**3 D’s - Duration, Distraction, Distance**: the 3 D’s are used in animal training to help proof, or solidify, trained behaviors. Duration is the length of time that an animal maintains a behavior. Distraction represents training the behavior when distractions are present. Distance involves increasing the distance between the dog and handler while the behavior is maintained.

**Aggression**: A normal form of communication that includes a variety of behaviors that, range from warnings (e.g., growl) to an attack (e.g., a bite). Aggressive behavior is almost always a distance-increasing behavior, meaning its intention is to create distance between the animal and the target for the behavior. See this [article](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/aggression). See also *Aggression, Offensive*; *Aggression, Defensive*

**Aggression, Defensive**: When an animal is fearful or anxious and would prefer to move away, but feels unable to and responds to the perceived threat with aggressive behavior. This aggressive behavior can include behaviors such as growling, hissing, swatting, snapping, or biting in response to the stimulus entering their space and is often associated with fearful body language. See also *Aggression, Offensive*

**Aggression, Dog**: Aggression which occurs in responses to exposure to dogs. Sometimes the behavior can appear to be aggressive when the dog is instead excited or frustrated. See also *Aggression, Defensive; Aggression, Offensive*

**Aggression, Offensive**: An animal moves toward and displays aggressive behavior toward a stimulus (e.g. person or other animal), instead of choosing to move away or disengage. This aggressive behavior can look like growling, hissing, swatting, snapping, or biting the stimulus. See also *Aggression, Defensive*.

**Aggression, Redirected**: Aggressive behavior that occurs when the animal is unable to access their desired target, such as when another animal is on the other side of a barrier, and there is a build up of frustration or excitement.The animal then directs that aggressive behavior onto a nearby but unintended target, such as a person, animal, or leash.

**Aggression, Unpredictable:**frequently overused/misused term when describing aggression. Truly unpredictable aggression is uncommon as there are often warning signs or signals that precede the event, even if they are missed by observers. An animal displaying truly unpredictable aggression may be able to be managed, but may be unsafe to live with people and/or other animals. We recommend discussing this behavior with a behavior consultant, animal behaviorist, veterinary behaviorist, and/or your veterinarian.

**Affect**: any experience of feeling or emotion, ranging from suffering to extreme pleasure, from the simple to complex feelings, and from normal to the pathological emotional reactions. See this [article](https://www.dbtcentersouthbay.com/what-is-the-difference-between-affect-emotion-and-mood/). See *Affect, Positive, Affect, Negative.* ([APA definition](https://dictionary.apa.org/affect))

**Affect, Negative**: the internal feeling state, (also known as the affect,) that occurs when an animal has failed to achieve a goal, avoid a threat or when an animal is not satisfied with their circumstances. An animal with a negative affect might appear fearful, depressed, anxious, frustrated or aggressive. See also *Affect; Affect, Positive*

**Affect, Positive**: the internal feeling state, (also known as the affect,) that occurs when an animal has successfully achieved a goal, avoided a threat, or when an animal is satisfied with their circumstances. An animal with a positive affect might appear happy, playful, and/or enthusiastic. See *Affect*; *Affect, Negative*

**Air Scent(ing)**: The animal elevates their nose slightly and sniffs the air. This behavior is often performed when an animal is assessing whether a person/animal is a threat.

**Animal Behaviorist**: Associate Applied Animal Behaviorists and Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists are behavior certifications and require a master’s degree or PhD, respectively. This term should only be used by people with the aforementioned certifications. See also *Associate Applied Animal Behaviorist; Behaviorist; Behavior Consultant; Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist; Trainer; Veterinary Behaviorist*

**Anxious/Anxiety**: When an animal is experiencing nervousness, worry, or stress about a particular event or outcome. There are several forms of anxiety including but not limited to general anxiety, separation anxiety, situational anxiety, etc. Common signs include; pacing, panting, drooling, restlessness, excessive vocalization (whining, barking), and destructive behavior. See this [handout](https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CSD-Anxious.pdf) for signs of anxiety in dogs. See this [handout](https://cattledogpublishing.com/product/body-language-of-feline-anxiety/) for signs of anxiety in cats.

**Appeasement/Appeasement Gestures**: Behaviors and postures dogs use to try and reduce a threat or avoid conflict from a threatening or aggressive animal/person, or communicate that they are not a threat themselves. Common appeasement gestures include; lowering body posture, curving the spine, ears back, long lip, squinty eyes, rolling onto the side or back, averting their gaze, turning their head away from the threat, low tail wags, urination, and lip licks.

