

Dog Owners Reinforce Leash Reactivity

Dog Owners Reinforce Leash Reactivity Through the use of Positive Punishment

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to provide information that supports the hypothesis that positive punishment method of training dogs reinforces leash reactivity and should not be used. Using positive reinforcement methods of training to teach dogs how to respond to stimulus to reduce and eliminate reactivity is the best approach to behavior modification. This research project will support evidence of how dog owners create and reinforce leash reactivity as well as the best treatment plan to help overcome leash reactivity, keep people walking their dogs safely, and keep dogs in their homes.

What is leash reactivity and why is it a problem and how do we reinforce it?

Leash reactivity is also describes or known as “Leash Aggression,” “Barrier Frustration,” or “Leash Frustration.” For the purpose of this article, we will refer to this behavior as Leash Reactivity. Leash reactivity occurs between a dog owner/dog walker, and the dog. Leash reactivity is described as anything that is an unwanted behavior while on a walk and on a leash. Barking and pulling on the leash towards other dogs are some of descriptions of leash reactivity behaviors. Other behaviors that fall under the category of leash reactivity are, whining, spinning, frequent marking, biting at the leash, or even a redirected bite to the dog owner. It is stated that leash reactivity can be genetic, hormonal,

or territorial, but in most cases leash reactivity is a learned behavior. Leash reactivity behavior can be initially derived

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from the barriers to meet and or play with other dogs as well as the aversive tools and techniques we use to attempt to correct this as an undesirable behavior. Leash reactivity is likely reinforced by dog owners failed attempts at applying a positive punishment technique for initial undesirable behaviors. This process becomes a vicious cycle. The dog is reactive, the dog owner applies positive punishment, and the dog becomes more reactive.

Leash reactivity is a problem. Studies have shown dogs with leash reactivity fail to meet basic welfare needs, which include exercise and socializing with con-specifics (Webster, 1994). Leash reactive dogs will not be walked, exercised, and often not socialized.

Reactive dogs are often neglected participation in extracurricular activities. Companion dogs that are leash reactive can become banned to the home, relinquished, or the most critical, they can be euthanized. Positive punishment plays the largest role in reinforcing leash reactivity. When positive punishment fails, the leash reactivity continues to be reinforced. Animals have been shown to respond to painful stimuli with aggression. Painful aversive stimuli used incorrectly and with bad timing can lead the dog to misinterpret the situation and through the process of attempting to distance himself, become leash reactive. The tools used for leash reactivity range from a sharp tug on the

leash to a choke, prong or shock collar. All of these tools are aversive tools and positive punishers if effective. Discontinuing the use of positive punishment methods and attempting to put the dog on extinction as well as incorporating positive reinforcement methods of behavior modification

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programs have become the best advised choice of correcting behavior problems and leash reactivity. Positive punishment is advised to be avoided. The punisher would be considered a successful tool to manage the behavior if the dog ceased the undesirable behavior after one or two attempts, but often this type of punisher fails with this behavior.

Introduction

As a Certified Professional Dog Trainer and member of the CCPDT organization, it is imperative that I provide behavioral counseling that is current, scientifically verifiable, and provide results to their problems in the most humane way possible. Many people seek out my assistance with a chief complaint of “difficulty walking their dogs.” When the clients elaborate on this subject, the description of the behaviors correlate to a behavior problem of leash reactivity. Leash reactivity includes barking, tugging to get towards other dogs, lunging on the leash, growling, howling, whining, spinning around while on the leash, jumping at the end of the leash, biting, shaking, stiffening, salivating, urinating or even defecating at the presence of another dog. Barking and lunging are the most common complaints. At this point, a behavioral evaluation is implemented. The

overall health status of the dog needs to be evaluated first. Pain and discomfort can create behavior problems and this needs to be ruled out. Upon finding the dog is in good physical health, a behavioral evaluation is obtained and a behavioral intervention plan can be implemented.

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Here is a list of some important questions to ask for the behavioral evaluation tool that would lead to a leash reactive diagnosis:

- 1) At what age did you acquire your dog?
- 2) If you acquired your dog as a puppy, did you socialize your puppy?
- 3) How did you socialize your puppy and starting at what age?
- 4) Did your puppy or dog experience any unpleasant encounters while socializing?
- 5) How did your dog respond to people and other dogs?
- 6) When did it become difficult to walk your dog on a leash?
- 7) What does your dog do while out for a walk that you describe as being difficult?

And the most important question is;

- 8) How do you respond to your dog's behavior when they bark and pull on the leash?

Many answers to the questions that lead to a leash reactive dog diagnosis reveal that dog owners have not socialized their dogs properly. Less than 40% of dog owners have

conducted any form of socialization with their dog from age young puppy up to 7 months of age. The greatest indicator of leash reactivity is the dog owners use a form of aversive or positive punisher to attempt to reduce leash reactive behaviors.

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Although early puppy socialization, and positive exposures with people and other dogs have been stated to support social friendly adult dogs, the use of aversive tools and positive punishment creates a set back and has been proven to become a reinforcer with leash reactivity.

