

# BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION PLAN

## (FOR DOGS NOT RESPONDING ADEQUATELY OR AT ALL TO BASIC ENRICHMENT & TRAINING PLAN)

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### STEPS:

1. Note the existence of the problem behavior on the dog's cage with a [Fear of People Cage Sign](#), so that staff and volunteers can identify fearful dogs before they enter the kennel.
2. Avoidance: whenever possible, avoid the types/kinds of people that the dog is scared of, except during controlled training sessions.
3. Provide the dog with a hiding place in its kennel/enclosure, such as a barrier to hide behind or a plastic crate, so that the dog can choose to avoid visual contact with people, when the dog is afraid.
4. Appropriate interactions: every time you interact with the dog
5. Make sure to follow the [Interacting With Fearful Dog Tips](#)
6. For help getting close enough to the dog to attach a leash to the dog's collar, follow the [Desensitization & Countercounidion Dog Tips](#).
7. Administer basic enrichment:
  - a. [Playgroup](#) once daily, if the dog is dog friendly
  - b. [Quiet time](#): 10 to 30 minutes, once daily, [watch Quiet Time Video](#)
  - c. Play/training: 5-15 minutes, once the dog is interested in treats and toys.

Note that many fearful dogs are initially not interested in play or training; quiet time and playgroup are the focus of enrichment. As the dog's fear decreases, training and play can be started.
  - d. walks: 10 minutes, 3 times daily (it is acceptable to substitute playgroup for one of the walks). Fearful dogs, who enjoy time outdoors, should go on walks. Some dogs with severe fear do not enjoy walks, and should be taken outdoors for elimination only. For these dogs, whenever possible, all interactions should be in a quiet indoor location.
8. Treat buckets: staff and volunteers should be taught to toss treats every time they walk by a fearful dog's kennel. Shelters with more extensive behavior modification programs can follow the ['Treat Buckets for Shy Dogs' plan](#).

## IN ADDITION, THE PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. Training sessions during time outdoors:
  - Praise/treat or click/treat in order to reward friendly or neutral behavior (not fearful, not aggressive, but not friendly). Be cautious: some fearful dogs are afraid of the noise of the clicker. These dogs will need to be desensitized and counter-conditioned to the clicker before using it, or you may wish to use praise/treat instead of click/treat with noise sensitive dogs.
  - On walks, when the dog looks at strangers (without aggression) praise/treat or click treat.
  - Stand in low traffic areas outdoors with the dog next to you. If a stranger passes and the dog looks at them (without aggression), praise/treat or click/treat. If the dog attempts to move away, allow the dog to move away. During training, avoid high (people) traffic areas.
  - Do NOT allow strangers to approach/pet the dog.
2. Office foster (5 days/week): Reference the [Office Foster for Shy Dogs](#) doc.

## ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL EXERCISES:

If your shelter has enough resources, you might consider additional training exercises to reduce the dog's fear of people.

1. Target training: Initially train the dog to touch a target, and then train the dog to touch (target) hands/feet, initially of people the dog knows and then of people to whom you wish to introduce the dog.
2. Tossing treats (desensitization and counter conditioning): Plan sessions with volunteers or staff that the dog does NOT know. Ask the helper to gently (no sudden movements) toss treats toward the dog.

As this treatment plan progresses, the helper should toss treats closer and closer to their location. The trainer and helper must carefully observe the dog's body language for signs of stress, fear, or aggression, which would indicate that you are not appropriately desensitizing the dog. Over time and multiple sessions, if the dog is demonstrating friendly behavior and voluntarily approaching helpers, helpers can begin to offer treats from their hand, and eventually begin touching the dog on the chest or withers.

