

## Mandatory Volunteer Training: Dog Handling Class

### Section 1

#### Dog Body Language-

Understanding basic canine body language ensures safe handling and decreases potential dog stress. All SafeHaven volunteers should be able to identify the following behaviors:

- **Signs of Stress in the Face**
  - Eyes
    - Hard
    - Excessively Blinking/Overly Squinty
    - Whale Eye/Half Moon Eye
    - Avoiding Eye Contact
  - Mouth
    - Lip Licking
    - Yawning
    - Stress Panting/Clown Mouth
    - Mouth Lines Visible
  - Ears
    - Pulled Back
- **Signs of Over Arousal**
  - Brow Line Visible
  - Height seeking
  - Facial grimace
  - Mouthing and jumping
  - Grabbing the leash etc.
- **Signs of severe distress**
  - Fight
  - Freeze
  - Flight



*What signs of stress do you detect?*



*Is this dog overly aroused?*



*What do you see?*

For more information about body language please review the video “11 Signs your Dog is Stressed” <https://youtu.be/ptgqVgtFEI4> and the Whole Dog Journal article [https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/16\\_3/features/dog-facial-expressions\\_20711-1.html](https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/16_3/features/dog-facial-expressions_20711-1.html)

### Section 2

#### In the Shelter:

- Please interact and work with animals that are in your current training level, unless staff have requested assistance with a particular animal.



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- Level I volunteers are not permitted to enter kennels or work animals labeled “Level II”, “Level III” or “Staff Only”.
- Level II volunteers may work with Level I and II dogs.
- Level III volunteers may work with any animal that is not labeled Staff Only.
- Only Level III volunteers are permitted to work with dogs in Pod 4 unless given permission by staff.
- Volunteers should not enter Pod 1 unless given permission by staff as Pod 1 is typically utilized as a medical isolation area for contagious animals.
- Do not stick body parts through the bars of a kennel with any animal for any reason.
- Please wear appropriate attire, including close-toed shoes and labeled volunteer shirts and/or aprons.
- Please wash and sanitize hands frequently.
- Any supplies from home, including leashes and treat bags must be washed regularly.
- Always tell a staff member immediately if you received any injury when handling an animal.
- Children are welcome to handle dogs on leash, with parent or guardian present.
  - It is especially important to make sure they are paired with a dog appropriate for their skill level and that necessary assistance is provided as needed. Children should only handle dogs on leash while outside. Adults should handle dogs while entering/exiting the kennels inside.
  - Children must complete volunteer training before interacting with shelter animals.
  - Children under the age of 16 may **not** work with Level II or III dogs even if the parent present has gone through the appropriate upper level training.

### Section 3

#### Leashing Up-

- Always keep a minimum of 10 feet between dogs at all times.
  - This prevents unsafe stations from occurring.
  - Do not allow dog to dog interactions through kennel doors, fences or on leash.
- Always look around corners and before exiting or entering doorways and utilize mirrors.
  - Dogs exiting the building always have the right of way.
- If you are uncomfortable with an individual animal you do not need to interact with that animal.
- Walk shelter dogs around the track counter clockwise.

#### Leashing Up Shy Dogs-

- Go slow with a shy dog and use non-threatening body language.
  - Angle your body away from the dog.
  - Do not hover over or reach for the dog.



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- Be quiet, slow, and gentle when handling shy dogs.
- Avoid giving direct eye contact.
- If petting be mindful of body language; if a dog is showing signs of stress, continual petting may cause the dog to escalate in behavior.
  - Practice consent tests by stopping petting and seeing if the dog requests more.
- Offer high value treats to gain the dog's trust, you may need to toss them to the dog at first.
- Gently put the slip lead over the dog's head by:
  - Offer the dog a treat through the leash loop.
  - Once the dog has eaten a few treats with their muzzle or head in the loop, gently adjust the loop so that it is sitting comfortably around the dog's neck.

