



FEATURES

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Check this out: www.avidog.com/articles/oh-what-fun-avidogs-adventure-box/



This is awesome and especially relevant for those who take puppy classes. They could make a version for class. The only thing that we would want to emphasise is supervision when in use and to check the toxicity of the objects used in case a puppy decides to have a chew.

On Leash Reactivity To Other Dogs:

An Overview Of Interventions

Patricia McConnell, PhD, CAAB and Pia Silvani, CPDT-KA

On-leash reactivity to other dogs is a common problem, creating embarrassment and anxiety for people and dogs alike. There are many reasons that dogs bark, growl and lunge at other dogs. Some of the most common reasons are fear of interaction due to lack of socialization or traumatic experience at a young age, protection or possessiveness of the owner, territorial behavior when on or near the dog's perceived "property," object guarding (when toys or other valuable objects are involved), inappropriate greeting behavior on leash and much more. Many times a dog is simply overwhelmed with excitement, but no matter what the cause, in most cases the behavior can be successfully turned around. However, each situation is unique and requires the consultant to be well-versed with a variety of techniques and to be always aware of the importance of creating a safe and secure learning environment.

In this article we will be discussing treatment options for on-leash dogs who behave problematically when they see an unfamiliar dog. Usually, these behaviors include barking, lunging, or growling at other dogs and are called "reactive" in the dog training field. More subtle behaviors, such as stiffening, whining, or marking are often indications of discomfort and should be included in the "reactive" category by the discerning trainer. It is useful to keep in mind that as commonly used, "reactive" actually means any behavior that we humans find inappropriate! However, highly aroused barking and lunging are understandably the behaviors that can make life especially difficult for anyone who owns a "reactive" dog. Commonly, these behaviors are labeled "aggressive," but it is important to remember that "reactivity" and "aggression" are two very different things. Many dramatic behaviors, such as barking and lunging, can be signs of excitement and/or frustration and have no relationship to the potential of aggressive behavior. In contrast, a dog might be "aggressive" to others (meaning with the intent to harm) and yet show few signs of arousal when he sees another dog. Thus, "reactive" and "aggressive" maybe correlated, but they are not the same thing.

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Presidents message



One of the highlights of my CPD year is the APDTNZ annual conference and I was delighted to see so many of you there. There is never enough time to catch up with friends and colleagues but one thing is for sure three days of talking about “dogs” is always motivating and inspirational to the point I drive my family crazy with all the renewed enthusiasm that I bring home, albeit packaged in extreme exhaustion for a couple of days.

After so many years of being involved in animal training and behaviour I am still amazed by what dogs are capable of learning and how much pleasure they bring to the lives of the families they live with but of course there are always things that can be improved to enhance these relationships and everyone’s wellbeing. I believe that we can never stop learning, never stop challenging what we believe to be true today and must remain open to ideas that have the potential to motivate and increase our understanding of dogs, and their people, to new heights. Once again this year’s conference added to my personal body of knowledge and it would seem that this was the case for many of the delegates as well, given the positive feedback we received. A big shout out to the conference committee, all the helpers and contributors who make conference a great experience for us all each year.

At the AGM I took on the mantel of APDTNZ president (WWIT). I have been disappointed that it doesn’t come with ‘make my day’ body guards, a fancy new office or an armour plated plane but it does come with a challenging road ahead. Although I have limited time in the role I would like to see some of the ideas that we have been chewing on in Committee come to fruition. I am thrilled to be representing such an amazingly talented bunch of people whose enthusiasm for dogs is second to none.

As many of you know me, I won’t bore you with who I am and what I’ve done but I do have a bio and CV if anyone is desperately interested! I would like to focus on what I can do for you in the short time that I will be referred to as “Madame President” so please email. Skype or call me with your ideas and suggestions on how we can make APDTNZ the “go to” association for all dog professionals and enthusiasts.

Paula

* Conference notes from 2013 for sale. *
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However, highly aroused dogs that are barking and lunging are at greater risk of being involved in an incident that ends up causing injury, just as fans at a football game can go relatively easily from yelling for their team to fighting the opponent's fans. For that reason, knowing how to work with reactive dogs, no matter what their original motivation, is often a key component in preventing and eventually treating dog-dog aggression.

Background Required

To treat on-leash dog-dog reactivity, trainers need to know how to obtain a detailed history, which should include past experiences, present living conditions, the temperament and personality of the dog and the expectations of the owner. Understanding the underlying motivational, triggers and goals is critical to achieving success or dealing with cases in which management is the only option. The ability to "read" dogs is a non-negotiable requirement: if the trainer is not able to "translate" subtle changes in facial expression and body posture, they are not going to be successful. Trainers must also have experience working with a variety of owners and be as good at understanding their needs and learning styles as they are the dogs'. In addition, a full tool box is essential: being an expert in one method without the ability to use other techniques restricts a trainer's repertoire and will make him or her less effective. And finally and most critically, a trainer must be absolutely aware of the importance of keeping all the actors safe from trauma or injury and be well-versed in creating fail-safe situations in which there is simply no possibility that a dog or person can be injured.

Although we cannot describe in detail the most common and successful methods of dealing with on-leash reactivity, we will summarize them in this article.

Importance of "Threshold"

Critical to all of the methods is an understanding of the concept of threshold. Threshold is defined as "the point that must be exceeded to produce a given effect." We think of it as the intensity of the stimulus required to elicit the problem behavior. Every dog will have its own level of tolerance, which will vary depending upon the context. Proximity to another dog is a critical variable with most dogs, so it is essential to know at what distance the dog becomes reactive. However, there are many other factors in which threshold is important: Many dogs can handle a calm, quiet dog but become uncomfortable as soon as the other dog picks up speed. Most dogs are less reactive if they themselves are approaching the other dog, but become aroused when the dog

walks directly toward them. Some dogs are not reactive when they see groups of dogs, but become so when they are one-on-one and, for others, it is just the opposite. Therefore, it is essential to recognize all of the triggers that affect each dog and the threshold of intensity that begins to elicit a response.

To determine a dog's threshold, a trainer must be adept at noting subtle signs of tension in a dog. Every dog is unique but, in general, trainers should be looking for changes in facial expressions (mouth closing from an open position, a slightly retracted commissure, offensive puckering, muscle tension, rounded eyes, a hard stare), as well as changes in posture and behavior (holding its breath, looking away, yawning, obsessively ignoring the other dog, sniffing the ground, changes in tail position, body shifted forward or backward). Some of these postures and expressions are appeasement signals, with a communicative function, and are used to defuse highly charged situations. They may consist of looking away, turning away, lying down or making small submissive movements away from the perceived threat. On the other hand, displacement behaviors, such as sniffing, scratching or shaking, are behaviors that are out of context to the situation. That is, when a dog is confused or undecided about how to act, he may engage in a behavior that is irrelevant to the situation.

In any case, trainers must be aware of subtle changes in a dog's demeanor that suggest he or she is becoming uncomfortable. Of course, not all dogs are equally expressive and, without heart rate variability tests and MRIs, we can't know with certainty what they are experiencing, but being able to "read" a dog is a critical aspect of all treatment methods. In the treatment methods discussed below, dogs should be worked below or at just the edge of threshold based on observations of the dog's expression and behavior.

Using operant conditioning to teach an incompatible behavior

One of the most important tools in a trainer's toolbox is operant conditioning (OC), in which the dog learns to offer a behavior in order to receive something he wants. There are lots of benefits to using OC with dogs who are reactive to others:

- 1) The successful use of OC does not always require that you know the dog's internal motivational state. Both dogs who are "on offense" or "on defense" can improve their behavior with these methods.

- 2) You can customize the behavior that works

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best for the dog, choosing a behavior that is incompatible with the action you are trying to replace and that is easy and enjoyable for the dog to do.

3) You can customize the reinforcement that most motivates the dog, whether it is great food, play with a favorite toy, and/or increasing or decreasing the distance between the dog and another dog.

4) OC often leads, indirectly, to counter classical conditioning, in which the dog not only changes his or her behavior when seeing another dog, but also changes the internal emotional state(s) that motivate the behavior.

Operant conditioning can be used to treat on-leash dog-dog reactivity in several ways. One frequently used method is to put a more appropriate behavior "on cue."

First, you can teach the dog to look at you as soon as he sees another dog. We begin with the cue "Watch" or the use of the dog's name, provided it has a good foundation and high history of success, or a nickname associated with lots of rewards. In this modality, the dog learns to turn away from an approaching dog and look toward his owner with (and this is key) the other dog itself acting as the cue.

The steps toward accomplishing this are:

Teach your "look at me" cue in an area with no distractions, gradually working up to asking the dog to turn away from low-level distractions (not other dogs).

Choose a reinforcer that is most motivating for the dog and creates a quick, yet positive, response. Food works well for many dogs, but for many dogs, play is often a great choice for positive reinforcement. Tug or retrieving games, for example, for dogs who enjoy them, are not only reinforcing; they help dogs disperse tension. You can also reinforce the dog by increasing the distance between him and the other dog (if he is afraid of other dogs) or let the dog greet another (if he barks and lunges because he is frustrated).

Next, ask the dog to look at you using your cue when he looks at a familiar dog with which he is comfortable. As always, set the dog up to win by initially giving the cue when the triggers are well under threshold, perhaps when the other dog is far away, or when the dogs are quiet and not likely to be easily distracted by one another.

Once the dog will respond 90% of the time when mildly distracted, start asking him to look at you

when he sees an unfamiliar dog as long as the dog is well beyond his "comfort zone." Don't wait until the other dog is too close: ask the dog-in-training to turn his head around when the other dog is a long way away. Have friends help you out so that you can control the distance between dogs. (It's fine if the dog in training looks at you and then turns his head right back to the other dog. That's great; it's another chance to get in another repetition! Just say your cue again and reinforce enthusiastically.)

Pay careful attention, and look for the time that the dog anticipates your "look at me" cue and turns his head himself when he sees another dog. Jackpot! That's your goal—a dog who sees another and automatically turns to look at you. When that happens (often after a repetition of three to five spoken cues in the same session) give him an especially valuable reinforcer: ten treats, one at a time, or an especially great game of play or an animated run away from the other dog with lots of treats or play at the end to reinforce him for the desired behavior.

After enough repetitions, almost all dogs will automatically turn toward you when they see another dog, no longer barking, growling or stiffening up. Of course, threshold again comes into play: a dog may be capable of this "Auto Watch" when the other dog is ten yards away, but not yet when it is two feet away.

Another use of OC is to teach "Where's the Dog?" or "Look at That." This is a similar method as that above, but in this case you directly ask the dog to look at another dog, and immediately mark that behavior and reinforce it. In some ways the methods seem to be polar opposites: one asks the dog to turn away from another dog, and the other asks the dog to intentionally look toward another dog. Ironically, both methods lead to a similar pattern in which a dog looks at another dog and automatically ends up turning to look at you and getting reinforced for it.

The steps involved in teaching "Where's the Dog?" are relatively similar to those above, in that the dog is first taught the behavior when it is well under threshold. It works best if the trainer or friends can collaborate by bringing a non-reactive dog as a focus. Sometimes the dog needs to be asked to move around: asking the handler to walk the dog in a small circle provides enough movement to cause the dog in training to look without approaching too closely and eliciting a full response. Be very careful when you are using this technique since owners can inadvertently add the cue when the dog is in an agitated state. The cue can then become a

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predictor that a dog is coming and arousal can set in before the dog actually sees the other dog.

As soon as the dog's head turns toward the other dog, the behavior can be marked with a clicker or marker word and then immediately reinforced. Eventually, using standard OC principles, the behavior can be put on cue and the dog can be asked to look at another dog at increasing levels of difficulty.

Depending on the dog, you can use either method or both of them together. Patricia cured her Border Collie Willie of serious dog-dog aggression by first teaching a "Watch" cue and then adding "Where's the Dog" once he was able to look toward an unfamiliar dog without erupting into high-arousal barking.

Operant Conditioning "Not on Cue"

Reactivity can also be countered by letting the dog learn that her own self-initiated behavior results in the reinforcement. The handler asks nothing of the dog, but teaches the dog that polite behavior will be reinforced, while impolite behavior is not. Here is a summary of the steps:

The dog is introduced into a carefully managed situation in which she encounters an unfamiliar dog at the edge of her threshold, at a distance close enough to elicit the beginnings of the problematic response, but far away enough to keep the dog from becoming overly aroused.

The handler stays still, watching intently for an improvement in behavior. As soon as the dog changes its behavior, expression or posture in ways that suggest it is becoming more relaxed (the changes, of course, depend on the individual dog), the dog is reinforced. In what is often called CAT (Constructional Aggression Treatment), the stimulus dog is removed, while in another method often referred to as BAT (Behavior Adjustment Training), the more appropriate behavior is marked with a clicker, and the subject dog is then allowed to move away from the stimulus dog as a reinforcement. In both cases the dogs learn that they can control their environment by their own behavior.

Over time, the dog is brought closer and closer to the other, always learning that an appropriate, relaxed response is rewarded by withdrawal, (or approach, if that is what the subject dog is motivated to do) while inappropriate behavior keeps the dog in the same context.

The value of this approach is that the dog learns to manage his or her own behavior and learns that she can control her environment through her own actions. The disadvantage is that the process can

be time consuming and relies on a handler who is especially skilled at reading subtle signs of discomfort or relaxation in a dog.

Classical conditioning

All three of the methods above have the advantage of indirectly classically conditioning a dog to feel good at the approach of another dog. In every case the dog learns, not necessarily consciously, to associate feeling relaxed and happy when he sees another dog.

