiding a Nightmare on Rally Street: How Pattern Games, Predictability & Preparedness Can Enhance Your Rally Obedience Performance

Laurie C. Williams, BA, CPDT-KA, CDTI

Have your rally ring performances felt like you were being chased by Freddy Krueger himself? Or are you worried your reactive dog would never be able to do the sport? The best thing about Rally Obedience, and what sets it apart from many other dog sports, is that you can communicate

and provide support for your dog throughout each exercise and all during the course! In this session, we will explore how implementing specific and directed pattern games, not only inside the ring, but from the moment you arrive at a rally trial, can help improve teamwork, lower both your and your dog's stress, and increase your dog's focus, attention, and comfort.

Nosework Unleashed

Megan Wallace, CPDT-KA, CNWI, CCUI & Anette Buind Nordby, CCUI, KPA-CTP

We've all heard that Nose Work/scent work games are good for reactive dogs, but what happens when a Nose Work class or trial looks like a haunted house to your dog? Megan and Anette will show you how to guide your dog through the haunted house with the conversation of Control Unleashed®, so that your dog can benefit from Nose Work's ability to scare the monsters away! Learn how to apply games and patterns throughout your dog's Nose Work journey, from classes to trialing, to help your dog deal with scary places, recover from things that go bump in the night, and relax without worrying about the bogeyman.

Unleashing Your Fearful Dog

Jeannine Jay, MS, CCUI & Crystal Gerovac, CCUI

Ever wonder how you can use Control Unleashed® skills to help your fearful dog? Jeannine Jay and Crystal Gerovac will guide you through their favorite games for your fearful dog. Working with fearful dogs is a very slow process. Not only does it involve confidence-building and desensitization, but, and perhaps most important, choice, consent, and the dog's ability to think about individual situations. CU pattern games, as well as Requested Approach Training (RAT) and Look At That (LAT), offer the perfect foundations for fearful dogs to explore their surroundings and be able to make personal choices about them. Once the dog's personal issues are determined, pattern games offer consistency and a platform on which the dog can begin to think about frightening things in their environment. LAT and RAT are then the tools the dog can use to make choices and eventually become involved in their environment.

Panel Discussions

BIPOC Panel Discussion: Inclusivity in the Dog World

Moderator: Emelie Johnson-Vegh

Panel: Laurie C. Williams, Michael Shikashio, Chirag Patel, and Ameera Skandarani

Join some of your favorite animal trainers as they explore the tremendously important topic of inclusion and diversity in the training/behavior world.

Panel Discussion: Fun, Casual, Candy-filled Q&A

Moderator: Marge Rogers

Join us for candy, grownup drinks, and geekery as we chat and answer CU questions. What could go wrong?