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# CANINE ANXIETY AND STRESS WORKSHOP

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# FEAR VS ANXIETY

## Fear Has Targets

- Afraid of other dogs, Men, Men with beards, Noises.
- It is easy to know what the dog is afraid of.
- Dogs in pain fall in this category. Dogs in pain hide under things. They don't understand pain. They cannot explain or translate pain
- Dog looks away when it growls. It wants to create space.
- Fear is afraid of all in a target group. They fear ALL

Fear is specific. There are specific therapies that work.

## Anxiety/Stress

- Worried about environment and the future They are always looking around. They are always on guard
- Worried about 'what is coming'. Their eyes are dilated. They stare hard. It is often the most reactive, but in the end they are 'often' the less likely to respond.
- It is difficult to predict what they are anxious about, and it may change.
- Separation anxiety is worried that they are alone forever.
- Anxiety is worrying about what is coming. They may react strongly but you see nothing.

Anxiety is vague. Each dog is different.

Canine Anxiety is a 'state' where the dog is 'reacting' to a stimulant which is causing fear, or threatening survival.

Anxiety is a Chemical/Physical Response to a Target/Trigger that incites a reaction in the Fear/Flight part of the brain.

Dogs have 2 brains. The Primal section cannot think. It cannot react.

Anxiety is an involuntary reaction to emotions. It is not a cognitive *response*. Dogs do not 'think' about controlling their reactions. Reactivity isn't 'just' aggression. We only notice it if it is offensive and annoying behavior.

*Dogs are Copy Cats.* They will feed off your body language. They 'read' your pheromones and chemicals.

Offensive Behavior is just an 'over reaction' when a dog hasn't learned a better behavior. It doesn't start as aggression.

Offensive Behavior is never stagnant. It is always diminishing, or accelerating. You can teach a dog coping skills. Dogs can learn how to manage their emotions.

## ANXIETY

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Fear is necessary for survival. The resource guarding dog would survive in a famine. The chaser can hunt better. The territorial dog would protect the pups. The fearful dog alerts the pack to danger soonest. It runs away increasing its chance of survival.

Wild animals that don't fear do not survive.

We think 'they shouldn't be afraid' – we want to 'teach' the dog not to be afraid. But you cannot 'teach' not fear. The dog doesn't control the emotion. The emotion control the dog. But YOUR response to the 'action' or your fear controls the dog.

Reactivity to fear is a visceral 'reflex' = dog's don't try to control their emotions. They just have a knee jerk response. It has nothing to do with the dog's 'wants' or their obedience level. It has nothing to do whether they are good or bad.

## FEAR

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Reactions are a dog's way of communicating. A behaviorally normal dog gives warnings to prevent aggression.

- It is just noise and body language for 'stay away.'
- Reactions are just emotions.

What is a Reactive Dog? It is a dog with 'over reaction/drama' to a situation the dog cannot handle.

- It is a dog's way of trying to make space when it doesn't know what to do.
- Dog was not taught 'not' to bite. Little/no impulse control training. Poor socialization.

Punishment masks emotions. You no longer can tell when your dog is about to bite.

Different Environment – Different Reaction

REACTIVE

# FEAR AND EMOTIONAL CONFLICT

- Dogs Feel Three things:
  - Pleasure – play, social interaction, hunting, chasing, eating
  - Fear - separation anxiety, stranger aggression, resource guarding, Phobias/OCD, envy/jealousy
  - Hostility - territoriality, resource guarding, sexual challenge, internal defense (dog's body prepares for fight/flight)

Dogs cannot feel fear and pleasure at the same time. The pleasure and fear sections are in different areas of the brain.

Many times dogs do not even think about reacting until we become stressed.

We think 'they shouldn't be afraid' – we want to 'teach' the dog not to be afraid. But you cannot 'teach' not fear. The dog doesn't control the emotion. The emotion control the dog. But YOUR response to the 'action' or your fear controls the dog.

Stress triggers your dog's internal defense mechanisms, making its heart pound and raising the energy level to full throttle ready to fight or run. When those reserves are gone, the dog will weaken. Their resistance to illness and disease may lower, and chances are that they will become sick.

