



Meeting the Needs of the Behaviorally Challenged Dogs in the Shelter

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Behavioral and Emotional Health in Shelter Dogs

→ **Pets are exposed to many stressors when they enter the shelter**

- **Unfamiliar people and animals**
- **Different sights and sounds**
- **Unfamiliar environments**
- **Different schedules**
- **Different food**

What is Fear, Anxiety and Frustration?

Fear – an emotional reaction of apprehension and fright due to the actual presence of the very thing the animal is afraid of

Anxiety – an emotional reaction of apprehension or uneasiness to an anticipated danger or threat

Frustration – occurs when an animal is motivated to perform a behavior but is not able to do so (no outlet)

What is Stress?

- **Stress is the sum of the body and mind's reactions to anything that disrupts our normal baseline state of functioning.**
- **The body's response to stress is to return both the body and mind back to their normal state.**



Dog FAS & Frustration Scale for Shelters

Signs of FAS and frustration can be caused by medical issues. Behavioral concerns should be brought to the attention of the appropriate medical staff.

High

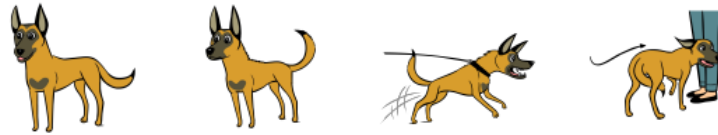
- Severe signs of stress indicate emotional suffering
- Urgent action is required
- Immediate environmental management is imperative along with increased daily enrichment
- Medication and behavior modification should be strongly considered (imperative if signs persist)
- If behavior continues to deteriorate, alternatives to shelter housing are required



May display active signs: aggression and reactivity; repetitive barking, jumping/pacing/spinning; wall rebounding, tail chasing, fence biting/licking; excessive panting, escape behavior, destructive behavior, or jumpy-mouthy interactions. **May display passive signs:** constant hiding, feigning sleep, not moving, avoiding social interactions, decreased play or exploratory behavior, poor appetite or refusal to eat.

Moderate

- Moderate signs of stress
- Environmental management is imperative along with increased daily enrichment
- +/- Behavior modification and medications and/or complementary/complementary/alternative therapies



May be hesitant but not actively avoiding social interactions with people, occasional hiding, occasional barking and jumping, occasional frustration related behaviors. May display a slight decrease in appetite.

Low

- Relaxed or mild signs of stress
- Prevent increase through environmental management, enrichment and daily routine



Normal behavior patterns including friendly behavior with people, eating, grooming, resting, playing, exercising, and sleeping. Relaxed body language. Good appetite. Appropriate social interactions.

Puppies



- **Under aged puppies should be placed in foster homes ASAP**
- **Higher risk of contracting infectious diseases**
- **Lack of adequate socialization in the shelter**

Behavior Treatment Plan

Management

- **Safety**
- **Avoiding triggers**

Training

- **Foundation behaviors**

Behavior Modification

- **Counterconditioning**

Natural Supplements or Behavioral Medications

Environment Enrichment

- **Shelter pets experience the world differently from us.**
- **Simple changes can be made to the shelter setting to reduce fear, anxiety, stress and frustration.**
 - **Tactile**
 - **Olfactory**
 - **Visual**
 - **Auditory**
 - **Gustatory**

Tactile



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Tactile Enrichment



Tactile Enrichment



Play with Toy



Olfactory



**Stuff cardboard tubes or boxes
with:**

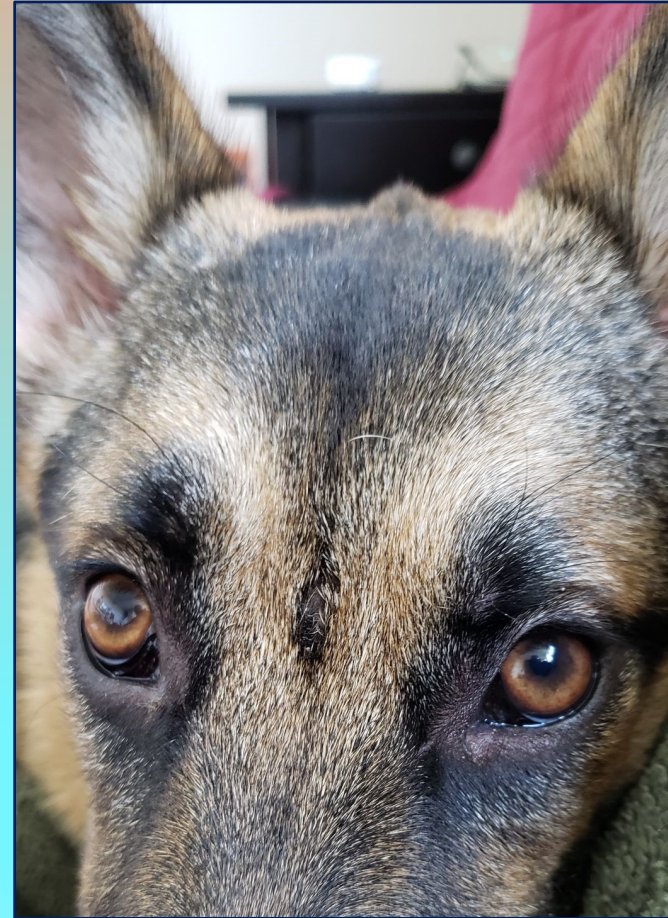
- **Sheep's wool**
- **Horse hair**
- **Brushed rabbit's fur**