### Leashing Up Jumpy/Mouthy Dogs-

- Avoid going into a kennel or yard until the dog has four paws on the ground.
  - This may take a few tries for the dog to be successful.
  - If desired, toss a few treats to the back of the kennel, when the dog is calm, to encourage them away from the gate. This makes getting in and out of the kennel much easier.
- Once in the kennel, wait until the dog is composed and polite before starting to leash up. Turn away from the dog and ignore until calm, if needed. To leash up the dog, use the following steps:
  1. Reward for good behavior by marking with the word "yes" and rewarding the dog for approaching and sitting or not jumping. Tossing treats on the ground instead of handing them to the dog can be done also.
  2. Slip the lead over the dog's head much in the same way as described for fearful dogs.
  3. Reward for good behavior and use the release word "okay" when it's time to head out of the kennel.
- If the dog jumps/barks/is overly aroused while you are in the process of opening the gate or putting on the leash, simply shut the gate or stop trying to leash up, and wait for an absence of unwanted behavior.
- If the dog jumps, mouths or is otherwise invading your space, turn your back away from the dog, cross your arms and wait for the dog to calm down.
  - Do not scold, knee the dog or get angry/aggressive.
  - For many dogs this worsens their behavior and increases arousal. If however your safety is at risk, exit the kennel and report this to a staff member asap.

## Section 4

### Holding the Leash

- **Do not** wrap the lead around your hand and wrist.
- Have one hand anchored to your midsection and the other hand able to extend out. Do this by holding the leash in the palm of your hand and the other hand be capable of sliding down the leash to hold the dog up and away from you.



## Section 5

### Dog Floor Cleaning-

When cleaning dog waste, ask a staff member if you are unsure of which mop bucket to use.

## Section 6

### Enrichment and Training Cabinet-

- Volunteers may use any of the treats, waste bags, and enrichment toys, treat bags, leashes and harnesses, etc. but must return all supplies.
- Dirty leashes and harnesses should be placed in the laundry bag inside of the small bin between the dog laundry washer and dryer that is labeled for leashes. Soft toys go in the laundry and hard toys go in the dishes.
- Supervise a dog when giving them an enrichment toy. This can be done in the play room, outside, or in the kennel. Always return used toys once cleaned.
  - Enrichment toys include:
    - snuffle mats
    - muffin tin game
    - treat dispensing toys
    - food scatters

## Section 7

### Other SafeHaven Dog Training Activities-

- **Dog Walk Group**



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- Sundays from 10-11:30am
- Walks are about 1 mile in length and typically two walks are completed per session to get as many dogs out as possible. Walks provide enrichment and an opportunity to stretch their legs.
- Sign up in the online volunteer schedule.

## **Section 8**

### **Cues/Words to use with Shelter Dogs**

- Yes!-Marker word to indicate correct behavior. Follow this cue with a reward.
- Sit
- Down-For the down position. Not used for jumping.
- Off-Used for jumping on someone or something.
- Wait-For doorways, kennel gates and food dishes.
- Ok!-Release word to end a behavior.
- Watch me-Ask a dog to look at you.
- Leave it-A way to instruct a dog to ignore something such as spoiled food on the ground.
- Ugh-Oh- A non-reward marker to indicate inappropriate behavior.

\*Remember not all shelter dogs will automatically understand these cues. Do not over repeat words while handling dogs, for example: Fluffy sit, sit, sit, sit, etc. Instead lure with a food treat to teach a dog a behavior. Do not physically force a shelter dog into a position for any reason.

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# SAFEHAVEN DOG HANDLING SKILLS

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NOVEMBER 2021



# FIRST, THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

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This presentation will help go over some of the basic knowledge you will build upon while in the shelter.

- Better understanding of dog body language
- Proper use of correctors (emergency only, NOT for training)
- Use defensive handling maneuvers
- How to use common tools/equipment



# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

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[https://youtu.be/00\\_9JPltXHI](https://youtu.be/00_9JPltXHI)



# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

Is your behavior contributing to the dog's stress? Stop or modify your behavior ASAP.

