
Postgraduate Certificate in Balanced Dog Training

Canine Problem Behaviors

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Canine problem behaviors refer to any actions or reactions displayed by dogs that are considered undesirable or inappropriate by their owners or trainers. These behaviors can range from mild annoyances to severe issues that may put the dog or others at risk. Understanding and addressing these behaviors is essential for maintaining a harmonious relationship between dogs and their human companions.

Key Terms and Vocabulary

1. **Aggression:** Aggression in dogs refers to any behavior intended to cause harm or intimidate others. This can include growling, snapping, biting, or lunging. Aggression can be caused by fear, territoriality, possessiveness, or frustration.
2. **Fear:** Fear is a common cause of problem behaviors in dogs. Dogs may exhibit fearful behaviors such as cowering, trembling, hiding, or fleeing in response to perceived threats.
3. **Anxiety:** Anxiety in dogs can lead to behaviors such as excessive barking, destructive chewing, pacing, or house soiling. Separation anxiety is a common form of anxiety in dogs and can be challenging to address.
4. **Reactivity:** Reactivity refers to a dog's exaggerated response to certain stimuli, such as other dogs, strangers, or loud noises. This can manifest as barking, lunging, or pulling on the leash.
5. **Resource Guarding:** Resource guarding occurs when a dog displays aggressive behaviors to protect their possessions, such as food, toys, or sleeping areas. This behavior can be dangerous and should be addressed promptly.
6. **Compulsive Behaviors:** Compulsive behaviors in dogs are repetitive actions that serve no apparent purpose. This can include excessive licking, tail chasing, or paw licking. Compulsive behaviors may be a sign of underlying stress or boredom.
7. **Leash Reactivity:** Leash reactivity is a common problem behavior where a dog displays aggressive or fearful behaviors while on a leash. This can be challenging to manage and may require desensitization and counterconditioning techniques.
8. **Jumping:** Jumping up on people is a common problem behavior in dogs. While it may seem harmless, jumping can be annoying or even dangerous, especially for young children or elderly individuals.
9. **Barking:** Excessive barking is a common issue for many dog owners. Dogs may bark excessively out of boredom, fear, excitement, or to alert their owners to perceived threats.
10. **Chewing:** Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs, but it can become problematic when dogs target

furniture, shoes, or other valuable items. Providing appropriate chew toys and managing the environment can help address this behavior.

11. House Soiling: House soiling, or inappropriate elimination, is a common problem behavior in dogs, particularly in puppies. This can be caused by lack of housetraining, medical issues, or anxiety.

12. Counter Surfing: Counter surfing occurs when a dog jumps up to steal food or other items from countertops or tables. This behavior can be dangerous and should be discouraged through training and management.

13. Hyperactivity: Hyperactive dogs may display excessive energy, impulsivity, and difficulty focusing. Providing adequate exercise, mental stimulation, and training can help manage hyperactivity in dogs.

14. Destructive Behavior: Destructive behavior in dogs can include chewing furniture, digging holes, or tearing up belongings. This behavior can be a sign of boredom, anxiety, or lack of exercise.

15. Jumping on Furniture: Allowing dogs to jump on furniture can lead to dominance issues, territorial behavior, and unwanted hair and dirt on upholstery. Establishing clear boundaries and providing alternative resting areas can help prevent this behavior.

16. Agility: Agility training involves teaching dogs to navigate obstacles, tunnels, and jumps. This can be a fun and challenging activity for dogs that helps build confidence and strengthen the bond between dogs and their owners.

17. Clicker Training: Clicker training is a positive reinforcement technique that uses a clicker device to mark desired behaviors. This method can be highly effective for teaching new behaviors and shaping existing ones.

18. Desensitization: Desensitization involves gradually exposing a dog to a feared or triggering stimulus in a controlled and positive manner. This can help reduce fear and anxiety responses over time.