- Chronic, prolonged fear can cause physical and emotional disease processes.
  - Can potentially shorten a dog's life
  - Negatively impact quality of life.
  - Depress your dog's immune system, putting him at higher risk for opportunistic infections.
  - Trigger the development of compulsive behaviors, and it can also
    - alter blood flow to vital organs.
    - Allergies and allergic reactions
    - Sensitive stomachs and diarrhea

# IT IS ALL ABOUT EMOTIONS

1. Change the emotion
2. Change your response to a situation
3. Teach coping skills and good manners
4. Our perceptions can cause us to misread a dog's reactions, intent, and purpose
5. Body Language

1. Change the visceral reaction
2. Stop teaching the dog to react
3. Give the dog an alternative 'survival skill'.
4. Build Relationship, communication, and 'leave our agenda at the door.
5. It isn't about you being stressed or afraid of the dog. It is how dogs translate your chemicals/body language



# GENERALIZATION & ASSOCIATION

- If something happens it will always happen this way. Where you are standing, how you are standing, where the dog is all effects the dog's reaction.
- If I have a new cue then it must always be done this way, in this place, at this time.
- My dog does it perfectly at home.
- Learning is driven by cause-and-effect. Creating a positive consequence using rewards is conducive to training. Obedience is a reliable response from your dog, to your cue.
- Good training is a reflexive response to your cue.
- If I am happy. Something comes into my environment. I am hurt. Therefore that something caused the pain
- Happy emotions mean I am safe
- Dogs learn by associations. If it makes me safe, if it makes me happy, then I will continue to do it. This is all based on connections between events and sensory cues (hand signals, body language, verbal)

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# THE PROBLEM

HOW DO GOOD DOGS BECOME REACTIVE



# HOW DID WE CREATE THE PROBLEM

- New things are scary. Socializing reduces the number of new things. But only if they are associated with pleasure.
- We let puppies become aroused and 'practice' becoming hyper. It is cute to see a puppy with the zoomies, or chasing its tail, or a leaf.
- Arousal builds and we have trigger stacking till something happens. It might be a small thing, but it switches the arousal to fear/stress.
- Trish King "Think of arousal as a red cloud of energy that interferes with judgment and causes poor behavior."
- No one teaches the puppy to make good choices. He makes bad choices and we have DRAMA and 'attention'. WE affirm that something is wrong.
- We don't build up our dog's frustration tolerance. We don't build coping skills. We don't increase the criteria of what we ask from the dog. We don't help the dog burn off cortisol.
- No learned replacement behaviors = reactive, aggressive, obnoxious, annoying behaviors

# WHERE DID I GO WRONG?

- Puppies run wild. Not training till 6 months
- We leave dogs outside for long periods of time to 'do what they want.'
- Too many corrections – not enough reward
- Accidental leash corrections
- Interfering when dogs are getting to know each other and working it out
- Freaking out at our dog's behavior when there is nothing to fear
- You stopped doing things (play ball/tug/chase) that increased your dogs stress removing their chance to learn coping skills.
- Not learning to listen to our dog when it tells us it has had enough
- Not building a relationship. Not playing, engaging, and making our dog feel safe.
- Forcing a dog to face too much, too soon.
- Treating a dog like a child.
- Alpha and Dominance – sorry, the old wolf pack theories have been disproved for about 15 years.
- Letting dogs rehearse unacceptable behaviors
- Not enough mental or physical stimulation
- Did not teach the dog impulse/prey control

# ANTHROPOMORPHISM & UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

- Our expectations can cause problems. We want dogs to act like children. We want the dog to 'care for us'. The dog can't meet our demands. The dog cannot cope so they close down.
- We force the dog to meet our emotional needs. We put emotional pressure on the dog. The dog cannot cope.
- We assign moral and cognitive purposes to dog's reflective actions, and destructive behavior.
- We interpret dog's calming signals using human equivalents. A dog baring teeth is 'grinning'
- We give dogs human behaviors – spite, revenge, guilty. 'He knew what he did wrong.'
- We expect dogs to be good because we rescued them, love them, etc. We expect them to show gratitude.
- Human aggression is misinterpreted. We (want to) think they are trying to protect us.

# LEASH REACTIVITY

- Dog cannot run. Dog cannot 'make space'
- Leash eliminates the dog's ability to fight.
- Only option is to try and scare away the approaching Target/Trigger. Lunging and Barking.
- The dog is constantly corrected without understanding why. The dog associates the correction with something in the environment, or something approaching.
- Accidental corrections.
- The 'Midnight Race' – An exercise in frustration.
  - The owner becomes anxious. It is time to take the dog for a walk. The dog senses this and becomes anxious.
  - The leash is put on, the owner anxiously leaves the house. They are watching for a Target/Trigger. The dog is not happy. The owner is not happy. Hopefully tonight they can have a quiet walk.
  - Extreme trigger stacking. Nothing is done to calm the dog. Nothing is done to improve the dog's emotional state.