However, the direct use of classical counter conditioning (CCC) and desensitization is also a valuable tool. When using classical counter conditioning, you are attempting to change the emotional state of the dog. While we really don't know a dog's emotional state without using a heart rate monitor, we can often make good guesses by reading its body language. Thus, as with the techniques described above, trainers need to be adept at reading subtle changes in expression and behavior.

Also as above, classical counter conditioning requires trainers to do their homework before starting. You first need to find out in what contexts the dog can comfortably function (i.e., distance from the neutral dog, type of neutral dog, behavior of neutral dog, and much more). Once the dog's threshold is established, the trainer or owner begins to feed the dog or play with the dog upon the sight of the other. In essence, the subject dog learns that the presence of a neutral dog brings about something good, like chicken or steak or his favorite tug game. By staying below threshold, the dog remains calm and learns to associate other dogs with feeling relaxed and happy.

As the dog is becoming more and more comfortable, it should be moved closer and closer to the neutral dog, stopping well before threshold. Short, brief sessions are best. Once the dog is in a calmer state and can focus on the owner without being reactive, it is often easier to teach the suggested operant conditioning behaviors mentioned above, since the dog has better focus and attention. However, you can be a great trainer and start off using OC without first changing the dog's emotion.

These descriptions make it clear that OC and CCC are not always distinct categories—they overlap to some extent, and how you best employ them depends on the dog, the context of treatment and the owner's capabilities. Our recommendation for those interested in learning more is to work with an experienced trainer or behaviorist to learn which

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methods work best for you, for the owners, and for each the individual dog.

Safety first

In all cases, special attention must be made to keeping the exercises safe for people and dogs. Trainers must create an environment of complete safety, in which the problem dog is unable, no matter what happens, to harm the "stimulus dog" or his owner. Depending on the severity of the problem, trainers need to be adept at using body harnesses, head collars and muzzles, as well as managing the situation to insure that no harm is done. It is also critical to remember that emotional harm can be as serious as physical injury, and no dog should be put in a situation of being frightened or traumatized, even if the chance of physical injury is nil.

Avoiding Aversives

All of the methods described above avoid the use of physical aversives as much as possible. Responses that include positive punishments such as yelling or jerking the leash can often exacerbate the problem, by either confirming a dog's fears that other dogs are dangerous, or by increasing the chance of defensive aggression. We have found that in an overwhelming number of cases, it is far safer and more effective to use positive reinforcement to teach a dog what you want it to do, rather than correcting what you don't.

Feisty Fido Classes

Not everyone can afford a one-on-one consultation and, in some cases, it is difficult to arrange other dogs to work with under controlled conditions. Basic group classes for dogs that are easily aroused when around other dogs can lead to frustration in the dog as well as the handler and those in the classroom. Therefore, finding a good reactive-dog class is beneficial since the space is typically larger with fewer dogs and more instructors. For more information, please see the January/February issue of The APDT Chronicle of the Dog written by Pia Silvani on this topic.

Summary

Obviously this is an issue that is complex, and every case requires a thorough understanding of the dog, the owner and the environment. However, the methods we've outlined have helped thousands of dogs and should be in the tool box of every trainer who is interested in working with dog-dog "aggression" issues.

Resources (in alphabetical order)

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Big Dog, Big Problem

Conquering Igor's fear of cars was no small challenge

Susan Sarubin , CPDT-KA, PMCT-2

Behavior issues, from simple good manners infractions to the more concerning problems of fears and phobias and aggression, appear in dogs both large and small. While training to modify behavior issues might look the same regardless of size, in other respects, the bigger the dog, the bigger the problem. When a Dachshund is having lapses in housetraining, the cleanup process is significantly easier than if an Irish Wolfhound has an accident on the prized oriental. If a Havanese is frantically jumping up on your elderly Aunt Tilly, the collateral damage is less than if a Great Dane does the same. A snapping Pomeranian will inflict far less damage with a single bite and release that punctures the skin than a Rottweiler with more powerful jaws and longer canines. And if a Yorkie is terrified of riding in the car and refuses to get in for an emergency trip to the vet, he can be picked up and placed inside...not so when a Newfoundland steadfastly refuses.

What do you do with a giant breed dog who, at the slightest hint that a car ride is imminent, runs to the farthest room in the house, lies down and won't budge? Such was the case of Igor, a 165 pound 6 ½ year old Newfie.

Igor's fear of the car had gotten progressively worse over his lifetime. Elizabeth, Igor's owner, received advice and a prescription from her veterinarian. But an incident that could have been a matter of life or death prompted her to seek a referral from her vet for a behavior professional.

There were three other dogs living at the house when Elizabeth woke to a puppy playing with an emptied prescription bottle. Was the puppy the one who ate the pills, or did one of the other dogs empty the bottle and leave it behind for the puppy to play with? It was clear that all four dogs needed to be taken to the veterinary clinic to be examined and the contents of their stomachs emptied. Three dogs were quickly loaded into the car, but Igor refused. All of the luring, cajoling, dragging, and shoving in the world would not convince Igor to enter what he perceived as a torture chamber. Fortunately, one of the other dogs was the culprit in this pill-eating incident, but it was enough to convince Elizabeth that something had to be done before she was possibly faced with another life threatening emergency.

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The origins of fear

A dog's fear of the car may be rooted in one or several different unpleasant associations developed when riding in a vehicle. The sound and vibration of the engine alone can be frightening to a puppy. The situation may be exacerbated by confinement in a small space with no way to escape. Many dogs experience carsickness as puppies, and even though they may outgrow it, the unpleasant association with physical illness remains. A dog may associate car travel with going to unpleasant destinations, such as the veterinary clinic or groomer, where he is poked, prodded, stuck with needles, or gets his nails trimmed. A car accident can be a traumatic experience for a dog and may lead to an intense fear. Or a dog may experience discomfort jumping in to or out of the vehicle as a result of a medical condition such as arthritis or hip dysplasia.

Pinpointing the origins of Igor's fear could help in working up a comprehensive training plan. It wasn't likely that unpleasant destinations caused the problem; he actually seemed to enjoy his vet visits once he was at the clinic. Physical discomfort entering and exiting the car was probably not the issue either - Igor hoisted his large body onto the couch daily. He had never experienced a car accident. Perhaps the sound and vibration of the engine had frightened him as a puppy, or maybe motion sickness had caused his negative association. Whenever Igor was riding in the car, he hung his head between the back seat headrests and stared out the rear hatchback window. It appeared to be an attempt by him to visually limit motion.

Igor had shown signs of being uncomfortable in a car since he was a puppy, his fear escalated after a round trip drive from Maryland to Tennessee

when he was two years old, and over time he became more reluctant to enter the car. At first, Elizabeth was able to lure him in with a pig ear as a reward. When luring no longer worked, Igor would take off across the yard when led to the car. She then took him to the car on leash so he couldn't escape and forced him into the car. Soon the leash became useless when Igor used his massive weight to pull Elizabeth in the opposite direction. Living in an old farmhouse on several acres and rarely walked on leash, Igor quickly associated the appearance of the leash to being taken to the car. Elizabeth approaching him with the leash became a cue for him to run to another room and lie down. When a 165-pound dog decides not to budge, there isn't much you can do about it!

Getting help

Elizabeth consulted her veterinarian, who prescribed the tranquilizer Acepromazine ("Ace"), to help with Igor's problem. Commonly prescribed by vets for pets who experience anxiety during car travel, Ace produces sedation and suppresses behavior, both normal and abnormal, and decreases locomotive coordination. The medication also reduces nausea and vomiting in animals who experience motion sickness. But research has shown that while Ace functions as a chemical restraint, it does not effect the animal's emotional behavior. While under the effect of the drug, the animal may be unable to physically react to what triggers the fear, even appearing calm and relaxed, but may still be having an intense emotional reaction.

Veterinarian, behaviorist, and psychopharmacology expert Dr. Karen Overall states that Ace "works by disassociative effects, meaning that you could still perceive the stimulus, but you can't cognitively put it together...you're aware of what's happening to you, but it doesn't make any sense to you..." (*From Leashes to Neurons & Psychopharmacology*, a DVD of a lecture given by Dr. Overall in 2007 and a terrific resource for owners and trainers who want to know more about medications that can be used to treat abnormal canine behavior). If the animal is still terrified and confused, but is physically unable to react, negative associations and fears may be amplified, potentially making the problem even worse. If the fear level intensifies, the animal may even break through the chemical restraint, overriding the physiological effects of the drug. In addition, according to Dr. Overall, Ace heightens sensitivity to noises, not a desirable effect when working with a dog who already has a negative association with the sound of a car engine.

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Elizabeth began to administer Ace to Igor one to two hours prior to car travel as prescribed. In his sedated state, she was now able to lead Igor to the car without much resistance. When they arrived at the car door, Elizabeth would throw treats on the back seat, place Igor's paws in the car and shove him in from behind. Igor was still fearful, just unable to physically resist with as much strength. After the pill-eating incident, it became evident that using Ace was not a solution. There is no time to wait for one to two hours for Ace to take effect in a medical emergency so she could shove him into the car.

Elizabeth contacted me in January of 2010, referred by her veterinarian, to help with Igor's fear of the car.

Meeting the gentle giant

The Igor I met was a sweet, affectionate, gentle soul, and with the exception of his fear of the car, had no other behavior issues of concern. Elizabeth clearly loved him, but had no clue as to what it would take to improve the situation. As many owners mistakenly assume, she believed that Igor was simply stubborn. It never occurred to her that he was actually terrified and miserable. This revelation during the consult saddened Elizabeth... how could she have forced the dog she adored into a terrifying situation for so many years? She was eager to help Igor overcome his fear.

Igor's fear of the car had a long history. We discussed what it would take to change his emotional opinion of riding in the car from one of terror to one of enjoyment, or, at the very least, calm acceptance. It was important to prevent Igor from having to ride in the car during the training, so veterinary home visits and a mobile groomer were recommended. We reviewed the general training protocol that would be implemented to help Igor and talked about the amount of time it may take to see improvement as well as the long term commitment needed from Elizabeth. She later admitted feeling overwhelmed and discouraged after our initial consult. To her credit, she made the commitment to do the work necessary to help her beloved Igor conquer his fear...no matter what, or how long, it took.

Beginning at the beginning

Counter-conditioning and desensitization (CC&D) is considered the most effective method in working with fears, anxieties and phobias. Our goal was to change Igor's emotional response to riding in the car from negative to positive. To use counter-conditioning, we needed to pair something Igor perceived as wonderful (in his case, garlic hot

dogs and cheese) with the scary things that triggered his fear response. We also needed to work below Igor's fear threshold, at a level of intensity low enough to avoid a fearful response, gradually increasing the intensity in small increments as long as Igor stayed relaxed (desensitization).

Before we actually could work with Igor in or around the car, we had to get him *to* the car. We began training at the point where he first became anxious about the prospect of having to go for a car ride. The leash draped over the kitchen chair, or even hanging around Elizabeth's neck as she behaved normally in the house, elicited no signs of stress from Igor. If Elizabeth approached him with the leash he retreated. If I held the leash, Igor wasn't particularly interested, so we began with *me* presenting the leash to him a couple of feet away. When the leash appeared, Igor got to graze on a handful of garlic hot dog bits. When the leash disappeared behind my back, the yummy treats disappeared as well. Soon Igor was looking to me when the leash appeared, as if to say "Yay! Hot dogs, please?" This was the conditioned emotional response (CER) that we look for in counter-conditioning; he was beginning to associate the leash with good things instead of bad. Gradually I moved the leash closer with each trial. The process went very quickly; Igor never showed any signs of stress and the process transferred very smoothly to Elizabeth presenting the leash. By the end of our first session we were both able to clasp the leash onto Igor's collar as he remained calm and relaxed. To further desensitize Igor to the leash, Elizabeth left the leash on him periodically while he slept, ate, and walked around the house. He didn't seem to mind one bit.

In subsequent sessions we continued using both CC&D and rewarding behaviors leading toward our goal of getting Igor to the car. We started by walking Igor inside the house on leash. We played games, practiced "sit" and "come" with a clicker and treats, and gradually focused on working by the door that led to the driveway. By the end of one session of leash practice, the leash had become a cue for fun! Elizabeth continued the training between our sessions, and very soon Igor willingly went outside on leash. Since the car was parked straight ahead in the driveway, we quickly veered left into the yard and walked, clicking and giving him treats and praise on our way around the entire house, past the car and back inside. Eventually, instead of passing by the car, we stopped next to it, briefly practiced some sits, gave treats and praise, and continued back to the house. Throughout the process we were careful to observe Igor for any visible signs of stress and

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moved forward only when Igor was relaxed.

Making contact

Once Igor was comfortable working in close proximity to the car, we tried a couple of different techniques to get him to actually make contact with the vehicle. Igor carried a lot of weight on his frame, was considered a senior dog for his breed, and more of a couch potato than a canine athlete. We needed to conserve his movement so that we could maximize his progress in training sessions as well as not create any negative association by being overworked, tired or sore. So we continued to use CC&D to gradually open the door to the back seat with Igor sitting near the door. It was time to try to reward Igor for his calm behavior with the door opened by placing his hot dog bits on the car door threshold. Lo and behold, we had contact! Soon Igor calmly approached the car when lured with treats, and soon after he approached the car just in anticipation of being given treats.

