

Modifying Dog Resource Guarding

This playbook outlines the steps to safely address and modify resource guarding behavior in dogs. The goal is to promote peaceful coexistence by reducing aggressive tendencies related to guarding resources such as food, toys, or spaces.

Step 1: **Assessment**

Assess the dog's behavior to determine the severity and triggers of the resource guarding. Observe the dog's reactions to different stimuli when guarding resources.

Step 2: **Consultation**

Consult a professional animal behaviorist or a qualified dog trainer who has experience dealing with resource guarding. Prepare to share your assessment findings during the consultation.

Step 3: **Create Plan**

Develop a behavior modification plan based on the professional's assessment and recommendations. The plan should prioritize safety and be tailored to your dog's specific needs.

Step 4: **Safety Measures**

Implement safety measures to prevent bites or escalation. This may include using gates to separate spaces, maintaining a safe distance,

and ensuring that the dog cannot access the guarded resources without supervision.

Step 5: Desensitization

Begin a desensitization process by gradually exposing the dog to the triggering situation at a distance or intensity that does not provoke guarding behavior, and slowly decrease the distance or increase the intensity over time.

Step 6: Counter-Conditioning

Pair the presence of a person or another animal near the guarded resource with something positive, like treats or praise, to change the dog's emotional response to the situation.

Step 7: Training Sessions

Conduct regular training sessions that focus on commands such as 'leave it', 'drop it', and 'stay', to improve control and communication with the dog.

Step 8: Monitor Progress

Keep track of progress and any changes in the dog's behavior, and adjust the behavior modification plan as necessary. Continuously reassess the level of resource guarding and the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Step 9: Consistency

Maintain consistency in the modification techniques and ensure that all members of the household are on the same page and working together.

Step 10: **Follow-Up**

Schedule follow-up consultations with the professional to evaluate the dog's behavior, discuss any concerns, and make adjustments to the behavior modification plan if needed.

General Notes

Patience

Understand that behavior modification takes time and patience. Do not rush the process—progress may be slow and gradual.

No Punishment

Avoid using punishment as it can exacerbate aggression and worsen resource guarding behavior. Focus on positive reinforcement techniques.

Safety First

Always prioritize the safety of people and other pets. If at any point you feel unsafe or unable to manage the behavior, seek professional help immediately.