- Remember petting is not always mutually enjoyed. Consent should go both ways!
- Hovering/Invading a dog's space while leashing up can be unsafe.
- Giving direct eye contact can be intimidating.
- Be a canine advocate! Articulate what you see to those around you to help set dogs and people up for success.



How does the dog feel about this? Is this safe?

# PETTING CONSENT TESTS

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- Gives the animal ability to choose to engage or not
- Applies to dogs, cats, rabbits, and more
- Observe and react appropriately to body language
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hsOIJwMwps>

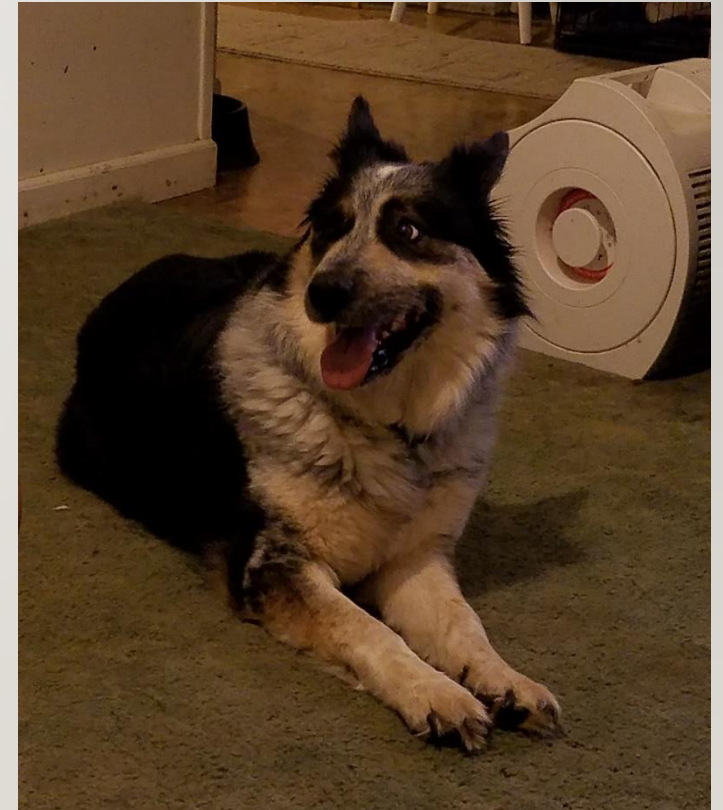
# DOG BODY LANGUAGE CONTINUED:

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## Common signs of stress in the face and body

- Whale eye
- Clown mouth
- Bunny ears
- Facial grimace
- Furrowed brow
- Tense muscles
- Avoidance by looking or moving away

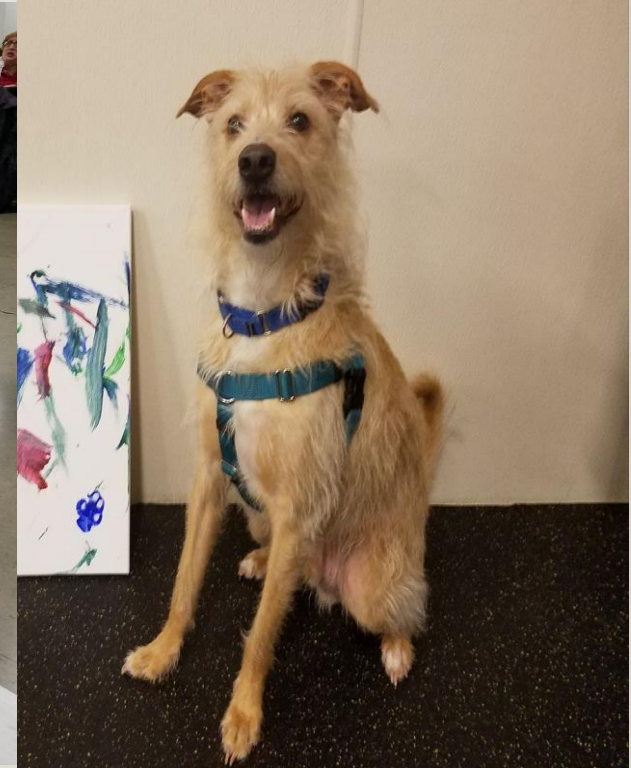




# DOG BODY LANGUAGE CONTINUED:

## Common signs of stress in the face and body

- Yawning
- Stress Panting
- Licking Lips/Tongue Flicks
- “Lipstick Showing”
- Paw Lift/Lifts one leg
- Leaving sweaty paw prints
- Scanning environment
- Unable to settle
- Mounting



Which Rusy is stressed?