Sniff walks



Visual

- **Use softer lighting**
 - **60 Watt**
 - **LED on dimmer**
- **Avoid hard stare**
- **Visual blockers**



Auditory



- **Classical music**
- **Through a Dog's Ear**
- **Reggae music**
- **Audiobooks**

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/science-with-a-smartphone-decibel-meter/>

Different Types of Enrichment

People interactions

- Walks
- Play
- Physical contact and attention
- Training
- Dog Day Dates

Dog-Dog interactions

- Parallel walks
- Play group

Environmental

- In room

Human-dog play



Training- in Room



Video Courtesy of JoyBound People & Pets

Positive Reinforcement Training Methods


- **Increased self-control**
- **Increased confidence**
- **Increased trust in people**
- **Decreased fears and anxiety**

Avoid the Use of **Punitive** Methods

Do not condone the use of physical punishment or harsh physical corrections.



Do not recommend the use of choke, prong or shock collars.



These techniques can exacerbate the pet's behavior problem and can increase the pet's level of anxiety or aggression.



Herron et al. (2009) found that dogs with aggressive behavior had increased incidents of aggression directed towards the owner or other family members.



Counterconditioning

Counter-conditioning can be used to reverse previous negative emotional response to a certain stimuli with a positive emotional response

Use food rewards, petting, praise, toys or play session.

Treat Toss



Video Courtesy of JoyBound People & Pets

Overnights and Dog Day Dates



Dog-Dog: Parallel Walks



Dog Play

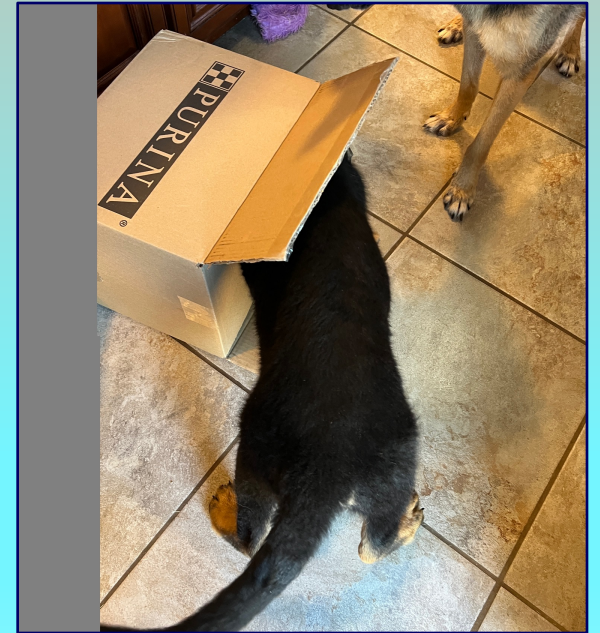
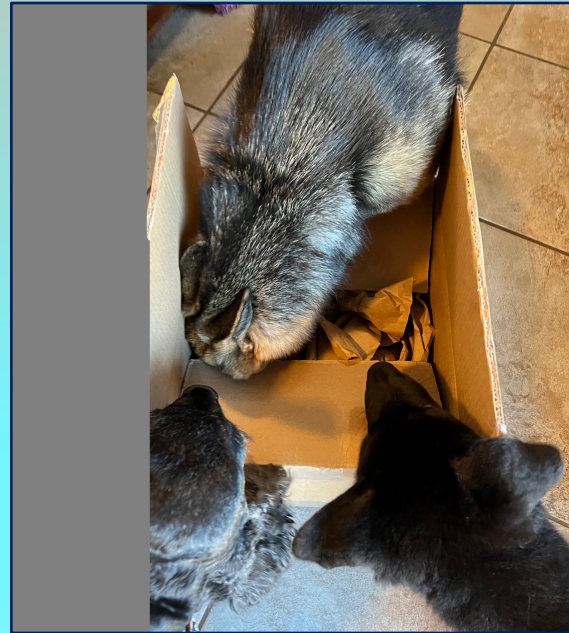


