

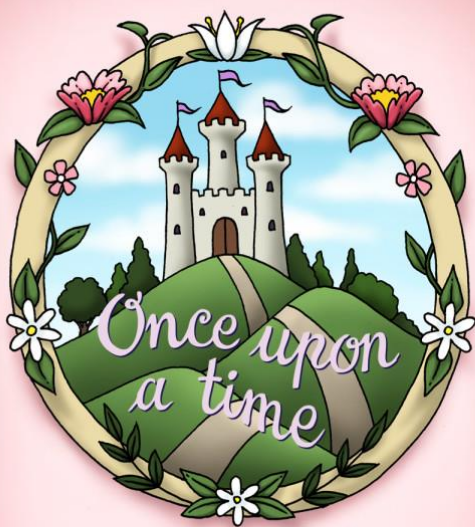
Good Boy lly

Communication

Humans' primary mode of communication is verbal, while our dogs' primary language is body language. We have evolved to understand complex words that can sometimes even mean different things, complex sentences and double / hidden meanings. Dogs on the other hand evolved to understand each other using a simple language that is exactly the same all over the world.

While humans think and talk about abstract things dogs' communication reflects how they feel at that exact moment.

We communicate in past present and future tense. Dogs only communicate in the present tense. E.g. we can say I was hungry at 9am I will be hungry again at 1pm, a dog always says I'm hungry now.



Human language can talk about things that aren't happening here or now.



Other animals react only to stimuli in the present.

Figure Retrieved from <https://owlcation.com/stem/The-difference-between-animal-and-human-communication>

While we struggle to read dogs, there are experts at reading our emotions and intentions by reading our faces, observing our movements and even smelling our pheromones. This is why we often think dogs are acting guilty when they do something bad when in reality they are cowering, running away or turning their head to try and calm down a clearly upset human. This is also why your dog may react poorly to people who are injured or walk / move in an unusual way. It's because they can't understand the movement and this scares them.

Like us, dogs will first try polite body language. If this is not heard or reciprocated they then raise the volume and display stronger signals to communicate what they are feeling. If this is still going unheard they then resort to yelling or in their case barking. If this is still not heard or worse still if they get punished for communicating in this way they resort to violence (biting, lunging, pawing and jumping). If a dog is compelled to shout or act out to be heard more than once they quickly learn to stop wasting time with other subtle signals and only use what works (barking, biting, lunging and jumping).

Communication is listening to what's being said and understanding what isn't being said.

To completely understand our dogs we need to look at their body as a whole and also the environment. Just like a hand wave can mean different things in different situations (hi when meeting, bye when leaving, stop when waiting, a polite no when refusing) so can our dogs signals have more than one meaning in different context.



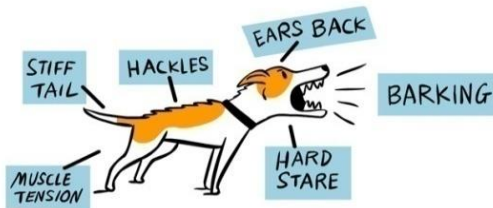
My dog is "_____"

TOPOGRAPHY

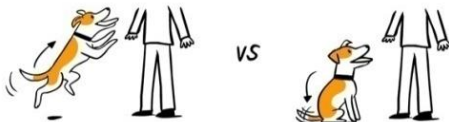
+

A TOPOGRAPHICAL definition of behavior focuses on the physical characteristics that are observable and measurable.

What does the behavior LOOK LIKE?



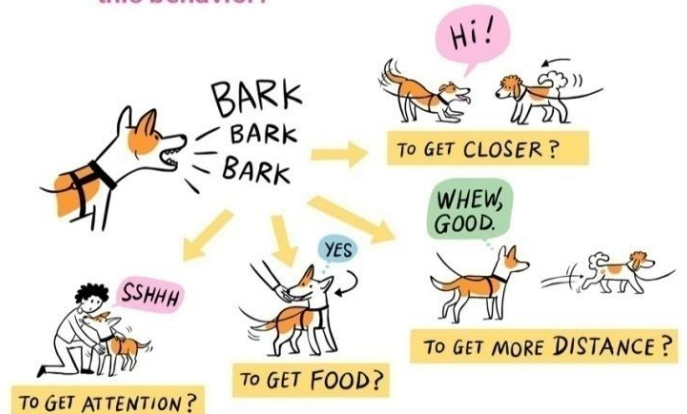
eg, "body language" or any movement with RATE, DURATION, and INTENSITY. Usually we think of behaviors as different when their topographies are different.



