


## Small Dogs



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## Small Dogs – *toy dogs?*

- Calling dogs “toys” does small canines a disservice
- They are sentient creatures and should be treated as such
- Two types of small dogs
- Small dogs bred for a purpose
  - Terriers (varmint killers)
  - Sleeve guards (Tibetan breeds)
- Dogs bred for companionship
  - French Bulldogs, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Poms, **Chihuahuas**



Many were bred down from much larger dogs

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## Why do people get small dogs



- For companionship
- To love them, to hug them
- To talk to them, and be listened to
- To help them exercise

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## What are some common problems with small dogs?

- Barking
- Lap Guarding
- Snapping at strangers
- Snapping at family members
- Leash reactivity




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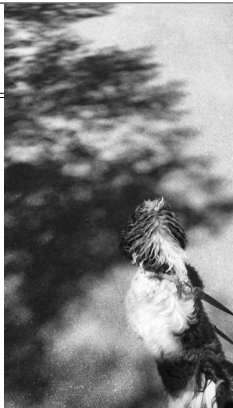
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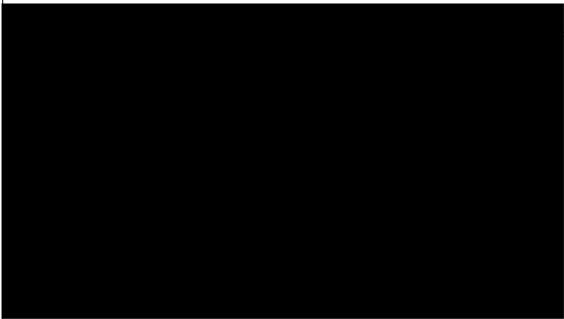
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## Problems associated with small dogs

- Being chased by other dogs
- Even if it's all in fun...small dogs are prey-sized
  - Sometimes injured or killed
- Being bullied




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## Are small dog problems different from big dog problems?

- Sometimes – however behavior mod often has to be very different
- Big dog b-mod can be relatively straight forward
  - Control the environment
  - Manage the dog
  - Train

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## Small dogs' lives are different – and so is their adjustment

- Small dogs are more at risk
- Owners of small dogs have certain expectations that are difficult to get around
  - *They may want their dogs to have perks associated with babies*
- We don't take them as seriously, but they can be dangerous ...just not deadly




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## Socializing small dogs with other dogs

- Just as important as with big dogs!
- Need to be kept safe at all times
  - Puppy classes – trainer/owner observation is extremely important!
    - Fearful puppies should be slowly habituated to novel situations and environments – go at their own pace
    - Trustworthy adult dogs should be part of the classes
    - In most cases, small puppies should play with small..large with large. They do not understand size differential.
      - Puppy class good
      - Puppy class bad

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## Adolescents and Adult socialization

- Although small dogs *look* like puppies, they are NOT puppies, and should be carefully introduced to other dogs
- Take care to introduce dogs as slowly as necessary
  - Good group intro
  - Not quite so good
  - Single intro
- Mixed size playing - big dogs need to be gentle and tolerant
  - Strider/Chi (possible predatory)
  - Luke/Aspen (overly rough)
  - Boo/Luke/Aspen/Gambit (good play)
  - Strider/Ariel/Sophie (tolerance)

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## Socializing small dogs with people

- The emphasis should be on generalizing carefully
- It's a big world out there, and little dogs need to think it is a safe place
- They do not need to meet hundreds of people – they need to meet a variety of people
  - Because they are small and vulnerable, care should be taken to introduce the more timid dogs carefully
    - Better to think of socializing as *exposure* more than inundation

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## Keep in mind

- Single event learning is more powerful when a dog is young
- Facilitated learning is also very powerful (ie if your dog is with a fearful dog, she will learn to be afraid of whatever the other dog is afraid of)
- Observational learning can be used to socialize without risk

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## Solving Behavior Problems - House Training



- Though we might not think this is a problem, it is a very strong reason why some dogs cannot stay in a home (think of cats and litter box training)
- Some small dogs are extremely difficult to house train – probably from one of two reasons
  - The guardian has been inconsistent in training (using puppy pads, allowing indoor eliminating for convenience)
  - The dog has been given too much "territory," and uses what she perceives as unused parts of the house

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## Housetraining

- Behavior mod
  - Remove options
  - Put the dog on a strict schedule
    - (taking out every two hours)
  - Make sure food is consistent
  - Sleep in a crate or on the bed
    - (dogs rarely have a house training problem in the night if they sleep on a bed!)




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## Barking

- Many small dogs are alarm barkers
  - Their bark is reflexive – they may bark at anyone coming in, stopping barking only when they greet the person
    - (these dogs may have been bred for this behavior – purposely or not)
  - They may bark fearfully at any newcomer they don't recognize
  - They may bark at people/dogs walking by the house or apartment

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## Reflexive Barking

- Is unlikely to respond to completely to behavior mod
- Generally, you can reduce but not eliminate it
  - Manage the environment so that barking is not as frequent or as intense
    - Block windows/doors
    - Long line
  - Train a behavior that will occur as soon as the dog barks at a strange noise, person, etc.
    - Call the dog; have her do something easy but compliant (sit)
    - Reward
  - If you have lots of time, you can counter condition expected sounds or sights with treats

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## Stranger Danger Barking



- Avoid greetings, motion and eye contact
- Do not allow dog to greet new people at door
- Crate train
  - Put crate on a counter, and cover
    - (do this OFTEN when people are not coming over, so that the dog is habituated to it)
  - Allow dog out of crate only when she is quiet and people are settled
- Treat/retreat

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## Lap Guarding

- Behavior modification
  - Why is this happening?
    - Fear?
    - Use counter-conditioning techniques
    - When approaching dog, do so backwards...no eye contact
  - Control?
    - Create rules about when a dog is allowed on a lap, and the behavior that is expected
    - Remove from lap if behavior deteriorates – time out in kennel is a possibility
    - Hand the dog to the other person – butt first!




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## Dog Afraid of household member (generally a man)



- Teach FFM (feared family member) about body language and eye contact
- Jump-start behavior mod by having the dog be boarded at a vets or other restricted boarding situation for a few days
  - Feared family member picks up the dog – takes her home and bonds for several hours before other family comes home
  - If necessary, leash the dog to the FFM for a period of hours each day
- Feeding, walking, etc by FFM – ignoring by TFM

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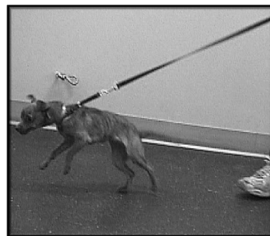
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## Leash Aggression

- There's a reason for Leash Aggression
  - Small dogs are SMALL – the world is large
- If it's primarily territorial (ie when the dog is in or leaving the yard), do not walk the dog from home
- Use DRI – find it's, catch, etc
- Pick up dog before the barking begins, holding back to front, like a football




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## Punishment

- Commonly used modification tools
  - Citronella or e-collars
    - While these are aversive, they can actually smooth out the relationship between dog and human, as the barking irritant is diminished
  - Squirt Bottle (water)
- **If you use aversive methods, they should be used every time the problem occurs, or the dog will just override the punishment, bark through it, or learn to run away and avoid it**

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## Our Job With Small Dogs

- Keep them safe
  - Safety is in the mind of the *dog*, not in our mind
  - Realize that all dogs do not need to like all other dogs
  - Help them practice good behavior
  - Understand that humans can facilitate poor behavior – we are often very selfish, and forget that our needs should not always come first
  - Practice setting and keeping rules and guidelines – they need them just as much as do big dogs ... and children ... and adults

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