# HIGH AROUSAL

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## Signs of High Arousal

- High arousal can be triggered by different events such as the sight of other dogs, fast movement, loud noises, etc.
- Shelter dogs are not given time to recover properly from one stressful event before the next occurs.
- Arousal causes a surplus of frustration and energy that can cause unwanted behaviors
  - Jumping
  - Grabbing the leash
  - Mouthing
  - Lunging at other dogs





# HIGH AROUSAL

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## Signs of High Arousal (one or more signs may be present)

- Closed mouth
- Focused stare
- Body tense and can appear very stiff
- Ears often pricked forward
- Furrowed Brow
- Tail often raised over level of back, tense tail,
- Body weight leaning forward, possible height seeking
- Facial grimace
- Unable to focus
- Mouthing and jumping



# HIGH AROUSAL

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## Dealing with High Arousal

- Use defensive handling skills!
  - Protect your face/hands.
  - Two points of leash contact/control.
  - Be aware of your surroundings.
    - Who is around you?
- Add greater distance from the *trigger* (other dogs, people, etc.)
  - Avoid yanking on the leash (opposition reflex) when possible, instead encourage or lure with food
- Communicate with others if you need assistance or space.





# HIGH AROUSAL

## Redirected Aggression

- Highly aroused dogs may redirect their frustration from the original target, to you or others, especially when:
  - Exiting the kennel.
  - While walking by fences.
  - Walking passed triggers in the halls.
- For your safety and their adoptability, stay alert, especially around blind corners and recognize signs of over arousal
  - Develop situational awareness
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybpgNm6b-jY>



# DOG BODY LANGUAGE CONTINUED:

## Recap High Arousal

- Recognize subtle signs of arousal. Dogs tend not to just “bite out of the blue” or “suddenly lunge” (with some exceptions).
- Use defensive handling maneuvers
- Distance dog from trigger(s) ASAP
- Reinforce if and when dog is below “threshold”
- Encourage and reinforce the dog for disengaging from trigger
- Communicate with others around you.



# CHARTING TRIGGER STACKING

## a visual guide

**What is trigger stacking?** When multiple stressors occurring at the same time create a potential bite threshold. ALL DOGS HAVE A BITE THRESHOLD.