Professional Veterinary Behaviorists, Animal Behaviorists, Certified Pet Trainers, and Professors of Animal Science have evaluated current research about leash reactivity. The above listed authoritarians are in support of abolishing the use of positive punishers or aversive tools and in support of positive reinforcement behavior modification techniques.

Through the investigation of this project, there will be a better understanding of why dogs are leash reactive, and what we can do to prevent and treat this problem.

What is Leash Reactivity?

Patricia McConnell is the Professor of Zoology at the University of Wisconsin and a leading authority on dog behavior. According to (McConnell (2008), and her book titled

‘Feisty Fido,’ she describes leash reactivity as “an unpleasant behavior that is usually displayed in the presence of other dogs.” McConnell also states “the same dogs that are leash reactive, often do very well with other dogs when off leash or unrestrained.

Although this is a very common complaint amongst dog parents, it is one of the behavioral problems that has the best prognosis and success rate for

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treatment” (McConnell, 2009). Quite often dogs that are on a leash, respond in an aggressive way, but off the leash, they have been found to be very social playful canines that interact non-aggressively with their con-specifics. According to (O’heare, 2007), “it is common for dogs to learn to make use of aggressive behaviors on leash. The key word here is ‘learn.’ In support of McConnell’s statement on leash

reactive dogs doing well with other dogs off leash, Howse (2018) and others

****reported that aggressive behaviors were rarely observed in the dog park with 69 dogs. She also states surprisingly there is little data on this subject. (Howse, 2018).

Although little is known about factors influencing dyadic interactions between dogs in public places. Threat appeared twice as often with dogs on a leash versus dogs off a leash (Rezac, 2011).

Pat Miller, author and certified dog trainer describes these behaviors as “restraint frustration aggression. Miller (2008). Miller is a highly respected Canine Authority. She is one of the first certified dog trainers in the US and writes frequent columns for the Whole Dog Journal. The American Kennel Club has been around since 1884 and set

some high standards for Canine Knowledge. They use the term ‘Leash Reactivity’ to describe a reaction or an overreaction to certain things or to a stimulus. The AKC also states that reactivity is not aggression per se (Rakosky, 2016). The term ‘Leash Aggression’ can be found more readily verses the term ‘Leash Reactivity’. If you type ‘Leash Reactivity’ into the internet tool bar, you will find 300,000 sites on this subject. Dr. Debra Horwitz DVM wrote an article called

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“How to help dogs that are aggressive during leash walking.” This article does not use the term “Leash Reactivity” but “Leash Aggression”. Horwitz describes leash aggression as barking, pulling, jumping, growling and possibly attempting to bite people or dogs. So in text, leash reactivity and leash aggression appear to be synonymous by their definition.

Applied Animal Behaviorist Karen Overall describes

“reactive” as “animals that respond to normal stimuli with an abnormal level of intensity.” The behaviors she uses to describe reactivity are:

- 1) Hypervigilance or alertness
- 2) Restlessness
- 3) Vocalization (whining, barking, howling)
- 4) Systemic effects (Vomiting, Urination, Defecation)
- 5) Displacement behaviors (Spinning or tail chasing)
- 6) Changes in content or quantity of solicitous behaviors (Miller, 2008 Pages 260-261).

Pat McConnell, author of “Feisty Fido,” describes leash reactivity as an unpleasant behavior that is usually displayed in the presence of other dogs. This condition can be exhibited by as dog that is:

- 1) Pulling or tugging on the leash to get towards the other dog
- 2) Barking
- 3) Growling
- 4) Lunging
- 5) Howling

Whining Dog Owners Reinforce Leash Reactivity

- 6)
- 7) Jumping
- 8) Urinating
- 9) Defecating
- 10) And or even spinning at the sight of another dog (McConnell, 2009).

Why does leash reactivity happen?

The most common and frequent response to why leash reactivity occurs is the use of positive punishment. Positive Punishers consist of a way of disciplining your dog in which an aversive is applied or added to make a behavior decrease. It is often ineffective. Positive punishment is described as ‘when a stimulus is presented following an operant and the operant decreases in rate of response.’ (Pierce, 2008). To clarify, positive punishment is an operant conditioning method of addressing or attempting to change a

behavior. If a dog exhibits a behavior that is undesirable to the dog owner, and the dog owner applies positive punishment, the behavior should stop. The punisher should be sharp and meaningful when applied for the necessity of the punisher to only need to be applied one time. The punisher would be considered a successful tool to manage the behavior if the dog ceased the undesirable behavior after one or two attempts, but often this type of punisher fails with this behavior. The intended outcome for positive punishment is a decrease in behavior, but positive punishment often becomes the reinforcer. For example, the dog is being walked on a leash with a choke chain. The dog sees another dog, becomes hyper-stimulated, begins to bark and lunge. The choke chain is tugged on

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creating a tightening unpleasant sensation. If the dog stops barking and lunging, then positive punishment has been successful. If the barking and lunging does not cease, then you are applying a painful stimulus without the positive effects of this type of punisher. If the barking and lunging behavior worsens with positive punishment, you are now reinforcing the behavior. (Pierce, 2008). Cases in which the behavior does not improve or becomes worse, confirms the behavior is being reinforced by the positive punishment techniques. Other descriptions of positive punishment would be a firm “NO” in the presence of other dogs, a correction with a sharp tug on the leash, a choke or prong collar, or a shock collar are examples. Leash reactivity can be prevented, reduced, and counter-conditioned.

