



**A Guided Plan**

**for**

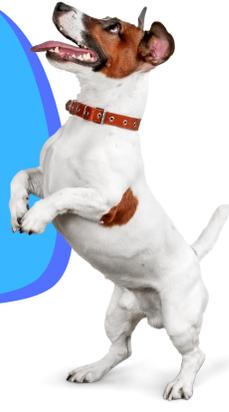
**You and Your Dog**

**5-DAY  
SOCIALIZATION  
ADVENTURE**



# WHAT IS SOCIALIZATION

## DAY 1



Socialization is a continuous process through which your dog or puppy learns the rules, behaviors, and social skills acceptable to society.

- Socialization is **ONGOING**

This means that socialization is continually happening throughout your dog's life.

- Socialization is **FAMILIARIZATION**

It involves becoming familiar with and feeling safe around various objects, sounds, other people, dogs, animals, and new places or environments.

- Socialization is **LEARNING** how to behave properly

This includes teaching your dog to greet people politely by keeping all four paws on the floor, not rushing up to unfamiliar dogs, and remaining calm in public settings.

- Make a **PLAN**

Consider what objects, sounds, people, dogs, animals, and new places you can safely introduce your dog to.

Define the desired behavior for your dog in those situations.



# TAKE ACTION!

Now that you understand what socialization is, it's time to take action and create STEP ONE of your dog's socialization PLAN.

List the specific objects, sounds, people, dogs, animals, and new places you'd like to socialize your dog or puppy with.

Remember, socialization involves multiple layers, so be thorough in your planning.

## STEP 1



List of  
Objects,  
Sounds,  
People,  
Dogs,  
Animals &  
New Places

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

## STEP 2



How do you  
want your dog  
to behave in  
those situations  
you listed in  
STEP ONE?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Ensure that your plan is well-organized, clear, and achievable. By following through with this process, you'll help your dog become well-adjusted and confident in various social settings.

Keep in mind that socialization is an essential aspect of your dog's development, and consistent effort will lead to positive results.

# WHY SOCIALIZATION IS IMPORTANT



## DAY 2

Proper socialization is crucial for helping your puppy develop into a happy, fun, and safe adult dog.

Living with a dog who is relaxed with strangers, gets along well with other dogs, and adapts easily to new experiences is not only easier but also more enjoyable.

Depending on your dog's genetics, you may need to put in even more effort to ensure effective socialization.

- **Socializing your dog..**

Prepares your dog for various situations it may encounter throughout life, ultimately increasing its confidence.

- **Socializing your dog..**

Inoculates your dog against future behavior problems when done during the peak developmental stages of 4 to 14 weeks.

- **Socializing your dog..**

Helps your dog learn how to behave appropriately in new and different situations.



# TAKE ACTION!

Now, consider the most important thing you want to socialize your dog to. Refer back to the list you created on Day 1 of your 5-Day Socialization Adventure and choose one item you want to focus on.

**The most important thing I want to Socialize my dog to is...**

Write your answer here.

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**Now, let's address the critical question: WHY?**

If you are struggling to answer your "why," review the first page and accompanying video to understand why socialization is so important.

Write your "why" below.

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Eliminate the distractions and prioritize the most valuable aspects of socializing your dog. With dedication and consistency, you can make a significant difference in your dog's behavior and well-being. Remember, each dog is unique, so tailor your approach to suit your dog's personality and needs. Let's move forward with a clear focus on effective socialization.

# WHAT SOCIALIZATION IS NOT

## DAY 3



To effectively create a plan for socializing your dog, it is crucial to understand what socialization is NOT.

- Socialization is NOT

Forcing your dog to do anything it's uncomfortable with or afraid of.

- Socialization is NOT

Exposing your dog repeatedly to something scary or unpleasant, like the vacuum, with the hope that they will eventually "get used to it."

- Socialization is NOT

Allowing your dog to be touched by every person they meet.

- Socialization is NOT

Encouraging your dog to run up and play with every dog they encounter.



# TAKE ACTION!

Now that you are aware of what socialization is **NOT**, it's essential to ensure you're socializing your dog in the right way.

Remember, socialization involves multiple layers, and positive experiences are key.

Complete the following steps to continue forming your socialization plan for your dog.



List the things your dog may be scared of or dislikes, such as loud noises, certain objects, or specific environments.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

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Reflect on how you may have handled such situations in the past. Have you unintentionally forced your dog into uncomfortable situations, hoping they would adapt? Note any instances where your approach may not have been ideal.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

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By recognizing what socialization is **NOT** and taking proactive steps to adjust your approach, you'll ensure that your dog's socialization experience is positive and beneficial.

With patience, understanding, and care, you can help your dog become well-adjusted and confident in various situations they may encounter throughout life.



# RECOGNIZING OVERWHELM



## DAY 4

Proper socialization involves exposing your dog to new people, places, other animals, experiences, and things at a level where your dog feels safe.

One of the easiest ways to ensure your dog is having a good time and feeling secure is by learning to recognize some common body language cues of stress.

Look for the following signs of stress in your dog:

- Does your dog hesitate to move toward something or someone or actually move away?