# DIAGNOSIS PROBLEMS

- Pop Science tries to make things too simple. It leads people to put labels on behavior and 'if you say it loud enough' or often enough you are taken as an authority without anyone asking for citations or references.
- Training, life with humans, socializing, dog's personalities, breeds, drive, sensitivity, and instinct changes dog behavior. Our anxiety and frustration changes dog's behavior. What might be one dog's 'threshold' behavior will be another dog's calming signals.
- How a dog responds to a threat depends on the dog. Active reflex. Passive Reflex. We can change this by our emotional response to a situation. We see people with small dogs cowering over their dog and picking it up. The dog's fear/anxiety increases. If the owner just let the dog 'deal' the problem the dog may have found a solution. We see this when two dog's squabble. Leave them alone, and 5 minutes later they are playing.
- We try to stop the behavior. The problem is, we stop the symptom, but leave the cause. We don't deal with teaching the dog a new behavior, and teach it to deal with the fear/stress. Our efforts may 'mask' the behavior.
- We create a conflict. Dog loves owner. Dog is afraid/nervous of owner. This is especially true while on leash.

# DEBUNKING THE DOMINANCE/ALPHA THEORY

- Dogs are social and emotional. Their packs are loosely formed. They are built around families with Mom and Dad teaching the younger dogs.
- No one dog imposes his will on others. Each personality has a different response to fear. This increases the likelihood that at least some dogs will survive, regardless of the threat.
- Wild dogs let us know the 'raw' behavior of a dog. How dogs solve problems, react to fear etc without human interference and intervention.
- How does that affect dog training and therapy?
- How do we know about this?
  - There are still wild dogs which have never encountered humans.
  - 71% of all dogs on earth do not live with a human
  - Researchers have studied wild dogs and why they survive living around humans.
    - Why is this symbiotic relationship so successful?
    - Why does it debunk the 'man adopted a wolf cub' theory. Why dog trainers should care.



The results of a study by Topal, Miklosi, and Csanyi (1997) showed that dogs who were viewed anthropomorphically by their owners showed more dependent behavior and decreased performance in problem solving. The authors concluded that this decrease in performance was due not to lack of cognitive ability but to the dogs' strong attachment to humans. Dominance theory has perhaps the greatest potential to directly harm the human–canine bond. Konrad Most was influential in introducing the concept of social dominance to popular dog training. Most believed that the only means for a dog trainer to establish himself as “pack leader” was through physical confrontation between trainer and dog “in which the man is instantly victorious” (Most, 1910/1955). Besides imbuing the dog with adversarial motivations, Most's misleading interpretations not only justify but condone abusive training practices. Despite these and other problems, Most's dominance theory is still widely accepted by many authorities (Lindsay, 2001).