# RESOURCE GUARDING

## Resource Guarding/Possession Aggression

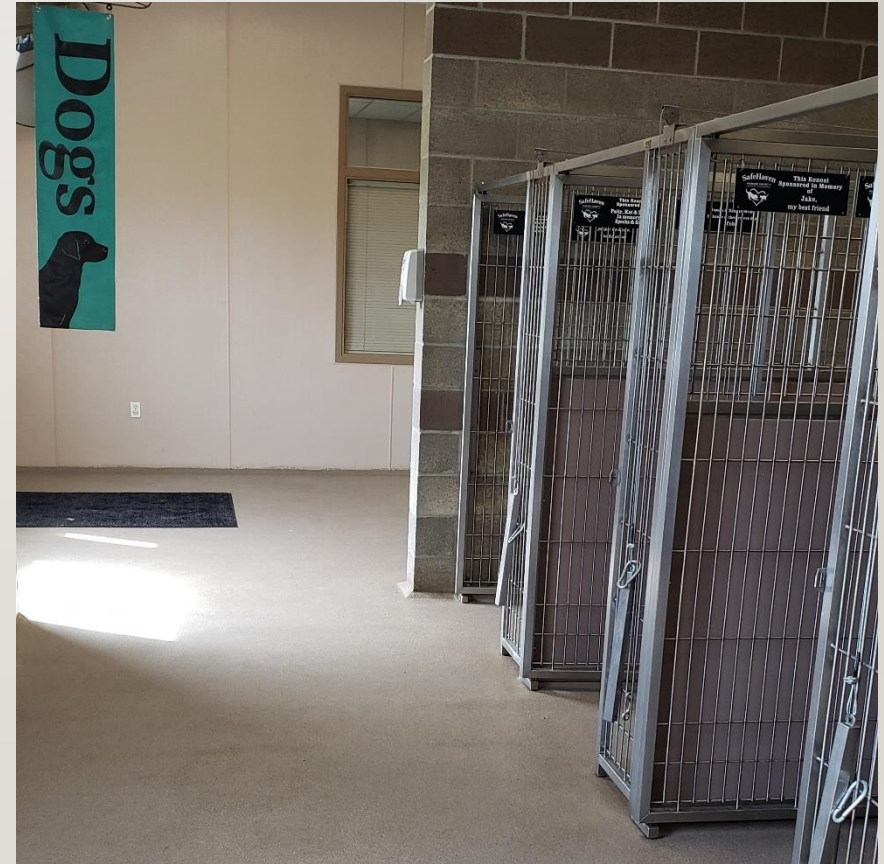
- Stiffening when approached
- Whale Eye
- Hovering over/Body Blocking
  - Food
  - Toy
  - People
  - Water Bowl
  - Bedding
  - Space
- Growling
- Lip Curl
- May Bite



# KENNEL/YARD PROTOCOL

## Gates

- Do not leave gate ajar when entering an occupied kennel.
- Be sure not to open a gate if someone else is doing the same in the next kennel.
  - Wait until one gate shuts before the next gate opens.
  - Always open the gates inwards, never outwards where they will impede the walkway.



# KENNEL/YARD PROTOCOL CONTINUED

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- **When taking a dog out of kennel:**

1. If a dog is jumping on the gate, if you can, wait for paws on the ground before entering.
2. Enter kennel with the gate moving in towards the kennel. **DO NOT PULL GATE TOWARD YOU!**
  - a. Dogs will easily slip out if the gate is pulled open.
3. Latch gate behind you while you are in the kennel with the dog.
4. Remember to have two points of contact on leash for optimum control of the dog when exiting.

- **When leaving dog in kennel:**

1. (Optional) toss treat toward back of kennel to keep the dog from slipping out the gate.
2. Like before, the gate moves in towards the kennel. **DO NOT PUSH GATE OUT.** Dogs will easily slip out if the gate is pushed out.
3. Be sure to face the dog as you exit.



# KENNEL/YARD PROTOCOL CONTINUED

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- Outside Reminders

- You have the right of way when exiting the building with a dog. If another person is trying to enter at the same time, that person should turn their dog away to give space.
- Keep at least 10 feet between on leash dogs when possible.
  - 50 feet is better.
- Avoid allowing dogs to run up to other dogs in yards when taking them for a walk.
- Help set everyone up for success! If a Meet and Greet is being held outside in one of the yards, avoid walking a dog by the yard, especially if one of both of the dogs are dog reactive.