FUNCTION

A FUNCTIONAL definition of behavior focuses on the consequences, or outcomes of the behavior. To identify the consequences, we observe and test.

FOR WHAT OUTCOME does the animal do this behavior?



TOPOGRAPHICALLY DIFFERENT behaviors can have the SAME FUNCTION. Two behaviors may look different and be motivated by the same outcome. For example:



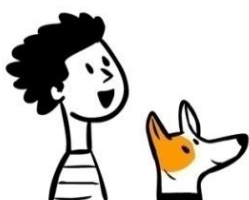
TOPOGRAPHICALLY SIMILAR behaviors can have DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS depending on the context. Behaviors that look the same may not mean the same thing. eg, Fighting or Playing?



We need both types of analyses in a scientific analysis of behavior.

A TOPOGRAPHICAL interpretation of behavior is important for setting concrete goals and monitoring progress during training.

Understanding the FUNCTION of the behavior we want to change is important for designing effective and ethical programs to meet the learner's needs.



My dog (does):

to GET or ESCAPE:

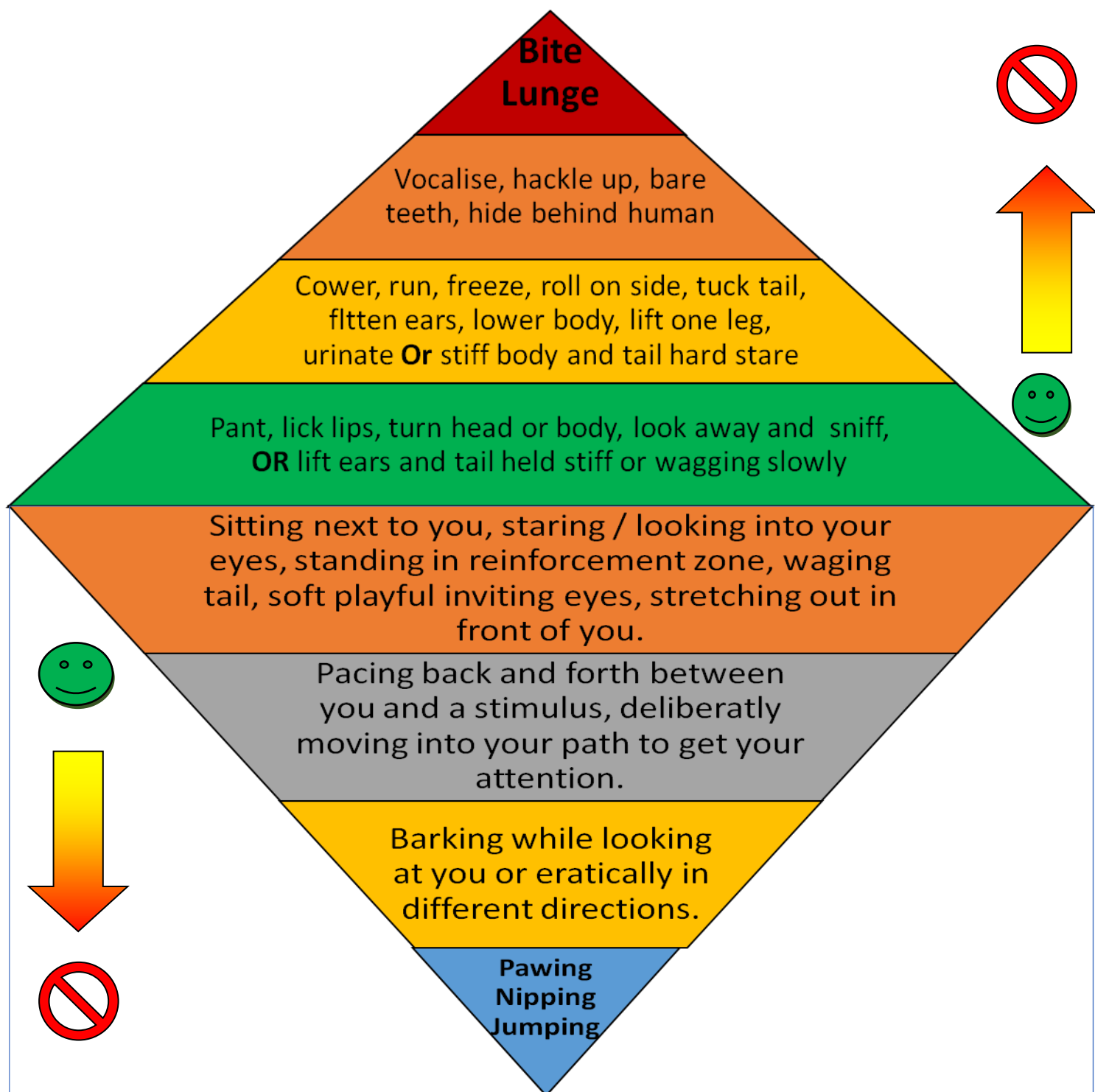
TOPOGRAPHY

FUNCTION

OK, Let's teach my dog MORE WAYS to get that need met!