19. Counterconditioning: Counterconditioning is a technique used to change a dog's emotional response to a particular stimulus. By pairing the stimulus with a positive experience, such as treats or play, dogs can learn to associate the stimulus with something pleasant.

20. Positive Reinforcement: Positive reinforcement involves rewarding desired behaviors with treats, praise, or play. This method encourages dogs to repeat behaviors that result in positive outcomes.

21. Negative Reinforcement: Negative reinforcement involves removing an aversive stimulus to increase the likelihood of a desired behavior. This can include stopping a loud noise when a dog stops barking.

22. Punishment: Punishment involves applying an aversive stimulus to decrease the likelihood of an unwanted behavior. Punishment should be used sparingly and appropriately to avoid negative side effects.

23. Operant Conditioning: Operant conditioning is a learning process that involves reinforcing or punishing behaviors to increase or decrease their frequency. This forms the basis of many training techniques used

with dogs.

24. **Classical Conditioning:** Classical conditioning involves pairing a neutral stimulus with a meaningful stimulus to create a conditioned response. This principle was famously demonstrated by Ivan Pavlov's experiments with dogs.

25. **Socialization:** Socialization is the process of exposing dogs to a variety of people, animals, environments, and stimuli to help them develop positive behaviors and confidence. Early and ongoing socialization is crucial for well-adjusted dogs.

26. **Enrichment:** Enrichment involves providing dogs with mental and physical stimulation to prevent boredom and problem behaviors. This can include puzzle toys, interactive games, and novel experiences.

27. **Behavior Modification:** Behavior modification involves changing a dog's behavior through training, management, and environmental adjustments. This can help address problem behaviors and improve the overall well-being of the dog.

28. **Threshold:** Threshold refers to the point at which a dog becomes reactive or anxious in response to a trigger. Understanding and managing a dog's threshold is essential for effective behavior modification.

29. **Reinforcement Schedule:** Reinforcement schedules dictate how often and under what conditions rewards are provided for desired behaviors. Different schedules, such as continuous or intermittent reinforcement, can impact the effectiveness of training.

30. **Extinction:** Extinction involves withholding reinforcement for a previously reinforced behavior, causing it to decrease in frequency. This can be a useful technique for eliminating unwanted behaviors.

31. **Flooding:** Flooding is a behavior therapy technique that involves exposing a dog to a feared stimulus in a controlled and prolonged manner until the fear response diminishes. Flooding should be used cautiously to avoid overwhelming the dog.

32. **Systematic Desensitization:** Systematic desensitization is a gradual approach to reducing fear or anxiety by exposing a dog to increasingly challenging stimuli while maintaining a relaxed state. This method can be effective for addressing phobias and anxieties.

33. **Impulse Control:** Impulse control involves teaching dogs to resist immediate gratification and make thoughtful choices. This can help prevent impulsive behaviors such as jumping, barking, or pulling on the leash.

34. **Marker Training:** Marker training involves using a specific sound or signal, such as a clicker or verbal cue, to communicate with the dog about desired behaviors. This method helps clarify expectations and improve communication during training.

35. **Reactivity Threshold:** Reactivity threshold refers to the point at which a dog's reactive behavior is triggered by a specific stimulus. Understanding and managing this threshold is essential for behavior modification and training.