# DIFFICULT TO HANDLE DOGS CONTINUED

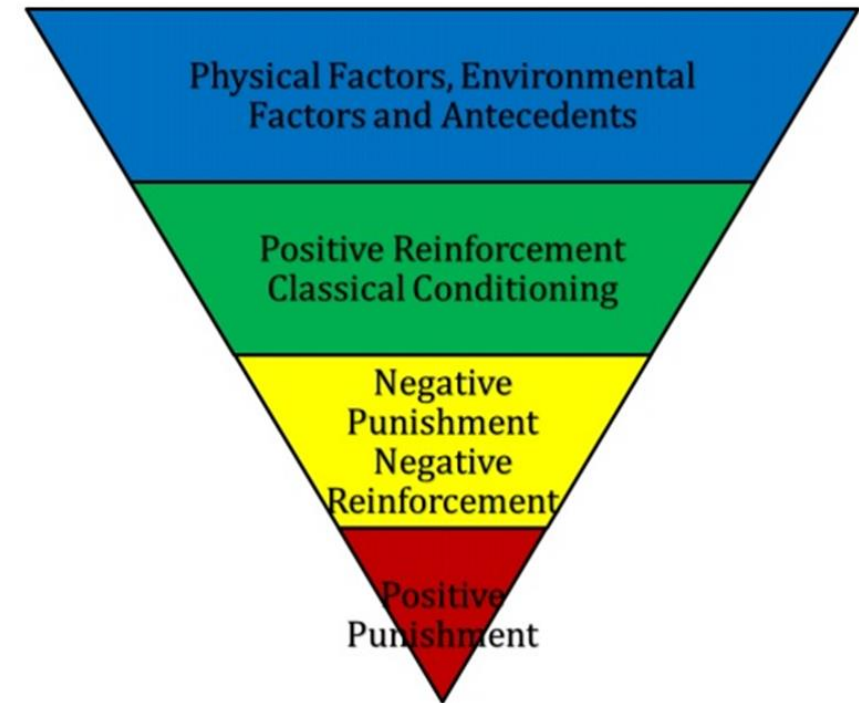
## Managing Difficult to Handle Dogs

Identify the undesirable behavior and the desired behavior.

- What would you like the dog to do instead?
- Can you cue an incompatible behavior?
  - Sit
  - U Turn away
  - Get a toy
- How can you prevent the undesirable behavior?
- To eliminate a behavior we need to prevent it from occurring while training the desired one in controlled scenarios.
- Handle dogs in a way that makes them successful.
- Handle the dogs in a way that keeps you safe!

### THE HUMANE HIERARCHY:

This graphic depicts the Humane Hierarchy as adopted by the CCPDT and as adapted from Dr. Susan Friedman's Humane Hierarchy.





# DIFFICULT TO HANDLE DOGS CONTINUED

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## Defensive Handling

### In the kennels

- ALWAYS PROTECT YOUR FACE!
- Optional, lightly hook your thumb in the dog's collar (not in the ring) to protect your face.
- Have an exit point available if dog begins to tip over into a highly aroused state.
- Use a hiss can if feeling threatened or to prevent injury.
- Last Resort: Use downward pressure on the leash, **only** when absolutely necessary to prevent or stop a dog from injuring you.

## Defensive Handling

### In the yards

- Use a leash attached to the collar as a drag line for notoriously jumpy/mouthy dogs
  - Use it to take dogs away from the fence when a reactive dog walks by.
  - To step on if a dog jumps up.
  - To catch a dog with poor recall.
  - To use to get a dog away from a fence fight.

# TOOLS:

\*NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING TOOLS ARE FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY **NOT** FOR TRAINING

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## Water

- If you have access to water, use it.
- It is wise to carry a small spray bottle during meet and greets. They are often small enough to fit into the pocket of your scrubs or pants.
- A spray bottle can be used to spray the “offending” dog. Water bowls and hoses can also work.
  - **Pros:** be used multiple times as needed.
  - **Cons:** May not be aversive enough to end a serious fight.



# TOOLS:

## Pet Corrector

- This should give you enough time to separate the dogs and move them away from each other.
- It is also small enough to comfortably sit in your pocket and is perfect for having with you for all meet and greets.
  - **Pros:** Startles dogs and can end most fights quickly.
  - **Cons:** Has limited uses as it must “re charge” before it can spray again. Not an ideal tool for teaching behaviors.



# TOOLS:

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## Spray Shield

- Spray shield may also be used to interrupt a more serious dog fight. Spray directly at the offending dog(s). Aim for face, mouth and eyes.
  - **Pros:** Can be used multiple times as needed
  - **Cons:** Sprays both dogs (one dog may be the victim of the fight). Spray may also affect people interrupting the fight.





# THANK YOU FOR REVIEWING THE PRESENTATION!

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**WE WILL SEE YOU IN THE SHELTER TO LEARN MORE  
IN PERSON WITH OUR STAFF! 😊**