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Pyramid of escalation of communication



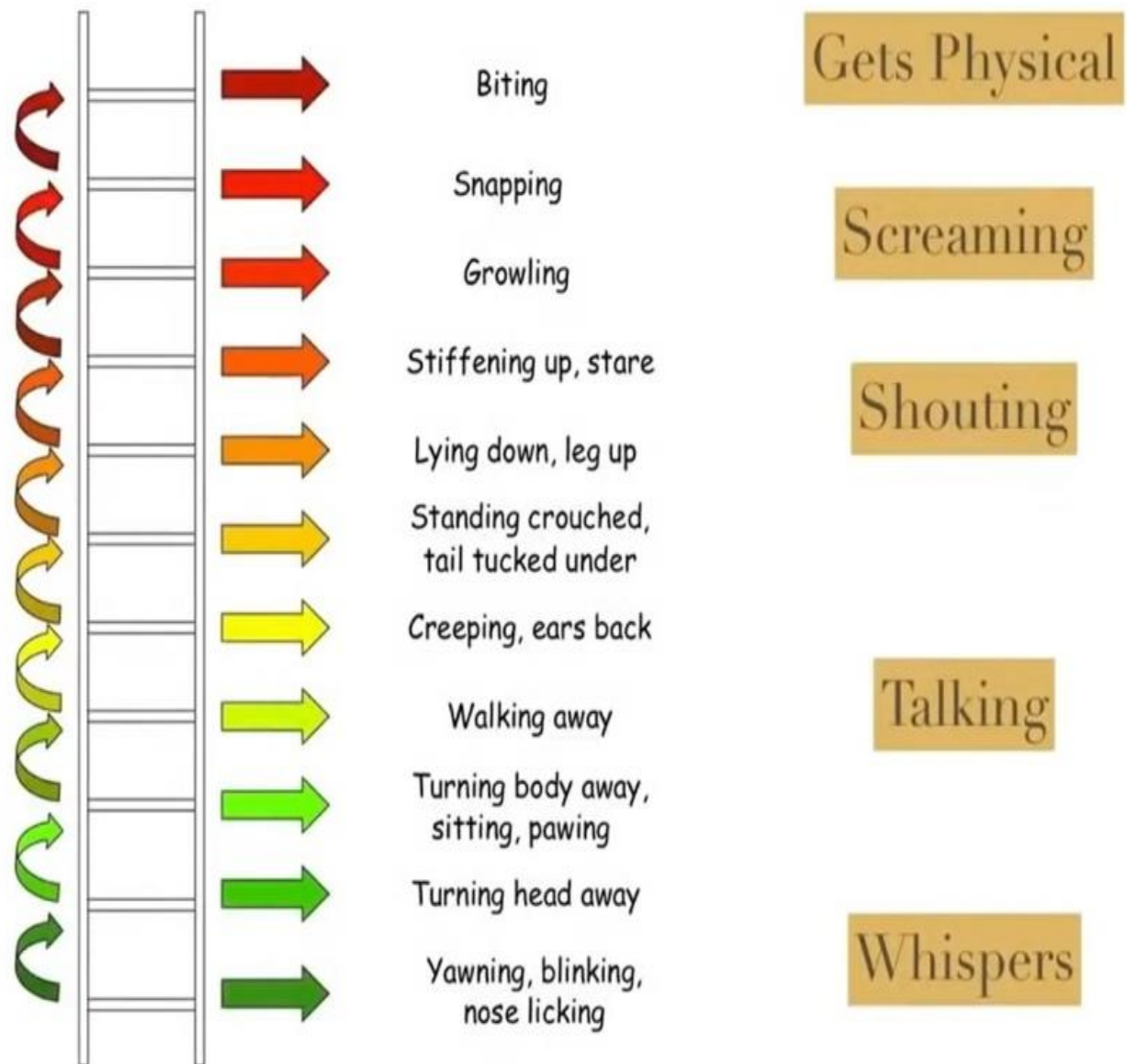
LEARNING IS BETTER IN A CALM STATE

Teach at the base of the pyramid.

