

## Safe at Home

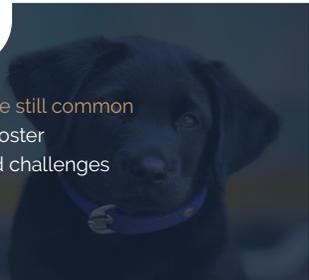
### Behavioral Care During Social Isolation



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## NEW NORMALS?

Behavior problems are still common  
Increased adoption/foster  
Socialization wins and challenges  
Still be a vet first



- SURVEY RESULTS: Only 6% of people were referred to a veterinary behaviorist for behavior concerns
- Most veterinary graduates do not feel prepared to support behavior cases
- Families still need and want additional information on meds and supplements

## WHY?

VanHaaften, et al 2020 JVB

## Behavior Problems

- 85% prevalence
  - 44% anxiety
  - 30% aggression
- Fear, anxiety, and aggression overlapped
- Thunderstorm phobia, noise phobia, and separation anxiety overlapped

Dinwoodie, et al 2019 JVB

## Behavior Problems

- Prevalent in 85% of dogs
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Dinwoodie, et al 2019 JVB

## Consequences

- Euthanasia
- Injuries to pet, other animals, and people
- Relinquishment
- Rehoming
- Difficult patients, hard to treat medically

## HOW ARE DOGS AFFECTED?

Caregivers are home all the time

Regular activity patterns disrupted

Virtual absence of caregiver (humans are home but not available)

Increased exposure to triggers

Increase in separation-related distress  
Increase in guarding or territorial behaviors

Sleep more or less  
Exercise more or less

Increase in attention-seeking behavior

Increase in fear-response (avoidance, growling, barking, biting)

7

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## FOSTERING/ADOPTION

Foster and adoption has significantly increased in recent weeks

- Fostering and adopting **WELL** is a SKILL
  - Most people are not taught
  - But they can learn quickly!



9

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## SOCIAL ISOLATION

Socialization

-easier

-more challenging

Separation anxiety

-good for now!

Unruly Behaviors

-more challenging

Back to work?

-MAY DAY!

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## BE A VET FIRST!

- Do a physical exam
  - If possible
- Sedate
  - If needed
- Get lab work
- Treat medical problems
  - very proactively



13

## BEHAVIORAL CARE COVID-STYLE

- Great schedule
- Socialization plan
- Prevent separation anxiety
- Treat current problems
  - SA
  - Territorial aggression
  - Leash reactivity

14

## THE BEST SCHEDULE IS CRITICAL

- Prevention
- Problem solving



15

## WORRY LESS, WAG MORE DAILY ROUTINE

WAKE-UP RITUAL | 6:00 AM - 7:30 AM

Wake up for a fun hike or walk

WORK START-UP RITUAL | 7:30 AM - 10:00 AM

30's breakfast through challenge hunt

WORK BREAK | 10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Training for fun

MID-MORNING WORK | 10:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Nap time in safe zone

LUNCH AND WALK | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Human lunch and walk

AFTERNOON WORK | 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Rest of breakfast in digging box, safe zone nap

WORK BREAK | 3:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Play break

AFTERNOON WORK | 3:15 PM - 5:00 PM

Safe zone nap

WORK DAY SHUTDOWN RITUAL | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Spilling walk and dinner in slow feeder bowl,

hangout with family

BEDTIME RITUAL | 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Relief walk and bedtime

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT US AT  
[WWW.BEHAVIORVETSNYC.COM](http://WWW.BEHAVIORVETSNYC.COM)



Behavior Vets  
Worry less. Wag more.  
A Division of VCA

16

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17

“The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior believes it should be the **standard of care** for puppies to receive socialization **before** they are fully vaccinated.”



18

## BODY LANGUAGE

WE WANT	THIS LOOKS LIKE
Calm and relaxed	Lies down easily
Watches Calmly	Soft eyes, easily interrupted
Greets Happily	Whole Body Wags
Active Engagement	Comes over to you readily

19

## BODY LANGUAGE

WE DON'T WANT	THIS LOOKS LIKE
Unable to settle	Sleeps less than 17 hours, wakes up easily
Watches Intently	Stiff body, focused on others, can't interrupt
Avoidance	Tail Tucks, Backs Away, Hides, or Stiff, Stares, Growls, Barks, Lunges
Hyperactive/anxious	Cries and jumps when greeting, mouthy - can be misinterpreted as "excited"

20



**The Scoring System**

Progress	Score	Response
Needs Work	1	<b>Overaroused</b> or Trying to "Get At" Growl, nip, bark, struggle, or lunge
Needs Work	2	<b>Avoid</b> Struggle, hide, try to get away, won't approach, or hesitant to approach
Needs Work	3	<b>Freeze</b> Holds still (but not eating), non-exploratory, moving slowly or acting sleepy when they shouldn't be tired
Going Well	4	<b>Calm - with food</b> Relaxed, explores the object or environment, playful, focused on the food
Going SUPER Well	5	<b>Calm - even without food</b> Relaxed, explores the object or environment, playful



# Social Distancing

The 6 foot bubble will HELP!



