

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!