Once Igor would happily eat treats from the car doorway, Elizabeth began to feed Igor all of his meals in that same location. He readily followed her to the car for his food bowl and calmly ate his meals. But when we tried to gradually move the food bowl further inside the car, he became hesitant to put his head further inside the car. His meals consisted of dry kibble only, so we tried adding a little canned food with a little warm water mixed in (Igor's "special sauce"), and the results were amazing. It wasn't long before Igor was willing to get his entire body into the car to eat his meals, and would even run to the car in anticipation of his gourmet meal and leap in the backseat - well, as close to leaping as a 165 pound dog is able! Gradually, the opened door was closed while he ate and re-opened when he finished. Elizabeth began to sit in the driver's seat with the door closed while Igor ate. She had faithfully worked with Igor for about three months at this point, and she could finally see a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel.

FOUNDING STATEMENT

The aim of the APDTNZ is to give credibility to affiliated members and confidence to the public for all dog related issues by encouraging and supporting the continuing education of members.

Rev your engines

The next step of turning the ignition key was a big one. Elizabeth started giving Igor melatonin an hour prior to training sessions to help him remain relaxed. A naturally produced hormone, melatonin can reduce stress levels without causing drowsiness if given at the proper dosage.

With Igor finally entering the car willingly for treat rewards, we once again used CC&D for helping him to accept the sound of the ignition, the vibration, and the hum of the engine for longer and longer periods. Since Elizabeth would be doing most of the training with Igor unassisted, we needed to figure out a way she could logistically, and safely, feed Igor while starting the engine and moving the car. Enter the "cheesy spoon"! Elizabeth used a long handled wooden spoon smeared with yummy canned squirt cheese. She offered the spoon to Igor between the front seats with one hand as she turned the key in the ignition with the other. The first time he heard the engine, Igor was startled, but the cheesy spoon quickly had his full attention. Overtime Igor remained calm in the car with the motor on with only occasional treats and lots of proud praise from his mom.

We were finally ready to start moving! Although Igor never threw up in a moving car, we decided to err on the side of caution in case he did experience motion sickness. He was given powdered ginger root (capsules) prior to training to help keep his tummy calm, and we never trained him when his stomach was full.

Get the show on the road

The cheesy spoon is not necessarily the method of food presentation I would recommend for a driver doing counter-conditioning on busy roads. But fortunately, Elizabeth and Igor live on a rural country lane with few houses. When Igor was comfortable with the engine running, it was time to move the car. Elizabeth began to back up the car a few feet while presenting the cheesy spoon, stop the car, remove the spoon for a few moments, then move the car forward and present the spoon again. Practicing two to three times a week, she used this procedure to progress to the end of the driveway, then drove a very short distance down the lane, and finally drove to the end of the lane (.1 mile). Igor was rewarded with dinner at the end of these brief excursions, as well as lots of hugs, kisses and praise. Elizabeth said he always looked very proud of himself!

Training stalled in late spring. The combination of a big black dog, rising temperatures and a black leather car interior made it unsafe to continue, so Igor had a summer vacation. But once fall arrived

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and the temperatures were more reasonable, Igor began to eat his meals in the car again, and Elizabeth resumed their brief trips down the country lane. In time, these trips extended to the mailbox on the road off the lane (¼ mile from the house), and eventually to the stop sign at the end of the road - about a mile and a half each way. The cheesy spoon was gone, and periodic treats were enough.

Leap of faith

The goal of CC&D is to never exceed the comfort level or fear threshold of the dog during training. Moving too far too fast is a common mistake of those new to the process. It can be painstakingly slow at times, and owners often become impatient hoping for quicker results. Elizabeth was extremely patient and worked hard to help Igor to the point where he was calm in the car riding for short distances. But one day last fall, she decided to throw caution to the wind. She loaded Igor into the car, along with her dog Abby for company, and drove to a McDonalds, a full seven miles away! She told me about the trip after-the-fact and my heart dropped...until I heard the details of the trip. Elizabeth drove slowly, feeding treats to Igor and Abby at every stop sign and red light. She ordered an Egg McMuffin at the drive-thru window, parked the car and fed half of the sandwich to a happy Igor and Abby. They continued home and were rewarded with the other half of the McMuffin when they arrived. Would I have suggested this significantly longer trip at this stage of the training? No, but it worked out fine. And as long as Igor doesn't become a fast food junkie, an occasional Egg McMuffin excursion is really not a bad idea.

Achieving the goal

It's been over a year since I first met Igor, the Newfie who ran at the sight of a leash for fear of riding in the car. And it's been about 6 months since his successful 14 mile round trip for an Egg McMuffin. Does Igor now love car rides? No, but he usually tolerates them calmly. He's had occasional relapses when pushed too far or too long, acting more reluctant when asked to get in the car for the next trip. But Elizabeth is aware when she has pushed his limits, and knows to step back in training. Her commitment to helping Igor is the single biggest reason for his success.

There are nothing but winners in the case of Igor and the mobile torture chamber. As long as he can walk to the car, Elizabeth never has to worry about not being able to get him to a vet in case of emergency. Igor no longer is terrified of anything. And I got to help the world's sweetest Newfie and his wonderfully committed mom make a big problem go away.

Susan Sarubin, CPDT-KA, lives in Easton, Maryland, USA, with her husband and three Rhodesian Ridgebacks. She is the owner and head trainer of Pawsitive Fit, LLC, Puppy & Dog Training, providing private training and behavior consulting to clients and their dogs. For more information visit www.pawsitivefit.com



**Deadline for contributions to be included in Issue 19, Jan/Feb/March 2014
1st February 2014**

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Pet Tech Pet Saver

By Shelly Turner

As a dog owner I've been wanting some first aid knowledge so I have an idea what to do in the case of an emergency involving my dogs. As an instructor I wanted to address the risk that I felt was present in class, me not knowing what to do in the event of a medical emergency involving a pet. On Saturday the 15th I felt I took one step closer to addressing both of those issues when I attended the Pet Tech PetSaver (Pet First Aid and Care) course in Wellington.

Pet Tech New Zealand is a division of Pet Tech, the first international training center dedicated to First Aid, CPR & Care for dogs and cats. Their PetSaver™ Training is designed for pet owners as well as Pet Care Professionals so it was perfect for what I was after.

I'd been keeping an eye on these courses for some time as I've been wanting to attend one or something like it for well over a year but nothing had been available outside of Auckland (to the best of my knowledge) so when the opportunity came up I jumped at the chance to attend.

At the cost of \$149.00 you get a full day course where your instructor, in my case Rhiannon Taylor, takes you first through the theory and then the practical application of the first aid training. There were lots of opportunities to practice the exercises (something I welcomed as I have a memory like a sieve so things need to be repeated multiple times to sink in) on very expensive latex dogs specially designed for practicing CPR and rescue breathing and a mix of soft toy dogs (Rhiannon made sure you got to practice with both).

After the full day of listening, practicing and discussing pet first aid, you have a handbook to take away with the notes already written up and a certificate to validate that you have passed the course. While all members present at our course did pass, I did get the distinct impression that it was not a certificate just handed out for attendance. Rhiannon was actively looking for comprehension and retention.

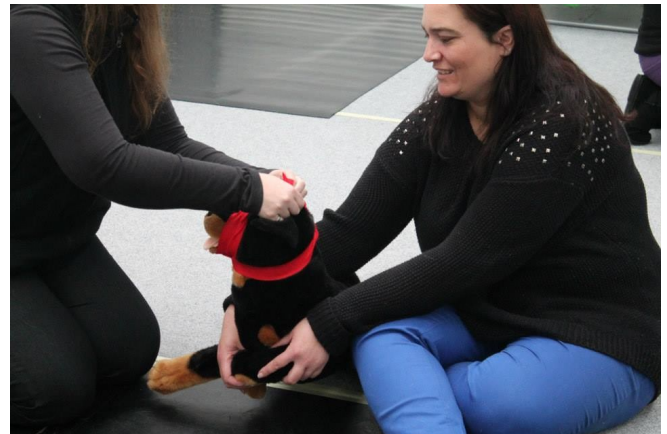
The people she was teaching and observing were a mix of kennel, daycare and grooming owners/workers to regular owners or pet sitters who saw the value in addressing a knowledge gap. I was pleased that others in the industry upskilling in this area and it was also a great opportunity to network with people I would otherwise not have got the opportunity to talk to.

Pet Tech's goal is to improve the quality of pets' lives one pet owner at a time. They believe that knowing first aid techniques for your pet can mean the difference between life and death! I hope I never have to find out if that's true but I'm glad that this course was available and that I was able to attend so a big thanks goes out to Rhiannon for bringing it down my way.

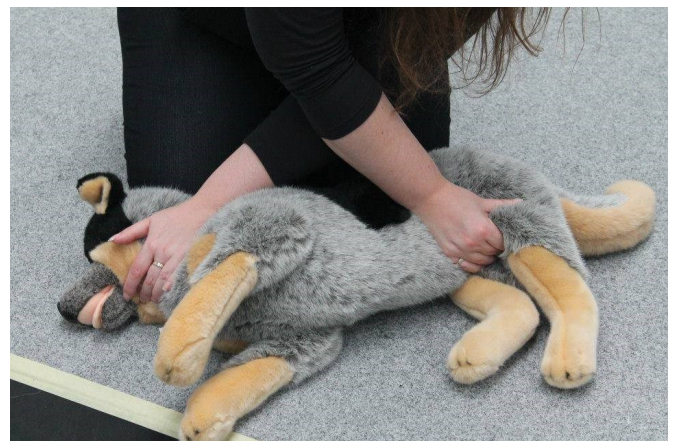
I think she did an awesome job of taking us through the course and I've let her know that I hope she does more in our neck of the woods and further afar. If you've ever been thinking about running one in your area, I'd suggest you get in touch with Rhiannon.

Pet Tech currently have 3 Pet Tech Instructors in New Zealand, 2 in Auckland and 1 in Christchurch. You can check out <http://www.pettech.net.au/> for the next class closest to you or contact Rhiannon on admin@completecaninecare.co.nz

Safety first! Learning to put on a makeshift muzzle. Rhiannon would remind us that we'd be no good to the pet if we didn't look out for ourselves first.



After CPR and Rescue Breathing we check for a pulse while securing the head from turning around in case they wake up - again safety first!



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Here I'm bandaging a wound on my poor cattle dog's foot - after putting on the temporary muzzle of course. Remember... safety first!



And of course the graduation pic. It was awesome to see so many attend. We couldn't get Rhiannon to agree to be in the shot (she was taking the photos) so it's just us attendees in this one (and our compliant patients).



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WHAT WE'RE THINKING

About What Our Dogs Are Thinking

By Pat Miller

I walked into the lecture hall at the University of Guelph (Ontario), excited and honored to be speaking among such notables as Dr. Andrew Luescher of Purdue University; Dr. Alexandra Horowitz, Barnard College at Columbia University; Dr. Meghan Herron, Ohio State University; Karen Pryor, Karen Pryor Clickertraining; Kathy Sdao, MA, CAAB, Bright Spot Dog Training; and omigosh, Dr. Jaak Panskepp, Washington State University. This was the 21st conference hosted by the Professional Animal Behavior Associates (PABA) and I was in heady company. The topic of the three-day conference was "Exploring The Dog's Mind." I hadn't attended a conference for some time, and I was eagerly looking forward to this one that was focused on cutting-edge concepts in canine cognition – how dogs think. I was not to be disappointed.

A Brief History Lesson

Today, we look back with horror at the time, not so very long ago in historical perspective, that scientists assured us that non-human animals didn't feel pain. We know now how cruelly wrong that was. Next we were told that the thing that differentiated us from the other animals was that humans made and used tools, and other animals didn't. Dr. Jane Goodall's work, among others, proved the error of that position. A stroll across today's Youtube can find countless examples of various non-human animals using, and even creating, tools. My favorite is of a crow *bending a wire* into a loop so he can reach into a long tube to hook the handle of a small container of food so he can pull it up and eat the food (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtmLVP0HvDg>). Really.

Okay, so other animals can make and use tools, but certainly they don't have "human" emotions. Or maybe they do. In fact, it's pretty species-centric to even call them "human" emotions when they simply are... emotions. Current research has demonstrated that many species, including our beloved canines, share brain circuitry very similar to the human part of the brain that controls emotion – the amygdala and the periaqueductal grey (PAG). While there's no doubt among most dog lovers that dogs have emotions, the question is still being discussed in the halls of academia: some insist that just because animals show emotional *behaviors*

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that we can observe, we can't assume that means they have emotional *feelings*. Really. Others, such as the esteemed neurobiologist Dr. Panskepp, argue that if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck...

Given that most of us now accept that many animals in addition to humans have at least *some* emotional capacity, the last stronghold of science is the vast superiority of human *cognition* – the ability to think. There was a time when our species believed that dogs (and other non-human animals) possessed very little cognitive potential compared to our own large front-brain ability to ponder the Mysteries of the Universe. It was believed that the size of the cortex controlled cognitive potential, and since a dog's cortex is relatively smaller than a human's, they must possess very little real ability to "think."

Recent studies, however, have demonstrated that even insects, with their tiny brains, are capable of more complex thought than they've ever been given credit for. According to a growing number of studies, most notable those done by Lars Chittka, Professor of Sensory and Behavioural Ecology at Queen Mary's Research Centre for Psychology and University of Cambridge colleague Jeremy Niven, some insects can count, categorize objects, even recognize human faces — all with brains the size of pinheads. Instead of contributing to intelligence, big brains might just help support bigger bodies, which have larger muscles to coordinate and more sensory information coming in.

Only in the past decade has the domestic dog begun to be accepted as a study subject for behavioral research. Brian Hare, assistant professor of evolutionary anthropology at Duke University, opened the Duke Canine Cognition Center in the fall of 2009, the same year Marc Hauser, a cognitive psychologist at Harvard University, opened his own such research lab. Similar facilities are now operating across the U.S., and in Europe.