**Arousal**: An animal's general state of excitability or stimulation. This term is typically used when an animal is experiencing a heightened emotional and physiological state in which the brain is preparing the body to respond to a threat or an opportunity. High levels of emotional arousal can result in behaviors such as excitedly jumping or using their mouth on people/animals, barking, whining, and more. See this [document](https://www.nycacc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Behavior%20Flyers/Arousal.pdf).

**Asocial**: indifferent to or not interested in making connections with others, lack of motivation to engage with others socially. A pet can be asocial with their own species but social with humans, or asocial with both.

**Assertive**: having or showing a confident and forceful personality. Generally showing bold behavior towards animals and/or humans. Commonly used when describing a dog’s behavior with other dogs. Common dog-dog body language could include: necking (a dog quickly approaching and putting their head over another dog’s neck), non-sexual mounting, demand barking, chasing, or vocalizing.

**Associate Applied Animal Behaviorist**: certified by the Animal Behavior Society, Associate Applied Animal Behaviorists have a Master’s Degree in a biological or behavioral science and at least two years of professional experience in the field. See also *Animal behaviorist*; *Behaviorist*; *Behavior consultant*; *Certified applied animal behaviorist*; *Trainer*; *Veterinary behaviorist*

**Aversive**: a stimulus or event that an animal will work to avoid

**Avoidance**:the act of keeping away or withdrawing from something. Animals may avoid unpleasant stimuli. Avoidance is often used as a management technique to support pets with behavioral concerns

**Barrier Reactivity***:* an animal displaying barrier reactivity may bark, growl, vocalize, lunge, jump, and/or snap when they see a stimulus (e.g., a person or other animal) from behind a barrier (e.g., a fence, gate, or window). This behavior typically does not occur when the barrier isn’t present, and may be caused by excitement, emotional arousal, fear, or aggression. See also *Leash reactivity*

**Behavior Consultant**: an individual that helps people to learn about, manage, and modify their pet’s behavior. Some behavior consultants are credentialed through a reputable certifying organization, e.g., IAABC or CCPDT (CBCC-KA), which allows the public to be more comfortable with their skills and background. There is currently no regulating organization for all behavior consultants and therefore anyone can call themself a behaviorist or behavior consultant without having to prove their knowledge and skills. See also *Animal behaviorist; Associate applied animal behaviorist; Behaviorist; Certified applied animal behaviorist; Trainer; Veterinary behaviorist*

**Behavior Modification**: changing an animal’s emotional response and teaching them to produce an appropriate behavior instead of an undesired behavior. For example, a dog that displays leash reactivity due to fear could undergo behavior modification to learn to be calm and relaxed (a new association) in the presence of other dogs by being taught to look at their handler whenever they see a dog in order to receive a reward.

**Behavior Professional**: an individual with training in the science of animal behavior who has accrued experience, credentials, and certifications from an accredited source. There are different credentials for different types of professionals. See this [article](https://www.preventivevet.com/dogs/what-does-that-dog-training-certification-mean). See *Animal behaviorist; Associate applied animal behaviorist; Behaviorist; Behavior consultant; Certified applied animal behaviorist; Trainer; Veterinary behaviorist*

**Bite**: occurs when an animal makes contact with another animal or human using their teeth. A bite may cause no damage at all, or may result in bruising, tissue damage, puncture wounds, or lacerations. For the Dunbar Bite Scale, which is commonly used to measure and describe bite severity, see this [handout](https://apdt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ian-dunbar-dog-bite-scale.pdf).

**Bridge**: a signal to an animal that a reward is coming. This could be a marker indicating the animal displayed the correct behavior, such as a clicker, verbal marker (e.g., “yes!”), or a hand signal like a thumbs up.

**Calming Signals**: signals that an animal presents when experiencing fear, stress, anxiety, or arousal from a stimulus (e.g., person or another animal). Animals typically display these signals to indicate that they are not a threat and/or to disengage an aggressive encounter. This can include body language such as looking away, yawning, lip licking, sniffing the ground (engaging in something else), raising one paw, freezing, and lying down. For a more complete list of calming signals, see this [article](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/canine-corner/201706/what-are-canine-calming-signals-and-do-they-work). See also *Displacement behaviors*.

**Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist**: certified by the Animal Behavior Society, Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists have a doctorate in biological or behavioral science with five years of professional experience in the field. They must have submitted two case studies or one case study and one research publication. See also *Animal behaviorist; Associate applied animal behaviorist; Behaviorist; Behavior consultant; Trainer; Veterinary behaviorist*

**Classical Conditioning**: When an animal learns a link between something they like (e.g. food, treats, or another reward) and something they don’t have an association with, (e.g. bell, clicker.) The animal learns that the new stimulus, (previously neutral,) predicts a reward. This can happen on purpose through training. This can also happen on accident in life. This may also be referred to as “Pavlovian conditioning” or “associative learning.” See this [graphic](https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/12783363623/sizes/l/). See also *Conditioned Emotional Response (CER); Clicker Training*

**Clicker Training**: A way of teaching an animal that uses a “click” sound to mark and reward behavior. See this [article](https://www.clickertraining.com/whatis).

