



Victoria Dog Obedience Training
FUN, SUCCESS & POSITIVE TRAINING

*Understanding
Your Dog*

A GUIDE TO BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES SOLUTIONS

Copyright Notice

© 2025 Victoria Dog Obedience Training.
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the author.

For permission requests, please contact:
info@victoriadogtraining.com

The information in this book is provided for educational and informational purposes only.

Victoria Dog Obedience Training
FUN, SUCCESS & POSITIVE TRAINING

CONTENTS

1. Behavioural Issues
2. Stress, fear & anxiety
3. Arousal
4. Trigger
5. Threshold & trigger stacking
6. Reactivity
7. Classical conditioning, counterconditioning and operant conditioning
8. Desensitisation



IF YOUR DOG HAS BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES, IT IS RECOMMENDED TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM A BEHAVIOURIST OR BEHAVIOUR CONSULTANT.

CHAPTER

01

BEHAVIOURAL
ISSUES

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



WHAT ARE THE BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES?

Reactivity, Aggression, Separation Anxiety, Fears & Phobias, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), Resource guarding, Barking & Whining are behavioural issues.

WHICH METHODS ARE RECOMMENDED TO USE FOR DOG REHABILITATION?

Classical conditioning, Operant conditioning, Counter conditioning & Desensitization

WHAT MAKES USING AVERSIVE TRAINING METHODS OR EQUIPMENT FOR DOG REHABILITATION A BAD IDEA?

Punitive training techniques are uncomfortable and may also result in enduring psychological harm that becomes ingrained over time.

*If you are uncertain
about your dog's
behaviour, it is
recommended to seek
assistance from a
professional.*



WHY REWARD BASED TRAINING MORE EFFECTIVE RATHER THAN AVERSIVE TRAINING?

Using aversive training methods or equipment is not an effective way to address behavioural issues in dogs, as they do not address the underlying root cause of the problem.

It is important to understand that behaviour is merely a symptom of the underlying issue and requires a more comprehensive approach to be effectively addressed.

While aversive training methods may yield visible results in a short time, the underlying cause of the dog's undesired behaviour remains unchanged.

The dog merely learns to inhibit its initial reaction due to the negative consequences associated with the behaviour.

CHAPTER

02

STRESS, FEAR &
ANXIETY

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



STRESS

Stress in dogs is their reaction to circumstances that require a change or adjustment in their behaviour. This stress can have varying impacts, with positive outcomes if the dog can manage and adapt, while negative stress occurs when the dog struggles to cope with the situation at hand.

FEAR

Fear is a fundamental emotion that helps living creatures survive by keeping them safe from potential threats. It triggers immediate responses in the body, leading to various physiological and physical changes to protect the individual from harm.

ANXIETY

Anxiety in dogs is a feeling of unease and anticipation of danger, often with a negative expectation of how things will turn out in a given situation. This emotional response can stem from past distressing experiences that have created fear and unease in the animal.

CHAPTER

03

AROUSAL

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



Arousal in dogs reflects their level of excitement and mental state, which can be influenced by both positive and negative events. These events trigger the release of adrenaline and cortisol hormones, leading to increased reactivity and excitement towards their environment. However, excessive arousal can overwhelm a dog emotionally, making it difficult for them to think clearly or regulate their behaviour. Signs of arousal include fast heart and respiration rates, dilated pupils, tense body posture, hyper-vigilance, panting, barking/whining, spinning, mouthing, jumping, humping, pulling on a leash, snatching at food, high tail and ear position, raised hackles, and rough play.

CHAPTER

024

TRIGGER

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



A "trigger" refers to specific events, conditions, or stimuli that can provoke strong emotional responses in dogs, leading to stress, arousal, pain, or fear. Triggers can include heavy traffic, loud noises like thunder or fireworks, encounters with other dogs, or the presence of unfamiliar people. Each dog is unique; what may be harmless to one could be overwhelming to another.

When confronted with these triggers, dogs may bark, growl, or attempt to escape. Unfortunately, many dogs have limited control over their reactions, making it essential for pet owners to be observant and proactive.

By identifying triggers and implementing desensitisation techniques, owners can create a more supportive environment, helping their pets manage their responses and fostering greater confidence in their canine companions.

CHAPTER

05

THRESHOLD &
TRIGGER STACKING

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.

