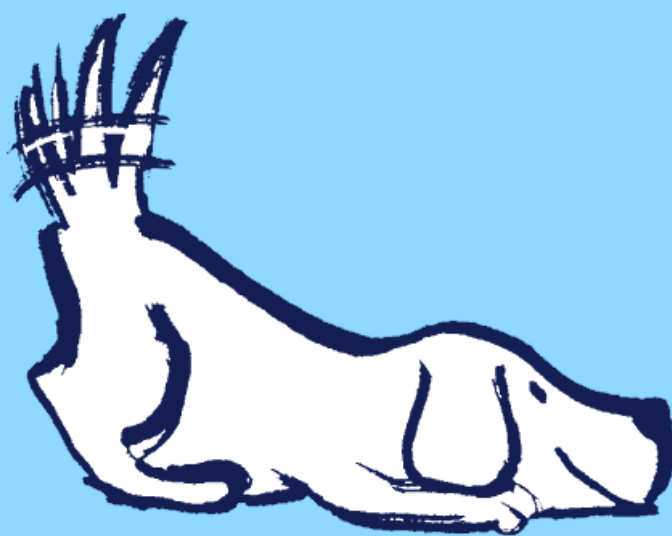




Puppy Raising for Excellent Partnerships



Foundation course eLearning overview

Version 1.0

Foundation course eLearning overview

This learning provides an overview of and supports the foundation course eLearning lesson on Kallidus. In particular it focuses on;





- Questions 1 & 2 from the ‘knowing your puppy’ principle:
 - Is my puppy fit and healthy?
 - What are my puppy’s developmental needs?
- Questions 1 & 2 from the ‘managing for success’ principle:
 - How can I manage the environment to help make it easier for them?
 - How can I prevent unwanted behaviour?
- Questions 1, 2 & 3 from the ‘teaching foundations’ principle:
 - What behaviour do I want to see?
 - Is everything set up to promote what I want?
 - What is my puppy learning?
- Questions 1, 2, 3 & 4 from the ‘teaching foundations’ principle:
 - Are we adding to the trust/life bank account?
 - What is my puppy telling me?
 - Are we working together?
 - Are we both enjoying this?



PREP principles

The table below shows all 4 PREP principles that are covered in ‘preparing for and early days of having a puppy’ course materials and sit within the ‘Our four principles’ lesson.

The table below has five columns and five rows.

	Know 	Manage 	Teach 	Partner 
1.	Is my puppy fit and healthy?	How can I manage the environment to help make it easier for them?	What behaviour do I want to see?	Are we adding to the trust/life bank account?
2.	What are my puppy's developmental needs?	How can I prevent unwanted behaviour?	Is everything set up to promote what I want?	What is my puppy telling me?
3.	What are my puppy's needs as a dog?	Are everyone's expectations managed?	What is my puppy learning?	Are we working together?
4.	What is my puppy's body language saying?	Do we all know the plan? Are we all following the same rules?	Do I have the right reinforcers?	Are we both enjoying this?





Knowing your puppy

Is my puppy fit and healthy?

It is well documented in both people and dogs that illness, injury, stress, or growing pains all have an impact on behaviour and should therefore always be considered as part of knowing your puppy.



Key message:

When looking at a puppy's behaviour, we first need to know as much as possible that they are physically fit and well, that they have their physical needs met, are of an optimal weight and have a balanced diet.

What are my puppy's developmental needs?

To know about your puppy, we first need to know about puppy development. How a puppy develops is a combination of their parents, genetics, experiences in early life and the environment in which they are raised.

A lot of what we know about their development comes from research that was conducted by Scott and Fueller in 1965. They reported that there were critical periods for puppies' behavioural development and the effects of a puppy's experiences during these periods would shape their behaviour as an adult.

This has often led to the thinking that we should get puppies out into the world and seeing things as quickly as possible. As our understanding has developed, we now know:

- These critical time periods differ between individual puppies.
- The importance of experiences being positive.

Key message:

There are several factors that will affect your puppy's development. The main ones to consider are genetics, experiences, and environment.



Development phases

From birth - 8 weeks

This is a rapid stage of development for puppies. During this time, planned socialisation is essential for normal behavioural development whilst the puppies are in the safety of their nest.