**Compulsive Behavior**: Repetitive behaviors, (e.g., pacing, circling, pouncing on shadows.) These behaviors do not appear to have a purpose. These behaviors may interfere with quality of life and are usually an attempt to cope with stress. See this[article](https://pets.webmd.com/dogs/guide/compulsive-behavior-dogs)*.* See also *Repetitive Behavior.*

**Conditioned Emotional Response (CER)**: an emotional response created through classical conditioning. This emotion can be positive, like confidence or excitement. This emotion also can be negative, like fear or anxiety. This can happen on accident through experiences in life, or can be created on purpose through training. See also *Classical Conditioning.*

**Conditioned Stimulus:**See *Stimulus, Conditioned.*

**Confident**: An often misused adjective. A confident animal does not usually exhibit fear, anxiety, or stress. Instead, they seem to be comfortable and self-assured. They appear to be free from concerns about their safety. This word is often misused. Common body language may include: loose body, neutral tail (dogs,) high tail (cats), and easily or directly approaching other people, animals, and/or situations.

**Confinement Distress**: Fear, anxiety or stress that occurs when an animal is in a space they cannot escape. This emotional state might trigger behaviors such as: chewing, licking, barking, self-mutilation, digging, or trying to break out of the space. Examples of confinement may include crates, kennel runs, or any room in a home with closed doors. See also *Isolation Distress; Separation Anxiety*

**Coping**: Behavior that helps an animal adjust to or tolerate something they view as negative. This can be when an animal is experiencing fear, anxiety, or stress. Sometimes this can be due to a new environment, people, or animals. . See also *Calming signals; Repetitive behaviors; Stereotypy*; *Aggression, Redirected*

**Counter Conditioning**: A technique that changes how an animal perceives something. This is often used to teach an animal that an activity is enjoyable, not scary. If we change how an animal views something, we often change their behavior too. See this [graphic](https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/12783363623/sizes/l/). See also *Conditioned Emotional Response (CER).*

**Cue**: A signal for an animal to perform a behavior that is asked of them. Signals can be verbal (saying “sit”), visual (hand signal such as a “thumbs up”) or physical (touching a deaf dog to get their attention).

**Defensive Aggression**: See: *Aggression, Defensive*.

**Desensitization**: This is a training strategy usually used to reduce an animal’s fear, anxiety, and/or stress. The trainer exposes the animal to something scary or stressful at a low level. This level should be so low that the animal does not view it as scary or stressful. The trainer then gradually raises the intensity. This is usually done over many training sessions. The goal throughout training is that the animal is not feeling scared, stressed, or anxious. Desensitization is often paired with counter conditioning. See this [article](https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/overcoming-fears-with-desensitization-and-counterconditioning). See also *Counter Conditioning*

**Dilated Pupils**: The “pupil” is the back center of the eye. When the pupil gets bigger, it is “dilated.” This can make the eyes look glassy. This can be a sign of emotional arousal. This can mean that a dog is feeling threatened, stressed, frightened, or excited. See this [article](https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/7-tips-canine-body-language). See also *Whale Eye.*

**Displacement Behaviors:** These behaviors occur when an animal is conflicted in a situation. These behaviors may not appear to serve a function. Examples include scratching, sniffing, disengaging, pretending to sleep. See also *Calming Signals*.

**Distance**: The 3 D’s are “distance,” “duration,” and “distraction.” These are used in animal training to help “proof,” or solidify, trained behaviors. Distance refers to increasing the space between the animal and trainer while the animal maintains the behavior. See also *Duration; Distraction.*

**Distance increasing behaviors/distance-decreasing behaviors**: Behaviors that communicate an animal wants more or less space. These behaviors are usually body language or vocalizations. See this [article.](https://pethelpful.com/dogs/-Distance-Increasing-and-Distance-Decreasing-Signals-in-Dogs)

**Distraction**: The 3 D’s are “distance,” “duration,” and “distraction.” These are used in animal training to help “proof,” or solidify, trained behaviors. Distraction refers to practicing the behavior when distractions are present. Distractions may include toys, people, other animals, cars, trains, etc. See also *Distance; Duration.*

**Dog aggression**: See *Aggression, dog.*

**Domestication**: Accustoming an animal to live under human care. The process of domesticating wild animals to live with humans takes many generations. See also *Feral; Tame*.