Dogs are not grey wolves. We are more closely related to the Golden Jackel

<http://newguinea-singing-dog-conservation.org/tidbits/originofthedog.pdf>

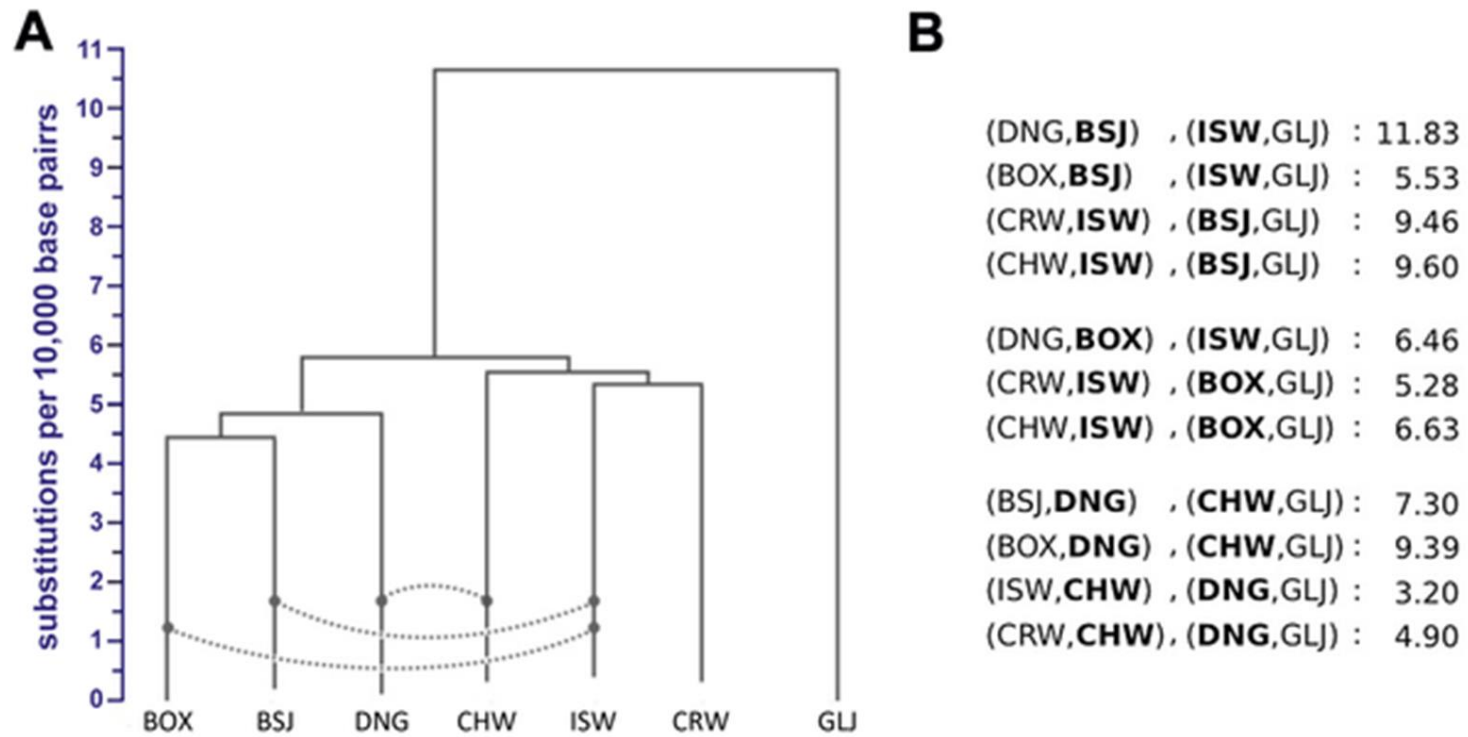
"Dr. Savolainen calculates a date for domestication either 40,000 years ago, if all dogs come from a single wolf, or around 15,000 years ago, the date he prefers, if three animals drawn from the same population were the wolf Eves of the dog lineage. Dr. Savolainen believes that dogs originated from wolves somewhere in East Asia, because there is greater genetic diversity, often a sign of greater antiquity, in Asian dogs than in European dogs." Nickolas Wade, New York Times

“This tells a different story than we anticipated. Instead of all three dogs being closely related to one of the wolf lineages, or each dog being related to its closest geographic counterpart, they seem to have descended from an older, wolf-like ancestor common to both species,” Dr Novembre said. Freedman AH et al. 2014. Genome Sequencing Highlights the Dynamic Early History of Dogs. PLoS Genetics 10 (1): e1004016; doi: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1004016

The study, published in PLoS Genetics on January 16, 2014, also shows that dogs are more closely related to each other than wolves, regardless of geographic origin. This suggests that part of the genetic overlap observed between some modern dogs and wolves is the result of interbreeding after dog domestication, not a direct line of descent from one group of wolves. (University of Chicago/Medicine Jan 16, 2014) <http://www.uchospitals.edu/news/2014/20140116-domesticated-dogs.html>

Why is this important? Because it supports current information that shows dogs are more social and emotional than was believed. This debunks the dominance theory and puts trauma, lack of socialization, and poor genetics as the cause of reactivity. It also calls for more humane therapies. It also opens up the field for allowing dogs to solve their own problems, and make choices.

We find that none of the wolf lineages from the hypothesized domestication centers is supported as the source lineage for dogs, and that dogs and wolves diverged 11,000–16,000 years ago in a process involving extensive admixture and that was followed by a bottleneck in wolves. In addition, we investigate the amylase (AMY2B) gene family expansion in dogs, which has recently been suggested as being critical to domestication in response to increased dietary starch.