## PARK IT GAME INGREDIENTS

- YOU
- YOUR PUPPY
- 6 FT LEASH
- 12 FT BLANKET
- A PLACE TO WATCH THE WORLD GO BY

WWW.BEHAVIORVETSNYC.COM



## Leave Your Dog Alone

- In a crate in the same room
- In a crate in a different room
- In a crate home alone

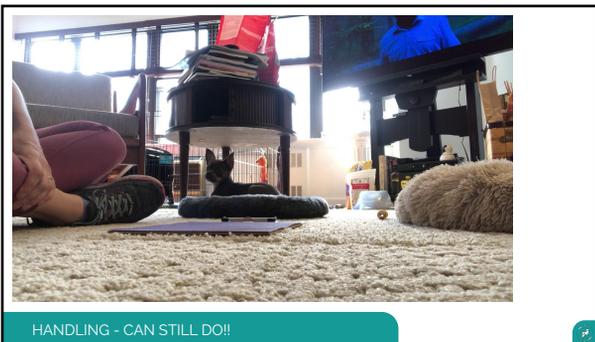
### Things To Do Inside

Wear Different Things  
Change The Environment Daily - move furniture!  
Create an obstacle course  
Explore the hallway  
Handling, Sound/Movement Desensitization

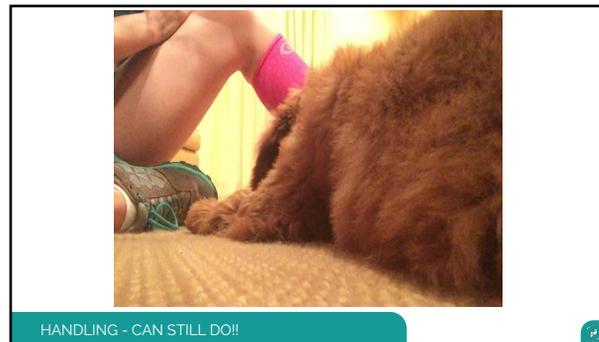
- Checking the ears
- Examining mouth and gums
- Opening the eyelids
- Squeezing the feet
- Wiping the feet
- Handling and trimming toenails
- Pinching skin
- Poking skin with a capped pen
- Cradling puppy in your arms
- Holding puppy on your lap
- Place puppy on their side/back
- Hugging puppy
- Putting harness on/off
- Grabbing their collar
- Putting on a muzzle
- Wiping body with a towel
- Putting on sweater/coat
- Putting on booties

HANDLING - CAN STILL DO!!





HANDLING - CAN STILL DO!!



HANDLING - CAN STILL DO!!



- Concrete
- Wet Concrete
- Slippery Concrete
- Metal Grates
- Vet Hospital Scales
- Tile/Marble
- Hardwood
- Stairs/Elevator
- Grass
- Wet Grass
- Sand/Mud
- Ice/Frost/Snow



NEW SURFACES - CAN STILL DO!!



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NEW SURFACES - CAN STILL DO!!



- Knocking
- Doorbell
- Phone
- Alarms
- Sirens
- Jackhammer/construction
- Bus brakes
- Motorcycles
- Thunder
- Fireworks
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Hair Dryer
- Blender
- Dogs Barking
- Skateboard

**HOW TO**

(1) Find sounds on youtube

(2) Play them on your phone  
- quietly

(1) Play them on your computer  
- a bit louder

(1) Play them on your tv  
- loudest

SOUNDS - CAN STILL DO




**BEHAVIORAL CARE COVID-STYLE**

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## PREVENT SA

- Leave daily
  - Downplay departures
- Practice with a safe zone
- Enrichment daily



37



DESENSITIZATION AND COUNTER-CONDITIONING

38

## FOOD ENRICHMENT

Provide a variety

Rotate toys and puzzles

- Create a scavenger hunt
- Kongs
  - Snuffle Mat
  - Licki Mat
  - Nina Ottosson puzzles
  - West Paws Zogoflex
  - DIY puzzles

Strategically use food puzzles to give the dog something to do



39



40



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41

## TREATMENT BASICS

### Safe Zone

- teach animal to use
- use daily

### R+ Relaxed Behavior

- offered not cued
- 50 X day

### Medications

- fast acting
- slow acting
- combo



42

## CREATE A SAFE ZONE

### MAKE IT A FUN PLACE TO HANGOUT

- Comfortable bed or soft blanket
- Noise buffer - white noise machine, audio book, classical or reggae music
- Food puzzle toy - Kongs, snuffle mat, etc.
- Adaptil diffuser - synthetic pheromone therapy

43

## REINFORCE RELAXED BEHAVIOR

THIS IMPORTANT CONCEPT IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMONLY OVERLOOKED

- High energy dogs may struggle to relax by themselves - role of exercise and enrichment
- Reinforce calm and cooperative behaviors whenever they occur in real life
- Helps teach a dog to be well-behaved, not just obedient
- Incorporate it into daily life