**Dominant/Dominance**: This term is commonly misunderstood and misused. Dominance is part of the relationship between animals of the same species that allows some individuals to have greater access to resources. Stable dominance relationships amongst animals of the same species may be maintained through the use of vocalizations or visual communication, with minimal aggression. Because methods of communication are very different between species of animals, the term ‘dominance’ doesn’t apply across species. People frequently think that a dog is attempting to establish dominance over them or someone else. This isn’t the case and instead the dog is experiencing feelings of conflict, excitement, fear, stress or anxiety. See this [article](https://avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Dominance_Position_Statement_download-10-3-14.pdf).

**Duration**: the 3 D’s are used in animal training to help proof, or solidify, trained behaviors. Duration is the length of time that an animal maintains a behavior.

**Extinction**: the behavior modification technique of removing reinforcement of a previously reinforced behavior, with the goal of the behavior no longer occurring.

**Fearful**: feeling afraid; showing fear or anxiety ([Oxford Languages definition link](https://www.google.com/search?q=fearful&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS838US838&oq=fearful&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i131i433i512j0i512l2j0i131i433i512l2j0i512j69i65.1732j1j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)). An emotion characterized by a perception of danger and feeling frightened of the environment, people, and/or animals.

**Fear, anxiety and stress scale/assessment** - A system to evaluate fear, anxiety and stress developed by the Fear Free initiative. See this [link](https://fearfreepets.com/fas-spectrum/), and [this one](https://fearfreepets.com/emotional-medical-record-and-fas-scale/).

**Feral**: wild offspring of domesticated animals. When raised without human contact, feral cats and dogs remain extremely wary of people and flee if approached, similar to wildlife. See also *Domestication; Tame*.

**Flooding**: a behavior modification technique of introducing an animal to a fear or anxiety inducing stimulus, without the opportunity to escape and without attempting to reduce the animal’s anxiety during the exposure. This technique is generally not recommended with animals and should be avoided whenever possible.

**Freeze/Freezing**: A momentary pause or stillness by an animal. This behavior occurs when an animal is experiencing fear, anxiety or stress, but can also occur during play. See also *Calming Signals; Pancake.*

**Frustration**: An emotional state associated with thwarting or preventing an animal’s goal-directed behavior. For example, a dog who wants to greet another dog but is restrained by a leash might feel frustrated.

**Generalization**: when an animal can apply a concept they’ve learned to different situations. For example, a dog first learns to sit while the trainer is standing and says, “sit.” When they generalize “sit,” they know that they need to sit whether they are in a park, on a crowded street, or when a different person is asking them to sit.. We can also teach animals to generalize their behavior toward similar types of things, people or animals For example, a dog has a positive experience with another dog, and learns that meeting other dogs is a positive experience. See this [article](https://dogmantics.com/generalizing/).

**Growl**: a vocalization that occurs as a warning sign when an animal is attempting to increase distance between themselves and something or someone else.

**Habituation**: the process of an animal becoming accustomed to something (Animal Behavior Desk Reference); when the psychological or emotional response to a frequently repeated stimulus decreases. For example, a shy dog becoming comfortable in a home environment; a cat becoming comfortable with or around other cats. To habituate an animal to a particular situation or stimulus, it might be paired with training or behavior modification. See also *Desensitization; Counterconditioning*.

**Handling sensitivity:** when an animal is uncomfortable with being touched or with the expectation of that touch. Animals with handling sensitivity are often uncomfortable with one part of the body being touched (e.g., ears, feet).

**Happy tail**: an injury to a dog’s tail due to confinement and wagging their tail repeatedly against a wall or other hard surface. This injury often results in bleeding and wounds. It rarely will require tail amputation if the injury is severe and slow to heal.

**Hard eye/stare**: direct eye contact that is characterized by an intense, fixated, glassy eyed stare. The animal often has a stiff/tense body posture. It usually appears in animals displaying fear, stress, or anxieties within an environment.

**Head butting/bumping:** a forceful or somewhat forceful push of part of the head into the face or body of another person, animal, or object. It often occurs during friendly interactions.

**Hiss:** a warning noise meant to increase distance between a cat and someone or something that feels threatening, often another cat. See this[*video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOyMS87g7o4)*.*

**Humane Hierarchy***:* The [Humane Hierarchy of Behavior Change](https://m.iaabc.org/about/lima/hierarchy/) offers a step by step guide of training interventions to choose from when working to change animal behavior. Punishment is reserved as a last step, only when all other techniques have failed.

**Humping/Mounting**: Mounting is when an animal puts their front legs on another animal and thrusts their hips repeatedly toward them. Some dogs will hump people, other dogs, animals or objects (e.g. pillow). This is normal behavior with dogs of any sex including puppies and littermates. This behavior happens when a dog is excited, playing, sexually motivated or attempting to control another dog.