The Learning process plays a huge role with leash reactivity as well. The learning process for dogs happens through association and consequences. Classical and Operant conditioning. For example, every time a dog is approached by an oncoming dog and they receive an aversive correction, they will learn to associate the dog makes unpleasant things happen. According to the Journal of Neuroscience and Bio behavior, if there is a punisher that is applied in the presence of a stimulus, the dog will acquire unpleasant feelings towards that stimulus (NewtonRessler, 2003). They will become conditioned to respond aggressively.

Dr. Horwitz has discovered that good history taking of these dogs is imperative. Early socialization or lack of socialization, improper socializing, *aversive corrections*, attempted fails at socializing, and how the dogs has responded to the above

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scenarios is all a part of coming to a leash reactive diagnosis. Horwitz, also states that the response to stimuli may be a fear based anxiety combination as well as a *learned response*. The two keys components to the above statement are aversive correction and learned responses are ways dogs become leash reactive.

If leash reactivity is a learned behavior, learned behaviors can be unlearned. If leash reactivity is reinforced by dog owners applying positive punishment, dogs can be taught how to respond to stimuli with the use of positive reinforcement behavior modification and counter-conditioning techniques. To counter-condition leash reactivity, the dog owner would need to avoid using these types of punishers and work with the dog under

the dogs threshold of reactivity around other dogs and apply positive reinforcement methods of retraining the dog's brain.

Two types of learning that are associated with punishers are Escape learning and Avoidance learning. With escape learning the dog will attempt to terminate an aversive stimulus by barking and creating a fuss. With Avoidance learning the dog will demonstrate trying to ignore the punishment. If the dog is unable to escape or avoid the punisher, they can exhibit a process of learned helplessness. To apply aversive punishers repeatedly to the extent of learned helplessness is cruel to physically punish your dog into submission. (NA, 2018)

People are under educated and misled to the fact that the methods they are using in attempts to stop leash reactivity is actually reinforcing the behaviors. Dogs learn primarily through association and consequences. If every time a dog is

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approached by an oncoming dog, and they receive an aversive punisher, they will learn to associate the stimulus dog makes unpleasant things happen.

Why are dogs leash reactive?

Leash reactive behaviors often start off with a dog that is being unruly to the dog owner in some way. Quite often pulling on the leash and or barking to get to dogs and people in an over exuberant way. These behaviors make walking difficult and the

response of the dog parent is to apply some form of punishment. Tightening up on the leash or giving a correction or a tug on the leash is often the initial responses. The aversive punishers often send a message to the dog that the approaching dog or person is problematic resulting in an increase in the dog's emotional response (Horowitz, 2015). Over time, the dog learns that the approach of other dogs predicts unpleasant and potentially painful circumstances generating defensive behavior (Haug, 2008). This becomes a vicious cycle. Dog sees dog, dog barks and pulls, dog owner tugs on leash giving a correction, dog responds with continuous barking and lunging.

Below is a list of motivations of leash reactivity according to (McConnell, 2010):

- 1) Lack of early socialization
- 1) Improper or poor socialization
- 2) Exposure to unpleasant circumstances and conditions
- 3) A rambunctious playful dog scolded while making attempts to play

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- 4) A fearful dog being scolded for barking at dogs in an attempt to make them go away
- 5) Unable to flee from an uncomfortable situation by restraint of a leash
- 6) Barrier frustration due to the inability to meet other dogs and establish a pecking order
- 7) Afraid or fearful
- 8) Frustrated because it can't get to the dog to play

- 9) Warning the dog to stay away because dogs can create a snap on the neck from their owner
- 10) Trying to entice the dog to come closer to instigate a fight (McConnell PhD, 2010).

According to (Oheare,2007), Leash Aggression can stem from:

- 1) The inability to escape or avoid an unpleasant or threatening situation

A CER (Conditioned Emotional Response) from the dog owners emotional behavior of tightening the leash

- 2) Other avoidance behaviors
- 3) Lack of socialization
- 4) An early traumatic experience
- 5) Punishment
- 6) Negatively reinforcing the aggressive behavior by increasing distance between the dog and the evoking stimulus (O'heare, 2007).

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O'heare, states that the dogs can also form what he describes as conditioned emotional responses that can develop from the dog owners emotional behavior such as tightening up on the leash and or avoiding the dogs all together.