The results are challenging our past beliefs about canine cognitive abilities. Many dog owners have heard of the studies that demonstrate a dog's ability to follow a pointed finger. More recently, in a study conducted by John W. Pilley and Alliston K. Reid, the accomplishments of Chaser, the Border Collie who learned *over a thousand names of objects* have generated excitement in the dog world. Of even greater interest to cognitive scientists is Chaser's ability to distinguish between the names of objects and cues. She understands that names refer to objects, regardless of the action she is told to perform in relation those objects. She was asked to either "nose," "paw" or "take" one of three

toys in an experiment, and could successfully do so. Even more astounding was the final piece of this study, which concluded that Chaser (and by extrapolation, other dogs) is capable of inferential reasoning by exclusion. That is, she can learn the name of a new object based on the fact that it is the only novel object in a group of objects whose names are all already known by her. Meanwhile, biologist and animal behaviorist Ken Ramirez is currently engaged in eye-opening research that studies a dog's ability to imitate (copy) another dog's behavior.

While growing evidence supports a theory of significant cognitive ability in dogs, the last holdout may be *metacognition* – the "self-awareness" that some tightly hold to be a uniquely human trait. But just like treasured misbeliefs from prior eras, this, too, may fall. David Smith, Ph.D., a comparative psychologist at the University at Buffalo who has conducted extensive studies in animal cognition, says there is growing evidence that animals share functional parallels with human conscious metacognition -- that is, they may share humans' ability to reflect upon, monitor or regulate their own states of mind. There may well come a time when humans find it as absurd to think dogs and other non-human animals aren't self-aware as we now find it to think that we humans once asserted that other animals don't feel pain.

Back to the Conference Dr. Andrew Luescher

Board Certified Veterinary Animal Behaviorist Dr. Andrew Luescher emceed the conference, and spoke on The Psychological Needs of Dogs, and on Companion Animal Welfare. He addressed the now well-known importance of early development, and stressed that "Deficiencies or abnormalities in early development can often not be compensated for, and that behavior/temperament issues based on early deficient development have a poor prognosis." (See Sidebar: Puppy Developmental Stages) While we all know of success stories from people who have rescued and rehabilitated dogs who were either undersocialized or traumatized during their early developmental periods, the greater likelihood is that pups who don't have the opportunity to develop normally during this period will never be completely normal.

Luescher reminded us that part of proper early development requires puppy proofing and management. While old-fashioned trainers still assert that a dog has to learn that there are consequences for mistakes in order to be fully trained, Luescher refutes this, saying, "The idea that a puppy has to do the wrong thing to learn what the right thing is, is wrong." His behaviorally scientific explanation for

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this is, “If a behavior is successful, others are suppressed.” In other words, if a pup is reinforced for doing desirable behaviors, the undesirable ones don’t happen.

In addressing Companion Animal Welfare, Luescher focused on the unsound practice of always breeding for “more.” We have a tendency in our show ring/breeding culture to always exaggerate characteristics. If a breed is big, make it bigger, if it’s small, breed for smaller. If a nose is long, make it longer; if it’s short, make it shorter. The fallacy of this approach is that it breeds unsoundnesses into our dogs, such that Bulldogs can’t breathe well; the Giant breeds have very short lifespans; and many Toy breeds can’t whelp without a Caesarian section. Luescher bemoans the look of today’s massive, jowly, drooling, short-nosed St. Bernard, who looks nothing like the original 24-inch tall, 90-pound Barry of Luescher’s native Switzerland, who, with a brandy keg around his neck, reportedly saved the lives of more than 40 stranded hikers over the years of his career in the Swiss Alps in the early 1800s.

Dr. Meghan Herron

Board Certified Veterinary Animal Behaviorist Dr. Meghan Herron spoke about her research project on the effects of confrontational training methods on dogs. Since we are always alert for scientific verification of our assertions that positive training methods are better, and documented statistically significant studies on training methods are rare, Herron’s study is important for dogs and the people who love them. Notable conclusions from her study included:

Confrontational techniques increase the likelihood of aggression, especially in dogs
Few dogs respond aggressively to reward-based training

Herron acknowledges that her study had some limitations (as do all studies) – it was a “self-selected” sample of dogs presented at the clinic for behavior problems; the study utilized a limited list of potential behavior interventions; it was a self-reporting study, relying on owner-interpretation of behavior; and it did not study the *efficiency* of various behavior interventions, only the uses and outcomes. Herron is planning a future study that will utilize a larger sample size; assess a more general population and a wider variety of methods; conduct a stricter comparison between positive reinforcement and positive punishment; and design a *prospective* study that follows the behavior of the study-group dogs into the future.

Kathy Sdao, MA, CAAB

Kathy Sdao is a well known and highly respected

applied animal behaviorist whose dynamic speaking style puts her in great demand as a seminar presenter. She spoke on the often-raised question as to whether old-fashioned coercion training is *faster* than clicker training.

Sdao confirmed that if two trainers were in a contest to see which one could get an untrained dog to place his body flat on the ground faster, the trainer using force would likely win. She also confirmed what any experienced clicker trainer knows – that long term goals of simple and clear communication; motivating the dog to act, interact and engage; building a relationship of trust between dog and human; and creating an accelerated learning process – are without a doubt better-served by clicker training than by the use of force and coercion. It’s not about who can get the dog on the ground the fastest.

Sdao also presented a session on “Hierarchy Malarkey,” refuting the unfortunate “conventional dominance wisdom” that lingers in the minds of the dog-owning public despite the best efforts of positive trainers and behavior consultants worldwide. “Anti-dominance theory” was an ongoing thread throughout the conference. Sdao presented a slightly different perspective by arguing that even the widely-popular “Nothing In Life Is Free” protocol, in which a dog has to *earn* all good stuff by offering a sit first, is based in outdated “alpha role” theory, and needs to be replaced by an approach that embraces cooperation and affection.

Dr. Alexandra Horowitz

Dr. Alexandra Horowitz specialized in studying animal cognition, and has conducted over ten years of research on dogs. We anticipate that her current research and studies will provide much needed and credible information for those of us who insist that anthropomorphism is no longer a dirty word.

Anthropomorphism is the use of human characteristics to describe non-human animals. According to a 2008 survey of 337 dog owners, most owners today believe that their dogs feel sadness, joy, surprise and fear. There was less of a consensus on other “secondary” emotions that some owners attributed to their dogs:

Embarrassment	30%
Shame	51%
Disgust	34%
Guilt	74%
Empathy	64%
Pride	58%
Grief	49%
Jealousy/Fairness	81%

While most dog training and behavior professionals agree that the behavior owners commonly de-

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scribe as “guilt” is actually simply appeasement behavior offered in response to human body language, even Charles Darwin said, “There can be, I think, no doubt that a dog feels shame.” Horowitz designed a study to test the guilty look phenomenon, by having the owner leave her dog in the room with a piece of food, after telling the dog not to eat it. Sometimes Horowitz left the food in view, sometimes the dog ate it and sometimes not, and sometimes she removed it and told the owner the dog ate it. If the food was gone, the owner scolded the dog. Horowitz’s findings were:

Guilt did not change the rate of the guilty look. The rate of measured “guilty” behaviors was similar whether the dog was “guilty” (ate the treat) or “not guilty” (didn’t eat the treat)

Owner behavior *did* change the rate of the guilty look. The rate of guilty behavior was significantly higher when the dog was scolded than when the dog was greeted, regardless of whether or not it had eaten the treat.

Dogs showed the *most* guilty behavior when they were “not guilty” but punished. Scolding led to higher rates of guilty look behavior when the dog *had not* eaten the treat than when the dog *had* eaten it.

It’s always nice when we have science to back up some of our dearly-held training and behavior beliefs. Horowitz’s current and ongoing study on whether dogs perceive “fairness” is likely to have equally interesting results.

Horowitz’s second intriguing presentation was entitled “What is it Like to be a Dog?” She reminded us that the world is very smelly to a dog, and that because of their incredible sense of smell, their world arrives on the air, and they tell time differently than we do. If the wind is right, they can smell the future – that which is in front of them that they will soon encounter. When they are smelling the ground, or the neighborhood pee-post, they are actually smelling the past – that which has come here before. For more on her perspectives on how dogs perceive the world, you can read her fascinating book, *Inside of a Dog; What Dogs See, Smell and Know*, published in 2009.

Karen Pryor

Karen Pryor, behavioral biologist and Monarch of clicker training, spoke on Creativity and the Animal Mind. According to Pryor, being creative implies novelty: producing something new and different. She referenced Dr. Jaak Panskepp’s work with *the seeking system* – that which motivates an animal to go out and have fun. Seeking behavior is not driven by survival – it happens only when the animal is already comfortable.

In humans, seeking includes things like window-shopping, doing puzzles and playing games, and web surfing. In non-human animals, seeking may include exploring new terrain, and showing curiosity about new objects and other living things.

Pryor suggests dog training can capitalize on seeking and creativity by clicking and treating exploration, chance-taking, persistence *and* novel behavior. Because your dog can’t be wrong (you’ve not *asked* for a behavior) there’s no association with failure – the dog is having fun. The more behaviors you capture or shape, the more innovations your dog is capable of inventing. The well-known “101 Things to do with a Prop” is an excellent example of asking your dog to innovate.

In closing, she challenged us to look for ways to give in to our own creativity by:

Enriching our environment with colors, scents, sounds, movement

Learning new things – *any* new things, and *especially* right-brain activities

Valuing our own work – not putting ourselves down – for example, not saying “I’m *just* a dog trainer.”

Dr. Jaak Panskepp

Neurobiologist Dr. Jaak Panksepp has been described as being twenty years ahead of his time. His work on animal emotions and the brain seeking systems take behavior science to the cutting edge.

Panskepp argues convincingly that not only do non-human animals possess emotions, but they also possess what behavioral science calls “mind.” In refuting the “lack of proof” argument in the “do dogs have emotions?” discussion, he asserts that scientists deal with “weight of evidence,” not “proof.” The weight of evidence overwhelmingly indicates that animals have feelings. In fact, the evidence is so strong that animals have emotional feelings (not just emotional behaviors), that he says it’s a done deal. Case closed (although the argument still rages in academic circles).

The question of “Mind,” or metacognition, may be more open to debate. Mind has three fundamental properties:

Subjectivity – experiences “self” in the real world
Volition – deliberate behavior; intentionality, seeking, desire, interest and expectancy

Consciousness – the capacity for self consciousness, includes questions about “theory of mind” in nonhuman animals; whether animal are capable of attributing mental states to others

Hard scientific evidence of canine Mind is harder to

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come by than canine emotion. The same brain circuits exist in humans and many other animals, suggesting that Mind may exist for them. Panskepp argues that animals *do* possess at least some degree of Mind, and that the answer to this question will become clearer with continued neurobiological and cognitive study. Indeed, some aspects of canine Mind seem inarguable. Does anyone doubt that dogs have volition? If it walks like a duck...

Pat Miller

Yes, I also spoke at the conference, on two topics dear to my heart – Shelter Assessments, and Modifying Dog-Dog Reactivity. I presented video and an applied science discussion from my work in these areas (citing Kelley Bollen’s 2007 study on shelter assessments).

Mostly I watched, listened, and marveled at the depth and breadth of information offered at the conference, and at this hard evidence of how far we have come in the world of dog training and behavior. There was a time, not so very long ago, that few, if *any* dog trainers had a clue about the science of behavior and learning. None of us had any working knowledge of or interest in operant and classical conditioning, theory of mind, meta-cognition, creativity, shaping, or any of the concepts presented at this conference. We may still have much to learn about what our dogs are thinking, but we have come a long, long way from those dark days when animals supposedly didn’t feel pain.

PUPPY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Fetal Period	To Birth
Neonatal Period	0-10 days
Transitional Period	11-21 days
Socialization Period	3-12 (maybe 14) weeks
Fear Period	8-10 (maybe 12) weeks
Juvenile Period	3 months to Puberty
Adolescent Period	Puberty to Social Maturity
Second Fear Period	A Three Week Period Between 4-11 months

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Attend one or more of the information-filled conferences that are now offered across the U.S.: Clicker Expo - www.clickertraining.com/clickerexpo, 1-800-47-25425; APDT conference - www.apdt.com/conf, 1-800-738-3647; PABA - www.gentleleadercanada.com/events, 1-800-666-3647

Read and learn all you can about the modern science of dog behavior and learning
Reflect on your dog’s mind – what he may be thinking, and how that affects his training, and his relationship with you.

Chittka, Lars (1), Jeremy Niven (2): “Are Bigger Brains Better?” 1-Queen Mary University of London, Research Centre for Psychology, School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, UK. 2-University of Cambridge, Department of Zoology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ, UK.

