



Newsletter



Stephanie Hedges BSc (Hons)
Canine Behaviour Counsellor

Welcome to my first practice newsletter

It has been a year since I first contacted local practices to let them know of the behavioural service I offer. Time has flown and I have been very busy. In addition to seeing cases I have also given numerous practice CPD talks, talks at dog clubs and shows and set up my 'Puppy Preschool' service providing 1-2-1 consultations for new puppy owners. I have also expanded my teaching role with BSc Animal Welfare students and made a significant contribution to the Scottish Parliament commissioned training manual for Scotland's new team of Authorised Officers employed to enforce the new Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010.

So it is only now that I have found time to write my long planned practice newsletter. I hope you find it interesting. Let me know if you have any thoughts or suggestions

Kind regards

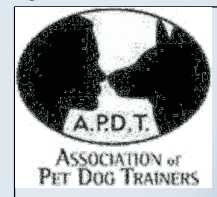
Stephanie Hedges

Choosing a trainer

•••

Clients often approach their veterinary practice for advice on how to find a reputable pet dog trainer. Unless the practice has personal knowledge of the trainers working in their area it can be difficult for them to make a reliable recommendation.

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) is the UK's leading dog training accreditation body. Members undergo written and practical examinations and adhere to a code of practice. A practice can therefore confidently refer their clients to a class run by their local UK APDT member. To find an APDT trainer go to www.apdt.co.uk or look for a trainer using this symbol.



A word of warning

APDT(USA) requires a similar level of assessment for 'professional' membership of trainers in the USA. However UK based 'full' membership of the APDT(USA) only requires payment of a subscription. There is no requirement for assessment or to follow a code of conduct. Membership doesn't therefore offer any guidance on the ability or conduct of the member.

Quote of the week

And then there's the personal question so many of Lassie's fans want to ask: Is he allowed on the furniture? Of course he is – but, then, he's the one who paid for it.

Julia Glass

Website finally done!

For those who have been patiently watching - my website is finally up and running! Hopefully it will provide a place for your clients to find out a little more about me and the APBC before deciding whether they would like to book a consultation.

Branded practice fact sheets

There are many situations in which practice staff offer clients behavioural advice. This can range from educating new puppy owners, help with minimising distress during storms or firework displays to familiarising a dog to wearing a muzzle. There is a great deal of generic client literature available on these types of behavioural subjects. However wouldn't it be better to be able to provide your client with a fact sheet branded with your practice logo and contact details?

I am able to provide electronic versions of a range of useful information sheets designed for you to be able to personalise with your practice details. An example is enclosed. If you would like more details or a list of subject areas please feel free to contact me by phone or email.

Top tip

Many dogs fail to walk to heel because they aren't given a clear idea of how far ahead of the owner is too far. By teaching the dog to touch the owner's hand on command the dog can be given a very specific signal of where the owner would like the dog's head to be. Teach the command as follows:-

- Hold a treat between your thumb and forefinger and hang your hand by your side
- Wait for your dog to touch your hand with his nose
- As he does so say 'touch' and give him the treat. Repeat regularly over a few days
- Try holding your hand by your side without the treat and say 'touch' - see if he has got it yet
- If he has give him the treat. If not practice some more.

Case history

Monty started to show problem behaviour when he was about 6 months old. At first this was just puppy boundary testing, inappropriate direction of his natural GSD herding drives and fearful behaviour at the Vets. His owner sought advice from a range of trainers, some of whom were quite prominent but none of which were qualified or accredited. Between them they tried pretty much every punishment in the book. As a result Monty's behaviour dramatically deteriorated into a severe aggression to passers-by and other dogs. Jen finally went to her Vet who advised her to seek an APBC accredited counsellor. After careful history taking it became clear that all Jen had so far been advised to do was to punish Monty for unwanted behaviour. She hadn't been shown how to teach Monty what she would like him to do instead. Jen was therefore taught how to use a clicker to reward Monty for more desirable behaviour whilst gradually exposing him to his triggers. At first she was sceptical but his progress soon changed her mind.

"Having seen changes in only a few months I'm certainly convinced about the clicker now, just a bit disappointed it's taken so many different training paths for us to get here!"



Scientists find a basic form of jealousy in dogs

• • •

Researchers in Vienna have shown that dogs will stop doing a simple task when not rewarded if another dog, which continues to be rewarded, is present. Writing in the journal PNAS, the scientists say this shows a sensitivity in dogs that was only previously found in primates.

The experiment consisted of taking pairs of dogs and getting them to present a paw for a reward in the form of a food treat. One of the dogs was then asked to shake hands, but received no food. The other dog continued to get the food when it was asked to perform the task.



Reward value

The dog without the reward quickly stopped doing the task, and showed signs of annoyance or stress when its partner was rewarded. To make sure that the experiment was really showing the interaction between the dogs rather than just the frustration of not being rewarded, a similar experiment was conducted where the dogs were asked to perform the task without the partner. Here they continued to present the paw for much longer.

(BBC, 2008)



Full paper: Range et. al., 2008. *The absence of reward induces inequity aversion in dogs.* Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

Stephanie Hedges BSc (Hons)
Canine Behaviour Counsellor

The Dog House, PO Box 950, Northampton, NN6 7WB
Tel: 01604 269451 Mob: 07961 298769 Fax: 01604 420007

If you would prefer not to receive future newsletters please let me know by email or fax