This indicates that your dog doesn't feel safe. Avoid pushing them to interact, as good intentions can backfire.

- Does your dog become very still?

Some dogs, when stressed, will freeze and try to go unnoticed. In reality, that's precisely what they are doing!

- Does your dog curl up tightly or roll over onto its back?

This behavior is often misunderstood as wanting a belly rub or being affectionate, but it usually means your dog doesn't want to be touched and is worried.

## Recognizing Overwhelm



If your dog is feeling overwhelmed, it is critical to leave the situation.

How can you tell if your dog is feeling overwhelmed?

Watch out for the following indicators:

- A drastic change in behavior
- Excessive vocalization - barking, whining, growling, etc.
- Hyperactivity or restlessness
- Very calm behavior when that's not normal for your dog.
- Trying to hide, seeking shelter behind your legs or under objects.
- Snapping, snarling, growling, or attempting to bite
- Vomiting or Diarrhea

### If your dog is Overwhelmed

If your dog is overwhelmed, be prepared to change plans and leave the situation.

Remember, your dog won't just "get over it," and continued exposure when stressed can lead to long-term behavior problems.

Group classes with other dogs and people, away from home, may not be the best option for socializing many dogs, as it can increase stress levels, creating an overwhelmed dog.

# IS YOUR DOG STRESSED?

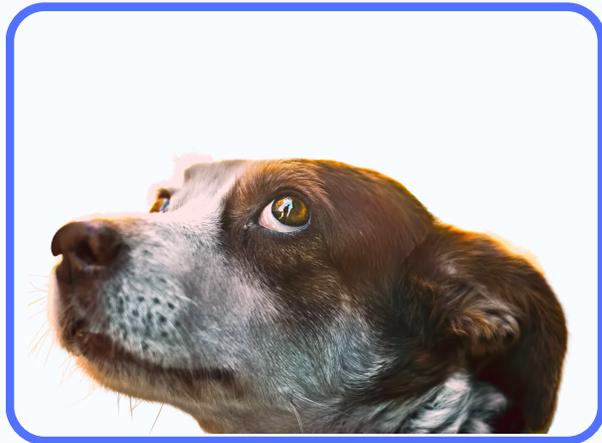
To help you recognize stress in dogs, here are some common indicators of fear, stress, or anxiety.

Note: This graphic doesn't include all of the extensive ways dogs communicate.

TONGUE FLICK



WHALE-EYE (WIDE, SCARED EYES)



MOVING AWAY FROM PERSON OR OBJECT



LIPS PULLED BACK, RESEMBLING A SMILE (OFTEN CALLED "SUBMISSIVE GRIN")



WRINKLED BROW



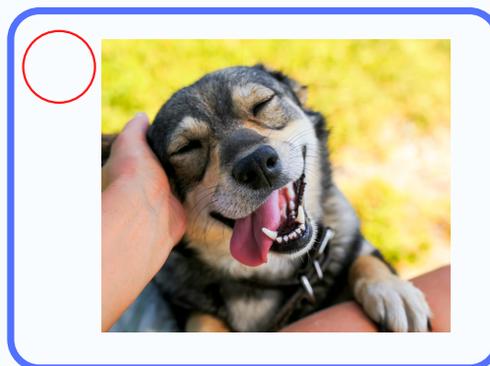
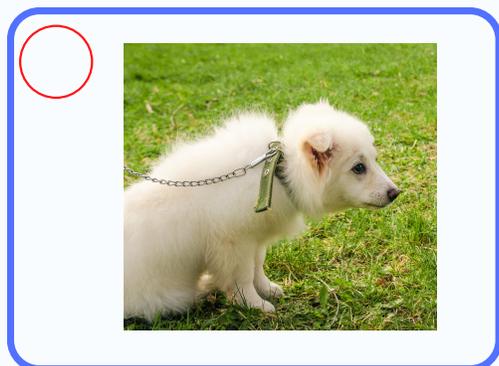
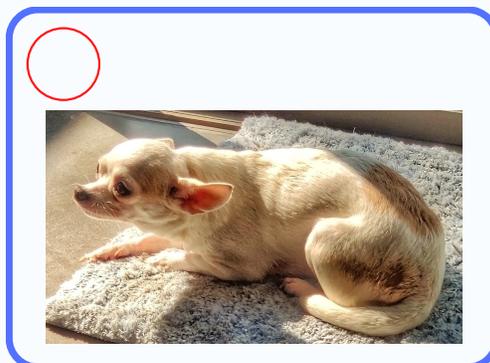
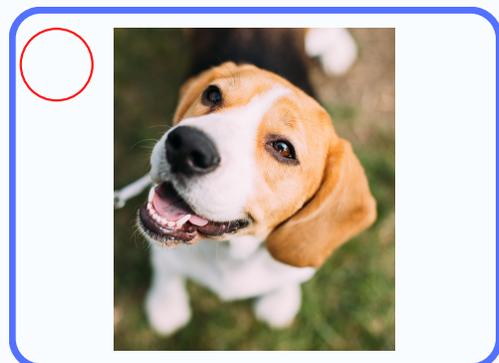
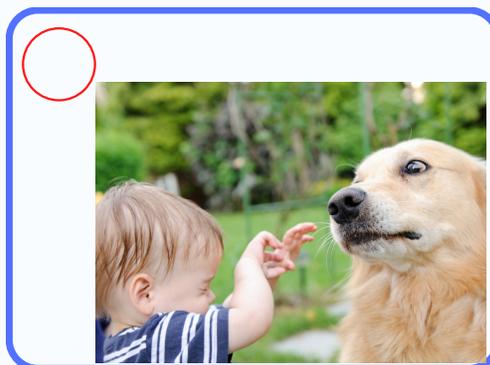
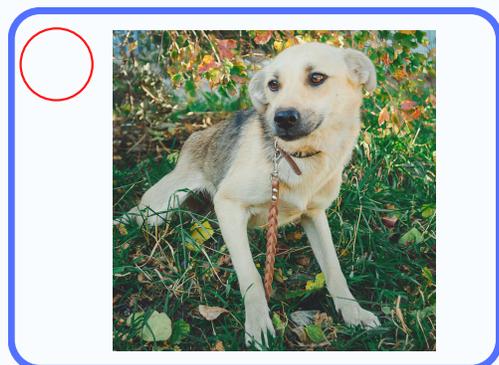
TUCKED TAIL