**Impulse control/Impulsivity:** An animal's overall state of emotional self-control. It often refers to the ability of an animal to willfully stop behaving in a certain way. For example, a dog who jumps repeatedly on someone despite a trained cue to ‘sit’ may have poor impulse control.

**Isolation distress**: Often confused with separation anxiety. It happens when an animal needs to have a (familiar or unfamiliar) human nearby in order to regulate their emotions. The animal does not have an attachment to the person for this to happen.

See also *Confinement Distress; Separation Anxiety.*

**Jumpy/mouthy:** refers to behaviors associated with energetic, playful, stressed or anxious adolescent or adult dogs. A dog who shows jumpy/mouthy behavior may jump up, put their mouths on people (usually people’s arms and legs), and may even grab at clothing and/or the leash. See *Mouthy*.

**Kneading/making biscuits:** When a cat pushes out and pulls in their front [paws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paw), often alternating between right and left limbs. It happens while the cat is calm. It may also be a form of communication between owner and feline: because of the action's maternal connection, the behavior may communicate affection towards their human companion and is often associated with purring.

**Learned helplessness**: occurs when an animal learns that they cannot change, control, or improve a situation regardless of their behavior or actions. An animal with learned helplessness may be unresponsive or minimally responsive to their environment.

**Leash reactivity**: an animal displaying leash reactivity may bark, growl, vocalize, lunge, jump, and/or snap when they see a stimulus (e.g., a person or other animal) while restrained by a leash. This behavior typically does not occur when the leash isn’t present, and may be caused by frustration, excitement, emotional arousal, fear, or aggression. See also *Barrier reactivity.*

**Least invasive minimally aversive (LIMA)**: This [principle](https://m.iaabc.org/about/lima/) encourages animal trainers and pet owners to use effective but minimally intrusive tools and techniques, focusing largely on techniques that reward animals for desired behaviors rather than punishing them for undesired behaviors.

**Lip Lick**: A canine behavior typically displayed when a dog is stressed, uncomfortable, or unsure. See this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMirei9-n18). See also *Tongue flick.*

**Making biscuits**: See *Kneading.*

**Marking (Urine)**: Typically involves an animal depositing a small amount of urine on a vertical surface rather than emptying their bladder. Marking is used as communication and to convey information (e.g., to signify “I was here”). See this [article](https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/dog-behavior-problems-marking-behavior).

**Mounting/Humping**: Occurs when an animal puts their forelegs on an object, person, or animal and thrusts their pelvis repeatedly toward the target of the behavior. This behavior is normal in dogs of all ages and genders, regardless of whether they are spayed or neutered. This behavior can be directed toward people, other dogs, other animals, or objects (e.g., pillows). Mounting can be associated with excitement, play, stress, or communication. See this [article](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/mounting-and-masturbation).

**Mouthy**: This commonly refers to behaviors associated with energetic, playful, stressed, or anxious adolescent or adult dogs. A dog who exhibits mouthy behavior may put their mouth on people (often hands, arms, and/or legs), and may even grab at clothing and/or the leash. This same behavior can be normal play between dogs. See this [article](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/mouthing-nipping-and-play-biting-adult-dogs). See *Jumpy/mouthy.*

**Muzzle punch**: Describes when a dog purposely bumps a person or animal with a closed mouth. This may be done in play or as a warning.

**Negative affect**: See *Affect, negative.*

**Negative punishment**: See *Punishment, negative.*

**Negative reinforcement**: See *Reinforcement, negative.*

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**: A clinical diagnosis made by a veterinarian. See also *Compulsive behavior; Repetitive behavior; Stereotypy; Coping.*

**Offensive aggression**: See *Aggression, offensive.*

**Operant Conditioning**: A training and behavior modification technique where we increase or decrease the frequency of behavior by adding or removing something (e.g., food reward, attention) See this [link](https://www.verywellmind.com/classical-vs-operant-conditioning-2794861).

**Overstimulation**: A response an animal displays when emotionally aroused often characterized by behaviors such as excessive vocalizations by dogs or cats; shutting down by dogs or cats; jumping and mouthing for dogs; or swatting for cats, etc. See *Arousal.*

**Pancake**: The action in which an animal makes themselves as flat to the ground and still as possible. This behavior is a fear based, freeze response and can be an example of “shutting down”. See *Shut Down.*

**Pavlovian Conditioning**: A classical conditioning process referring to Pavlov’s bell experiment when a predictable response is conditioned by pairing a neutral stimulus (eg: clicker) with a response eliciting stimuli (eg: food) See *Classical Conditioning*.