# STIMULUS GENERALIZATION

- Classical Conditioning: Dogs learn to associate a neutral sound to a positive reinforcement (food).
  - Friend comes to house. Rings doorbell. Pets dog. Dog LOVES to hear doorbell ring. Cortisol shoots up.
- Dog being conditioned starts to associate unwanted stimuli that is similar.
  - Little Albert (1913). Liked white rats. Hated noises. Every time he went to pet the rat he heard a loud noise. Started crying just seeing a white rat.
  - Your dog hears the door bell. Is all excited to see Friend. You yell, chase, and shove dog into crate. Dog is alone and scared. Next time the door bell rings it means something bad is happening. Dog cannot run from a sound (he cannot pin point it) so he growls. Stranger at the door goes away. You are not home to correct dog. Dog has learned that aggression stops pain.
  - Experiment ended and Little Albert went home. But his fear started to spread to all animals that were white.
  - Your dog growls on a walk, stranger backs up (only 1 inch) growling = making space. Growling is good.

# TRIGGER STACKING – SELF CONTROL DEPLETION

- What is trigger stacking?
  - Under threshold dogs can make good choices. Above threshold dogs try to build space. Too high = 'reflexive reaction'
  - Good: Stress starts at 0. Dogs have a stress incident +2. Time lets the dog's Cortisol return to 0. Dog is ready for next incident.
  - Bad: Stress starts at 0. Dog has a stress incident +2. A short time later dog has another +2 incident. Now stress level is at +4.
  - It can take 72 hours for cortisol to return to normal.
- A tired dog is not a good dog. "Too dog tired to avoid danger: Self-control depletion in canines increases behavioral approach toward an aggressive threat." Psych Bull Rev 2012 19:535-540 – Patricia McConnell
- Imagine stress to a dog is like a shock to us. We don't feel well. We can't think well. We are not comfortable.
- Self control, impulse control, are learned behaviors. They need to be rehearsed.
- Miller et al, also from 2010 that links depletion of glucose in the brain to dwindling self-control.
- Self-control relies on a limited resource (Baumeister & Heatherton, 2004; Miller et al., 2010). Exerting self-control depletes this resource, and once depleted, subsequent efforts to control behavior become impaired

# THERAPY TREATMENTS MANAGEMENT

IMPROVING LIFE



# HOW TO FIX THE PROBLEM PART I

- Change the emotional response (Ian Dunbar)
- Meet the dog's emotional needs
- Give dogs acceptable behaviors
- Allow them to 'make choices'. A dog cannot make good choices if it 'shuts down' mentally and waits for a correction
- Create a working relationship with your dog so that the dog's 'reaction' is to turn to you for safety.
- Burn off the cortisol
- You have 10 minutes after the 'event' to change the emotional response to the target/trigger
- Learn to control your own 'response.' It isn't about whether you are afraid, or not. It isn't about whether you are trying. It is about what messages you are giving the dog
- BAT (John Fisher – let the dog choose)
- TACT (focus on me and ignore the trigger)
- CAT (Let's work out bad feelings on a stuffed dog)
- Reactive Rover Classes (let's do this together)
- Operant/Classical Conditioning/Desensitizing
  - Why it isn't a stand alone
- Push Therapy and Relationship Therapy
- Abandonment Therapy – Using the dog's social needs to fix the problem.
- Why punishment/correction doesn't work.
  - Training into the void

# WHY/WHEN BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION FAILS

Cognitive actions can only take response one at a time. Behavior modification requires 'muscle memory' we teach the dog a 'different' reaction to the situation. We think dogs should do 2 or 3 things at a time, but they can't so we end up compensating, we lure with a treat over the dog's nose. WE don't practice without enough practice to create muscle memory.

Our Drama can make dogs react. On the FLIP side – We can help our dogs heal.

