



Reactive Behavior

Does your dog cry, bark, or lunge while on a walk? If so, you've come to the right place. Whether your dog reacts to other dogs, strangers, cars, bikes, or something else, we'd like to help you understand what "reactivity" means and we'd like to share some information about ways you can help your dog. Sometimes, behaviors such as reactivity occur in some situations and environments but may not surface in another environment, so it's important to understand that if your dog is only reactive sometimes, it's not unusual!

Definition

Reactivity is a term we use to describe the behavior that some dogs display in response to certain stimuli; reactive behavior can include growling, barking, or lunging. Dogs display reactive behavior for a number of reasons. Some dogs are reactive because they may be fearful. Others are reactive because they may not have received proper socialization early on. And others may be reactive due to frustration. Dogs can be reactive to specific stimuli such as another dog, a stranger, certain sounds, or even objects in motion (bicycles, cars, skateboards).

Prevention

Here are some general tips:

- If your dog is reactive, make sure that you take treats with you on a walk so you can distract him and/or do some training while on walks.
- Maintain an appropriate distance with your dog. For example, if your dog reacts to bicyclists, you will want to keep some distance between your dog and bicyclists. Try to keep a distance such that your dog is not reacting. If your dog is showing reactive behavior (barking, lunging), then increase your distance.
- Consider using a head halter (such as a Gentle Leader) for walking; this type of equipment gives you more control.

How We Can Help

St. Hubert's offers several ways to help you address behavior concerns, such as reactivity, with your dog. We offer private training sessions with our behavior counselors/ trainers. This can be used to give you one-on-one consultation on the behavior and a protocol to help you manage the behavior. We also offer pet training classes, in addition to specialty classes including our Feisty Fido program. We highly recommend contacting St. Hubert's Training and Behavior Center where our professionals will be able to assist you in finding the right course of action for you and your dog. Our humane methods of reward-based training, fair leadership and simple kindness are renowned around the country and lead to more than 4,000 canine diplomas awarded annually. To schedule an appointment with someone from our Behavior Team, please call 973-377-0116. To view our class offerings, please visit our website: www.sthuberts.org and click on the Pet Training tab to see a menu of courses.