**Piloerection**: The hair (or “hackles”) raising on the back and/or neck (sometimes even all the way to the base of the tail) when an animal experiences arousal; often interpreted as “aggression” but it is simply their emotional response.

**Play:** Play behavior includes running, pouncing, vocalizing (e.g. growling or barking), wrestling, and often includes components of the predatory sequence such as chasing, rolling around, and biting. Play does not involve aggressive intent and can occur between animals of the same species, different species, with humans, or with objects. Play is an indicator of positive affect. Play between animals is usually characterized by switching offensive and defensive roles.

**Positive affect**: See *affect, positive*.

**Positive punishment**: See *punishment, positive.*

**Positive reinforcement**: See *reinforcement, positive.*

**Predatory sequence:** The instinctive motivation and motor pattern to orient, stalk, chase, grab/bite, kill/bite, dissect, consume; a series of motor patterns whereby one pattern triggers the next. See this [article](https://positively.com/dog-behavior/aggression/predatory-behavior/).

**Prey drive**: The instinctive motivation to chase, catch, or kill things.

**Punishment**: A stimulus that the animal does not like or want, and thus will work to avoid. Punishment, as a consequence for a behavior, will decrease the frequency of that behavior. See also *Aversive; Punishment, negative; and Punishment, positive*.

**Punishment, negative**: Taking away or removing something that the animal wants to reduce the frequency of a behavior. For example, when a dog whines, cries, or barks when they want attention, we remove attention (by ignoring the dog) to decrease the frequency of unwanted behavior. See this [article](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-negative-punishment-2795409).

**Punishment, positive:** Adding or doing something the animal does not like or want to decrease the frequency of a behavior. For example, spraying a dog with water (something the dog does not want) when the dog jumps on people to decrease the frequency of the dog jumping on people. See this [article](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-positive-punishment-2795411).

**Reactivity/ Reactive**: when an animal displays one or more behaviors during periods of emotional arousal, such as lunging or vocalizing towards another animal, human, or object - typically one that they are not able to access due to a barrier such as a leash or fence. Animals may behave reactively for various reasons, such as excitement, fear, frustration or aggression.

**Recoil**: when an animal backs away, typically from something they are unsure of or fearful of, sometimes arching their back at the same time or making themselves appear smaller to what appears to be and could be perceived by them as a threat.

**Redirect (attention)**: To interrupt a dog from what they were focused on and bring it back to the handler. See also *Aggression, redirected.*

**Redirected aggression:** See A*ggression, redirected.*

**Reinforcement**: the action of strengthening or encouraging something; something that an animal likes or wants and will work to get. When a behavior is reinforced, its frequency increases. See also *reinforcement, positive; reinforcement, negative.*

**Reinforcement, negative**: taking away or removing something that the animal does not want to increase the frequency of a behavior. See this [link](https://www.clickertraining.com/node/274).

**Reinforcement, positive:** adding or doing something the animal likes or wants to increase the frequency of a behavior. For example, giving the animal a treat, (something the animal wants,) when the animal comes to you to increase the frequency of the animal coming to you.

**Repetitive behaviors**: a normal behavior, such as jumping, barking, licking, or pacing, which is performed repeatedly. It typically occurs when animals are excited, frustrated, stressed or anxious. Stereotypic behavior, compulsive behavior, and obsessive-compulsive behavior are types of repetitive behavior. See this [link.](https://www.dvm360.com/view/repetitive-behaviors-pets-proceedings) See also *compulsive behavior.*

**Resource guarding**: the use of avoidance, threatening, or aggressive behaviors by a dog to retain control of food or non-food items in the presence of a person or other animal. See this [link](https://grishastewart.com/resource-guarding/). See this [article](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6004413/).

**Separation Anxiety**: anxiety which occurs when an animal is left alone and separated from people they are attached to. Behaviors associated with separation anxiety may include destructive behavior, vocalizing, pacing, panting, and inappropriate elimination. Dogs suffering from separation anxiety are experiencing the equivalent of a panic attack every time they are left alone. It’s important to differentiate separation anxiety from other causes (e.g. boredom, isolation distress, confinement distress) of the same behaviors, because they should be managed and treated differently. See this [link](https://malenademartini.com/logic-doesnt-apply-to-separation-anxiety/) to learn more about separation anxiety. See this [link](https://malenademartini.com/separation-anxiety-top-10-list/) for treatment of separation anxiety. See also *confinement distress; isolation distress.*

**Shaping (behavior)**: Behavior modification using stepwise reinforcement of behaviors that produce progressively closer approximations of the desired behavior. See this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgefxJAjXSM).

