

# ***Info shared by Pitbull SA.***

***Manjaro APBT kennel.***

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***Hyper active dog, anxious dog – heightened sensitivity?***

**Not to be confused with compulsive behaviours in dogs.**

*(See articles on compulsive behaviours on the website).*

All dogs are intelligent, sensitive animals, but some dogs have an even more acute sensitivity and intelligence – these dogs are what is called - 'Heightened Sensitivity' dogs (HSD) also termed 'Hyper Sensitive' dogs (HSD).

Heightened sensitivity can be found in many species, including people. Such people are called HSP – highly sensitive people.

Highly sensitivity tends to be a term that has less negative connotations.

Due to the increasingly high volume of children diagnosed as ADHD (attention deficit, hyper-active disorder) the term 'hyper sensitive' tends to have a more negative connotation than the term 'highly sensitive' – also with such dogs.

It is confirmed by most dog trainers and handlers that some dogs that are being diagnosed as ADHD are in fact not ADHD – they are instead HSD – but call it what you want they are very over active exciting dogs.

Heightened sensitivity dogs (HSD) need structure, adequate physical and mental exercise – no more or less than any other dog.

The HS dog does require that their human owner and handler communicate with true clarity and they require a diet that supports optimal health as do all dogs.

It might be needed to get expert advice – do not just require chemical-based medications such as Reconcile (Prozac for dogs).

Heightened sensitivity (HS) in both dogs and people can be an amazing gift and an asset that benefits the HS individual and others with whom they come into contact with.

Heightened sensitivity can also lead to problems (and do) when it is ignored, not recognized, understood and positively leveraged.

Taken control of this ability, hypersensitivity could become a detriment rather than an asset – as over sensitivity can lead to flooding of senses and result in anxiety - the dog can become flooded by over-stimulation, resulting in a state of anxiety and distress.

HS dogs are amazing as they have the ability to learn and connect with people in a capacity that can exceed the capacity of other dogs.

These type of dogs in particular offer a great gift to the human that is willing to learn from the dog.

“In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn’t merely try to train the dog to be semi-human.

The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog.” Edward Hoagland

Working with APBT dogs typically exhibit over-threshold behaviors - yet when the dog is given the opportunity to be effectively, respectfully communicated with and directed in a truly logical and patient manner the dog will usually choose to accept the direction provided.

### **Positive leveraging.**

Real understanding, real control from a place of self-awareness, self-discipline, self-restraint and good communication – deliberately positive creators and communicators.

“What we see mainly depends on what we look for” - *John Lubbock*

My experience working, teaching, training and living with APBT dogs has shown me time and time again that dogs do exactly what their human master tells them to do – teach them to do and allow them to do ... the problem is that the human may have a very low level of self-awareness.

So for example if you communicate to another human or a dog from a state of frustration, or anger what you get back usually reflects **your** own state.

When a human is emotional and reactive and they create emotion and reactivity in others also in their dogs.

Pure logic – and dogs love logic even more than humans do because dogs are better communicators than most humans today.

APBT are sensitive, intelligent dogs that might end-up in high-kill 'shelters' because the dog's people did not understand how to effectively communicate.

So many wonderful souls lost to a death they did not deserve – opportunity is all they need and deserve.

**Some signs that your dog are hypersensitive are:**

Heightened levels of awareness/sensitivity to:

Physical stimuli, i.e. sound, sight, touch, smell ;

Emotional Stimuli, i.e. emotions of others;

Easily over-whelmed – 'flooded' by too much stimuli.

A dog that is hyper sensitive is more likely than a non HSP or HSD to suffer from allergies, asthma, skin conditions such as eczema.

Dogs that are HS may show acute signs of hyper-active behavior if good leadership is lacking in the dog's life.

**An HSD does not require more physical exercise than a non-HS dog;**

In-fact over stimulation with non-structured exercise will create more hyperactivity as the dog is not presented with the opportunity to reconnect with its natural inclination to relax and go into a calm and restful state.

**The remedy is to provide:**

The dog with the structure it needs to be a fulfilled well-adjusted being;  
An equal balance between appropriate quantity of physical and psychological exercise.

A truly good diet, which includes sufficient levels of nutrients such as Omega-3 Fatty Acids, which when lacking in the diet can create serious impediments to optimal brain and body function.

### **An example of the positive attributes of HSP/HSD**

See hypersensitivity as a great gift as is it allows you to work with these dogs in a manner that others cannot;

Sense things that a non-HSP dog would not be able to sense;

Alert to a the handlers thoughts and read them more as another dog would;

The dog gets flooded by stimuli;

You learn from dog's everyday – each dog is an individual and each dog has something new to share with you ... but that can only happen if you open your senses and expand your awareness.

Dogs are one of the few animals that have a similar muscular facial structure to humans, dogs do smile and express many emotions in their facial expressions – dogs use all of their senses to communicate...when a human only uses their voice backed-up with unrestrained emotion your dog will listen to you and do exactly what you are telling them to do – be emotional and reactive.

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place” - *George Bernard Shaw*