When dogs are on a leash, the escape or avoidance options become limited and the aggressive behavior becomes the option since they are unable to flee. Two types of

learning that are associated with punishers are Escape learning and Avoidance learning. With escape learning the dog will attempt to terminate an aversive stimulus by barking and creating a fuss. Avoidance learning the dog will demonstrate trying to ignore the punishment(NA, 2018).

As stated above, many leash reactive dogs do well off the leash, but dogs that are trained with positive punishers can become aggressive. These same dogs that are not reactive off of a leash can become aggressive with repeated uses of positive punishers and aversive tools. Studies also support that dogs subjected to physical reprimands, scored higher on the aggression subscales than dogs trained with positive reinforcement. (Yuying, 2010).

All of the above descriptions initiate the leash reactivity behavior and dog owners reinforce it. Punitive collars such as slip leads, choke chains, prong or shock collars that can elevate fear and or cause pain to the dog may cause the dog to associate the pain with the trigger stimulus versus the dogs own behavior. Unpredictable punishment will increase the dog's anxiety level (Haug, 2008)

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Problem Statement

Up to 42% of dogs present to behavior clinics for aggression towards other dogs which places a serious strain on the human animal bond (Haug, 2008). Leash reactivity is a widespread problem across the United States. Dog owners inadvertently create and reinforce leash reactivity. Lack of puppy socializing, bad experiences during early

socializing, social dogs restrained and attempting to get to other dogs, dogs trying to avoid dogs, are a few fore-mentioned reasons behind why dogs may initially respond to other dogs by barking or tugging on the leash, but positive punishers reinforce the barking lunging behaviors. People are under educated to the fact that the methods they are using in attempts to stop leash reactivity is actually reinforcing the behaviors.

Positive reinforcement methods of behavior modification as well as techniques to modify behaviors are not common public knowledge. People rely on the media, literature, and friends and associates to provide often misguided information for the solution to the problem. When dog owners continue to reinforce leash reactivity verses attempting to modify the behavior with other techniques, the ramifications from owning a leash reactive dog are as follows.

Dogs that are leash reactive are a problem in multiple aspects:

- 1) They are hard to walk or take out in public.
- 2) Cant be walked

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- 3) Create scheduling issues when the dog need to be walked early in the morning or late at night to avoid other dogs
- 4) “A leash aggressive dog creates tension and welfare issues.” (Horwitz, 2012).
(Basic welfare rights are for a dog to be able to exercise and socialize with conspecifics (Webster, 1994).
- 5) They are dangerous.

- 6) They require extensive work beyond basic training.
- 7) They are unpredictable.
- 8) They are a personal liability.
- 9) They are a community liability.
- 10) They are a nuisance.
- 11) Lack of exercise creates other behavior problems
- 12) People can become resentful of their dogs
- 13) They are a potential liability
- 14) They do not make good companions
- 15) They are no longer a good exercise partner
- 16) They incur expenses for vet bills or in hiring trainers or dog walkers.
- 17) Dogs will be relinquished
- 18) Dogs will be euthanized

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The person with reactive dog in the neighborhood is labeled as having “the Naughty dog” and can be the victim of a personal attack. There can be social ramifications from having a reactive dog (SPCA 2017). This is such a common problem that the San Francisco SPCA provides a Leash Reactive Support Group. The SPCA

states that, “Guardians of leash reactive dogs often find themselves feeling isolated, embarrassed and emotional about their dogs behavior.” When dogs are difficult to walk, they are deprived of social interactions as well as exercise.

According to (Zazie Todd, PhD, 2013) and article writer for Companion Animal Psychology website, the number of pets relinquished to shelters for behavior problems is at 65% according to her study. (Table A). One of the big behavior problems that falls under this behavior category is “The Dog was difficult to walk” (Todd, 2013). Another one of the problems stated here is that dog parents are relinquishing dogs for leash reactivity and walking behaviors that could have a resolution other than abandoning them to the shelters. Dogs that are difficult to walk will be deprived from exercise and socializing. Dr. Karen Becker states there are other benefits to walking your dog besides exercise that include elimination, mental stimulation, training and socializing (Becker, 2011). Dogs that can’t be walked miss out on these opportunities and this can create other behavior problems such as boredom, which leads to destructive behaviors such as digging, barking, hyper activity and an overall unruliness (Becker, 2011).

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In a study composed of 36 potential Guide dog puppies in training, 5 of them were considered to be a nuisance for barking at other dogs which was deemed treatable, but 10 were considered disqualified for aggressive barking and growling while out for a while participating in walking exercises with guide dog walkers (Gazzano, 2008). This

calculates to 27% of the young dogs were disqualified for leash reactivity. Leash Reactive Dogs are deemed unacceptable in professional settings as well as companion dogs.

How do dog owners reinforce leash reactivity?

