POWER POOCHES

ANXIETY ISSUES



- Separation anxiety
- Reactivity
- Desensitization and Counterconditioning

DESENSITISING: SLOWLY EXPOSING POOCH TO TRIGGERS OVER TIME

WHAT IS DESENSITISING?

Desensitization is a technique of exposing the pet to a stimulus that would normally cause an undesirable reaction at an extremely low level so that there is no response. As the pet becomes less reactive, it is desensitized through exposure to gradually more intense levels of the stimulus. Finding this threshold and developing a gradient for exposure are the keys to successful desensitization.

WHAT IS COUNTER CONDITIONING?

Counterconditioning is a treatment process that changes an animal's fearful, anxious or aggressive reaction to a pleasant, relaxed one instead.
It's done by associating the sight or presence of a feared or disliked person, animal, place, object or situation with something really good, something the dog loves. Over time, the dog learns that whatever he fears actually predicts good things for him.
For dogs with separation anxiety, counterconditioning focuses on developing an association between being alone and good things, like delicious food.

A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF ANXIETY TREATMENT



During desensitization to any type of fear, it is essential to ensure that your dog never experiences the full-blown version of whatever provokes his anxiety or fear. He must experience only a low-intensity version that doesn't frighten him. Otherwise, he won't learn to feel calm and comfortable in situations that upset him. This means that during treatment for fear anxiety, your dog should not be put into situations with their trigger except during your desensitization sessions. Fortunately there are plenty of alternative arrangements. (See Jake)

In addition to your graduated distance exercises, all dealings with your dog should be conducted in a very calm manner. The amount of time it takes for your dog to relax after a reactive moment will depend on his level of anxiety and individual temperament.

WHAT NOT TO DO



Do not scold or punish your dog. Anxious/Reactive behaviors are not the result of disobedience or spite. They are distress responses! Your dog displays anxious behaviors when confronted by triggers because he's upset and trying to cope with a great deal of stress. If you punish him, he may become even more upset and the problem could get much worse.

CALM. PATIENCE. PROGRESS.
THAT'S THE POWER OF TRAINING.

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