Pi-ley, J.W., Reid, A.K., Border collie comprehends object names as verbal referents. *Behav. Process.* (2011), doi:10.1016/j.beproc.2010.11.007

Herron ME, Shofer FS, Reisner IR. Survey of the use and outcome of confrontational and non-confrontational training methods in client-owned dogs showing undesired behaviors. *Appl Anim Behav Sci* 2009; 117:47-54

Morris, Dog, Godsell (2008)

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Bollen, K. and Horowitz, J. Behavioral evaluation and demographic information in the assessment of aggressiveness in shelter dogs. *Appl Anim Behav Sci* 2007, doi:10.1016/j.applanim.2007.07.007

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC

Pat Miller is a Certified Dog and Horse Behavior Consultant and Certified Professional Dog Trainer. She offers classes, behavior modification services, training clinics and academies for trainers at her 80-acre Peaceable Paws training facility in Fairplay, Maryland (US), and presents seminars worldwide. She has authored “The Power of Positive Dog Training,” “Positive Perspectives,” “Positive Perspectives 2,” “Play With Your Dog,” and “Do-Over Dogs.” Miller is training editor for The Whole Dog Journal, writes for Tuft’s University’s Your Dog, and several other publications. She shares her home with husband Paul, five dogs, three cats, five horses, a donkey and a potbellied pig. www.peaceablepaws.com

* * * * *
 * **APDT NZ Vision statement:** *
 * All dogs are effectively trained through dog *
 * -friendly techniques and therefore are *
 * lifelong companions in a relationship *
 * based on mutual respect and trust. *
 * **APDT NZ Mission statement:** *
 * To promote human-dog relationships of *
 * understanding and trust by offering *
 * education in canine behaviour and *
 * effective, up to date, dog friendly training *
 * methods and skills. *
 * * * * *

Conference 2013 photos



Conference 2013 delegates, we got everyone in the picture without too much trouble!



Shopping was good at the APDTNZ stall.



Paula Denby Gibbs, Pia Silvani, Veronica Boutelle and Susie Londer



3 days of learning, what a joy!



The B.E.S.T. Solution: Partnering with Local Rescues

by Sara Reusche

Like many trainers, I've long struggled with my ethical desire to help homeless dogs find homes and my financial need to support myself. The statistics are clear: dogs with behavioral issues are more likely to end up homeless. Of course, we trainers know how important professional training is. However, the general public, and even many other dog professionals such as groomers and dog walkers, truly believe that they can train their dogs themselves. When things don't go well, the dog is at risk of losing his home, and perhaps his life.

As trainers, we need to find a balance between making a living and helping our local animal welfare agencies. The ideal program provides benefits to both the trainer and the organization. In the past, I've offered free spots in training classes to shelter dogs, but was unimpressed with the results. Volunteers would stop attending halfway through class, or the shelter would send a dog who was obviously inappropriate for the class environment. Volunteering my time for private behavioral consultations with dogs in foster homes took away from the time that I could see paying private clients, and the follow-through with volunteers again tended to be poor. Enter the B.E.S.T. training program.

The B.E.S.T. program (which stands for Behavior, Enrichment, Safety, and Trust) truly benefits everyone involved: the trainer, the rescue organization, the adopter, and the dog. Started in the fall of 2011, this program provides free weekly training classes for dogs from local shelters and rescues. Any 501(c)(3) organization may participate. The majority of our volunteers come from three different foster-based rescue organizations, but volunteers from the local shelter facility also participate. Volunteers are asked to commit to attending class for a minimum of six weeks within an eight-week time period. Many volunteers continue coming for much longer than this. Prior to coming to class, volunteers attend the monthly orientation session. During orientation, volunteers learn about the program, sign our standard training class waiver, and are added to a private email listserv where they receive additional support with training questions and can share brags about the dogs they are taking through the program. Volunteers are encouraged to work with their dogs each week between classes, but this isn't required.

Any dog who is healthy, current on vaccinations, and non-aggressive towards people and other dogs is welcome to participate in class. Participat-

ing dogs must be spayed or neutered prior to adoption (some of the local organizations still place unaltered dogs with spay/neuter deposits, and these dogs are not eligible to participate). Volunteers select which dog they want to bring, and bring the same dog each week until that dog is adopted.

Dogs who participate in class go home with training folders for their adopters. These folders include "report cards" that are filled out by the volunteers with information on the dog's likes and dislikes, training vocabulary, and other helpful hints; informational handouts on socialization, management, and puzzle toys; and a new dog checklist. Packets for Pit Bull-type dogs also include information on the breed and on helping the dog become a breed ambassador. All of the folders include a cover letter that explains that while the dog has received some training through the rescue organization, the new owner should not consider the dog "trained," and encouraging the adopter to continue the dog's training. A training class schedule and a coupon for a small discount on a private training consultation complete the packet.

Discounts and coupons were purposefully kept minimal, as I've found that people value training advice more if they pay for it. Adopters receive a 15% discount (20% for Pit Bulls and Pit mixes) on a private consultation if they schedule one within 30 days of their dog's adoption. These consults often result in clients booking consult packages or signing up for classes, so the small discount pays for itself. Should an adopter sign his or her dog up for training class within 30 days of adoption, 10 percent of the total class fee is donated back to the rescue the dog came from. When adopters sign up for class, I mail a thank you card along with the donation to the rescue or shelter organization. This timely positive reinforcement serves to increase my referral base from within each organization. In-person recommendations are much more powerful than coupons or branded handouts, and having the adoption staff and volunteers personally recommend our training business to new adopters makes a huge difference in the likelihood of those people coming to us for training.

Weekly training classes are divided into two groups, beginning (level 1 and 2 behaviors) and advanced (level 3 and 4 behaviors). We use a drop-in "levels" style curriculum, so that each dog and handler team can work at different levels on the same set of skills. The skill sets we focus on are impulse control, pet manners, basic obedience, loose-leash walking, and recall. The promotion criteria for each level are outlined below. Dogs must meet all of the promotion criteria for levels 1 and 2 to move up to the "advanced" class.

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Level 1:

- Go to mat from two feet away (uncued, all four feet on mat)
- Dog is nonreactive to people and other dogs at a five foot' distance during all class activities
- Stationary attention for five seconds with low distractions
- Handler can recognize and fix a tight leash (hallway and parking lot count!)
- Sit on one cue within five seconds, for a count of one second
- Handler can easily handle ears and paws, no mouthing or avoidance

Level 2:

- "Leave it" with food in open hand, one cue, dog continues to leave food for five seconds
- Settle on mat for five seconds (dog's choice of relaxed sit or down)
- Attention away from high-level distraction within 15 seconds, one cue
- Five steps of loose-leash walking with no lure
- Down on one cue within ten seconds, for a count of one second
- Sit for stranger approaching five feet away, dog doesn't creep or come forward

Level 3:

- "Leave it" with food on floor, one cue, dog continues to leave food for five seconds
- Recall away from moderate level distraction, leash length, one cue
- Dog can walk on a loose leash six to ten feet away from other dogs, handler can easily redirect dog when needed
- Dog settles on mat (sit or down, dog's choice) while another dog walks past within six to ten feet
- Stay on cue (sit or down, handler's choice) while handler takes two steps to the side and returns
- Any trick (shake, high five, roll over, spin, bow, dance, jump through hula hoop, etc.)

Level 4:

- Moving "leave it" (walk on a loose leash past food on the ground)
- Recall away from high-level distraction, 20 feet away, one cue
- Loose leash walk length of room, no lures, multiple cues permitted
- Stay on cue, dog remains still while handler jumps up and down and walks around dog
- Sit and down in any position relative to handler (at left and right side, behind handler, etc.)
- Handler recognizes/rewards settling behaviors on mat

Most dogs complete all of the level 1 requirements prior to their adoption, and several have completed

all of the exercises through level 4 before being adopted. The weekly training classes are each 50 minutes long and give my newer class instructors the chance to practice teaching skills and to gain teaching experience towards their CPDT certification.

Overall, this program has been a great success! While it was slow to start, the volunteers who initially participated had enough fun and success to start talking about it at adoption days, and a press release in the local women's magazine also provided some eager new volunteers. We usually have three to eight handlers per class. Volunteers who participate receive a 10 percent discount on training classes for their own dogs, and also receive a small discount on training supplies such as clickers and bait bags.

Some dogs are not appropriate for a group class, and I provide free behavioral evaluations after class for questionable dogs to any participating rescue. Behavioral evaluations are based on the SAFER assessment (although I am not yet a certified SAFER evaluator). Based on the evaluation, rescues are able to determine the best course of action (whether euthanasia or a behavior modification plan in a qualified foster home), and support for volunteers providing behavior modification to dogs with issues is also available through the program email list.

I also evaluate dogs at the local impound and provide evaluation results (including video and pictures) to the local rescue groups to help them make decisions on which dogs to pull. The officers at the local impound have begun to welcome our visits and to network more with local rescues, resulting in more lives saved. The local pound does not provide any veterinary care and adopts every animal out to anyone for \$5, so the more of these animals we can get into qualified rescue organizations that will alter them and screen potential adopters, the better. Recently, the animal control officers at our pound asked for a stack of my business cards to hand out, and I have begun receiving regular calls and emails from clients who are struggling with barking noise complaints, dogs who escape their property and run away, and dogs with reactivity issues.

Keeping the buzz going is important. I post pictures of the dogs who are attending class on our Facebook page, blog, and monthly email newsletter. People love to hear success stories, so make sure to share them! I tag the rescue organization the dog is available through, and many of these stories are cross-posted and shared by clients through social media, helping more dogs find

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homes and promoting my business at the same time.

In addition to the training classes, I provide free educational seminars at a participating feed store every six weeks. These seminars touch on topics relevant to pet owners, such as understanding canine body language or providing enrichment to the home-alone dog. The seminars are advertised by the rescue organizations (I provide a flyer for volunteers to print out) and on Facebook. There is no charge for people to attend a seminar, but donations are collected at the end of the hour-long talk to benefit one of the participating rescue groups. I put business cards out during the seminars and also put my contact information on the final slide of the PowerPoint presentation (which I leave up during the following Q&A session). Attendance at these events has improved dramatically from the early presentations, and the last seminar I hosted ended up being standing-room-only!

So, does the program work? The early numbers have been encouraging. Not one of the participating dogs has been returned to rescue, and several dogs have been adopted as a direct result of our marketing. Training referrals to my business from rescue organizations have doubled from the start of this program (even for rescue groups not currently taking advantage of the classes), and I typically get several new clients from each educational event. The volunteers have also benefited. As their training skills increase, their ability to work through (rather than just manage) any behavior issues that crop up has also increased, and their ability to showcase their dogs' positive attributes at adoption days and home visits with adopters has also improved.

Overall, the B.E.S.T. Program has provided me with the means to both market my business and help more homeless dogs find great lifelong homes, along with networking with local animal lovers who may not otherwise have known about our training services. I would encourage all trainers to consider starting a similar program in their own community, and would be happy to provide more information about the classes, forms, or presentations via email. Working together with your local rescues and shelters really can be the *best* source of referrals for your business!

Sara Reusche CPDT-KA CVT owns Paws Abilities Dog Training, LLC in Rochester, MN. She can be reached by emailing sara@paws4u.com, visiting <http://www.paws4u.com>, or following Paws Abilities Dog Training on Facebook.

People Training Part 3: Taking Turns

Erica Pytlovany, CPDT-KA & Ashley Forman

Our last article compared the flow of your class to the telling of a great story. The plot, your lesson plan, should be entertaining and easy to follow. The structure of activities will drive the action. Activities can be organized into individual, group, and team exercises. Switch between group and individually focused activities for a dynamic lesson that keeps students active and engaged.

This article focuses on activities done by the individual student. For our purposes, an individual activity is one where you ask each student, one at a time, to demonstrate the requested behavior. Individual activities can be either public or private. In a public individual activity, each student would perform at the front of the class as a whole. A private individual activity would occur when you check in with each student at his or her station while the rest of the class practices independently. A well-run public individual activity will feel like a group exercise because everyone remains engaged.

Why Choose Individual Activities?

The advantage of individual activities is that you can personalize your coaching when you work one on one. Your challenge, however, is to keep your other students from becoming bored or confused while your attention is on a single dog and handler. Private feedback allows you to have time for a personal connection with each student, and students can raise questions or concerns that they might be less likely to share with the entire group. Public feedback, on the other hand, keeps students engaged as a class and provides an opportunity for students to learn more by watching each other. Your challenge with public feedback: make sure that students feel safe when they are in the spotlight.

Individual coaching is often best when teaching a new behavior, while group activity is useful to then practice the behavior with more difficulty and distraction. The first week of a basic obedience class might be heavy on individual activities, because all of the behaviors are new, but the second week you should be able to incorporate week one skills into a group activity.

Below are three tips to help you successfully incorporate individual exercises into your group classes so that everyone feels like they have received individual attention, and no one gets bored or disengaged.

Tip #1: Small Steps Finish Faster

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Break activities down to the simplest steps so you can add one instruction at a time. You can give directions in seconds when they are easy and tightly focused.

Simple task <input type="checkbox"/>	High rate of success
High rate of success <input type="checkbox"/>	Each student performs quickly
Each student performs quickly <input type="checkbox"/>	All students are finished quickly
All students are finished quickly <input type="checkbox"/>	Move to the next step of the exercise!

Your activity will be broken into several parts, but you will spend very little time repeating instructions and a majority of time on actual practice. You will also spend less time problem-solving with single students because the smaller tasks will be easier to accomplish. Best of all, your lesson will move along at a brisk pace and no student will ever sit on the sidelines for long.

If students are practicing in front of the whole class, there's yet another benefit: students feel much less pressure being in the spotlight a few times briefly than being under scrutiny once for several minutes.

Tip #2: Test the Handler

We ask our students to show off and they think we need to see how much the dog can do. They think we will be impressed by the fastest sit or the longest stay. Not true! We also want to see what the handler can do. Take the focus off the dog and ask your students to showcase their handling skills.