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Canine ladder of aggression

The Canine 'Ladder of Aggression'



© Kendal Shepherd 2004

How a dog reacts to stress or threat

Dogs will try low level signals first to convey how they feel. If this goes unnoticed they will escalate to shouting, screaming or getting physical. This normally gets our attention and we remove the dog from the situation. They then learn that we only understand when they are shouting, screaming or getting physical, and stop using the low level signals that don't work or simply escalate from them much quicker.

FAS (FEAR, ANXIETY & STRESS) SCALE

HIGH FAS

Level 5

Significant signs of FAS with aggression such as growling, lunging, barking, hissing, snarling, and/or snapping. Intolerant of procedures.

Level 4

Significant signs of FAS without aggression, such as immobility, fidgeting, escape behavior, dilated pupils, excessive panting (dog), increased respiratory rate, trembling, tense closed mouth, ears back, tail tucked or thrashing (cat). May or may not be accepting any types of reinforcers. Not interested in interacting with team members and may be showing active avoidance (moving away).

MODERATE FAS

Level 3

Displays more than 2 moderate signs of FAS occurring more than 4 times in a minute. May refuse reinforcements for brief moments. Might take treats roughly at times. May also be hesitant to interact with team members but not actively avoiding team members.

Level 2

Displays 1 to 2 moderate signs of FAS, such as ears slightly back or to the side, tail down, furrowed brow, slow movements or overly attention seeking, and/or panting with a tighter mouth (dog), occurring 4 or less times a minute. Readily accepts reinforcement (treats, toys, and attention). Still soliciting social interactions with team members.

LOW FAS

Level 1

Displays 1 or 2 subtle signs of FAS, such as lip licking, avoids eye contact, turns head away without moving away, lifts paw, or partially dilated pupils, and/or panting but commissures of lips are relaxed, occurring less than 4 times a minute. Interested in reinforcers (treats, play, attention) and chooses to interact with the team members.

Level 0

No signs of FAS. Pet displays relaxed body language and solicits social interactions with team members.

STOP

- Little to no interest in treats, toys, and/or attention
- Fight, Freeze, or Flight Response
- Sedation + Pharmaceutical
- Nutraceutical PVP

CAUTION

- Moderate interest/disinterest in treats, toys, and/or attention
- Fidgeting, difficulty settling
- Pharmaceutical/Nutraceutical PVP

GO

- Readily accepts treats, toys, and/or attention
- Relaxed or subtle signs of FAS
- Nutraceutical PVP



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Dog Body Language

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



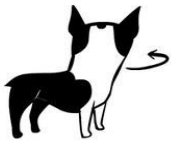
ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



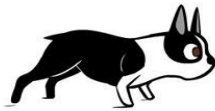
"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



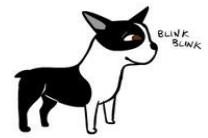
STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"

Good Boy lly

Calming Signals

Calming signals are a phrase coined by author and dog trainer Truid Rugaas. The book is an excellent read and is recommended for amateur and seasoned dog owners alike. Calming signals are your dog's way of communicating when they are in an uncomfortable situation. As with all communication it works best flowing both ways. You can also learn to use certain calming signals when communicating with your dogs to help them understand your intentions.

CALMING SIGNALS



Lili

Wagging tail

It is a common misconception that a wagging tail means the dog is happy. When a dog wags or doesn't its tail it is simply communicating it is emotionally aroused.

"Before we learn to speak "tail," we must recognize that the neutral or natural position of a dog's tail varies by breed. Most dogs have tails that hang down near their heels when they are relaxed. But some dogs, like Beagles, hold their tails more vertically. Others, like Greyhounds and Whippets, curl their tails under their bellies. Still others, like Pugs and Boston Terriers, have tails that coil tightly against the body and don't wag at all.

Tail position may indicate:

Preparedness or agitation. When dogs are alert, they stand with their ears up and tails raised. This posture indicates that they are watching and ready to confront whatever caught their attention.

Negotiation. When a dog suddenly stops wagging his tail and freezes, it may mean that he wants divert a threat without being aggressive. Many dogs do this when petted by strangers, to communicate that they don't want to interact with them.

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Aggression. When a tail moves from a neutral position to a vertical one or arches over the back, it indicates that the dog may be aggressive. The higher the tail, the greater the threat. This high tail position also releases more of the dog's scent from the anal glands, announcing the aggressive dog's arrival and marking his territory.