# BODY LANGUAGE 101

Let's test your knowledge!

Identify the stressed dogs by filling in the circles



By understanding and responding to your dog's body language, you can ensure a positive socialization experience, fostering a happy and well-adjusted adult dog.

Remember, each dog is unique, and being attentive to their needs will help build a strong bond and trust between you and your best friend.

# HOW TO PROPERLY SOCIALIZE



Now that you understand the importance of socialization, what it is and is not, and how to recognize when your dog is overwhelmed, let's learn how to properly socialize your dog!

- **Feed your dog or puppy treats yourself**

Unless you are sure your dog is 100% comfortable with other people, feed your dog the treats yourself.

- **Don't force your dog to greet people**

Pay attention to your dog's body language and ensure their experiences are enjoyable.

- **Socialize in smart spaces**

If your puppy isn't fully vaccinated yet, avoid dog-dense public areas and carry them to keep them off the ground and organic surfaces.

- **Your dog doesn't have to meet every person or dog that they see!**

Avoid creating a dog that expects to run up to every person or dog they encounter, as this can lead to frustration and excitable and poorly-mannered behavior.



# TAKE ACTION!

Now, let's make a plan for socializing your dog based on what you've learned in the last 5 days.

Remember, there are many layers to socialization, so consider the specific areas your dog needs more exposure to and take gradual steps to introduce them.

Does your dog need more experience with uneven surfaces? Take a walk in the woods!

Maybe your dog needs to learn manners around people. Practice your dog's manners during your daily walk or at the park.

Remember to listen to your dog, help them feel safe and not overwhelmed, introduce new people, places or things a little at a time and HAVE FUN!

## My dog \_\_\_\_\_'s Socialization Plan

1. The most important thing I want to socialize my dog to is \_\_\_\_\_
2. In this situation I want my dog to \_\_\_\_\_
3. My "why" for socializing my dog to this \_\_\_\_\_
4. My dog is scared of or doesn't like \_\_\_\_\_
5. In the past, I have handled the situation by \_\_\_\_\_
6. I am now going to \_\_\_\_\_
7. My dog's body language is telling me \_\_\_\_\_

**FILL OUT THE NEXT PAGE USING YOUR ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS. YOU CAN CREATE A PAGE FOR EACH SITUATION OR THING YOU WANT TO SOCIALIZE YOUR DOG TO.**

# 'S SOCIALIZATION PLAN

**EXAMPLE:**

I will socialize my dog with (visitors to my home) line 1.

I want my dog to (greet visitors with four feet on the floor) line 2, so he (doesn't jump on them and is a good citizen), line 3.

My dog is scared of or doesn't like (being pet on top of the head) line 4.

In the past, I (yelled at him and pulled him off people when he behaved inappropriately), line 5.

I am now going to (keep him on a leash until he is calm and ask people not to pet his head), line 6.

My dog's body language is telling me (that he is insecure and excited so I'll work on building his confidence using rewards and praise), line 7.

**NOW WRITE OUT YOUR DOG'S PLAN BELOW!**

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I am signing this as a promise to my dog to do my best with socializing and to reach out for help if we're struggling. (Signature)



Completing this socialization adventure is the first important step to a harmonious relationship with your dog.

By ensuring your dog is well-socialized, you pave the way for a lifetime of positive interactions and shared experiences.

If you ever need assistance or have questions along the way, don't hesitate to reach out to Valeria at Drop the Leash Dog Training for professional guidance and support.

By following this plan and being attentive to your dog's needs, you can provide a positive and enriching socialization experience for your dog or puppy.

Remember to take things at your dog's pace, always keeping their safety and well-being in mind.

Enjoy the process and have fun bonding with your dog through socialization!

Thank you,

Valeria Cascaddan  
KPA-CTP, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, LFDM-B, LFDM-T, FFCP, A.S.