I like to play a game that I call "Wanna Bet?" You can keep score in a number of ways but we have students wager with tickets. If we are practicing the stay, we might ask, "How many steps can you take away from your dog?" The student must make a wager. If he says ten steps and he demonstrates ten steps, he gets ten points (or ten tickets). If he says ten steps and the dog breaks the stay, he gets zero points (or zero tickets). The handler is strongly motivated, by points and by pride, to choose an attainable number of steps. This individual exercise pushes students to practice the crucial skill of assessing what their dogs can actually do as opposed to what they believe the dogs can do. With a little creativity, you can find ways to place a wager on all sorts of training exercises. A few other ideas include:

- How many seconds can your dog stay? Points could be per second or for longer intervals, such

as one point for every five or fifteen seconds

- How close can you call from a distraction? I create an "Aisle of Despair" at the front of our room, loaded with tennis balls, squeaky toys, pig's ears, and open treat containers. Using cones or tape, I mark off an empty aisle one foot away, three feet away, and five feet away. If the student chooses the closest aisle and succeeds, three points. The middle aisle scores two points and the farthest aisle scores one point. If the dog goes into the "Aisle of Despair" from any aisle, the handler gets zero points.

- How far can you heel? One point for each step the handler takes with the dog's attention, with points scored only if the dog sits within one second of when the handler stops walking. Perfect heel position can be more or less strict depending on the intent of the class.

Tip #3: Student Coaching

While students demonstrate in front of the class, you can keep the rest of the class alert by teaching them that you will ask questions about what they see. The skill of observation is incredibly important for trainers and handlers, so you should teach your students how to learn all they can from watching other students.

Ask questions after each student performs. Questions can be open ended: "What did you notice when Mark asked Daisy to down?" Questions can also be more directed: "Did you see anything interesting about what Sally did with her shoulders when she cued heel position?"

Wonderful things happen when you ask these sorts of questions.

1. Students pay far more attention to classmates when they know you will ask questions.
2. It is aurally interesting to hear different voices during class. When yours is the only voice for an entire hour, your moments of brilliant wisdom may start to run together, but your class might remember how Nancy observed that Mark did a great job with his leash handling.
3. You find out how much your students actually know. They may be far ahead or far behind where you believe they are.
4. Your students will make some fantastic observations. They will notice things that never occurred to you and they will come up with fresh new phrases or analogies that perfectly explain a subject to the rest of the class. Don't miss out!

For even more targeted feedback, assign your students to be side coaches. One student will perform and one will be a coach. Direct the coach to watch for one very specific criterion. After the first student performs, ask the side coach "What did you see?"

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You may need to add a leading question like “Did you notice where Sally’s treat hand was when she cued the sit?” If the side coach doesn’t know the answer, you can open the question to the rest of the class: “Did anyone else notice?” You can keep side coach responses to 30 seconds or a minute depending on how quickly you want to move through the group. After the side coach has given his feedback, he will perform and the third student becomes the next side coach.

A few examples could include:

- “Click coach” watches whether the treat comes after the click
- “Leash coach” looks for whether the handler is holding the leash properly
- “Cue coach” counts the number of cues the handler gives the dog

You Can Have It All

We respect our students and their time is valuable. How will you balance the time you spend with the individual against the time you spend with the group? With these techniques and a little creativity, your students can get personalized instruction and learn actively through the entire lesson.

Erica Pytlovany, CPDT-KA runs the Rally Obedience program at WOOFs! Dog Training Center in Arlington, VA. Ashley Forman is the Director of Education Programming at Arena Stage in Washington, DC. For ten years Ashley has trained and evaluated teaching artists and classroom teachers. Erica and Ashley’s partnership began in 2007, when Ashley began Rally Obedience training with her Bernese Mountain Dog Mirabelle.

People Training Part 4: All Together Now

Erica Pytlovany, CDPT-KA and Ashley Forman

Ever struggle to keep your whole class engaged and learning, all at the same time? Today we talk about group activities. A group activity is one where all students participate together in a single exercise, often with friendly competition or to accomplish a shared goal.

Why Work in a Group?

Full-class exercises provide:

1. Refinement of skills that have been taught and practiced individually
2. Distractions to challenge students and their dogs
3. Action and entertainment for the whole class at once

Students feel achievement when they succeed on their own, but the accomplishment is even greater when they operate effectively and in synch with their dog and human classmates.

Collaboration, Not Chaos

An ideal group experience is educational, harmonized and fun. Poorly executed, it can be confusing, frustrating and chaotic. Have a clear plan before you turn your students loose.

Keep it simple: Make instructions short and direct, using as few words as necessary to make your point.

Create layers: Instructions should be sequential and build on one another.

Try, don’t tell: Briefly practice each step of your instructions as you give them. Why give a long list of directions and wait until the end to see if they’ve been understood? If the class will be split into teams, have them momentarily join with their team. If the class will be forming a line, practice forming a line. You might think it would be faster to rattle off the instructions, but you waste far more class time when you have to repeat and re-explain individual steps.

When you try the directions instead of telling them, you know immediately if one or more students are confused. Your group is only as successful as each individual student, so you can’t afford to lose anyone along the way.

Set time limits: Confirm that students have the skills and information that they need, but do not wait for perfection on each component of an exercise. Limit some activities to a fixed amount of time, and when the time is up, pull the attention back to your next direction. (More on this can be found in part 1 of this series: Kinesthetic Assessment, in the March/April 2012 issue of The Chronicle.) If you believe that students are not prepared to move forward, simply repeat the component.

Train your students: Be consistent and your students will rise to your expectations. If you always expect that the class should give you full attention between the steps of an exercise, your human students will easily learn to give you that attention. More importantly, they will appreciate your predictability and will follow your direction with more confidence.

Use Your Space

We would never train a dog standing in just one part of a room; why should our students? Direct dogs and handlers to move around the training area and you have created as much “real life” distraction as you could desire. Our human students must learn how to split attention between their dogs and the outside world: traffic, people on the sidewalk, neighbors, and other things that will pull their attention away from their dogs. Group movement lets us practice this critical skill. It is common

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for students to hunch over their dogs and focus intently when they practice a new behavior like sit or down or leash walking. The very nature of group movement encourages students to stand upright, become aware of the other people and dogs in the room, and to trust their dogs.

Activity #1: Cover the Space

Break out of the circle and abandon the old comfort zones! This easy movement can be done with any group that can maintain simple dog/handler attention. Instruct students to move to a new spot in the training area and stop. Tell handlers to use the entire area and seek the emptiest space; this helps them create maximum distance. When everyone is at a standstill, ask them to look around the space and judge whether they are evenly distributed around the room. If some dog and handler teams are clustered together, prompt them to spread out. Once students and their dogs are settled into their new positions, call for students to again find a new spot.

The most basic version of this exercise is to find a new spot and cue the dog to sit. It can be quite a challenge for all of the dogs and handlers to move around the space and then regain attention. Ask your more accomplished students to keep their dogs' attention as they move around the space; even more advanced students can maintain heel position. Add variation by calling for a different behavior at each stop: sit, down, touch, stay or anything else your class is learning.

Activity #2: Milling

You can extend the idea of covering the space into milling by directing students to simply continue walking until there is some further instruction from you. As above, students are directed to move about the training space, use the entire area, and move toward the emptiest places. Students must simultaneously work their dogs and modify their pace and direction to share the space with classmates.

Activity #3: Smithsonian

Now that students can cover the space and mill, we can go even further to test the individuals and the group. Why do we call this activity Smithsonian? Because you can put anything in it! You can call for simple exercises like sit and down, and then build up to highly complex behaviors. In my advanced classes, we might include a call to front, left and right finishes, stay and leave the dogs, and even pace changes.

Activity #4: One Dog Walking

One dog walking is an amazing way to increase your students' spatial and environmental aware-

ness. First direct students to cover the space as described above. Then explain that once you start, there will be one dog (and only one dog) walking at all times. If a walking dog stops, someone else needs to begin walking. If a new dog starts walking, the walking dog should stop. Talking is not allowed; handlers must be sensitive to the movement and body language of their classmates. Allow students to begin without a designated leader. You can remind students to be generous in both sharing the time and joining in to walk.

This exercise is one of our favorites because it sounds excessively difficult, but consistently produces beautiful teamwork between dogs and handlers. We aren't certain why this is true, but it seems to distract the handlers just enough that they interact more naturally with their dogs.

Putting It All Together

Individual exercises are often the best way to teach a new skill, but group exercises can help students apply and extend the skill. In addition, use these activities for the warm-up at the beginning of class, to review recently learned behaviors, and to evaluate your students' progress. With careful planning and thoughtful direction, your class can transcend what even you, their teacher, thought was possible.

Erica Pytlovany, CPDT-KA runs the Rally obedience program at WOOF! Dog Training Center in Arlington, VA. Ashley Forman is the director of education programming at Arena Stage in Washington, DC. For ten years Ashley has trained and evaluated teaching artists and classroom teachers. Erica and Ashley's partnership began in 2007, when Ashley began Rally obedience training with her Bernese Mountain Dog Mirabelle.

NOTE 1:

Be creative when you break your humans' behavior down into its most basic instruction. If your class is highly distracted, the simplest step might be "Hold up the hand with the treats" or "Everyone take one step forward". If students do not accomplish that very simple task, there might be too much noise or distraction for students to comprehend the directions. Address those problems before you continue.

NOTE 2:

All of this motion can be overwhelming for dogs with space sensitivity. If you have one or more dogs in class who are fearful or reactive when classmates pass too closely, these quick tips may help you manage the situation safely without compromising the experience for the rest of the class.

- Follow the steps above, but only ask one dog to move at a time.
- Allow the space sensitive dog to step behind a barrier while the class is in motion

HYPER HOUNDS;

Does Your Dog Have ADHD? By Pat Miller

A disconcerting number of my clients preface the explanation of their dogs' undesirable behaviors with the pronouncement, "He is really hyper!!" The vast majority of the time, they have perfectly normal dogs. The explosion of apparently "hyper" dogs in our world can be traced back to several factors:

The popularity of breeds of dogs who, when well-bred, are genetically programmed to have enhanced environmental alertness, vigilance, and high activity levels. While high activity levels are distributed across all breeds (I am personally acquainted with a high-energy Basset Hound), they are especially prevalent in the sporting breeds (Labradors Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, etc.) and herding breeds (Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, et al.).

The puppy-milling and retail sale of those popular breeds that results in poorly-bred, poorly-socialized pups ending up in the hands of owners under-prepared to care for and train them.

Unreasonable expectations of dog behavior by owners who have a poor understanding of their dogs' needs and behaviors, which results in:

Lack of adequate exercise and socialization.

WHAT IS CANINE HYPERACTIVITY?

That said, hyperactivity does exist in dogs. It is, however, greatly overdiagnosed. Hyperactivity, otherwise known as hyperkinesis can be defined as dogs who display frenetic activity, abnormally short attention spans, and high impulsiveness. They can also demonstrate overbearing attention-seeking behavior. It is truly a canine form of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Like clinically hyperactive children on Ritalin, it seems that dogs who are truly hyperkinetic can benefit, paradoxically, from the administration of stimulants to help correct brain chemistry imbalances.

What differentiates a normal, high-energy dog from one who is truly hyperactive? ADHD dogs often demonstrate exceptionally short attention spans and a high degree of impulsiveness that makes it impossible for them to focus on one task for long. They are easily distracted.

In contrast, most of the high-energy dogs that clients bring to me will focus very quickly on the click-and-treat game. They are normal, active dogs who

haven't learned how to control their own behavior – but they can, if you show them how. In fact, owners are often amazed by the undivided attention their previously intractable canine companions will offer – as soon as we give the dogs a reason to focus; when we show them that focused attention makes good stuff happen. The truly hyperactive dog can't focus even if she wants to – everything she encounters, regardless of how trivial or irrelevant, is given equal and minimal, active but fleeting interest.

Hyperactive dogs also tend to be especially sensitive to sudden environmental changes (SEC) – overreacting to the presence of a strange person or animal, and apparently unable to adjust to the new stimulus. In addition, they seem to have an intolerance for boredom and an exaggerated need for novelty and variety. They don't do well with repetitive tasks (no assembly-line jobs for these dogs!), but may excel in situations requiring creative solutions, such as the Border Collie who often must think for himself and make his own decisions about how to move the sheep.

Hyperactive dogs also are likely to get into everything (bored, looking for creative opportunity), can be destructive, and are often emotionally unstable. They can become almost unmanageable if physically restrained, and may exhibit uncontrollable rage like aggression if frustrated.

WHAT CAUSES HYPERACTIVITY?

Like so many other behaviors, hyperactivity is believed to result from a mix of genes and environment – nature versus nurture. Certainly, the high-energy breeds previously mentioned are more prone to develop true hyperactive behaviors, but a dog's genes are just the canvas that his personality is painted on by life, training and socialization experiences. Hyperactivity can be minimized or exacerbated from puppyhood on, depending on social and environmental factors.

Excitable dogs can often be identified early. They are frequently the puppies who continually bite at hands and fight any attempt to restrain or control them – not with just a mild struggle, but with violent resistance. An excitable puppy placed into a calm, structured environment, with an owner who provides adequate exercise, socialization and training, has a good chance of growing up to be a well-behaved, albeit active, canine companion. In the wrong environment, this pup is a disaster.

Exposure to overly active and playful children can feed hyperactivity – just one of many reasons that interactions between children and dogs should be very closely supervised. Excitable children tend to

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do exactly the wrong things in response to an excitable puppy's inappropriate behaviors – hitting back, restraining, running or screaming – all of which are guaranteed to escalate the pup's level of excitement. Even a pup with a moderate activity level can be induced into hyperactivity in the wrong environment.