The environment plays a role on dog temperament, so how do aversive methods of training affect a dog? According to the article, '13 negative effects of aversive dog training methods,' Aversives are described as unpleasant stimuli that induce change in behavior through punishment. By applying an aversive immediately following a behavior, the likelihood of the behavior occurring in the future is reduced. But, aversives can vary from being slightly unpleasant or irritating, to physically damaging. It is not the level of unpleasantness, but rather the effectiveness the unpleasant event has on changing behavior that defines aversive.

The dog is the one that ultimately decides what is aversive and then we need to take into consideration the variables. The problems associated with aversive training are the potential for problematic fall out or inadvertently reinforcing the behaviors we are trying to extinguish. The side effects of these methods of training can be worse than the original problem that owners and trainers were trying to correct. What

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this all means is the methods people use to correct the leash reactive behaviors, exacerbate the problem. With Positive punishment, the punisher should be harsh enough

to stop the behavior once. If the punisher is considered too harsh for the dog, unwanted consequences such as fear and anger can result. Another negative aspect of positive punishment is that it tells the dog what they should not do verses telling them how to appropriately respond when they encounter other dogs.

*****Two types of learning that are associated with punishers are Escape learning and Avoidance learning. With escape learning the dog will attempt to terminate an aversive stimulus by barking and creating a fuss. Avoidance learning the dog will demonstrate trying to ignore the punishment. (NA, 2018).

Here is a list of 13 negative affects of dog training. This correlates with the hypothesis that we as dog parents instill most of the undesirable behaviors in our dogs through these methods:

- 1) Aversive methods often evoke defensive behaviors.
- 2) Aversive dog training can be reinforcing to the person applying them.
- 3) Aversive methods can evoke fear or anxiety.
- 4) Dogs can form associations from things used and generalize over into other areas. For example, if you shooed or swatted at a dog with a broom, they could learn to dislike a person with a cane.

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- 5) Once aversive methods have been used to the point in which you have a fearful dog, this new temperament is hard to eradicate.

- 6) Aversives can cause a dog to shut down and their cognitive functions can interfere with learning
- 7) When a dog learns to rely on defensive behaviors, this will become the dog's routine way to behave.
- 8) Aversive based methods can lead to stress, which can lead to other problems such as paw licking or scratching.
- 9) Aversive methods are not guaranteed to work
- 10) Punishment if non consistent can be confusing
- 11) When unwanted behaviors are suppressed through aversives, they can display other unwanted behaviors in other areas.
- 12) Dogs can learn to associate the aversive with the dog parent.
- 13) Aversive methods can deter dogs from offering behaviors making training difficult and more challenging (N/A, 2016).

Please review (Table B) for the results of how dogs respond to aversive training methods. Dogs subjected to physical reprimands scored higher on the aggression subscales (Yuying, 2010).

The other negative aspect to positive punishment or aversive techniques is the learned helplessness mechanism. Dogs can be psychologically harmed if they are

constantly place in situations in which they are restrained and cannot escape. Dog's initial response to painful stimuli or confrontation is escape or avoidance. Restraint and the inability to escape can promote learned helplessness. In a study in which dogs were placed in a shock box, they learned they could escape a shock by pressing a lever bar, and they chose the escape route. When they were restrained and subject to the painful stimuli of multiple shocks and they were unable to escape, because they discovered the shock termination was independent of their response. This is a phenomenon in which animals have been conditioned to expect pain, suffering or discomfort without a way to escape it. This is a learned behavior conditioned through experiences (N/A 2018).

Treatment recommendations

Evaluating the dog and ruling out any physical problems that could be causing the undesirable behavior is an initial first step to any behavior evaluation program.

Good history gathering and obtaining baseline information will allow the practitioner to diagnose the problem and devise a treatment plan.

Seek out the assistance of professional Behavior Counselors, Certified Pet Dog Trainers, Veterinary Behaviorists, and resource groups such as the ASPCA.

Assess and teach the owner basic training techniques and proper leash handling skills to establish a system of communication and a bond with the dog as well as a certain level of focus. According to the article "The effects of dog obedience training and behavioral counseling upon the human-canine relationship," dogs and people

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can benefit from basic obedience. It improves and enhances the human canine relationship, improves obedient behavior, reduces separation anxiety, and enhances a positive interaction between the dog and the owner as well as promoting quality time through training (Clark, et al. 1993).

Incorporate Sophia Yins' handling exercise for leash reactive dogs or similar training programs (Yin, 1995).

After a proper functional assessment, behavioral change programs are usually advised based on the clients goals for the dog as well as an antecedent management prevention program (O'heare).

3 important behavior modification strategies are:

- 1) Classical counter conditioning when approached by people and or dogs
- 2) Desensitization to people and or dogs
- 3) Increasing the control and ability to remove yourself and the dog from potentially aggressive situations (Horowitz, 2015).

Managing canine aggression in the home. Management allows for the avoidance of future aggressive episodes and minimizes the risks associated with living with a patient with this diagnosis(Pike, 2018).

