

FEAR OF PEOPLE

Congratulations on adopting your new family member!

As your adoption counselor explained to you, your new dog has shown fears of some people. Fear of people is very common in dogs who have not grown up with certain types of people. For instance, dogs who have not grown up around children may be afraid of them. Dogs who have only lived with women may be afraid of men.

Dogs who are afraid of people may look away, put their tails down, hide, cower, or tremble when they see some people. Some may even growl and bark. If the person they are afraid of reaches out to pet them, they may snap or nip to keep the person away. Dogs who are afraid of people tend to be very friendly toward the people they know. By following these guidelines, you will be able to help your new dog be less afraid of new people and not react to them by growling, barking, or nipping.

- Provide the dog with a safe place, such as a crate, so that the dog can choose to avoid contact with people.
- Have all people your dog is afraid of sit whenever possible and not look directly at your dog. Then have the person toss delicious treats to your dog. If your dog eats the treat readily, then the person can hold a treat to see if your dog will approach and eat it.
- Ask all new people not to look directly into your dog's eyes or approach. These actions can be very scary to fearful dogs.
- Ask all new people not to pet your dog unless he or she approaches them and asks to be petted. A dog may ask to be petted by leaning into or nudging a person.
- If your dog likes to play, give a favorite toy to a new person. Ask the person to throw the toy for your dog.
- Sometimes it helps to ignore your dog's fearful behavior. Let your dog seek their safe place if he or she needs to, or to approach and stay near you but with a minimal of fuss and attention from you.
- Don't push your dog! Forcing the fearful dog to accept petting from people before being ready can increase the dog's fear, and, worse, end up with the dog snapping or biting the person. Let your dog tell you when he or she is ready. Look for approaches, eating treats, tail wags, and willingness to play.
- Don't take your new dog places where there are many people you can't control (parties, parades, ballgames). Most likely your dog will be more afraid and neither you nor your dog will be able to have a good time.

Many people may tell you that your dog just needs to be "socialized." However, the best time for socialization is between the ages of three and sixteen weeks. You can still "socialize" your dog, but now that your dog has become fearful, the socialization must be done slowly and carefully.

If you are not successful in curbing your dog's fearful behavior, PLEASE CALL your adoption counselor! He or she will be able to direct you to a person who can help you.