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36. **Redirected Aggression:** Redirected aggression occurs when a dog redirects its aggression towards a person or animal that was not the original target. This behavior can be dangerous and should be addressed promptly.
37. **Impulse Aggression:** Impulse aggression is a sudden and unplanned aggressive response by a dog, often in reaction to a perceived threat or trigger. This behavior can be challenging to predict and manage.
38. **Obedience Training:** Obedience training involves teaching dogs basic commands and behaviors, such as sit, stay, come, and heel. This training is essential for establishing communication and boundaries with dogs.
39. **Reactivity Training:** Reactivity training focuses on addressing reactive behaviors, such as barking, lunging, or pulling on the leash. This training aims to modify the dog's response to triggers and improve their behavior in challenging situations.
40. **Behavioral Consultation:** Behavioral consultation involves working with a professional dog trainer or behaviorist to assess and address problem behaviors in dogs. This process may include behavior modification plans, training techniques, and ongoing support.
41. **Behavioral Modification Plan:** A behavioral modification plan outlines the steps, techniques, and strategies for addressing specific problem behaviors in dogs. These plans are tailored to the individual dog and their unique challenges.
42. **Canine Body Language:** Understanding canine body language is essential for interpreting a dog's emotions, intentions, and responses. Signs such as tail wagging, ear position, and posture can provide valuable insights into a dog's state of mind.
43. **Threshold Training:** Threshold training involves working with a dog at a distance from a trigger that allows them to remain calm and under their threshold. Gradually reducing this distance can help desensitize the dog to the trigger over time.
44. **Behavioral Triggers:** Behavioral triggers are stimuli or situations that provoke problem behaviors in dogs. Identifying and managing these triggers is crucial for addressing and modifying undesirable behaviors.
45. **Behavioral Fluency:** Behavioral fluency refers to the consistency and reliability of a dog's responses to cues or commands. Dogs with high behavioral fluency can perform behaviors accurately and quickly in a variety of situations.
46. **Reinforcement Hierarchy:** A reinforcement hierarchy ranks different rewards or reinforcers based on their value to the dog. Understanding the hierarchy can help trainers effectively motivate and reward desired behaviors.
47. **Behavioral Shaping:** Behavioral shaping involves breaking down complex behaviors into smaller, achievable steps and reinforcing each step until the desired behavior is achieved. This method is useful for teaching new behaviors or modifying existing ones.
48. **Behavioral Compatibility:** Behavioral compatibility refers to the match between a dog's behavior and the
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expectations and lifestyle of their owners. Ensuring behavioral compatibility can help prevent conflicts and misunderstandings between dogs and their human companions.

49. Behavioral Reinforcers: Behavioral reinforcers are rewards or stimuli that increase the likelihood of a desired behavior being repeated. These can include treats, praise, toys, or access to preferred activities.

50. Behavioral Punishers: Behavioral punishers are aversive stimuli or consequences that decrease the likelihood of an unwanted behavior being repeated. Punishment should be used judiciously and in conjunction with positive reinforcement techniques.

51. Cue Discrimination: Cue discrimination involves teaching a dog to respond to specific cues or commands while ignoring others. This helps improve communication and clarity during training and behavior modification.

52. Behavioral Maintenance: Behavioral maintenance involves reinforcing and practicing desired behaviors to ensure they remain consistent and reliable over time. Regular training sessions and positive reinforcement can help maintain good behavior in dogs.

53. Behavioral Generalization: Behavioral generalization involves applying learned behaviors in new situations or environments. Dogs that can generalize behaviors can respond appropriately in a variety of contexts.

54. Behavioral Flexibility: Behavioral flexibility refers to a dog's ability to adapt and respond to changing situations or cues. Dogs with high behavioral flexibility can learn new behaviors quickly and adjust their responses as needed.

55. Behavioral Consistency: Behavioral consistency involves applying rules, boundaries, and expectations consistently to reinforce desired behaviors and prevent confusion. Inconsistency can lead to mixed signals and unreliable responses from dogs.

56. Behavioral Challenges: Behavioral challenges are obstacles or difficulties encountered when addressing problem behaviors in dogs. These challenges may include fear, aggression, motivation issues, or environmental factors.

57. Behavioral Success: Behavioral success refers to achieving desired outcomes and improvements in a dog's behavior through training and behavior modification. Celebrating small victories and progress can help maintain motivation and momentum.

58. Behavioral Setbacks: Behavioral setbacks are temporary regressions or relapses in a dog's behavior during training or behavior modification. These setbacks are normal and can be addressed with patience, consistency, and adjustments to the training plan.

59. Behavioral Progress: Behavioral progress involves making positive strides and improvements in a dog's behavior over time. Tracking progress, celebrating successes, and adjusting strategies as needed can help maintain momentum and motivation.

