

In-House Behavior Modification Protocol
Cage Reactive Dogs
“Food Chucking” Program

Protocol to be used for dogs that get extremely frustrated by the confinement of the cage and start to bark and lunge at passing dogs, people, or both.

The behavior modification program for this issue involves all staff and volunteers wearing treat bags with treats at all times and “chucking” the treats into the cage as they pass by.

This program involves the use of pure Pavlovian Conditioning (Association Learning). The dog learns that passing people and/or dogs predict flying treats and eventually they will start to anticipate the treats when they see someone coming, which will start to improve their emotional and behavioral response to these stimuli. It is important to understand that it does not matter what the dog is doing when you chuck the treats in. You will not be rewarding the reactive behavior - you are simply making a new association.

SET UP:

Color-coded cards hang on the cage to identify the dogs on the program.

Yellow card = human reactive dog

Orange card = dog reactive dog

PROCEDURE:

If there is a yellow card on the dog’s cage everyone who walks by tosses the treats.

If there is an orange card on the dog’s cage - everyone who walks by with a dog tosses the treats.

*If the dog is reactive to both dogs and humans - hang both cards on the cage so that everyone who walks by - with or without a dog - tosses the treats

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Move the dog to a less stimulating kennel is recommended.

Visual barriers should be used during high traffic times to prevent the dog from practicing the behavior when the program is not being done.