



Irvine Animal Care Center

DOGGY DAYCATION BEHAVIOR GUIDE





Dog Body Language

Why is it important to understand dog body language?

- Often times we have no information regarding a dog's history at the center.
- It is our responsibility to listen to the dog's body language, so that we can set them up for the best chance of success.
- Understanding how to communicate with them will increase their chance of being adopted.

Important Things to Notice

Environment

When you have a dog out for a walk and something unexpected happens, ask yourself these questions so that you can tell a staff member.

- Who's around?
- What are you doing?
- Were there people or dogs walking by?
- Did you have any tools in your hand? Food/treats?
- Distance?
- What happened after the event was over, if applicable?

Speaking Dog

In this training, we will touch on some of the basics of understanding dog body language. We will give you tools that will start to lay the foundation of the complexities that will follow in future levels.



Canine Communication Signals

Communication signals are designed to increase or decrease distance.

Dogs communicate through:

- Facial expression.
- Tail, ears, eyes, and mouth.
- Vocalizations.
- Body postures.
- Rate of respiration.
- Speed and direction of movement.
- Tension in muscles.





Signs of Possible Stress

You have probably seen dogs display these behaviors, but did you know that they are "signs of stress"?

- Yawning
- Licking lips
- Shaking off
- Panting
- Paw lifting
- Sniffing
- Scratching/itching
- Head turning
- Play bowing or stretching
- Whale/half moon eye
- Freezing
- Snapping
- Snarling
- Retracting

***Give dogs showing these signs space and allow them to approach you. DO NOT approach them.**



DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"



Less is More

- Stay out of a dogs face.
- Let them turn away.
- Don't engage/pet them until they show they are ready.
- Never underestimate the power of treats!





COMMUNITY SERVICES Irvine Animal Care Center

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

No one solution works for every dog, so it's important to be prepared with a variety of tools. Specific challenges are discussed below, including any tactics or reminders particular to each. Overall, these are the standard strategies that most often work with the greatest number of animals:

- Carry a treat bag with a large amount of small soft treats. When walking, offer the dog a treat every 3-4 steps.
- Walk quickly, with purpose (like you're on your way to very important meeting), and change directions frequently.
- Don't give the dog the full 6 feet of leash. Keep the leash shorter, so that you have more control.
- Ask staff if they've seen progress using a no-pull harness or a gentle leader.
- If the dog will not be deterred, put him back in the kennel and alert staff. The dog may need a more in-depth plan to help manage his behavior.

Darting on Leash

Darting on leash is common in younger, active dogs. Rather than persistent pulling, these dogs speed way up, then slow down, change direction frequently, and may lunge forward. It makes walking them difficult. They may catch you off guard and pull you down. Managing this behavior is important to prevent injuries and helps make the dog more attractive to potential adopters. Use one or more of the general strategies to reshape this behavior.

Jumping Toward Person's Face

Dogs that jump in your face can be difficult to deal with. This behavior must be managed because the dog may accidentally hit you in the face or hurt themselves when they fall back to the ground. Additionally, this behavior typically works against a dog's adoptability.

- Use a gentle leader. This gives you greater control over the dog's movement and it may be easier to prevent them from getting up into your face. Ask staff to help fit a gentle leader to the dog.
- Reward the dog for keeping his feet on the ground. If they are eating treats from your hand, they are not jumping up in your face.
- Don't reward the dog for jumping up. Don't squeal, yell, or push the dog down. Simply turn your head away and when their feet are on the ground again, regain control of the dog by shortening his leash.

Leash Biting

Leash biting is a common behavior for Level 3 dogs to exhibit. The severity of the behavior varies—some may bite at the leash, some will tug on it, some will try to chew it in half, and some will bite up the leash, getting closer and closer to your hand. It's important to manage the behavior so that it does not escalate into trying to bite your hands. Potential adopters want walking their dog to be more enjoyable and less of a chore.

- If a dog is a known leash biter, arm yourself with a soft toy. When you leave the kennel, offer the toy to the dog. You may need to toss the toy on the ground to get the dog interested in it. The idea is that if the dog has a toy in its mouth, it can't bite the leash.
- If the dog is food motivated, offer treats in rapid succession, continue offering treats as you walk. The idea is that the dog is being rewarded for not leash biting. If they are eating, they can't bite the leash.
- Clip two leashes on the collar. When the dog starts to bite at the leash that you're holding, grab the other leash and let go of the leash that the dog is biting. As the dog switches biting leashes, continue switching so that you're always holding the leash that isn't being chewed on. The idea is that it is less fun to bite on a leash that someone isn't pulling on.

Reactivity to Dogs

Some dogs are frustrated by the sight of other dogs and may bark or pull on the leash when they see them. It's important to manage this behavior because it may be frightening to the other dog, it is stressful for the reacting dog, and it's not attractive to potential adopters.

- Anticipate other dogs in the environment and work to gain your dog's attention before they react to another dog. When your dog notices a dog, give them a treat and move away from the other dog. Do not wait until the dog is reacting. You should be watching them and when they notice the dog give him a treat and turn away from the other dog.
- If the dog begins reacting before you are able to give a treat, move quickly away from the dog into a quieter area and give the dog a treat when their quiet.

Excessive Leash Pulling

Pulling on leash is very common for level 3 dogs. It differs from darting on leash in that the pressure is consistent and usually in one direction, towards a goal the dog has in mind. Some dogs are very big and strong, making them difficult to control. Managing their behavior is important because it helps prevent injuries to both the handler and the dog, and eliminating this behavior increases the dog's adoptability.

- Use a no-pull harness or a gentle leader; either will physically prevent the dog from pulling. Ask staff to assist with fitting the dog.