

Your Dog is Behaving Aggressively!

**A guide to managing life
safely, until your professional
can come and see you.**

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So lets start with identifying your dogs "Triggers". A trigger is an item, sound, place, smell, person, behavior etc that causes your dog to become reactive/aggressive toward it. Knowing these helps to add the "environmental management" we will discuss further on in this handout.

- Need more space? Add your own sheet of paper. It is okay if you have a laundry list- it doesn't mean your case is hopeless. It means you recognize them. A powerful observational tool to have as a dog owner.

Now circle all of the behaviors your dog will engage in if a trigger is present.

BARKING HACKLES RAISED GROWLING SNAPPING NIPPING
LUNGING PULLING ON LEASH URINATING
DEFICATING SPINNING BITING AT PEOPLE NEAR THEM
BITING AT DOGS NEAR THEM FENCE BITING GUARDING ITEMS
CHARING BACKING AWAY WHILE SHRILLY BARKING SCREAMING

Has your dog behaved aggressively toward people/bitten a person? Y N

Has your dog behaved aggressively toward dogs/bitten a dog? Y N

For Multi Dog Households with issues among dogs continue onto the next page.

Is your dogs behavior only on the leash? Y N

If your dog is behaving aggressively or having altercations with another dog in your home? Then you need to install “environmental management”. This means that the dogs are to be separate. Even one small incident between them before you get a professional on board can make your work significantly harder. I do not recommend baby gates or keeping separate in a room together where one dog can walk around the other dogs crate. This can cause more significant tension as the other dog is behind a boundary. For separate rooms and crate and rotate you want the dogs to have their own spaces separate from each other where they can not develop a secondary issue of boundary frustration. One dog goes out for potty, play, enrichment and then back into the crate. Then the other dog goes out for their own turn. For dogs who seem to target one specific dog but not others. It is still recommend to keep them separate, without the normal target dog, another may be chosen. We want to avoid that. This is not easy and you may feel poorly that your dog is crated or concerned as your dog has never been in a crate before. That is where Crate Games come in and adding enrichment as well. Both are in the back section of this guide.

- If your dog has severe anxiety Please contact your veterinarian to discuss options to keep your dog calm temporarily or invest in an impact crate. The Straw method for mild anxiety is in the addendums.

Is your dog reactive ONLY on the leash?

Then temporarily we need to stop going for walks. Why? Because these issues will continue to occur on leash, thus practicing the behavior, until other behaviors are taught to replace them. That is one of the things you need a professional for. So we eliminate walks temporarily and amp up that mental stimulation. Brain Games- in the addendum of this guide. Brain games ensure your dog is mentally depleted. Unless your dog is overweight or needs to be walked for medical reasons brain games can provide a mental outlet to help keep your dog calm until the walks can return.

If you live in a complex where you need to go walk for potty, try adjusting your dogs time to match that when there is the least amount of foot traffic.

You may need to use a sheet attached to a pvc pipe stand to create your own temporary visual barrier, also known as a blind.

Resource Guarding?

When your dog is resource guarding. It is very important to keep things out of reach of your dog. If your dog steals things mostly when you are cooking or doing laundry than keep baby gates up in those areas so your dog can not access them. If children partake in these chores keep your dog in the other room/crate/yard until they are done and you can verify that there are no dropped items. Keep doors closed to prevent access to conflictive spaces and prevent stolen items.

If your dog guards their bed remove it when they are not near it.

If your dog guards their food or treats until they have eaten it only feed in the crate and only add the food in from the outside through an attached funnel or open topped open spout style watering can.

Basket Muzzles

When we hear muzzle we think horrific Hannibal Lecter thoughts. We do not want our dog to be looked at like they are from silence of the lambs. But not all muzzles are the same. Basket muzzles are called basket muzzles as they are like a tiny basket meant to fit over your dogs face and allow them to eat drink, bark, growl, pant, and take treats. However a properly fitted basket muzzle does not allow a dog to get its teeth onto someone's skin. This prevents the trauma from a bite not only to the person or other animal, but also to your own dog.

Basket Muzzles need to be conditioned to in order for your dog to accept them and enjoy wearing them. I hear a lot that a persons dog did not like the head collar for training, But when prompted they were never taught to properly

condition the head collar either A basket muzzle can be a very fun thing for a dog to wear if taught correctly.

I am a huge advocate for all dogs to be taught to enjoy these muzzles because if you have a veterinary emergency or you need to apply first aid to a bad injury to get to the vet a basket muzzle protects everyone and doesn't have a time limit on being worn like traditional closed mouth muzzles do.