**Shut down**: when an animal is so stressed or anxious that they become unresponsive to their environment, behavior requests, cues. See also *learned helplessness; overstimulation.*

**Slow blink**: Slow blinks given when an animal is looking into the eyes of another person or animal, which shows friendliness or non-threatening purpose.

**Soft eye**: when an animal’s eye is relaxed and responding normally to light. The animal is relaxed and doesn’t have tense neck or facial muscles.

**Sound sensitive**: an animal that is fearful or anxious of environmental noise, more typical with loud, sudden, unpredictable noises. See this [link.](https://www.akcchf.org/canine-health/your-dogs-health/noise-phobia-in-dogs.html)

**Spraying (urine)**: Cat communication with urine to convey information; their version of saying “I was here”. May be a sign the cat can be stressed about something. A cat who is spraying urine typically deposits a small amount of urine on vertical surfaces, rather than emptying their full bladder. See this [link](https://catbehaviorassociates.com/why-cats-spray/)**.**

**Stereotypy (stereotypic behavior)**: persistent, apparently functionless, repetition of the same vocalizations, movements, or other behavior, particularly under conditions of social isolation, early social deprivation, or neglect. This term is rarely used anymore because repetitive behavior almost always serves some function (e.g, coping). Stereotypic behaviors may also be indicative of an underlying clinical condition, (medical or behavioral.) See *Repetitive behavior.*

**Stimulus**: an event or situation that results in a response from an animal. [See Link.](https://www.topnotchdogs.com/talking-dog-column/dogs-learned-behavior-explains-response-to-various-stimuli/)

**Stimulus, Conditioned**: A previously neutral stimulus results in a specific behavioral response due to pairing with an unconditioned stimulus. See this [link](https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/12783363623/sizes/l/). See also *Unconditioned Stimulus.*

**Stimulus, Unconditioned:** a stimulus that leads to an untrained and automatic response (e.g., food is an unconditioned stimulus that causes a dog to salivate). See also *conditioned stimulus*. See this [link](https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/12783363623/sizes/l/). See this [article](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470326/#:~:text=An%20unconditioned%20stimulus%20is%20a%20stimulus%20that%20leads%20to%20an%20automatic%20response.&text=An%20unconditioned%20response%20is%20an,eventually%20trigger%20a%20conditioned%20response.).

**Stress:** a state of mental or emotional strain or tension. Mild stress is often beneficial and helps animals to learn to cope with negative experiences. Severe or prolonged stress results in impaired welfare.

**Strike:** When a cat swats at a target (generally a person or another animal) with their paw. The movement is usually quick and forceful, with or without claws extended. This can be part of a defensive or offensive aggressive display. It is meant to create social distance.

**Submissive body language:** Occurs when an animal is trying to communicate that they are not a threat and their behaviors are an attempt to avoid conflict. Behaviors include lowering and curving the body, ears back, rolling onto the side or back, tail tucked. This term is commonly misunderstood. It is often misused to describe an animal’s overall personality. However, these behaviors are dependent on the situation and not a personality trait.

**Submissive grin/smile:** Occurs when an animal is trying to communicate that they are not a threat (i.e., *appeasement behavior*). The dog appears to be smiling/showing their front teeth. Often combined with other appeasement gestures to reduce tension or conflict, and is sometimes part of a dog’s greeting behavior. Over time, many dogs learn to display this behavior because it’s reinforced/rewarded, and it’s no longer an appeasement behavior. This behavior is often misunderstood and thought to be aggressive behavior. See this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=502LlV0auUI). Also see *submissive body language.*

**Tail carriage** The way an animal carries their tail, accompanied with other body language, helps us to interpret their emotions and intent at that moment. See this [link](https://www.hepper.com/dog-tail-language/).

**Tail flick:** when a cat quickly flips their tail side to side. This behavior is associated with increasing levels of agitation, and may suggest readiness for conflict.

**Tame**: getting an animal used to the presence of humans and/or human contact. Tame animals may approach humans and/or may not run away from humans, but they may not be friendly. Wild animals can be tame without being domesticated. See also *Domestication; Feral*.

**Teeth chattering:** A behavior associated with emotional arousal, and occurs due to excitement, fear, anxiety, stress or frustration. Non-behavioral reasons for teeth chattering include pain and response to cold. See this [article](https://forevervets.com/blog/why-does-my-dogs-teeth-chatter).

**Threshold**: The lowest level where a stimulus will cause a response in an animal. An animal who is above threshold reacts (e.g, excitement, aggressive behavior) to a stimulus. An animal who is below threshold responds calmly to a stimulus. See this [article](https://www.k9turbotraining.com/post/what-is-trigger-stacking#:~:text=Trigger%20Stacking%20is%20the%20combination,physiological%20effect%20on%20a%20dog).