Submission. When a tail moves from the neutral position to a lower one, the dog is submissive and is not a threat. If the tail is tucked tightly between the rear legs, the dog is scared. He perceives a threat and is asking not to be harmed. This lower tail position reduces the amount of scent emitted from the anal glands and allows the dog to remain in the background or fly under the radar.

Curiosity. When a dog is curious about something, she holds her tails straight out in a horizontal position.

Happiness. When a dog is happy, he holds his tail in a neutral or slightly raised position and adds a healthy wag.

The rate at which a tail moves adds further meaning to canine communication.

Wagging speed may indicate:

Excitement. The faster the wag, the more excited the dog. A tail wag may range from very slow to extremely rapid (known as flagging). Sometimes the dog's tail wags so fast that it appears to vibrate.

Insecurity. A dog that is tentative about meeting a new person or another dog may wag his tail ever so slightly to indicate that he is insecure.

Friendliness. A dog that is very friendly may wag his tail more freely and even wiggle his hips at the same time.

Aggression. When a dog wags his tail very fast while holding it vertically, he may be an active threat. Remember that a person can get bitten by a dog that is wagging its tail!

Left vs. right tail wags

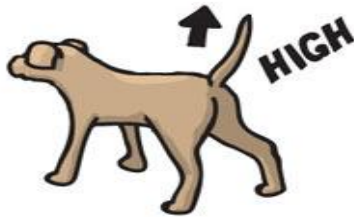
Canine "tail talk" is so complex that even the direction of the wagging is significant. Studies show that dogs wag their tails to the right when they are happy or confident and to the left when they are frightened. Interestingly, there is a scientific reason for this.

The left side of the brain controls movement on the right side of the body and vice versa. Therefore, the left brain is engaged when the tail wags to the right and the right brain causes the tail to move to the left. Since the left side of the brain is associated with positive feelings like love and serenity, a happy dog wags his tail to the right. Conversely, the right half of the brain is associated with negative feelings like fear and depression, so a frightened dog wags his tail to the left." ([VCA animal hospital](#))

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Dog Tail Translation

 doghealth.com
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Alert and excited



Neutral and exploring



Submissive and concerned



Concerned or unpleasant
about person or animal



Excited



Happier



Pleasant about person or
animal



Less enthusiastic



Anxious or uptight

Additional resources

Apps - <https://www.dogdecoder.com/>

Videos - [Jaw-Dropping Facts](#), [Morley Vetcentre](#), [Kris Crestejo](#), [Dogs That](#), [Shelter Playgroup Alliance](#), [Dogkind \(pet Consent\)](#), [Fear Free Happy Homes](#), [The Family Dog](#), [How to Survive](#)- How to Talk to Your Dog, According to Science,

[Lost in Translation? DVD](#)

Websites – [I speak Dog](#) ,

Books - [Doggie Language](#) by Lili Chin, [On Talking Terms With Dogs - Calming Signals](#) By Turid Rugaas, [The Other End of the Leash](#) By Patricia McConnell PhD, [Secret Language of Dogs](#) by Heather Dunphy,

FIDDLE: Early Stress Signals in Dogs



LIP LICKING



VELCRO DOG



PAW LIFT



SCRATCHING



YAWNING



MOUNTING



SHAKE OFF



HYPERVIGILANCE



CONSTANTLY LICKING
SELF OR OTHER



SNIFFING
OR SNEEZING

Facial Expressions of STRESS



LOOKING AWAY



WHALE EYE



CLOWN MOUTH



BROW FURROWED



EARS ALERT



EARS BACK/FLATTENED



EARS SIDEWAYS



GRINNING



CHEEK PUFFING,
TEETH CHATTERING



SQUINTING,
BLINKING

Physiological Signs of STRESS



PANTING



PUPILS DILATED



SHEDDING



URINATION/
DEFECATION



HYPERSALIVATION



NOT TAKING
TREATS



TENSE MUSCLES



LIPSTICK SHOWING



GRIMACE



SWEATY PAWS



VOMITING



RED SCLERA

Severe Stress Signs in Dogs

FIGHT



BARKING



BARE TEETH



HACKLES



LIP LIFT

FREEZE



**MOVING IN
SLOW MOTION**



FROZEN

FLIGHT



RUNNING AWAY



HIDING



**DUCKING
BEHIND LEGS**



STARTLES EASILY

HYPERAROUSAL



HYPERACTIVE



DESTRUCTIVE



PANTING



FACIAL GRIMACE



UNABLE TO FOCUS



SNATCHING TREATS



MOUNTING



LIPSTICK SHOWING



**CONSTANTLY JUMPING
AND MOUTHING**



EXCESSIVE FRIENDLINESS