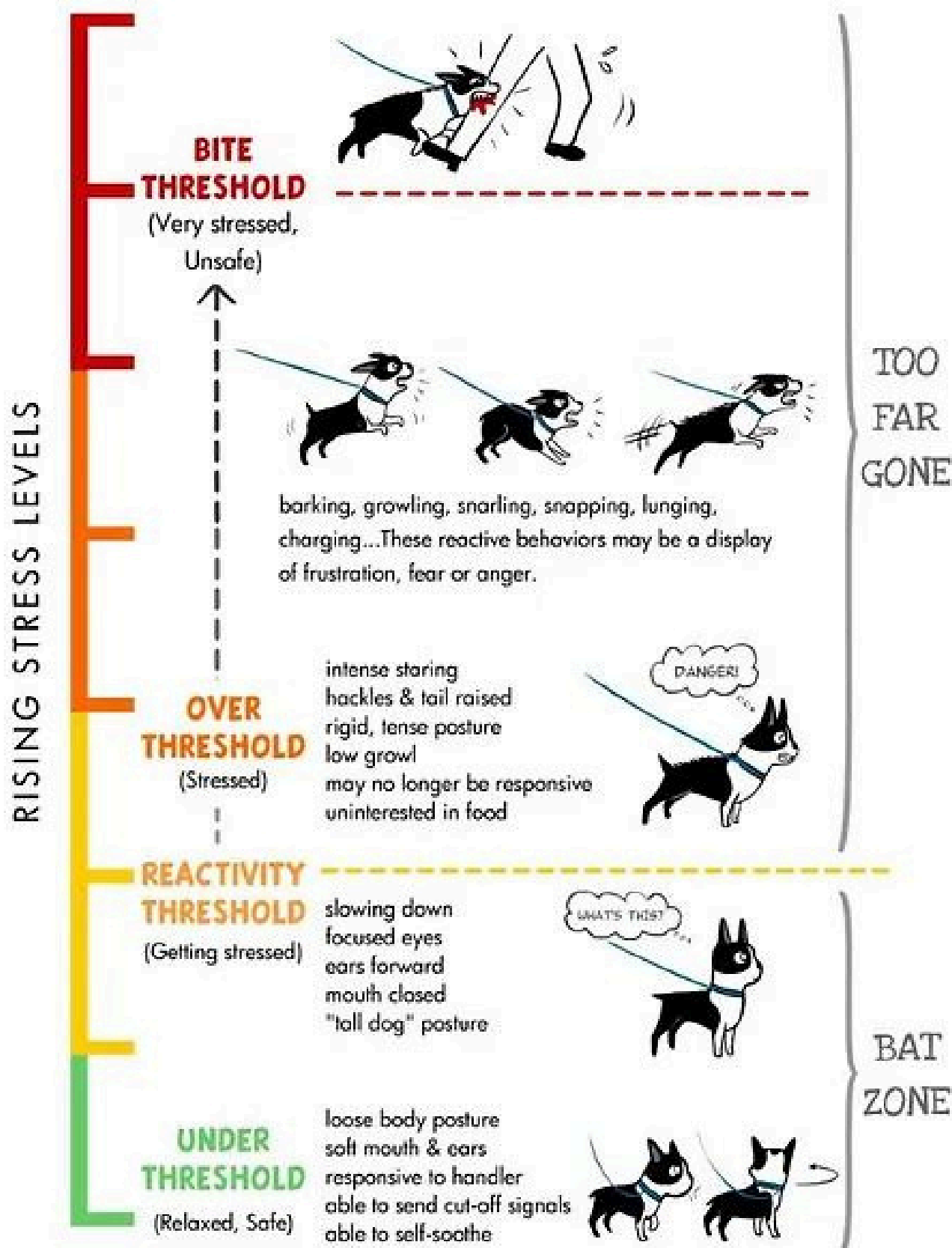


In essence, a behavioural threshold serves as a boundary that distinguishes between various emotional states in dogs. Each dog has a unique coping threshold, beyond which they can no longer manage their emotions, and this threshold can change depending on the situation. For instance, if you have a dog that is uneasy in new places and around joggers, he may be able to handle a new environment without joggers. However, if you introduce both a new environment and joggers, along with the presence of another unfamiliar dog, it may overwhelm him with too many triggers, leading to potential aggressive behaviour towards the new dog.

Several factors can influence your dog's threshold, including the number of triggers present, how close the trigger is to the dog, the frequency with which triggers occur (as multiple triggers in quick succession can lead to a more intense reaction), the severity of the trigger itself, and the dog's overall state, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, or pain.

REACTIVITY CHART

WHEN DOG ENCOUNTERS A TRIGGER



CHAPTER

06

REACTIVITY

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



Dog reactivity refers to a heightened response in dogs to certain stimuli, such as other dogs, people, or loud sounds. This reactivity can manifest as behaviours like barking, lunging, or growling, often signalling feelings of fear, anxiety, frustration, or pain. Various factors contribute to a dog's reactivity, including lack of socialization, past traumatic experiences, physical discomfort, or simply being overwhelmed by their environment.

♥ Can we help every dog? Absolutely! With proper training, patience, and positive reinforcement, you can guide your furry friend to remain calm in triggering situations. While reactivity may not fully disappear, many dogs can significantly improve their responses.

Professional training, behavioural modification techniques, and gradual exposure can make a remarkable difference. Remember, each dog is unique, and progress takes time!