44

## Indications for Medications

- Pet is suffering now
- Family doesn't want supplements
- Injuries to self or others
- Family considering rehoming, euthanasia, surrender
- Human-animal bond suffering/at-risk

45

## TREAT SA

- Practice departures
  - Needs professional help
  - Can make problem worse
- No punishment
- Healthy exercise
- Auditory/olfactory owner cues
- Calmer Canine
- **Start MEDS ASAP!**

46



Tito - At A Year

47



## TREAT TERRITORIAL AGGRESSION

- Avoid visitors
- Counter conditioning
- Muzzle training
- Medication trials

48



Tito - Puppy in need of HELP

### TREAT LEASH REACTIVITY

- Avoidance
- Right equipment
- Muzzle training
- Counter-conditioning
- Medications

MEDICATIONS

## Adaptive fear

*Running away from a snake*

VS

## Maladaptive Fear

*Running away from a tissue*

### Training/Therapy

- May function to strengthen pathways from the cortex
- Decreasing the response to the trigger (rather than actually re-writing or erasing the fear)

### WHAT IS ABNORMAL?

WHEN SHOULD YOU CONSIDER A VETERINARY BEHAVIORIST?

Restlessness	Reluctance to interact
Trembling and panting when not hot/cold	Fearful or anxiety-related responses are new or change in intensity
Change in appetite	Difficulty coping with change
Vomiting or diarrhea	Excessive startle response
Increased irritability	Poor recovery from startle
Global fear	

## WHEN TO USE MEDICATIONS?

- Emotional quality of life is compromised
- Triggers are unavoidable
- Response is intense or unsafe
- Recovery is poor
- Time budget for pet is abnormal
- Injuries or medical problems related to behavioral disorder
- Appropriate training has failed or plateaued

## WHAT CAN MEDICATIONS HELP?

Research shows medications and supplements can be helpful for:

- Owner-directed aggression
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Urine marking
- Separation anxiety
- Thunderstorm phobia
- Noise fear/phobia
- Fear-aggression towards strangers
- Fear and aggression during veterinary handling
- Compulsive/stereotypic behaviors

## HOW TO DECIDE?

- What is the diagnosis? Symptoms?
- How fast is coverage needed?
- How long does it need to last?
- What happens when it wears off?
- Potential side effects?
- Target signs?
- How will side effects and target signs be tracked?
- Drug interactions?
- On/off label?
- Could other behavior problems be made worse with this plan?
- Ongoing medical problems?
- What neurotransmitters am I targeting with this protocol?
- Why those? Why not something else?
- Do these medications work on the same neurotransmitter in the same way?
- What is the suspected treatment duration for this disorder?
- Owners willing to give meds?
- Any concerns about clients taking or selling this medication?

## Improvement

- Able to eat, play, follow cues in a situation where pet couldn't before
- Less intense negative responses
- Less frequent negative responses
- Faster recovery
- Smaller personal bubble



Tater Before Zentrol-Video 1



Tater Before Zentrol-Video 2



Tater After Zentrol



## Medication Advantages

- Generally minimal side effects
- More robust research
- Good consistency of product
- Ability to check interactions



## Slow? Fast? Slow *and* Fast?

### Slow-Acting (4-8 weeks)

- Help patient learn over time
- Even control of symptoms
- Trigger is daily
- Trigger is unavoidable
- Trigger is unpredictable

### Fast-Acting (30 min to 2 hrs)

- Need improvements now
- Symptom relief may wax and wane
- Trigger is time limited
- Trigger is avoidable
- Trigger is predictable



## Options: Daily, Slow Acting Meds

### Medication

Prozac/Reconcile, Paxil, Zoloft  
Clomicalm, Elavil  
Anipryl  
Venlafaxine

### Mechanism of Action

5HT  
5HT, NE, DA, H  
DA, NE, 5HT  
5HT, NE



## Options: Fast-Acting meds

### Medication

Diazepam, alprazolam, etc  
Gabapentin  
Sileo  
Clonidine  
Trazodone  
Propranolol  
Hydroxyzine  
Acepromazine

### Mechanism of Action

Gaba  
Glutamate  
Alpha-2 agonist  
Alpha-2 agonist  
5HT  
Beta blocker  
Antihistamine  
DA (lower)



## BEHAVIORAL CARE COVID-STYLE

If you are not comfortable

**REACH OUT OR REFER**

to a Behavior Vet

## CONCLUSION

Behavior problems still common

Adoption/foster and socialization present immediate challenges

Having quick tips and resources will help

Utilize free webinars, professional online classes, and referrals when needed



67

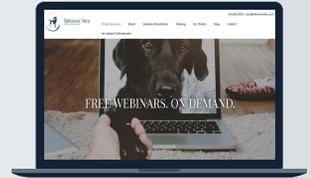
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Thank You!  
Questions?



68