- **Every muzzle company has their own requirements for measuring your dog for a proper fit. Follow your selected basket muzzle's sizing guide.**

Aggression toward people

If your dog is behaving aggressively toward guests the easiest thing to do is to temporarily meet guests at another location or keep the dog separate. If your dog is behaving aggressively toward people in the home you need to keep the dog separate from those people until help arrives. This avoids any bites that may occur, trigger stacking, and furthering the issues between dog and humans.

Remember this is only temporary until you get help and you have reached a point where you are all working together properly.

TRIGGER STACKING

Trigger stacking is important to understand because we humans also suffer from this It is when all kinds of little things that are difficult for us to process happen 1 right after the other. In people it can lead to panic attacks, an emotional outburst, crying from feeling so overwhelmed, etc. This same thing occurs in dogs. While it is different aggression and reactivity in dogs is still from an emotional response, Fear.

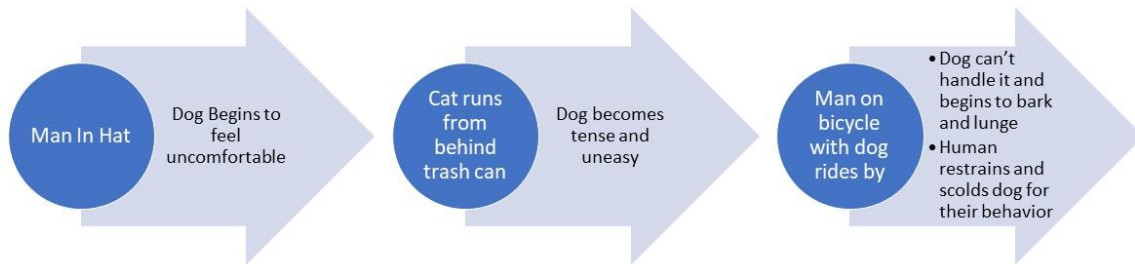
For Example: I will use Genevieve, a 5 year old Carin terrier, to illustrate her worst trigger stacked moment. Genevieve was adopted from a shelter and she was nervous. The rescue noted she did not do well with men, would run away from children, and did not enjoy loud noises. The family who adopted her brought her home, allowed her a few days to settle in, and then had a superbowl party. As guests arrived Genevieve began to bark at guests. She was shushed and she retreated into the corner. The Tv was turned on and the stereo sound put up so

everyone could experience the game. Genevieve remained in the corner watching everyone quietly. Her owners dropped some treats, which she did not touch. About an hour into the game their 6 grandchildren arrived. They ran around the house in glee and upon noticing the dog 3 of the kids ran over to the corner to pet her. Genevieve began to bark and growl and lunge. So her new owner picked her up so she wouldn't hurt the kids. Genevieve bit her on the hand and the arm.

What happened here? Genevieve was in a totally new space with new people and was in mild distress as she adapted to her new home. Then her home was filled with men who scared her and made her feel very insecure. She barked to make them go away, she was chastised. She retreated to a corner where it was quiet to stay away and stay safe. The the Tv was put on and loud. People cheering the game. Remember how Genevieve is afraid of loud sounds. Then in come the grand children. Who not only run around everywhere but surround her in her corner where he has no ability to escape. The 3 things she is most afraid of are all thrown at her one after the other until she can not handle it anymore and while she is terrified something grabs her and her instinct kicks in. With flight no longer an option she is left with fight.

It is important to know that when a dog is first triggered- they first react to something. When this occurs their cortisol levels are increased and this is important because they remain increased for up to 12 hours. Owners need to know this to understand that when a dog is "triggered" the likelihood of them being triggered again within 24 hours is increased by 50%. Each time the dog is retriggered that is an additional increase until your left with a dog who just can not handle what is happening and becomes dangerous to be around or shuts down completely.

We do not ever want this to happen. So following any incidents between dogs or people we want a 24 period of quiet for both and reflection from the human to assess what was going on and ways it could have been handled better. This is not to scold yourself but to be better prepared for the future. These diagrams on the next page show a more visual version of people and dog trigger stacking.



Now that you have read through the guide, if you have not contacted a professional as of yet, please feel free to contact us or one of the links below for a directory to access professional help.

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants www.IAABC.org	The Guild for Force Free Professionals www.PetProfessionalGuild.com	The Certification Counsel for Professional Dog Trainers www.CCPDT.org
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