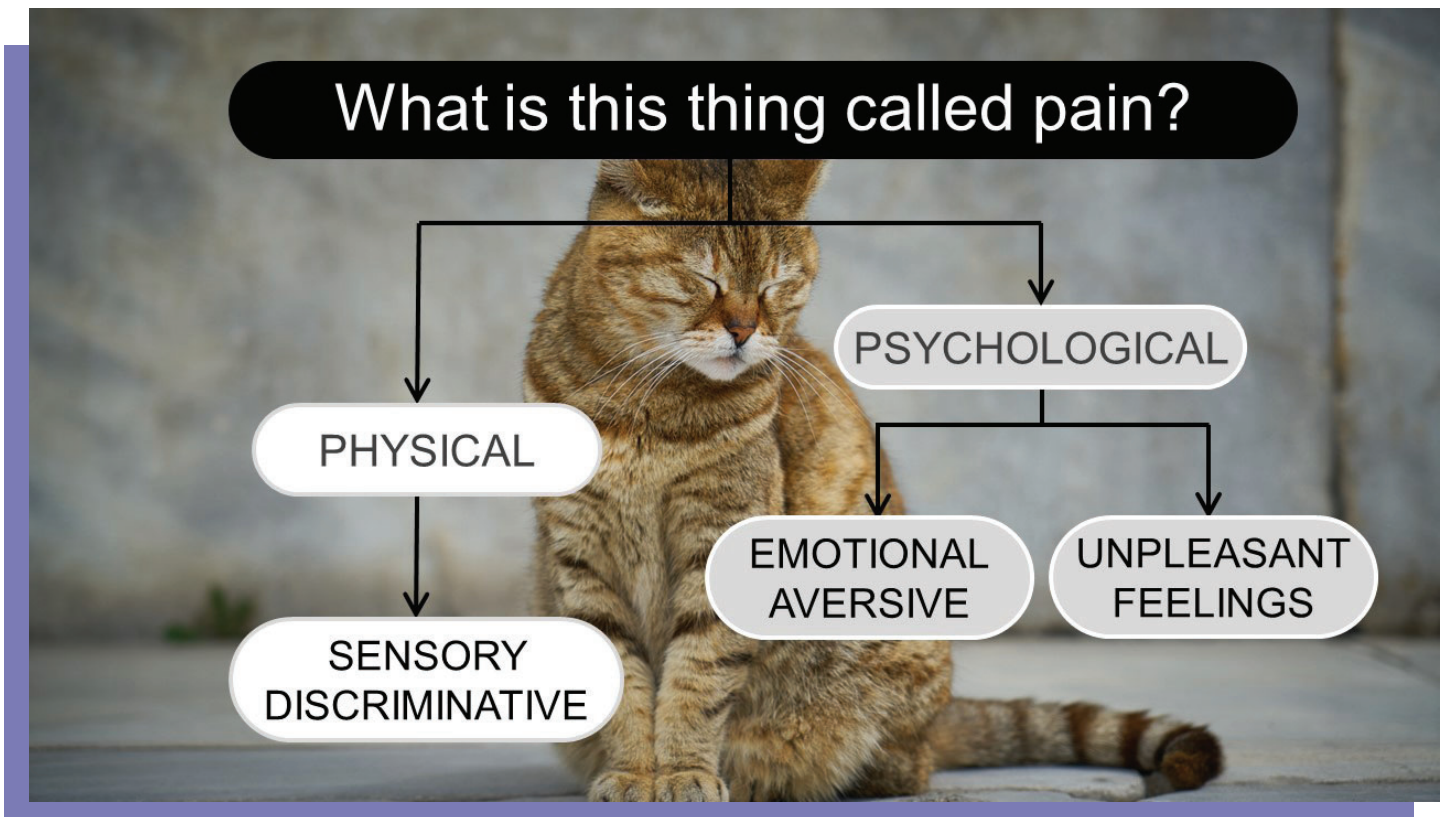




THErapy GOALS

The primary goal of therapy is to minimize the patient’s pain. A crucial component of effective analgesia is the knowledge that pain is dynamic (i.e., not static) and needs continued reassessment, both by the veterinarian and the caregiver, which is an integral part of successful therapy. Describing pain as ‘dynamic’ refers to the fact that pain can both increase and decrease over time and so pain management should be adapted accordingly. All pain conditions require regular re-assessment of the patient.

Pain, by definition, has both sensory (the sensation of pain) and emotional (the impact of pain on the patient) components also crucial to effective therapy is the knowledge that pain management is not solely the administration of pharmacologic or nonpharmacologic treatments, but also the support of the patient’s wellbeing. This ladder below is an overview of treatment goals (See flowchart below). Specific therapy will be based on each patient’s pain level and the caregiver’s ability to treat without being overburdened. If pain is moderate to severe, treatment should be more ‘comprehensive’ in order to both control pain at the moment and decrease the likelihood that pain will become maladaptive.





TREATMENT



Start with proven effective drugs



Consider degree of pain



Consider caregiver budgets

Choose treatment duration based on degree and cause of pain, and reassess (e.g., every day for severe pain, in one week for moderate pain).

Is the Cat's Pain Managed?

Yes

Continue treatment and reassessment at scheduled intervals.



No

Evaluate treatment dose and dosing interval. Change if needed. If appropriate:

Switch to another proven drug(s) if possible and continue to reassess. If not possible or not effective:

Initiate multimodal therapy with the goal to decrease pain while not overburdening caregiver. Consider Cat Friendly medication options (e.g., smaller tablets, melting tablets, transdermal, or flavored) and non-oral drugs (e.g., anti-NGF mAbs) when possible and appropriate.

Continue to reassess analgesic success, as well as environmental factors, and increase or decrease treatments as the cat responds to therapy.

PATIENT WELLBEING

1. Decrease fear-anxiety.

- a. Utilize environmental modification as described below.
- b. Utilize anxiolytics (e.g., gabapentin, trazodone, pregabalin) as needed.



2. Ensure normal function in the environment.^{a,b,c}



a. Modify environment for mobility aids (e.g., non-slip rugs, ramps/steps to elevated areas that cat likes to access).

b. Provide easy access to resources (e.g., food and litterboxes on same floor of house that cat spends most time in).



3. Ensure comfort in the environment (e.g., provide soft bedding, accessible places to rest/sleep away from other household members/pets, if the cat desires).^c

4. Evaluate social interactions with other pets and humans in the household, and make adjustments based on specific concerns identified.

^aAdditional information can be found in the [2021 AAFP Senior Care Guidelines](#).

^bAdditional information can be found in the [2021 AAHA/AAFP Feline Life Stage Guidelines](#).

^cAdditional information can be found in the [2023 AAFP/IAAHPC Feline Hospice and Palliative Care Guidelines](#).

Additional information on environmental modifications can be found under the Patient Support section of this Toolkit.