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***Re socialize a stressed up dog.***

According to many experts the most unique aspect of canine behaviour is the ability to form a strong emotional attachment to humans.

However, in order for a dog to truly bond the dog as a puppy must be socialized at an early age and continuously thereafter.

The most crucial time for dogs to form attachments to humans must occur while they are very young.

Usually such socialization takes place from the third week of a puppy's life – (even before that).

Without close and personal nurturing dogs will eventually experience difficulty in the bonding process.

Neglect, abuse or mistreatment can weaken the human/dog bond.

In some cases humans can be successful in re-establishing those bonds.

## **Looking at four stages recognized in re-socialization:**

### Stage one.

#### Escape stage.

This stage is characterized by an extreme show of fear upon sight of a human.

Usually if the animal is confined it tries desperately to escape by digging, pawing or jumping into the air.

If escape is impossible the dog will then resort to retreat.

It finds a corner farthest from the human then crouches, cowers, pants, trembles, tail between the legs salivates defecates and/or urinates.

The period of time for a dog to learn to accept the presence of a human can take up to a month.

During this time the human needs to be patient and be willing to work with the animal.

When working with extreme cases of un-socialized dogs it is important to learn proper body language.

### **Do not stare.**

It is best to simply ignore the animal and let the dog adjust to human presence.

Stomping feet, sudden movement or stepping towards the dog can trigger a frantic "escape mode" response.

Confining the dog to a small room or area reduces the stress level and assists the dog in coping with this stage.

Recommendations of sitting on the floor maybe reading a book and generally ignoring the animal will help him to overcome his fear of humans.

It is important to note here that in experiments completed on wolves an assortment of fear-reducing tranquilizers were administered.

These drugs reduced the time required to reach the final stage of socialization.

However, the tranquilizers did not produce the permanent effects that long-term training did.

The drugs only blocked the fear but failed to remove it.

There is no substitute for time, patience or knowledge.  
Once the dog learns to accept a human presence the next phase may begin.

### Stage two:

The avoidance stage is characterized by the dog accepting a human presence.

Once the dog has learned this acceptance the dog will no longer bolt or flee.

This stage is usually accompanied by a canine exhibition of avoidance tactics while still keeping the human within sight.

When dealing with a dog at this stage avoid direct eye contact or threatening moves.

If pressured the dog will easily revert back to the escape stage.

Usually a small amount of direction will be tolerated such as compliance with the command of entering or exiting a room.

But such obedience is usually only exhibited if the dog feels no threat from the human.

Most often a subtle change in distance between dog and human will be noticed.

As the animal begins to feel more comfortable the space between human and dog will begin to shrink.

The next phase will then immediately follow.

### Stage three:

Approach stage - Several months may pass before the dog will consistently and easily allow a human to approach.

If stared at or made to feel uncomfortable in other ways the animal will appear to revert back to the previous stage.

During this stage the dog may follow the human.

If the dog voluntarily touches a human, it is usually the dog approaching behind a human and touching with a gentle nose or paw to the back of legs or back of arms of the human. It is important to understand that during this stage patience is crucial.

Any attempt to dominate an un-socialized dog or display any type of aggression will set the whole process of socialization back to almost the beginning.

Allowing the dog to approach at its own pace will help to ensure success.

During the approach stage it may be possible to actually handle the dog.

This must be accomplished with extreme caution, however. Usually the dog is stiff and unresponsive to touch.

An insecure dog feels most comfortable out of the direct line of human vision.

During this period there is some danger that a dog may become aggressive as it attempts to dominate the situation.

If this happens guidance may be required from an experienced canine behavioural specialist.

#### Stage four:

##### Socialization stage.

The dog will finally approach with wagging tail and without fear.

There is no longer any display of aggression.

At this stage dogs can be seriously trained in obedience, agility or other canine disciplines.

Sometimes the road to socialization can seem full of setbacks and crossroads. Dealing effectively with issues of socialization requires patience.

Keeping a journal with notes detailing the dog's behaviour will help the owner track progress.

Keeping accurate details of the dog's posture and response to outside stimuli will also prove helpful if professional guidance is required.

The experience of working with un-socialized or poorly socialized dogs can be tremendously satisfying.

There's nothing like the feeling of success after days, weeks or months of patient work.

In the end, perhaps the larger reward does not belong to the dog. We are compensated by the increased understanding of our loving companions!

Learning about a dog is always worth the effort and our lives are enriched by the experience.

### **About body language.**

When dealing with any dog it is important to understand the importance of the dog's body language.

Knowledge of this topic will help an individual to adjust his own demeanour in order to help with the behaviour modification of dogs.

Dogs show dominance over other dogs in a variety of ways.

Unknowingly an individual may also imitate these types of behaviours setting up a pattern of human - canine misunderstanding. Hands on the dog's head or back demonstrates dominance in canine opinion.

With an un-socialized dog placing hands in these areas will increase his fear.

Hands softly stroking underneath the head, between the front legs, or the sides of the body indicate friendliness to the dog.

Any time stroking or handling occurs it is wise to use soft, soothing, even tones of the voice and avoid direct eye contact.

Quick movements of any sort should be avoided for obvious reasons.

Also it is not a good idea to stand at full height over the dog. This is interpreted as a show of dominance and can set up a feeling of intimidation.

Dogs will sometimes react to intimidation with a show of aggression or with flight.

Grabbing and holding a dog's neck is also interpreted as an indication of human dominance and can result in undesirable behaviour.

Timid dogs or those lacking in confidence already respect the human as dominant.

Over-enforcing this recognition by unwittingly using body language that confuses the dog will provoke a flight or fight reflex.

There are no procedures which can guarantee overnight success.  
As a dog gains confidence in themselves and in the trainer they will increasingly become more responsive.

In canine behaviour modification this is the key fact that allows the human to triumph and success to be ensured.

# 9 COMMON ANXIETY TRIGGERS IN DOGS

Some of the causes of stress in dogs are species-specific, while other are caused by humans.

1. Separation from family members
2. Changes in housing, household routine or household members
3. Exposure to strange and unfamiliar environments
4. Being forcibly hugged, kissed or held
5. Lack of opportunities to express behaviors such as running, retrieving and herding.
6. Being randomly awakened from a nap
7. Hostile relationships with other pets or humans
8. Sudden loud noises
9. Punishment-based training methods involving yelling, hitting or shock collars

**TIP:** If your dog's anxiety seems to be getting worse, consult a well-researched behaviorist

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