In Room Enrichment

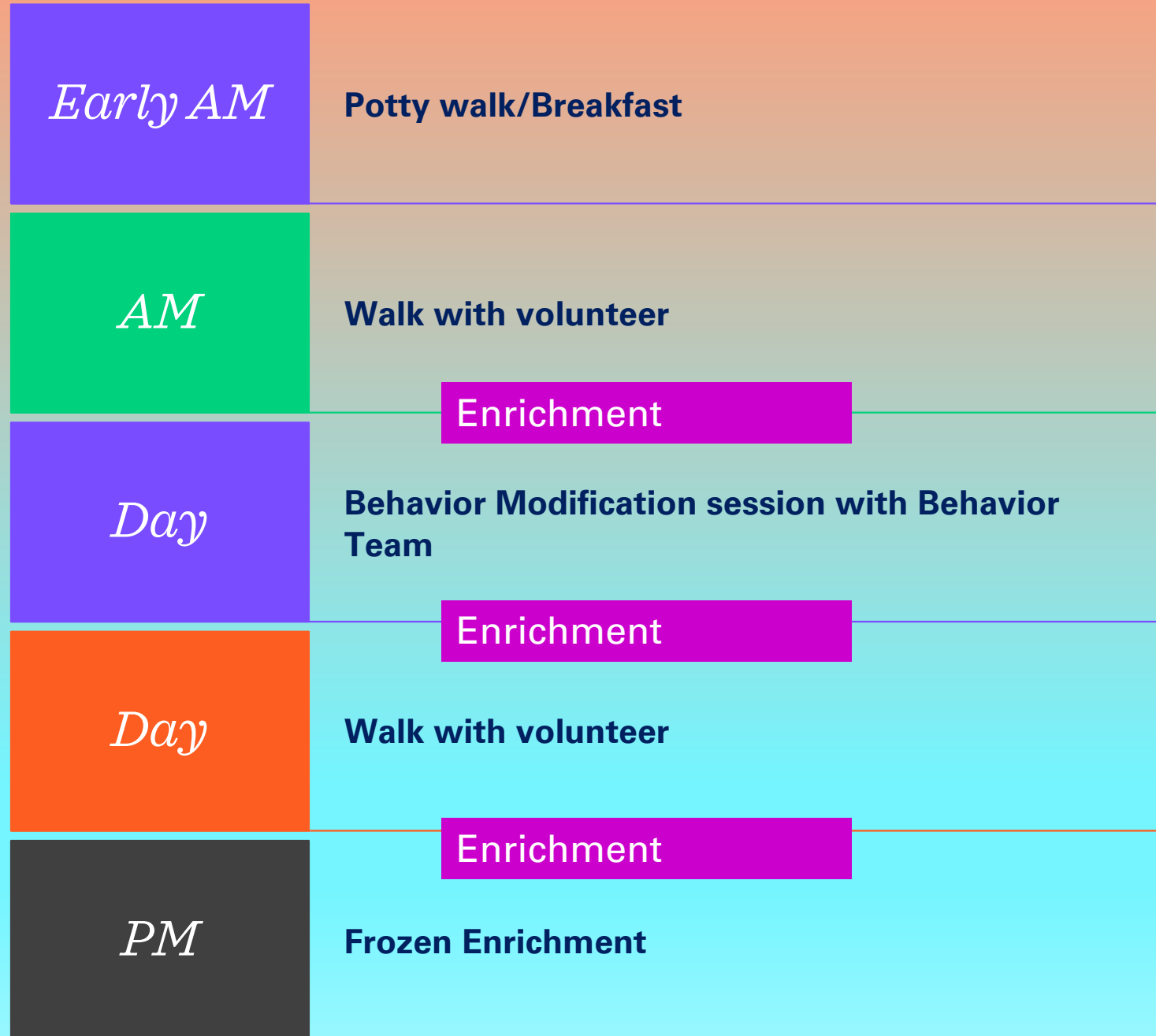


Video Courtesy of JoyBound People & Pets

Enrichment - Puzzle Box



Dog's Daily Schedule



Natural Supplements

- **Dog appeasing pheromone**
- **Alpha casozepine**
- **L-theanine**
- **Solliquin**

ThunderEase FKA Dog Appeasing Pheromone



- Synthetic pheromone
- Female dogs produce a calming and tranquilizing pheromone 3 to 5 days after whelping.
- Sends the message of constant security, safety, and reassurance.

