

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP SESSIONS

Dog Talk & TheraPet, LLC

What is Socialization Preceding Level 1?

We invite puppies from about 12 to 16 weeks (with Veterinarian approval) to puppy socials that precede Level 1 classes. We emphasize the value of allowing puppies to navigate their way in dog-to-dog interactions. While engaging in socialization, pups learn essential communication skills (Calming Signals®). Careful human intervention teaches the leadership role. It begins the foundation for a trusting relationship. Socializing sessions (anywhere) should be supervised, short and safe and *with awareness*.

What do I Bring to Class?

- ④ Bring yourself, your dog & family members (*if you choose*). Children must be supervised in class. Children under 12 should be supervised anywhere with dogs. An adult must accompany teenagers under 16.
- ④ Initial vaccinations & rabies are required and in collaboration with your Veterinarian.
- ④ Bring your dog's healthy treats or kibble, mats and/or a blanket (if you like), a favorite toy or two, an open-mind & a good sense of humor.
- ④ Don't feed your dog too much before class ... save it for "watch-me's" and food lure training.
- ④ Your pup and/or dog will naturally be excited and/or a bit stressed. You may be too. Take a moment before coming in to de-pee, de-poo and de-stress before class, and after play sessions (in the fenced training area). Clean-up apparatus is available.

How do I Prepare Myself and My Dog(s) for a New Learning Experience?

Training puppies (*and older dogs*) can be a positive life changing experience! It's about developing a relationship with a different species and learning together. Pups learn quickly in the first 6-months. Visualize the adult dog. Then, teach & shape the behaviors you desire using positive-life rewards (healthy treats, kibble, scratch, play, sniff or walk). What are the top 3-things your dog absolutely loves? Here's some other helpful tips you can integrate into your lifestyle on a daily basis and prepare you for the journey to class:

- ④ B r e a t h e ~ e x h a l e ~ l e t – I t – g o. Walk your dog for some healthy exercise and de-stressing. Emotions travel like a conduit from you, down the leash and to your dog, so try to relax.
- ④ Set an intention for your training practice allowing for flexibility. Throw judgment aside for a while and develop a beginner's mind. Set some realistic intentions & expectations. Quality is more important than quantity.
- ④ No free lunch! The mantra is "you do something for me and I'll do something for you (sit, "OKAY", here's your dinner). Dogs need boundaries and a leader they can count on. It's less confusing and gives their life meaning.
- ④ Train with the same qualities that you expect and enjoy when learning something new yourself: patience, compassion and understanding.
- ④ Catch your dog in the act of doing something right! Focus on and reward positive behaviors pronto!
- ④ "Bone-up" on your life management skills, while integrating a dog(s) into your family.
- ④ Learn to quiet your mind, be present, observe & listen. It makes it easier to find solutions.

We are hoping to motivate you to develop a relationship with your dog that is trusting, respectable, reliable and inspires confidence in a broad range of circumstances and situations. Be mindful that dogs live in the here and now! We can learn from that.

Have fun & Enjoy the Journey!