**Time-out (exclusionary)**: The temporary removal of an animal from a rewarding/reinforcing environment as an immediate consequence of an unwanted behavior occurring in that environment. For example, a dog who is behaving aggressively toward a human or animal is put into another room of the house as a time-out. Exclusionary time-outs aim to eliminate the possibility of the animal being accidentally rewarded by the environment for the unwanted behavior. See *negative punishment*.

**Time-out (non-exclusionary)**: The removal of an animal from the rewarding/reinforcing aspects of being in an environment as an immediate consequence of an unwanted behavior,without taking them out of the environment. For example, a trainer stops interacting (a pause in training) with an animal when the animal is displaying unwanted behavior. A form of negative punishment in which something is taken away from the animal in an attempt to decrease an unwanted behavior.

**Tongue Flick:** A flick of a dog’s tongue which typically occurs when the dog is stressed, uncomfortable, or unsure of their environment. See this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMirei9-n18). See also *Lip lick.*

**Trainer:** A person who teaches people how to train animals. A trainer also teaches animals how to perform behaviors in response to cues. Some trainers are credentialed through a reputable certifying organization (e.g., CCPDT, KPA, CTC), which improves confidence in the trainer’s skills and background. There is currently no regulating organization for trainers and therefore anyone can call themselves a trainer without having to prove their knowledge and skills. See this [article](https://avsab.ftlbcdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/How-to-Choose-a-Trainer-Position-Statement.pdf). See also *Animal Behaviorist; Associate Applied Animal Behaviorist; Behaviorist; Behavior Consultant; Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist; Trainer; Veterinary Behaviorist.*  [How](https://avsab.ftlbcdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/How-to-Choose-a-Trainer-Position-Statement.pdf)

**Training:** Teaching animals and/or coaching people how to teach animals to perform behaviors like “sit”, “down” or “stay”. Training might improve a dog or cat’s day to day behavior, but can also be a sport and form of enrichment (e.g., agility or nosework). Training does not necessarily change an animal’s emotional response. Find a [trainer](https://apps.apdt.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=TrainerSearch) or [behavior consultant](https://m.iaabc.org/consultant/). See also *Behavior Modification.*

**Trigger**: An event or situation that causes an undesirable emotional response (e.g., stress, fear, aggressive behavior) from an animal. For example, when a dog is reactive to other dogs, triggers might include the sound of the other dog’s collar, seeing the dog, etc.

**Trigger Stacking**: The combination of multiple stressful agents or events in a short period of time, leading to an exaggerated reaction to a small stimulus. See this [article](https://www.k9turbotraining.com/post/what-is-trigger-stacking#:~:text=Trigger%20Stacking%20is%20the%20combination,physiological%20effect%20on%20a%20dog). See *also threshold.*

**Touch sensitivity:** a term used to describe an animal who is uncomfortable with the sensation of being touched by training equipment, clothing or people. Animals who are sensitive to touch may be uncomfortable wearing harnesses, sweaters, etc.

**Unconditioned Stimulus**: *See Stimulus, unconditioned.*

**Undersocialized**: an animal that has had no or limited interactions with people, other animals, environments, noises, and other experiences during critical periods of their development. This may result in fear, stress, or anxiety and an inability to adapt. For more information on how to work with an undersocialized dog, see this [article](https://www.marinhumane.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Under-Socialized-Dogs.pdf).

**Unpredictable Aggression:** *see Aggression, unpredictable.*

**Unsocial (anti-social):** a reluctance to interact with or aversion to a human or other animal due to a lack of experience, previous negative experience, and/or genetics. An unsocial animal might seek to avoid or might demonstrate fearful, anxious or aggressive behaviors.. See this  [article](https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/feral-dogs-and-shy-dogs-how-help-them). See also *coping; calming signals; aggression, defensive; aggression, offensive.*

**Veterinary Behaviorist**: a veterinarian who has completed a two to three year specialty training program in animal behavior which includes coursework, clinical case management, teaching and research and has passed a board certification examination. See also *Animal Behaviorist; Associate Applied Animal Behaviorist; Behaviorist; Behavior Consultant; Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist; Trainer; Veterinary Behaviorist.*

**Whale eye**: a sign of fear, anxiety, or stress where a dog’s eyelids are pulled back, resulting in a lot of white around the colored part (iris) of the eye; pupils tend to be enlarged. This is typically a warning signal of distress and if ignored could escalate to growling, snapping, and biting. See this [link](https://www.patriciamcconnell.com/theotherendoftheleash/whale-eye-nothing-to-do-with-whales).