(McConnells, 2010) methods for treating leash reactivity consist of:

- 1) Threshold work
- 2) Classic counter-conditioning
- 3) Operant conditioning using positive reinforcement, on cue

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- 4) Operant conditioning positive reinforcement, no cue
- 5) Operant conditioning positive punishment. CAT or BAT Programs

To counter-condition leash reactivity, the dog owner will need to avoid using these types of punishers and work with the dog under the dogs threshold of reactivity around other dogs and apply positive reinforcement methods of retraining the dogs brain.

This problem typically can be well controlled with changes in the dogs' environment, and the appropriate implementation of appropriate behavior modification exercises. Owners are encouraged to seek out professional help early to avoid injuries to other humans or dogs (Haug, 2008).

How we respond to, or program, or train our dogs to behave under circumstances in which they are reactive will determine the long term outcome..

Conclusions

The results of this project make a statement that positive punishment and aversive methods are quite often the method of control used by the dog owner to try and manage the behavior.

This article provides substantial information to state that dog owners reinforce leash reactivity through the use of positive punishers.

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Initially undesirable behaviors from dogs resulted in the dog owner applying aversive techniques and attempts at positive punishers. The positive punishers failed to stop the behavior and proved to reinforce the undesired behavior.

Continuous use of positive punishers that fail, reinforce the barking lunging behaviors that now become a conditioned response.

It was discovered that leash reactive dogs can often be in social environments with other dogs off leash.

Studies have shown that the same dogs that are receiving painful applications from aversive tools that are behaving aggressively on a leash, do not respond aggressively towards other dogs off the leash.

Leash reactive dogs are at risk for becoming aggressive.

When dogs are unable to escape painful aversive punishment, they respond aggressively.

When positive reinforcement methods of behavior modification techniques are used with leash reactivity, dog owners can divert their dogs attention long enough to provide positive reinforcement for the desired behaviors. This process teaches dogs how to behave.

When reviewing the various types of training methods with dogs, aversive training methods, positive punishment and negative reinforcement can jeopardize

the physical and mental health of dogs. Those working with or handling dogs should rely on positive reinforcement methods (Galziv, 2017).

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This is useful information because aversive techniques can be avoided, behavior modification programs can be applied, and we can teach people how to work with and understand their dog's personality types better.

Identifying the reason behind the behavior can often result in a behavior modification plan and a good prognosis for a healthy human canine bond.

As pet professionals, one of our duties is to help people learn about and understand pet behavior, provide a treatment plan, and live cohesively with the dogs and retain them in their homes.

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Appendices

Table A

Reason for Relinquishment Table. Kwan, J., Y. & Bain, M., J. (2013)

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TABLE 4
Reasons for Relinquishment ($n = 80$)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Not a Reason</i> (Score = 0)	<i>Somewhat</i> <i>of a Reason</i> (Scores = 1–5)	<i>Strong Reason</i> (Scores = 3–5)	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>Median</i>
Behavior (all)	28 (35%)	52 (65%)	39 (49%)	2.53 (0.25)	3
Not enough time for dog	28 (47%)	42 (53%)	31 (39%)	1.78 (0.22)	1
Behavior (aggression)	42 (53%)	38 (47%)	23 (29%)	1.66 (0.24)	0
Cuts in income	51 (64%)	29 (36%)	25 (31%)	1.49 (0.24)	0
Moving	52 (65%)	28 (35%)	27 (34%)	1.66 (0.25)	0
Vet cost	57 (71%)	23 (29%)	17 (21%)	0.95 (0.19)	0
Food cost	60 (75%)	20 (25%)	13 (16%)	0.80 (0.18)	0
Old/Sick	69 (86%)	11 (14%)	8 (10%)	0.49 (0.15)	0
Dog is too big	71 (89%)	9 (11%)	5 (6%)	0.35 (0.13)	0
Allergies to dog	73 (91%)	7 (9%)	5 (6%)	0.28 (0.12)	0

DISCUSSION

This study shows that 29% of dogs that were relinquished to shelters were for aggressive related reasons.

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Table B

Sample grading History from Dr. Horowitz

TABLE 2.
A Sample Grading History

DISTANCE FROM STIMULUS	RESPONSE	RATING
1 block away	Dog stops, stares, and gets very still but does not vocalize or pull.	1
1/2 a block away	Dog begins to bark quickly and pulls.	2
4 houses away	Dog is barking fiercely, pulling, and lunging.	3
2 houses away	Dog is barking, twirling, lunging, growling, and on 2 legs.	4
15 feet away	All of the above and handler can hardly hold the dog.	5
1 house behind	Dog is still barking, but not lunging, and owner can maintain control.	2
2 houses behind	Dog is calm and will walk on.	No response

Note: Each dog's response will be different.