As many trainers will testify, social isolation also makes a significant contribution to hyperactive behavior. We often encounter the conundrum of the owner who promises to bring Rex into the house as soon as Rex learns to be well behaved, but Rex can't learn to be well-behaved when he is experiencing the activity-increasing effects of social deprivation.

A 1961 study conducted by Waller and Fuller found that puppies raised in semi-isolation exhibited excessive social contact behavior when given limited access to other puppies. When kept with their litters, the number of social contacts reduced by 75 percent. One conclusion of this study is that dogs may possess a biological need for a certain minimum amount of daily social stimulation and activity, and if that need is not met, a dog compensates with excessive activity when placed in a social situation.

It is likely that the minimum amount of social stimulation needed varies from one dog to the next. When faced with a dog who has higher-than-anticipated social needs, some owners resort to routine isolation of the dog in order to deal with the unwanted behaviors. Inadequate attention, insufficient exercise and excessive confinement add fuel to the fire, creating a vicious cycle: when the dog is released from his confinement his behavior is worse than ever, which results in more isolation, and further decline of behavior. Rex's chances of ever becoming a housedog grow dimmer and dimmer.

Some physiological conditions are believed to play a role in canine ADHD as well. In a study published in 1999 by Drs. Jean Dodds and Linda Aronson, in collaboration with Drs. Nicholas Dodman and Jean DeNapoli of Tufts University, 634 dogs were evaluated for thyroid dysfunction as it related to various behavior problems. Forty-two of those dogs were determined to be hyperactive; thirty-one percent of the hyperactive dogs (13) were diagnosed with thyroid dysfunction. Of 95 dogs in the study whose behavioral responses to thyroid therapy were evaluated, 81 dogs (85.3%) showed at least a 25 percent improvement in their behavior. Thirty-four of the dogs (35.6%) showed better than 75% improvement. Of 20 dogs treated with conventional methods and modification techniques

over the same time period, only 11 (55%) improved by at least 25 percent.

Chronic lead poisoning is also a potential cause of hyperactivity in dogs. Two common sources are destructive chewing on linoleum, or surfaces painted with lead-based paints. There is also evidence to suggest that inadequate nutrition, especially early in life, may permanently affect activity levels throughout the remainder of a dog's life. This means that the importance of good nutrition during puppyhood cannot be overstated. Breeders must be sure that puppies in large litters or those born to mothers with insufficient milk receive adequate nutrition from other sources, and that the mother's dietary intake can meet the demands of a nursing litter. A diet high in protein, or containing elements to which a dog is allergic, may also contribute to hyperactive behavior.

Although the scientific jury is still out on the role that food additives and colorants play in hyperactive behavior, and, in fact, many studies have not found a direct correlation, a 1980 study did find a sharp decrease in hyperactive symptoms when dogs were put on a 28-day-additive free diet.

CONDUCT A 10-MINUTE ADHD TEST

How can you tell if you have a "normal" high-energy dog or one with ADHD? The proof is in the Ritalin. Your veterinarian can administer a low dose of an appropriate amphetamine after measuring your dog's respiration, heart rate and reaction to restraint. Most hyperkinetic dogs will show a marked decrease in excitement and activity level as well as a measurable drop in respiration and heart rate, and greater acceptance of restraint, some 30-120 minutes after the amphetamine is given. A normal-but-active dog will have the opposite response to those markers.

First, however, you might want to try an ADHD experiment at home. Make sure your high-energy dog hasn't eaten for at least four hours. Take him out for a good hard romp in a safely enclosed area to take the edge off – don't run him into exhaustion. Then leash your dog, grab your clicker and a treat bag full of very high value treats, and take him to a place with minimal distractions (indoors) for some clicker-testing fun:

Supercharge your clicker using a very high rate of reinforcement and tiny treats for one minute (30-60 treats per minute), – a smidgeon of chicken will do for each Click! Your dog doesn't have to do anything but focus on you – don't ask for sits, downs, stays, or any other good manners behaviors. If he tries to jump on you, just turn away, but keep clicking and treating. Be sure to deliver the treats at his

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nose level so he doesn't have to jump up to get them.

After one minute, reduce the rate of reinforcement to 15-30 click/treats per minute, and start moving the treat over his head to lure a sit. If he does sit, briefly increase the rate of reinforcement for three to four clicks, then slow down again. Do this for two minutes.

Continue at a reinforcement rate of 10-20 per minute, and when he sits, Click! but hold off delivering for two seconds at first, gradually increasing the delay of treat delivery for up to four or five seconds. Do this step for two minutes.

For two more minutes, Click! and treat on a variable/random schedule of reinforcement. That is, vary the number of seconds between clicks and treats – sometimes doing several click/treats rapidly in a row (remember to treat after each click) sometimes pausing for a second, or five, or two, or seven, between clicks. Try to keep it random – we humans are very good at falling into patterns! Now, stop clicking for 30 seconds.

After 30 seconds, Click! only if he looks at you. If he keeps looking at you, keep clicking using the random reinforcement schedule for Step 4. If he looks away, stop clicking. If he looks back at you or looks in your general direction, Click! again. Do this for 2.5 minutes.

Time's up – the test is over!

If your dog is willing to play this game with you for the entire 10 minutes with only occasional minor attention lapses, you probably have a normal high-energy dog. It's time to increase his exercise, socialization and training programs. (See Sidebar: Working With The "Normal" High-Energy Dog.)

If, however, you lost your dog's attention totally somewhere between Steps #2 and #4, there's a good chance you really do have a hyperkinetic dog. Time to call your vet to schedule that amphetamine test, and while you're there, have a full thyroid panel done as well as a blood test for lead poisoning. Remember that thyroid results within the clinically normal-but-low range can be a contributing factor to behavior problems. Your vet can contact Dr. Jean Dodds at 310-828-4804 to discuss the significance of your dog's thyroid test.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

So, the bad news is that your dog has ADHD, with behaviors that are so intrinsically driven by organic causes that behavior modification and positive training alone can't help. The good news is that a high percentage of ADHD dogs can be helped with

the judicious use of stimulants in combination with a behavior modification program. Hyperactive dogs tend to be very responsive to positive reinforcement shaping procedures in conjunction with brief time-out periods.

Think back to the results of your 10-minute ADHD test. At what step did you start to lose your dog? If he was with you through Step 2, and you lost him at 3, you know that he does well with a continuous schedule of reinforcement at a fairly high rate. Go back to the step where he did well (Step #2), and work toward Step 3, making breaking your "gradually" into even smaller increments – perhaps a half-second rather than a full second – so you don't lose him with too big a leap. Keep your demands and expectations low. Expect to shape most of his behaviors, also in very tiny increments with a high rate of reinforcement, and keep your training session brief (five minutes, maximum), with a short time-out to calm him, before you start another brief session. (See Sidebar – Shaping a Down With Your ADHD Dog)

You never know, with patience, in the right positive environment, your "hyper" pal may turn out to be a great agility, herding, tracking or drug-sniffing dog!

LURE-SHAPING A "DOWN" WITH YOUR HYPER HOUND

With many dogs, lure-shaping a down is a simple matter, accomplished in short order by moving the treat toward the floor and clicking the dog for following into a down position. We often have success in just three or four clicks, as we hold the treat at the dog's nose and he focuses on it (Click!), we move it halfway to the floor and he follows (Click), three-quarters of the way and his feet are sliding forward (Click!) and he's down (Click!!!). The hyperkinetic dog may need 20 Clicks or even a hundred, over several sessions, before you reach your final behavior goal – down:

Dog is sitting – you hold a treat in front of dog's nose and he focuses – Click!

He stays focused on the treat – Click!

Lower the treat a half-inch. His nose follows – Click!

He stays focused on the treat – Click!

Lower the treat another half-inch. He follows – Click!

Lower another half-inch. He follows – Click!

He stays focused – Click!

Release him from the sit, tell him he's a great dog – and both of you take a 5-minute brain break.

Start with the sit again. Click! as soon as he focuses on the treat.

Lower the treat an inch. His nose follows – Click!

Lower the treat another inch. He follows – Click!

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He stays focused – Click!

Lower the treat another inch – Click!

He stays focused – Click!

Lower the treat another inch – Click!

And take another brain break. You get the idea – slow and steady. Anytime you increase the increment, say from an inch to two inches, make sure he stays with you. If you lose him between an inch and two, go from an inch to an inch-and-a-half. Take frequent brain breaks, and don't make your total session more than about 15 minutes. If you are losing his attention a lot, you are expecting too much. Use smaller increments, a higher rate of reinforcement (Click! him often just for staying with the game), and more breaks.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Evaluate your dog carefully to determine if he is truly hyperactive, or just has "normal" high-energy. Seek veterinary assistance if he is truly hyperactive, in conjunction with a positive behavior modification program.

Provide a structured environment and maximize his opportunities for exercise, training, and socialization.

Feed your dog a good quality, low protein, non-allergenic, additive-free diet.

NOTE: WORKING WITH THE "NORMAL" HIGH-ENERGY DOG

You have determined that you have a high-energy dog, rather than a hyperactive one. That may be good news, but you still need to deal with your out-of-control canine. Here are some tips to help you turn your Wild Willy into a Gentle Bill:

Increase the structure in his environment. Teach him to "Say Please" (sit) to make good things happen. Have him sit for his dinner bowl. Have him sit for his leash to go for a walk. Have him sit to make the door to the back yard open. Have him sit to be petted, or get a cookie for coming back inside.

Increase his exercise. Whatever he gets now, give him more, and make it quality exercise. Tossing him out in the back yard is not quality exercise. Go out with him. Throw sticks, balls, play tug of war, get him to swim in the pond, take him to the dog park... and add structure to his exercise. Have him sit politely for you to throw the ball. Make sure he will "Give" you the tug toy when you ask him to. Have him sit before you open the gate into the park.

Increase his socialization time. If you've been leaving him outside because he's too wild, grit your teeth and bring him in. Use leashes, tethers, crates and baby gates as needed to preserve your sanity

while inviting him into the family.

Increase his training time. If you've already taken him to a basic training class, sign up for a Level 2. Or a tricks class, or agility – anything that will keep the two of you active and learning together. Keeping his brain occupied and busy is just as important as occupying his body.

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CHILL OUT By Pat Miller

Boy, do I wish I had a dollar for every time I heard someone say their dog was "hyperactive" or "ADHD" – I'd be a wealthy woman. In fact, those are clinical terms referring to very specific behavioral disorders (canine *and* human) that are relatively uncommon in dogs. In reality, most "hyper" dogs are just under-exercised. A couple of days hiking at the Peaceable Paws farm and you'd hardly know them.

Not every dog owner has access to large tracts of acreage upon which to exercise their unruly canines, and in any case, "wild child canine syndrome" (WCCS) is more than *just* lack of exercise; it's also lack of appropriate reinforcement for calm behavior – i.e., training. Unfortunately, all too often a dog loses his happy home – maybe even his life, as a result of his high-energy behavior.

We've seen several of these WCCS dogs at the training center in recent weeks. One private client decided to return her Shar-Pei mix pup to the rescue from where it came. Despite her best intentions and efforts, the client had mobility challenges that made it impossible for her to provide the pup with the exercise and management she needed. As painful as it was for the owner, returning the

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pup was the right decision.

WCCS dogs often include inappropriate biting in their repertoire of undesirable behaviors. We currently have a temporary foster resident at the training center: a 13-week-old high-energy Jack Russell Terrier who failed his assessment at the shelter for using his mouth in protest when restrained. Little Squid is a perfect example of the kind of dog who needs to learn self-control and the art of being calm.

Teaching Calm

A successful WCCS behavior modification program contains three elements:

- Physical Exercise
- Management
- Training

While any one of these alone can make your high-energy dog easier to live with, apply all three for maximum success.

Physical Exercise

Squid's day begins with an hour of barn-play while we do chores. He delights in harassing our dogs (and our pig). He gets at least one long hike around the farm per day, preferably two, or even three. He also gets one or more sessions of ball/toy fetch in the training center, and some puppy socialization/play time when there's a class going on. Finally, he wraps up his day with evening barn chores. Does it tire him out? No. I have yet to see him tired. But it does take the edge off, so that when I work with him to teach calm he is able to focus and participate in the training. The physical exercise sets him up for training success.

Not everyone has an 80-acre farm to play on. If you're farm-deprived, there are other ways to provide exercise for your WCCS dog. A placid walk or three around the block won't do it. Nor will leaving him on his own in your fenced back yard. He needs to be *actively* engaged.

Outings to your local well-run dog park can be a good exercise option (See *A Bark in the Park*, Sept. 2006). If you don't have one in your area, invite compatible canines over to play in your dog's fenced yard. If you don't have one, invite yourself and your dog over to your dog-friend's fenced yard for play dates. Absent *any* access to a dog-friendly fenced yard, play with your dog on a long line. A 50-foot line gives him a 100-foot stretch to run back and forth and work his jollies off.

Caution: Work up to 50 feet gradually, so he learns where the end of the line is. You don't want him to blast full-speed to the end of his long line and hurt himself. Also, wear long pants. A high-speed long-line wrapped around bare legs can give you a nas-

ty rope burn.

If none of those work for you, having him wear a pack when you walk him, or even better, pull a cart (which takes significant training), or exercising him (safely) from a bicycle may be options for using up excess energy. If outside exercise is simply out of the question, here are some indoor activities that can help take the edge off:

Find It

Most dogs love to use their noses. Take advantage of this natural talent by teaching yours the "Find It!" game:

Start with a handful of pea-sized tasty treats. Toss one to your left and say "Find it!" Then toss one to your other side and say "Find it!" Do this back and forth a half-dozen times.

