

Helping Clients Manage Aggressive Dogs



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Motivations



- ☞ Lots: Fear, territorial, resource guarding, predatory, pain, play...
- ☞ Fear and anxiety about the target causes aggression in some dogs (usually defensive fight/flight)
- ☞ Calm, happy dog is a non-aggressive dog

Plan of action



What you can do in brief GP appointment



Physical and Mental Health

- ☞ Exercise needs met?
 - ☞ head halters and basket muzzles for safety
- ☞ Mental Enrichment?
 - ☞ Avoid animal based products
 - ☞ Stuffed Kongs, Twist n' Treats, puzzle toys

For pullers and/or aggressive dogs – head halters

Gentle Leader®



Halti®



Snoot Loop®



Canny Collar



Pullers without aggression

Easy Walk



- ☞ Head halters
- ☞ (Front clip) harness
- ☞ Pressure

Freedom harness

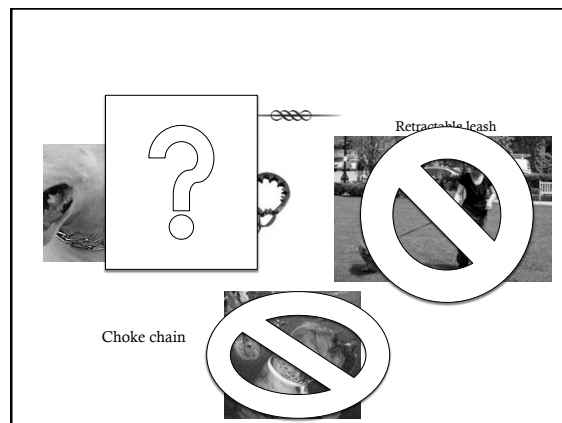


Dream walker



Sensation





Muzzles

Baskerville



Italian basket muzzle



Tuffie muzzle



What you can do in brief GP appointment

Physical and Mental Health

- ☞ Anything that causes pain or discomfort can increase aggression
 - ☞ Orthopedic pain
 - ☞ Neuropathic pain
 - ☞ Dermatologic discomfort
 - ☞ Endocrine diseases

Relationship builders

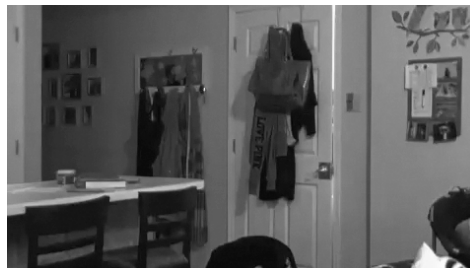
- ☞ Understand how animals learn
 - ☞ I-C-E principle (immediate-consistent-effective consequences)
 - ☞ Poorly executed aversive correction = anxiety
- ☞ Discontinue aversive punishment
 - ☞ See above
 - ☞ Results in injury to humans
 - ☞ *Suppresses behavior without addressing emotional problem*
- ☞ Leadership Protocol, Learn to Earn, "say please by sitting," "nothing in life is free"

Avoidance

- ☞ Identify triggers and either avoid or countercondition the triggers
- ☞ Avoidance prevents emotion and behavior from getting worse
- ☞ Baby gates, muzzles
- ☞ Walking at low-traffic times and locations
- ☞ Putting dog in bedroom or crate BEFORE visitors arrive
- ☞ Not allowing dogs in underground fence to access front/driveway
- ☞ Proper approach: don't space invade or lean over/out dog

Behavior Modification

- ☞ Simple can be very helpful
- ☞ Dog is acting aggressively to increase distance between itself and the target
- ☞ Encourage pleasant association between dog and its target
 - ☞ Treats
 - ☞ Toy/ball



Other types of behavior modification

- ☞ Desensitization
 - ☞ “baby-stepping”
 - ☞ Staying under threshold for aggression/fear
 - ☞ Gradual increasing intensity of stimulus (e.g. distance)
 - ☞ Never simple in practice- need lots of coaching for timing and body language to prevent stress

Don't make it worse!

- ☞ Don't flood animal – expose to stressor at high level and hope dog “gets over it.”
- ☞ Don't assume owners are using common sense
- ☞ Dog aggressive to other dogs should not be going to public area (dog park, pet store) unless strictly supervised by professional (and even then very questionable due to safety issues)

Medications

- ☞ Maintenance antidepressants first line:
 - ☞ SSRIs (fluoxetine, paroxetine, clomipramine)
- ☞ Layer PRN medications with caution
 - ☞ Trazodone
 - ☞ Clonidine
 - ☞ Benzos?
- ☞ All medications that calm have potential to cause increased agitation in a few individuals
- ☞ Act by increasing animals ability to learn... have to teach dog how you DO want him to act

Adjunctive therapies

- ☞ Go for it if owner hesitant about “real” drugs
- ☞ Zylkene (alpha-casein)
- ☞ Anxitane (L-theanine green tea extract)
- ☞ Novafit (SAmc)
- ☞ Adaptil, Feliway, Nuturecalm pheromones