60. Behavioral Reinforcement: Behavioral reinforcement involves rewarding desired behaviors to increase their frequency and reliability. Positive reinforcement techniques are used to motivate dogs and encourage them to repeat behaviors.

61. Behavioral Punishment: Behavioral punishment involves applying aversive consequences to decrease the likelihood of unwanted behaviors being repeated. Punishment should be used judiciously and in conjunction with positive reinforcement techniques.

62. Behavioral Modification Techniques: Behavioral modification techniques are strategies and methods used to address and modify problem behaviors in dogs. These techniques may include desensitization, counterconditioning, shaping, and reinforcement schedules.

63. Behavioral Training Programs: Behavioral training programs are structured plans designed to address specific behavior issues in dogs. These programs may include assessments, behavior modification plans, training sessions, and ongoing support.

64. Behavioral Training Exercises: Behavioral training exercises are activities and drills designed to practice and reinforce desired behaviors in dogs. These exercises help dogs develop skills, improve responsiveness, and build confidence.

65. Behavioral Training Tools: Behavioral training tools are devices or aids used to facilitate training and behavior modification in dogs. These tools may include leashes, clickers, treats, toys, harnesses, and training aids.

66. Behavioral Training Techniques: Behavioral training techniques are methods and approaches used to teach new behaviors, modify existing behaviors, and address problem behaviors in dogs. These techniques may include positive reinforcement, shaping, desensitization, and counterconditioning.

67. Behavioral Training Methods: Behavioral training methods are overarching strategies and philosophies that guide how training and behavior modification are approached with dogs. These methods may include positive reinforcement training, balanced training, or force-free training.

68. Behavioral Training Principles: Behavioral training principles are fundamental concepts and guidelines that inform how training and behavior modification are conducted with dogs. These principles may include consistency, patience, clear communication, and individualized approaches.

69. Behavioral Training Goals: Behavioral training goals are specific outcomes and objectives that trainers aim to achieve through training and behavior modification. These goals may include improving obedience, reducing reactivity, or addressing specific behavior issues.

70. Behavioral Training Progress: Behavioral training progress refers to the advancements and improvements made in a dog's behavior through training and behavior modification. Tracking progress, adjusting strategies, and celebrating successes can help maintain motivation and momentum.

71. Behavioral Training Challenges: Behavioral training challenges are obstacles or difficulties encountered when working with dogs to address behavior issues. These challenges may include resistance, fear,

distractions, or inconsistent progress.

72. Behavioral Training Success: Behavioral training success refers to achieving desired outcomes and improvements in a dog's behavior through training and behavior modification. Celebrating successes, tracking progress, and maintaining consistency can help sustain positive results.

73. Behavioral Training Setbacks: Behavioral training setbacks are temporary regressions or relapses in a dog's behavior during training or behavior modification. These setbacks are normal and can be addressed with patience, adjustments, and consistency.

74. Behavioral Training Strategies: Behavioral training strategies are tactics and approaches used to address specific behavior issues and achieve training goals with dogs. These strategies may include breaking behaviors down into smaller steps, using rewards effectively, and managing triggers.

75. Behavioral Training Techniques: Behavioral training techniques are specific methods and practices used to teach new behaviors, modify existing behaviors, and address problem behaviors in dogs. These techniques may include shaping, luring, capturing, and fading.

76. Behavioral Training Tools: Behavioral training tools are devices or aids used to facilitate training and behavior modification in dogs. These tools may include leashes, collars, clickers, treats, toys, and training aids.

77. Behavioral Training Resources: Behavioral training resources are references, materials, and support systems that trainers can use to enhance their knowledge and skills in training and behavior modification. These resources may include books, videos, workshops, and online forums.

78. Behavioral Training Programs: Behavioral training programs are structured plans designed to address specific behavior issues in dogs. These programs may include assessments, behavior modification plans, training sessions, and ongoing support.

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