Then have your dog sit and wait or stay – or have someone hold his leash. Walk 10-15 feet away and let him see you place a treat on the floor. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

Next, have your dog sit and wait or stay – or have someone hold his leash and let him see you "hide" the treat in an easy hiding place: behind a chair leg, under the coffee table, next to the plant stand. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

Again, have your dog sit and wait. This time hide several treats in easy places while he's watching. Return to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" Be sure not to help him out if he doesn't find them right away. You can repeat the "find it" cue, and indicate the general area, but *don't* show him where it is; you want him to have to work to find it. Hide the treats in harder and harder places so he really has to look for them: surfaces off the ground; underneath things; and in containers he can easily open.

Finally, put him in another room while you hide treats. Bring him back into the room and tell him to "Find it!" and enjoy watching him work his powerful nose to find the goodies. Once you've taught him this step of the game you can use it to exercise him by hiding treats in *safe* places all over the house, and then telling him to "Find it!" Nose work is surprisingly tiring.

If you prefer *less* challenging, just go back to Step 1 and feed your dog his entire meal by tossing pieces or kibble from one side to the other, farther and farther, with a "Find it!" each time. He'll get a bunch of exercise just chasing after his dinner!

Hide and Seek

This is a fun variation of the "Find it" game. Have your dog sit and wait (or have someone hold him)

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while you go hide *yourself* in another room of the house. When you're hidden, call your dog's name and say "Find me!" Make it easy at first so he can find you quickly and succeed. Reinforce him with whatever he loves best – treats, a game of "tug," petting and praise, a tossed ball – or a combination of these. Then hide again. As he learns the game, make your hiding places harder and harder, so he really has to search. A trainer friend tells me she has hidden in bathtubs and closets, under beds and even inside a cedar chest.

Manners Minder

If you are into higher-tech exercise, use a treat dispenser called the Manners Minder that spits out treats when you push a button on the remote control. A Maryland trainer friend, Elizabeth Adamec of Sweet Wag Dog Training shared her exercise secret with me for her high-energy adolescent Golden Retriever, Truman. This one is especially useful if you don't feel like exercising along with your canine pal or can't, due to physical restrictions of your own:

Teach your dog to use the Manners Minder, by showing him several times that when he hears the beep, a treat falls out of the machine. You can use his own dog food, if he really likes his food.

Set the machine a few feet away and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and let him go eat the treats. Repeat several times, encouraging him, if necessary, to go get the treats when he hears the beep.

Put the machine across the room, and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and watch him run over and eat the treats. If he's not doing this with great enthusiasm, repeat Steps 1 and 2 several more times with higher value treats, until he really gets excited about the treats when he hears the beep.

Set the machine in the next room, and repeat the exercise several times. Call him back to you each time, so he runs to the Manners Minder when he hears the beep, eats the treat, and runs back to you to wait for the next beep. Gradually move the treat dispenser into rooms farther and farther away from you, until your dog has to run all the way across the house, or even upstairs, when he hears the beep. Now you can sit back with the TV remote in one hand, your dog's remote in the other, and enjoy your favorite show while canine pal gets exercise and dinner, all at the same time.

There are tons of other ways to provide your dog with indoor exercise. Play tug. Teach him to bowl. Teach him to catch, then repeatedly toss him his ball ten feet away and have him bring it back to you. Some trainers use treadmills and canine exercise wheels to exercise their dogs. (These must be carefully trained and supervised.) Get creative. Get busy. Have fun. Let the indoor games begin.

Management

Successful positive training, *especially for high-energy dogs*, relies on the appropriate use of management tools to prevent the dog from practicing – and being reinforced for – undesirable behaviors. In between his many daily exercise and training sessions, Squid is either parked in an exercise pen in the barn tack room (with plenty of bathroom breaks outside), or in an outdoor kennel off the side of the training center. Here are examples of when to use various management tools for your WCCS dog:

Crates and Exercise Pens when you can't directly supervise his energy to consistently reinforce appropriate behaviors and prevent reinforcement for inappropriate ones.

Appropriate use of crates and exercise pens:

When you can provide adequate exercise and social time in addition to his time in the crate or pen.

When your dog has been properly introduced to the crate or pen and accepts it as a good place to be. *Note: Dogs who suffer from isolation or separation distress or anxiety often do not crate or pen well.*

When you know you'll be home in a reasonable period of time so you don't force your dog to soil his den – no longer than one month more than your pup's age, no more than an outside maximum of eight to nine hours for adult dogs.

Leashes and tethers are useful for the "umbilical cord" technique of preventing your wild child from being reinforced for unwanted behaviors. With your dog near or attached to you, you can provide constant supervision. It also gives you lots of opportunities to reinforce him for *appropriate* behavior. The leash can be hooked to "waist belts" that are sold for that purpose, or clipped to your own belt or belt-loop with a carabineer. He can't zoom around the house if he's glued to your side. If your WCCS dog includes inappropriate mouthing behavior in his high-energy repertoire, however, this may not be the best choice. Tethers are better for keeping him in view, but keeping his teeth away from your clothing or skin, and you still have easy access for reinforcement of calm behavior.

Appropriate use of leashes and tethers:

For dogs who get into trouble unsupervised.

When your activities don't preclude having a dog connected to you (leash) – okay for working on the computer; not okay for working out.

When you want to keep your dog near you but not directly connected (tether), to teach good manners and/or prevent inappropriate behaviors.

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Baby gates and doors prevent your dog's access to vulnerable areas when he's in wild child mode. A baby gate across the nursery door keeps him safely on the other side while you're changing diapers, but still lets him be part of the "baby experience." Not to worry if the older kids left their stuffed toys and Breyer™ horses strewn across the bedroom floor – just close the bedroom door when your dog is in a "grab toy and run" mood.

Appropriate use of baby gates and doors:

To prevent your dog's temporary access to areas during activities you don't want him to participate in. To prevent your dog's access to areas when you can't supervise closely enough, to prevent inappropriate behaviors such as counter surfing or getting on forbidden furniture.

Training

The final element of your WCCS behavior modification program is training. The more training you do the easier it is to communicate with your dog. The better he understands you, the more easily he can follow your instructions and requests. With a high-energy dog, in addition to basic good manners training, invest a lot of training time in impulse-control behaviors.

Click for Calm: Start by simply clicking your dog for calm behavior, beginning with clicks and treats for *any* pause in the action. One challenge with a high energy dog is that the instant you try to praise or reward, he's bouncing off the walls again. With the clicker, an instant of calm elicits a "click" *during* the calm behavior. Even if the delivery of the treat causes excitement, your dog still understands it was *calm* that caused the click-and-treat to happen. An added advantage of the clicker is that most dogs, when they hear the click, pause in anticipation of the coming morsel, drawing out the brief period of relatively calm behavior even longer.

The goal of clicker training is to get your dog to understand that *he* can make the click happen by offering certain behaviors – in this case, calm. At first you won't get long, leisurely stretches of calm behavior to click. Begin by giving your dog a click and treat just because all four feet are on the floor at the same instant. Be quick! You want him to understand the behavior he got rewarded for was pausing with all four feet on the floor, so the click needs to happen the *instant* all four feet are down. If you click late, you may reinforce him for bouncing around – the exact opposite of what you want!

If your timing is good and you click for four-on-the-floor several times in a row he'll start to stand still deliberately to *make* the clicker go off. This is one of the most exciting moments in dog training –

when your dog realizes *he* can control the clicker. Your clicker is now a powerful tool; you can reinforce any behavior you want, any time it happens, and your dog will quickly start repeating that behavior for you.

How does "pausing briefly on all four feet" translate into calm? Very gradually. You will "shape" the pause into longer periods of stillness, by extending the time, in milliseconds at first, that he stands still before you click and treat. As he gets better at being calm for longer periods be sure to reinforce randomly – sometimes for shorter pauses, sometimes longer. Do the same thing with "sit" and "down." Down is my favorite calm position: the very act of lying down evokes relaxation.

Do several short training sessions every day. You'll have the most success if you practice clicking calm right *after* one of your dog's exercise sessions when he's tired anyway. When he understands that "calm" is a very rewardable behavior, it will work even when he has more energy.

When your dog will remain still for several seconds at a time, add the verbal cue of your choice, like "Chill out..." that will eventually cue him into calmness. Over time you can phase out the click and treat for calm behavior and use other rewards such as calm praise, a gentle massage, or an invitation to lie quietly next to you on the sofa.

"Sit" as Default Behavior: "Sit" is one of the first behaviors we teach. Even after the dog knows it well we reinforce "sit" so heavily that it becomes his "default behavior" – what he does when he doesn't know what else to do. Teach your dog to sit by holding a treat at the end of his nose and moving it slowly back a few inches, clicking and treating when his bottom touches ground. Alternatively, shape it by clicking and treating for slightly lowered hind end until touchdown, and/or click for offered sits. Then shape longer sits. If he already knows sit, start reinforcing it *every time he does it* until he sits for anything and nothing. When you have installed "sit" as his default, things like the "Wait" exercises (below) and "Go Wild and Freeze" (See Sidebar: More Steps to a Calm Dog) happen very easily.

Wait: "Wait" is especially useful for dogs who are short on impulse control. I teach it using food bowls and doorways. "Wait" then easily generalizes to other situations.

Wait for Food: With your dog sitting at your side, tell him to "Wait." Hold his bowl (with food in it, topped with tasty treats) chest-high, then move it toward the floor 4 to 6 inches. If your dog stays sitting, click and feed him a treat from the bowl as

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you raise it back up to your chest. If your dog gets up say “Oops” and ask him to sit again. If he gets up several times in a row, you’re asking for too much too soon; lower the bowl in smaller increments.

If he remains sitting, lower the bowl 4 to 6 inches again, click and treat. Repeat several times until he consistently remains sitting as you lower the bowl. Gradually move the bowl closer to the floor with succeeding repetitions until you can place it on the floor without your dog getting up. Finally, place the bowl on the floor and tell him to eat. After he’s had a few bites, lift the bowl up and try again. Repeat these steps until you can easily place the bowl on the floor and he doesn’t move until you give him permission.

Caution: If your dog guards valuable resources such as his food bowl, consult with a qualified positive behavior professional before trying this exercise.

Wait at the Door: With your dog sitting at your side, tell him to “wait.” Reach for the doorknob. If he doesn’t move, click and treat. Repeat this step several times. Then jiggle the door knob. Click and reward him for not moving. Repeat this step several times. Slowly open the door a crack. Again, click and treat if he doesn’t move, and repeat. Gradually open the door farther, an inch or two at a time. Do several repetitions at each step, with clicks and treats each time.

Eventually you’ll walk all the way through the door, stop, and face your dog, without having him move. Wait a few seconds, click, then return and give him a tasty treat. Of course, occasionally you’ll actually give him permission to go out the door!

Squid does a variation of “Wait at the door” in his pen and kennel. With dog on the inside and human on the outside, I reach for the latch. If he jumps up, I pull my hand away. If he sits, I continue with the gate-opening process. Each time he jumps up, the process stops. If he exercises self-control the gate opens and he earns his freedom. Sitting makes good stuff happen.

A Happy Future

Using a combination of exercise, training and management, I am wildly optimistic that I can help Squid chill out, pass his shelter assessment and find his forever home. If, after reading all this you *still* think your dog suffers from clinical hyperactivity or ADHD, then it’s time to visit a qualified behavior professional for help. More likely though, using the same combination of exercise, training and management, perhaps with a sprinkling of additional tools from the sidebar below (*More Steps to a Calm Dog*), you can ensure your own dog’s calm and happy future in your family.

More Steps to a Calm Dog

Every behavior and training professional has seen her share of WCCS dogs. Some have developed their own programs to help humans help their dogs. Here are a few:

Dr. Karen Overall’s *Protocol for Relaxation*; http://dogscouts.org/Protocol_for_relaxation. Veterinary behaviorist Dr. Overall says, “This program is the foundation for all other behavior modification programs. Its purpose is to teach the dog to sit and stay *while relaxing* in a variety of circumstances.”

Trainer September Morn’s *Go Wild and Freeze*, as described by trainer/behavior professional Jolanta Benal in her *Dog Trainer: Quick and Dirty Tips* podcast (<http://dogtrainer.quickanddirtytips.com/play-games-bad-weather.aspx>); “Start by dancing around and acting excited till your dog gets going, too. After a minute or so, you all of a sudden stop moving. Ask your dog to sit, or down, or do another behavior she knows well. The moment she does it, start dancing around again; when your dog joins in, stop, ask for that sit or down again, and reward her by re-starting the party. Mix things up by varying what behaviors you ask for and how long you wait before re-starting the game. If your dog is super-excitable and likely to mouth you or ricochet off you, start with a pale-vanilla version of “going wild” -- your dog’s introduction to this game can be “Take a Single Step and Freeze.” You can also retreat behind a baby gate if need be.”

Linda Tellington Jones’ *T-Touch* (www.ttouch.com/whatisTTouch.shtm /866-488-6824), from the website: “The Tellington TTouch is a specialized approach to the care and training of our animal companions. Developed by internationally recognized animal expert, Linda Tellington-Jones, PhD (Hon), this method based on cooperation and respect offers a positive approach to training, can improve performance and health and presents solutions to common behavioral and physical problems.”

What You Can Do

Understand that your dog is not being “bad” – he can’t help his high-energy behavior.

Make a serious commitment to exercise, manage and train your high-energy dog so he stays with you forever.

If you’re convinced his energy goes beyond normal and he really is one of those rare hyperactive, ADHD dogs, consult a qualified positive behavior professional.



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