Alpha-Casozepine (Zylkene)

- **Alpha S1 casein portion of milk**
- **Similar structure to gamma amino butyric acid (GABA)**
- **Have effects on the immunological and opioid systems**

L-Theanine (Anxitane)

- **Increases the concentration of GABA, an inhibitory neurotransmitter**
- **Inhibits binding of glutamate receptors**
- **Increases serotonin and dopamine**

Solliquin

1. **L-theanine**

- Promotes calm brain waves (alpha waves)
- Increase GABA, dopamine and serotonin

2. **Alpha lactalbumin**

- Found in whey, which has an especially high tryptophan content.

3. **Pheodendron amurense**

- Extracts contain berberine which has anxiolytic effects similar to diazepam and buspirone

4. **Magnolia officianalis**

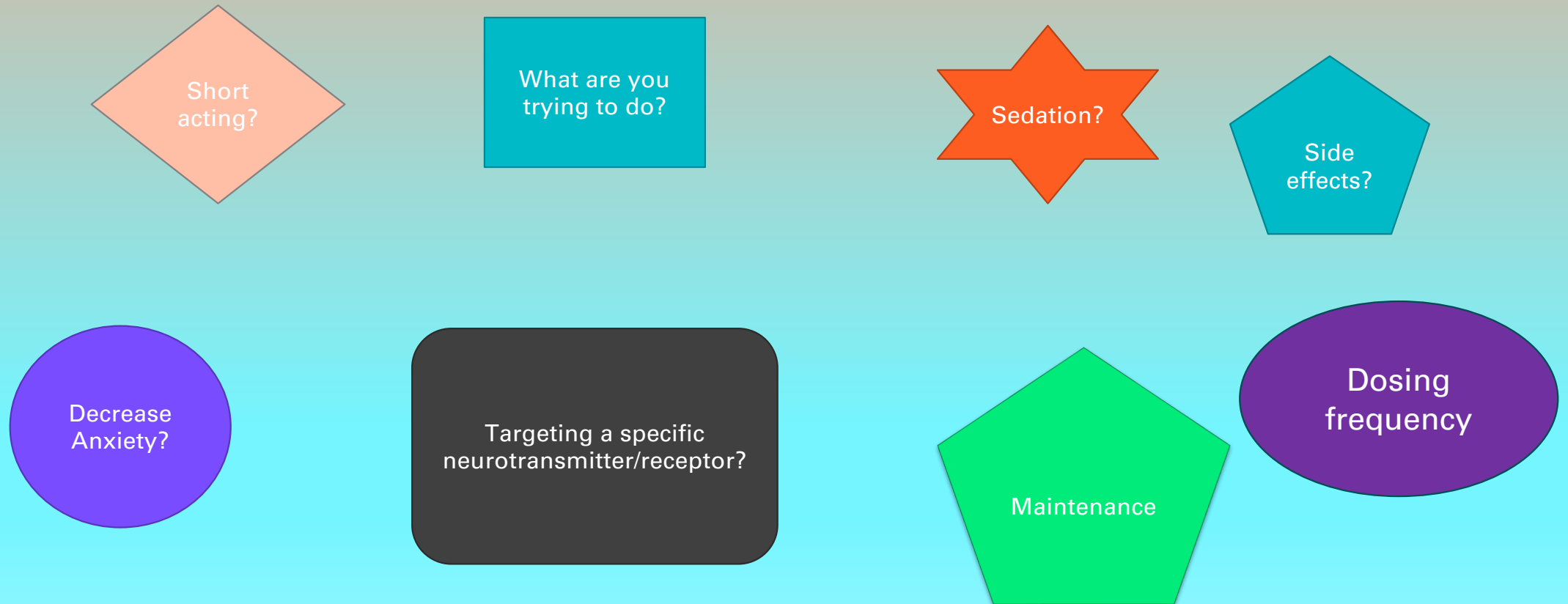
- Binds to GABA receptors



When to Use a Psychoactive Medication?

- **Reduce overall anxiety**
 - **Lower baseline**
- **Reduce intensity of reactions**
- **Reduce duration of reactions**
- **Reduce frequency of reactions**
- **Reduce recovery period**

How to Choose a Psychoactive Medication?



Medication Options

Behavioral medications are medications that we use to help manage symptoms that

Gabapentin

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

Clonidine

Trazodone

Tricyclic antidepressants

Pathway Options

Signs of Decline:

- **Shutting down**
- **Increased agitation**
- **Aggression**
- **Increased incidents of bites**
- **Decreased resiliency**

- **Foster**
- **Transfer**
 - **Another shelter/rescue**
 - **Working dog program**
- **Euthanasia**

Thank you

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