

SOLVING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS WITH TRISH KING, CDBC, CPDT-KA

THIS WORKSHOP WILL LOOK AT PROBLEMS FROM THREE VIEWPOINTS

1. The Owner – the person having to deal with the issues
2. The Consultant/trainer – person brought on board to help
3. The Dog

THE PROCESS

1. Observation
2. Analysis
3. Creating a plan

OBSERVE

- List the issues
- What is happening?
- How often does it happen?
What sparks the issue?
- How is the dog feeling?

ANALYSIS

- Why is dog doing something we might not like -Acceptance is necessary to modify behavior
- While analyzing dog, also analyze owner: Attitude, Capability & Commitment

THE JOB

- What is dog capable of and what are owners willing to do
- Need a behavior modification plan that takes everyone's lives into consideration: Time, Commitment & Abilities

IN MORE PRACTICAL TERMS...2 Personality Types:

- A. **CONTROLLERS:** Some people look upon a dog/human relationship as a control issue: as a threat or a challenge with a need to dominate the animal, and the dog reflecting their ability to control their own lives. They want the dog to behave, and believe the dog knows the difference between right and wrong
- B. **NURTURERS:** tend to look on their relationship with a dog like a nurturing parent whose chief goal is to make sure the dog is happy They may assume that all behavior problems are *their fault*. They often identify with the dog, attributing human motives to the dog's behavior It's tricky when the dog being happy means the people aren't.

Neither is right! Dog/human relationships are complex. They require thought, management and good sense

“TRAINING”

YOU CANNOT “TRAIN” A RELATIONSHIP. You can only train behaviors and build trust.

BASELINE ABILITIES

- You should be able to set up the environment for success
- Without this, behavior mod will not succeed
- Practicing a behavior where failure is more likely than success is counter-productive
- You should be able to handle the dog without fear
- Leash handling is very important, and sometimes neglected in the age of positive reinforcement

BEHAVIOR MOD + TRAINING = CHANGE

- Obedience work is not the same as behavior...but is often needed to change behavior
- Dog should understand the rules of the game – what do your commands/cues mean? Does your dog know? Do you know?

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION: MANAGEMENT

Adjusting the environment to set yourself up for success

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION CHOICES

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

- Desensitization and Counter conditioning: Create an association between a “bad” thing and a “good” thing
- Working the dog below threshold
- Going above threshold does much more damage than consistently working below (though many clients wish to do that)

OPERANT CONDITIONING

- Teaching the dog to do something for a consequence
- Good consequences (R+ and P-)
- Bad consequences (R- and P+)

THE MOST COMMON PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN THE MOST DIFFICULT

PUPPY AND ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR: Mouthing, pulling on leash, jumping up

PLANS BY BEHAVIOR • LATE PUPPY, EARLY ADOLESCENT

- Disobedient
- Willful
- Mouthy Rough
- Destructive
Too energetic
- Easily aroused
- Chasing people
- Chasing Cars

CASE HISTORIES

RECENTLY PLACED DOG - OWNER AGGRESSION

- 12+ years old
- Bonded to wife

- Not so good with husband or teenage son
Owners – committed; semi-skilled; emotional
- Issues – dog has learned to distrust adult males (we don't know why)

ANALYZE

- What is the dog feeling? Conflict and confusion
Sometimes likes man and will approach
- Distrustful when man approaches him What are goals?
- Build trust between dog & man

PLAN MANAGEMENT

- Place dog in situations where he does not feel he needs to protect himself or wife.
- Relationship Wife must subtly distance herself from dog, while husband becomes more trustworthy.

TECHNIQUES

- Slip leash
- Leash tether to man (twice daily)
Leash tether to safe spot in in house
- Man walks and feeds dog
More emotional distance between wife and dog (this is the most difficult part)

FEAR BASED AGGRESSION

A. Committed owner with good skills and abundant time High level plan:

- DS/CC for environmental acceptance
- Daily exposure, (twice daily if possible)
- Raised criteria over a period of weeks
- Operant conditioning to teach alternate behaviors
- Polite walking
- Impulse control
- Combine both for max improvement

B. Committed owner with skills but limitations Time, family, etc.

- DS/CC is not likely to work well under these conditions
- Not enough time for enough exposure to make a difference
- *Potential for sensitization rather than desensitization*
- Operant conditioning is best bet
- Teach Incompatible or Other behaviors to replace unwanted behaviors
- Practice as often as possible – 4 times a week minimum to set behaviors

C. Loving and committed owner with few skills

- Priority should be management/relationship plan
- Make sure dog doesn't get to practice poor behavior
- Environmental controls
- Appropriate equipment
- Education about what dogs actually do need
- Honing of observational skills

- Relationship work to establish skills and attitude

PLANS

- Loving owner with few skills and time constraints • Management/relationship plan as above
- Referral network for walkers/daycares, etc.
- Day training

PLANS

- Dysfunctional family with internal conflicts • Management plan if possible
- Referral network for day trainers
- Discussion of rehoming possibilities

BEHAVIOR

- Offensive aggression towards people in home • Committed owner with skills and time
- Management for safety
- Equipment, housing, routines
- Relationship work
- Patience, structure, etc.
- Training
- Loving owner – few skills, no time
- Management
- Moving dog from home

PLANS

- Offensive aggression outside of home
Committed owner with skills and time
- Management
Safety equipment
- Insurance
- Handling expertise
Leash and observational skills
- Multiple training sessions

PLANS

- Offensive aggression
- Committed owner with few skills
- Management/equipment/insurance
- If you are more committed than they are...You will become discouraged