

Mouth to Snout



Dog CPR class teaches basics of canine emergencies

A VELVETY TAN ear protrudes from a red canvas bag with “Little Anne” written across the front. The ear belongs to a yellow Labrador retriever. Well, not a real one, but a life-size facsimile known as a manikin. Welcome to Physical Education’s Dog CPR and First Aid class.

The half-credit course, taught once a semester by EMS instructors Ray Levy (SAR’98, SPH’01) and Christopher Libby (CAS’11), draws students of all (ahem) breeds—from veterinarians-in-

training to pet owners and dog walkers.

Levy and Libby cover a lot of ground during the six-hour course, which includes an American Red Cross video, and hands-on practice dealing with a host of emergencies, such as choking, cuts, and scrapes, and techniques, like cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and splinting.

Levy arranges the day’s guest stars on the carpeted floor—the yellow Labrador, a Greater Swiss Mountain dog, a husky, a tabby cat

(meant to simulate a very small dog), all plush, and a brown plastic mutt. Each contains an inflatable paper bag attached to a plastic tube extending out from the snout. One high-tech dog even comes with a hand pump to simulate a femoral pulse.

Students who have pets are asked to pick one about the size of their own pet.

“And now, the moment you’ve all been waiting for,” Levy says as he takes the students step-by-step through choking and breathing emergencies, coaching them on the ABCs of CPR: airway, breathing, and circulation.

WEB EXTRA
Watch a video about BU’s Dog CPR class at bu.edu/bostonia

Students manipulate the animals awkwardly at first, but are encouraged when they see their manikins’ sides rising and falling with each breath.

Catherine Carchedi (CAS’14) looks concerned as she gives her plush dog the Heimlich maneuver. “Isn’t there a bone you can break if you do this wrong?” she asks. Libby assures her that isn’t as big a concern with animals as with humans, and she carries on.

Later, students practice bandaging and splinting their manikins’ wounds. Levy urges the dog owners to keep a dog first aid kit, containing gauze and adhesive tape, wire cutters (for nasty fish hooks), Benadryl (for allergic reactions), and a rectal thermometer (‘nuf said), on hand for medical crises.

“The more pet owners can learn about their pets, the better,” says Brian Adams of Boston’s MSPCA-Angell Animal Medical Center about the BU class.

But, Adams adds, “they should appreciate that there are professionals who deal with these situations on a day-to-day basis. We’d really hate to see a pet owner attempt to treat an emergency that can actually hurt the animal further.” LF



Students in FitRec’s Dog CPR class learn the basics of pet first aid with the help of some furry friends.

KATE FLOCK