

**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 carrying high value treats when in the kennel and “chucking” the treats into the cage as they pass by the reactive dog.

This program involves the use of pure Pavlovian Conditioning (Association Learning). The dog learns that passing people or people with dogs predicts 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 hung on the cage front to identify the reactive 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 into the kennel.

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

\*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 into the kennel.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Moving 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.