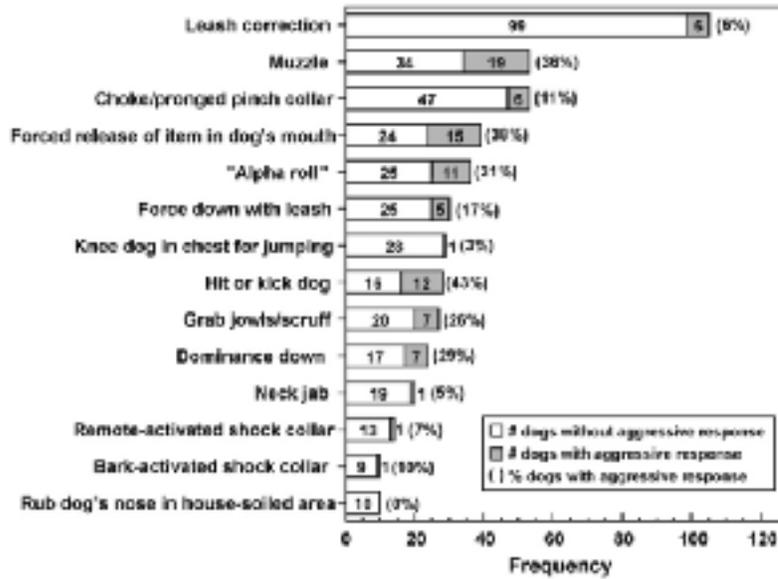
The chart above is a leash reactivity-rating sheet. It can help determine the severity of the leash reactivity and determine where to start with threshold work.

Dog Owners Reinforce Leash Reactivity

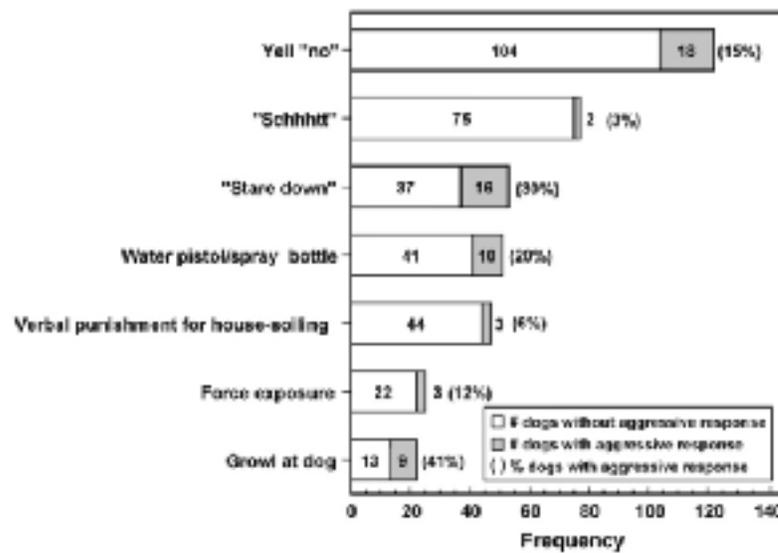
Table C

Percentage Ratio of Dogs that Respond Aggressively to Aversive Training Techniques.
Herron, M., E, & Shofer, F., S. & Reisner, I., R. (2009)

McArthur et al./Applied Animal Behaviour Science 112 (2009) 47–54



confrontation) interventions attempted by 140 dog owners prior to a behavior consultation and number of



Percentages of Dogs that respond aggressively to aversive training techniques

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Table D

Behavior Modification Protocols for Leash Reactive Dogs. N/A. (2017) ASPCA.

The Role of Rewards for Classical and Operant Counter Conditioning

To change an underlying emotional state, the owner must offer the pet something enticing that evokes a (hopefully) happier response. These "rewards" include:

- Treats that the dog finds especially enticing
- Play; some, but not all, dogs find play an enticing reward.

If a dog does not respond to either of these, **then the stimulus is too intense**. All dogs have to eat but are not likely to eat or play if they are anxious or frightened.

Training is more successful if there is a gradient of treats, beginning with those that are extremely desirable and progressing to less desirable ones. The owner should identify 3 levels of treats:

1. **"A" treats:** Very delectable; table food works best for most dogs
2. **"B" treats:** An example is liver treats
3. **"C" treats:** Biscuits

Extremely desirable rewards ("A" treats) are saved only for training and conditioning sessions and are withheld at other times.

Tips and tools for effective counter conditioning The goal of this program is to manage the dog's reactive behavior by teaching him to look at the person holding the leash when in the presence of other dogs. (ASPCA, 2017).

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behavior modification protocols

One of a series of ASPCA® Behavior Modification Protocols developed by Emily Weiss, Ph.D., CAAB



reactivity towards other dogs

The goal of this program is to manage the dog's reactive behavior by teaching him to look at the person holding the leash when in the presence of other dogs.

identifying dogs for the program

- The dog is a SAFER™ M1 and M2 dog on all parts of the assessment other than the Dog to Dog Behavior Item
- He is likely responds to seeing other dogs by attempting to rush in with tail high and ears forward, growling, alarm barking, or deer-fencing on the end of the walk.

before you begin:

- Provide extra canine enrichment for the dog in the program.
- Provide daily walks with skilled staff members and volunteers on a path less frequented by other dogs.

program instructions:

