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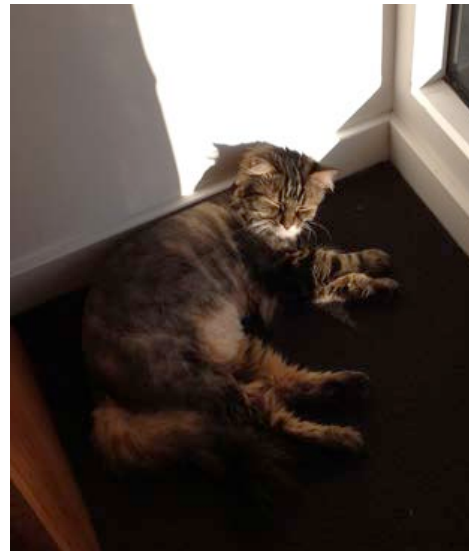
Food for thought – why do people feed stray cats?

Professor Grahame Coleman

Dr Miranda Coffey



What cats are we talking about?





What cats are we talking about?

- ◆ Semi-owned cats are stray cats that are fed by people who do not consider themselves to own the cat.





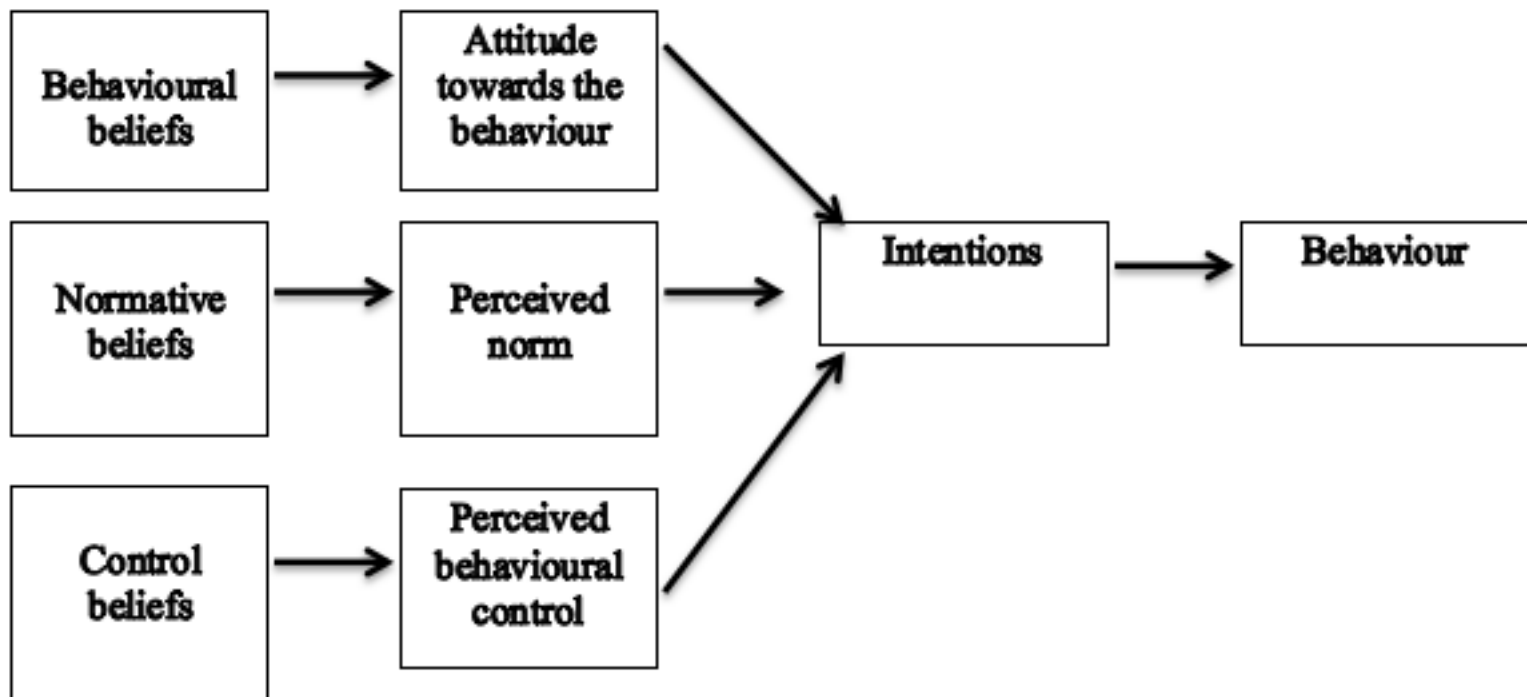
What did we research?

- ◆ Australia wide online survey
 - Demographics
 - Feeding stray cats (where, how many, how long etc.)

 - Attitudes:
 - about feeding stray cats
 - about important others' view of their feeding stray cats
 - about perceived control over feeding stray cats



What did we research?



Theory of Planned Behaviour: Ajzen & Fishbein



Why do people feed stray cats?

- ◆ What we found:
 - Semi-owners
 - Most are women
 - Most are middle aged or older
 - Most feed one cat daily or every few days, in their home or within their property and have done so for several months or more
 - Most cats that semi-owners feed are able to be picked up or at least patted
 - Can also be pet owners



Why do people feed stray cats?

- ◆ What we found:
 - Attitudes correlated with semi-ownership:
 - Benevolent attitudes about the outcomes of feeding for the cat
 - Positive attitudes about outcomes for the person doing the feeding
 - Belief of support from important others to semi-own
 - We can predict semi-ownership based primarily on beliefs about positive outcomes of feeding (behavioural beliefs)
 - These beliefs outweigh any influence other factors





Why is this knowledge important?

- Semi-ownership:
 - It's a result of benevolent beliefs
 - Semi-owned cats are in good body condition
 - Many semi-owned cats are tolerant of human interaction
 - But....





Why is this knowledge important?

- ◆ Semi-owned cats are in the main un-desexed
- ◆ There are estimated to be 500 000 stray cats in Victoria alone
 - ◆ semi-owned cats aid in maintaining this
- ◆ Semi-owned cats have *much* shorter lives than responsibly owned cats
- ◆ Semi-owned cats suffer with disease and injury





Why is this knowledge important?



- Semi-owned cats make up a significant proportion of shelter admissions
- 64,000++ unwanted cats are admitted to shelters annually in Australia
 - 60-74% of admitted cats are euthanased





Why is this knowledge important?

- ◆ Food for thought....

- ◆ Nearly ¼ of Victorians semi-own cats
- ◆ We know benevolent beliefs drive this behaviour
- ◆ We know many semi-owned cats have poor welfare

- ◆ Challenging/changing beliefs an important part of effecting change
 - Could people's benevolent attitudes be better directed to benefit semi-owned cat welfare?
 - What are the barriers to taking the next steps (responsible ownership)?
 - Continuing education on semi-owned cat welfare



Thanks, any questions?





References

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