CHAPTER

07

CLASSICAL
CONDITIONING,
COUNTERCONDITIONING
AND OPERANT
CONDITIONING

Classical conditioning



Classical conditioning is a fundamental concept in dog training that involves associating a neutral stimulus with a meaningful stimulus to create a new response. This type of conditioning was first studied by Ivan Pavlov, who demonstrated how dogs could be conditioned to salivate at the sound of a bell through repeated pairings with food. In dog training, classical conditioning can be used to modify a dog's behavior by creating positive associations with specific cues. Classical conditioning can be used to train a wide range of behaviors in dogs, from basic obedience cues to more complex tasks.

Key points:

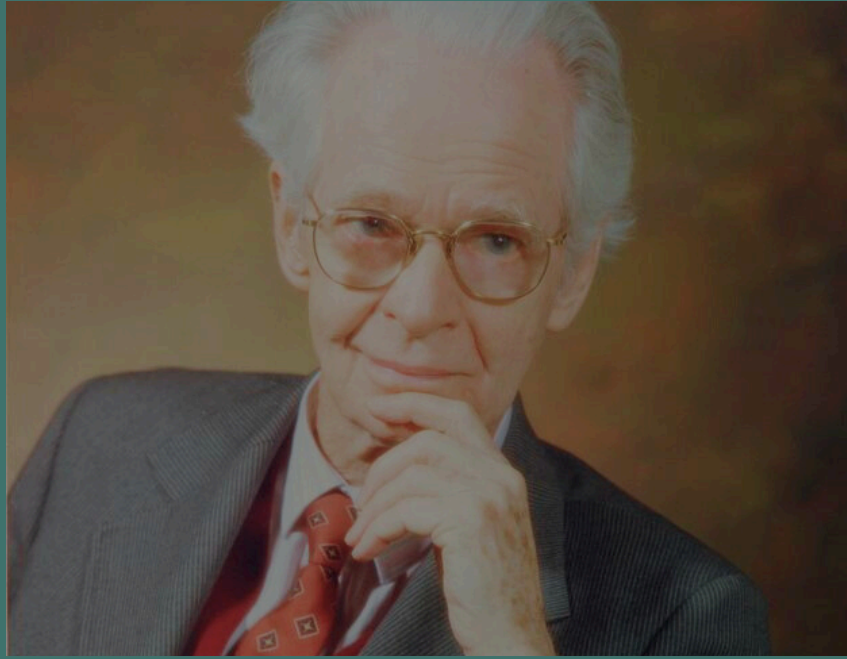
1. Choose a meaningful stimulus
2. Timing is key
3. Repetition is crucial
4. Be patient and consistent

Counter- conditioning



Counter-conditioning is a powerful tool used in dog training to change a dog's response to a specific stimulus. It involves pairing a positive experience with something that the dog currently finds stressful or frightening. The goal is to create a new and positive association with the stimulus, thereby changing the dog's emotional response. Counter-conditioning can be used to address a wide range of behavioural issues in dogs, including aggression, fear, reactivity, and anxiety. It is a humane and effective way to help dogs overcome their fears and develop more positive associations with the world around them.

Operant conditioning



Operant conditioning is a learning process studied by B.F. Skinner, where behaviour is strengthened or weakened based on the consequences that follow it. Skinner's work focused on how behaviours can be shaped and changed through reinforcement or punishment, highlighting the role of environmental factors in determining behaviour. This method is widely used in obedience training and behaviour modification to help dogs learn the appropriate behaviours.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Good stuff added - increase the behaviour



NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Bad stuff stopped - increase the behaviour



POSITIVE PUNISHMENT

Bad stuff added - decrease the behaviour



NEGATIVE PUNISHMENT

Good stuff stopped - decrease the behaviour



4 QUADRANTS OF OPERANT CONDITIONING

CHAPTER

08

DESENSITISATION

If you are uncertain about your dog's behaviour, it is recommended to seek assistance from a professional.



Desensitisation is an important technique used in dog training to help dogs overcome fears, anxieties, or phobias related to certain stimuli or situations. Desensitisation involves gradually exposing the dog to the feared stimulus in a controlled and systematic way, starting at a very low intensity and gradually increasing the exposure as the dog becomes more comfortable.

Desensitisation can be a powerful tool in helping dogs overcome fears and anxieties in a positive and proactive way. By gradually exposing the dog to the trigger and rewarding calm behaviours, trainers can help dogs build confidence and resilience in the face of challenging situations.

© 2025 Victoria Dog Obedience Training



Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read my Understanding Your Dog book. I sincerely hope it provided valuable information to you. If you require further assistance and haven't already enrolled in my training program, please don't hesitate to reach out. I would be happy to discuss the best options for your dog.

Feel free to connect with me at:

info@victoriadogtraining.com

Visit my website for more resources and information:

victoriadogtraining.com

Wishing you and your furry friend all the best!

Warm regards,

Viktoria