Our emotions confuse the issue. We are resentful, we are angry, we are afraid, we are frustrated – we want the issue to stop 'NOW' all this creates a chemical change in us that the dog can 'read'. The dog may not cognitively respond to our emotional state. The dog 'reacts' to it. (visceral reaction)

# BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION MISTAKES

- We wait until the dog is engaged in the undesirable behavior BEFORE we do anything. The most important thing we can do is stop the behavior before it starts. Throw the treat before the dog starts to growl.
- Don't teach the dog to deal with eye contact, people walking straight at the dog, passing dogs.
- We teach obedience till the dog no longer annoys us. We don't increase criteria. We don't proof. We don't introduce new things to the dog's environment.
  - We need to teach redirects, recalls, 'drop!' until they are reflexes (Imprinting) not a cognitive process.
  - We are not consistent.
  - Obedience, Play, Exercise needs to be a lifestyle.
- We micro manage. We yank the dog back. We force the dog to behave in a specific manner. We don't let the dog 'sort it out.' We focus on stopping the aggression and ignore the dog's needs, emotions, reflexes.
- Behavior then treat = changes. Treat then Behavior = nothing

**Emotions are the problem – Emotions are the solution**



# WHAT DOGS NEED

- Predictability and Consistency
- To feel safe. To be heard.
- Dogs need 'space'
- To have their emotions kept in the happy zone
- To build good associations
- Dogs need positive consequences to their bad behavior AND their good
- They need us to tell them when they are doing what is right. Good Associations to Good Behavior
- They need us to make sure we don't just fix one problem. Good socialization is building good associations with everything possible so that the 'generalized stimulus' = good for any thing or any one that is strange.
- Do not train into a void. If you say no, show the dog what the 'yes' is

# METHODS AND THERAPY

- BAT - Behavior Adjustment Therapy
  - Let dogs make their own choices
- TACT – Touch Associated Clicker Training
  - Teaching the dog to learn how to remain calm, or to calm itself. Teaching the dog coping skills
- Click to Calm – Emma Parsons
  - Manage behavior and Rehabilitation for reactive dogs
- CAT - Constructional Aggression Treatment
- Push or Tug Therapy – Teaching Dogs coping skills
- Abandonment Therapy – Trish King, using social needs to teach dogs to stop aggressive behavior
- Reactive Rover – Association, Generalization, Desensitization
- Building Coping Skills (Susan Clothier)



# HOW TO HELP

# TAKE CONTROL

- You have 10 minutes to change the dog's emotional response to the scary incident.
  - Play
  - Treats
  - Fun
  - Affection
- Help your dog burn off the cortisol. High energy. Run.
- Dogs grow into, not out of aggression. If you are not actively solving the problem then the problem is getting worse. There is no place where the behavior stagnates. It is getting better – or worse.
- Obedience doesn't help. Teaching another task/trick won't change behaviors, or reactions to an incident.
- Keep life simple. Crate Train to prevent overstimulation, self satisfying, rehearsing bad behaviors. Give dogs a time out.

# SOCIALIZATION

- Socializing isn't about forcing your dog to endure scary situations. It is about building confidence, trust, courage, boldness, mental fortitude, It is all about the dog 'not what you want.' If it takes your dog 1 month to approach people, then that is what it takes.
- It is about creating good emotional associations with people, dogs, and 'scary things'.
- Do not force the dog to continually face the stress without YOU taking control of the situation. Your dog is helpless.

# LOOK – LEAVE IT

- There is one step before 'look' – if you don't have a connection with the dog, then you can say 'look' and stick treats in front of its face all day. It won't help. There needs to be a protocol practiced until perfect.
- The follow behavior needs to be strengthened until it is reflexive.
- The dog needs to trust you. You need to remain calm.
- Behavior then Treat. Luring with a treat will not help.

# RELATIONSHIPS

- Build relationship and communication with your dog
- Work with your dog to help it feel safe. Meet its emotional needs.
- Teach your dog to be calm.
- Learn to control your anxiety.
- Stop yanking on the leash.
- Build coping skills.
- Build good associations.



# TEACH DOG TO CALM

- Tellington Touch TT
- Canine Massage
- Karen Overall's calming protocol
- Impulse control
- Classical and Operant Conditioning.
- Teach an alternative behavior
- Play and Treat
- Clicker training
- Don't let dogs play rough, bite, etc. If they can do it to you, then other dogs can do it to them.



# STAY SAFE

- Create space for the dog. Do not turn your back. Move Slow. Try to find a visual barrier.
- If the dog is close try throwing treats. I've tested this and it only works  $\frac{3}{4}$  times in tests.
- Breathe slow, count backwards. Stay calm. If the dog will not disengage try to stand tall, don't move.
- Distract your dog from the other dog. Keep them from 'lock and load', staring.
- Keep your voice calm
- Try to ignore the other dog.



IN THE END – ITS YOUR DOG'S CHOICE. YOU CAN'T MAKE IT HAPPEN.