1. Teach the dog's "look" cue. The goal of using this cue is to have the dog look and make eye contact with you when you say the verbal cue.
 - a. Choose (classically condition) a reward marker (click, "good," etc.).
 - b. Hold a treat in your hand that is visible to the dog. Bring the treat up to the outer corner of your eye, then use your reward marker and deliver the treat when the dog follows the treat with his eyes and makes eye contact with you. Repeat until dog is reliably replicating this behavior.
 - c. Now say the verbal cue "look" and bring the treat up close to your eye. Reward the dog when he looks at the treat with his eyes and makes eye contact. Repeat until he is reliably replicating the behavior.
 - d. At J is point, begin to keep the treat hidden until after you deliver the "look" verbal cue and the dog makes eye contact with you. Repeat until he is reliably replicating this behavior in other locations besides the room in which you do the initial training.
2. Teach the dog the "tail" cue.
 - a. Get dog to stand head-to-toe with you.
 - b. Place bit of food between thumb and forefinger.
 - c. Bring treat (food) to dog's nose and get his attention with it. It is okay if he licks or nibbles at it, but do not give him the treat yet.
 - d. Slowly raise the hand up and as the dog follows it with his nose, move it back over his head a few inches.
 - e. As his head hits back, he is likely to sit.
 - f. As soon as the rear touches the floor, say "yes" and give the dog the treat.
 - g. Practice 6-10 times in quick succession.
 - h. After the dog is anticipating the next move and begins to sit before you move your hand up and back, he is ready to learn the verbal command. Take a piece of food, hold it in your hand at about waist level and when the dog looks like he's ready to offer the behavior, say "sit." When he sits, say "yes" and give him the treat.

1. Dogs need the opportunity to generalize. In order for him to really know the command, you must practice it in many locations, under various weather conditions, around different levels of distraction, and on different flooring surfaces.

Note: The two verbal cues are going to stay separate and you will not be combining the "look" and "sit" cues/fractions together. Asking the dog to sit will make "You are off!" You react to the initial stages of the program. Once the dog is adapted into a new home, he will be able to be on a half and be asked to "look" while remaining seated.

3. Now that the dog knows how to both "look" and "sit," another dog can be brought into the behavior modification.
4. I leave the reactive dog on leash and identify a safe distance from another dog on-leash to begin modifying the "look" and "sit" cues. When correctly identifying the proper distance to begin the program, the dog should allow into no reactivity.
5. I leave the non-reactive dog out of view and have someone helping bring him into view of the reactive dog. The owner and the reactive dog spot him say the "look" cue and reward him for the correct behavior. Then immediately ask the dog to "sit" and reward him for the correct behavior. Be sure you are rewarding each individual behavior in order to keep them separate. The non-reactive dog then leaves out of view. Repeat this until the reactive dog reliably looks and sits when you ask each time the non-reactive dog comes into view. If you cannot get his attention off the other dog, you likely have to begin from a farther distance.
6. Once the dog is successful at a certain distance, decrease the distance between the two dogs and repeat the above procedure.
7. Continue to decrease the distance according to the dog's success and repeat the above procedure.

8. Once the dog reliably looks and sits to a cue in the presence of many dogs in multiple locations, he is ready for adoption.

9. Keep a daily behavior log.

Note: This is not a behavior modification project, but a way to manage the behavior of the dog around other dogs. Be sure to reach the adoption home to use the "look" cue prior to the adoption to ensure that dog.

When the dog is adopted: Review the "Program for Reactivity Towards Other Dogs" instructions with the adopter which can be found in the Reproducible Forms and Templates section. Remember to follow-up with the adopter at three days, three weeks, and three months post-adoption.



Table E

Focus Exercises

If your dog barks and lunges at distractions or just drags you on walks, one helpful strategy is to perform fun exercises that help your dog focus on you. These exercises work best if you adopt quick, precise treat delivery and movement speed as well as posture and arm positions that make your signals clear.

The following is a set of patterns for combining simple exercises:
REPEAT SITS BACKWARDS, HEELING, REPEAT SITS ON THE SIDE and CHANGES IN PACE
 in ways that make focusing on you fun.

A. Repeat sit backwards; change direction by turning 90° or 180° (towards (1-turn) and continuing with repeat sits backwards.

B. Repeat sit backwards; change direction by turning 90°, 180°, 270°, or 360° and leading forwards.

C. Head forward; change direction, including to repeat sit backwards 90° (1-turn) or 180°.

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Focus Exercises. Yin, S. Dr. (2015)

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Focus Exercises

D. Heel forward: Change direction by continuing to heel, but in a 90° or 180° about-turn.

E. Heel forward: Change direction by continuing to heel but in a 90° or 180° U-turn.

F. Changes in speed: Sudden stops or a reward for 3-5 steps.

G. Changes in Speed: Sudden stops by using reward after heel position.

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior
The world's best and most effective animal training and behavior solutions from the world's leading expert.

Focus exercises teach your dog to pay attention to the dog owner instead of barking at lunging at other dogs

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