- **From birth to 2 weeks old** - your puppy is sensitive to touch, taste, and smell but their eyes are closed, and they have limited hearing. They spend most of their time sleeping or eating, and they are only able to crawl slowly.
- **Over the first few weeks** - the puppy's will be gently handled by their Breeding Dog Holder and have their first exposure to important scents, such as people and other animals. Although tiny, they already starting to learn about the world around them.
- **From 2 weeks old** - your puppy will start to open their eyes and ears and begin to distinguish between light and sound. They will also start to show social behaviour towards their litter mates, support their own body weight and become increasingly mobile.

At this point the Breeding Dog Holder will have introduced background sounds to provide them with safe and gentle first exposures to key noises in the environment. This might include sound recordings (played on a very low sound setting) of hoovers, fireworks and traffic. This can help them avoid developing fear or anxiety towards these noises in later life by building positive emotional connections. Our Breeding Dog Holders will endeavour to maximise this stage for our puppies as they are in a safe and cosy environment with mum.

- **From around 3 weeks (or once fully mobile)** - your puppy is primed to explore and seek out new things with little or no fear. Their primary focus is familiarisation with the wider world and developing social skills.

From 8 -13 weeks

Our puppies leave their first home and start their wider world socialisation. They need to toilet and eat frequently - their bladder and stomach are still very small, and they often wake at least once during the night to toilet.

- They have a strong desire for social contact and chewing and mouthing behaviours are common to start the process of teething. It's a good idea to have lots of chews and toys that they can do this on, as well as making sure wires and valuable items have been placed out of the way.

- Play is a useful tool at this time - helping puppies form attachments with people as well as a positive way of managing biting behaviour.
- At this age, puppies begin to show fear responses to experiences, objects, people, and other animals. Often, we don't know puppies have entered a fear period until it's too late, so exposure to new things should be carried out with extreme care.
- This is a sensitive time in a puppy's development and it's essential that their experiences are positive and fun. This means your puppy will avoid forming long term negative associations and will stop them being worried about things in the future.

Some people might feel overwhelmed and think they need to get their puppy out there seeing things as quickly as possible. In fact, in the early days, after a puppy leaves its mum, you should focus on having fun and building a bond with your puppy - limiting new experiences to ensure each, one is positive.

The juvenile phase (from approx. 12 weeks)

It is generally accepted that the juvenile phase starts from 12 weeks, however, individual puppies go into and move through this phase at different times as does their reaction to new things. Their environmental awareness increases, and they start to explore further away from their handler.

- Sleep and rest are essential for puppies to process new experiences and responses. At this time, they can be particularly sensitive to bad experiences. They may spook at something they have previously walked past, or bark at a stranger on the street.
- To support them through this phase, puppies should be gradually introduced to different experiences to avoid them being overwhelmed. If they do spook, whilst it can be hard in the moment, stay cheerful and support them without making a big deal out of it. Let them look and investigate if possible so they can reassure themselves it's nothing to worry about.
- Over the next few weeks this might happen again, and we need to be mindful of upcoming interactions, and err on the side of caution if necessary. We can avoid situations that may worry a puppy and set up lots of positive experiences using food, toys, and play.

The adolescent phase

From the juvenile phase, puppies transition into the adolescent phase. The transition is blurred, varying between breeds and individuals and is often a gradual process. Generally, this stage happens anywhere between six months and two years.

- During this time, puppies undergo physical, hormonal, emotional, and mental changes and their behaviour may change from day to day - effectively their brain is being re-wired! By assessing their behaviour regularly, we can make sure they are not becoming overwhelmed.
- In this phase, it's common to feel like your well-trained puppy has forgotten everything they have ever learned. They are more likely to ignore a recall, become more noisy, boisterous, or energetic and may be more responsive to others.
- Be prepared to reduce our expectations of what your puppy can do. Offer support and plenty of opportunities for your puppy to get it right.
- Adolescent dogs are also more prone to taking risks so can start to get into scuffles with other dogs. Careful management such as where we take them, not only maintains a secure bond but also keeps them safe. We can reinforce all the right behaviours, whilst avoiding unwanted behaviours.

Key message:

With some puppies, the adolescent phase can be a particularly trying time. Take your training back to the stage where they are responding well and start building up from there. Manage the environment to set your puppy up for success, so that your puppy learns to get it right rather than learning things you don't want.

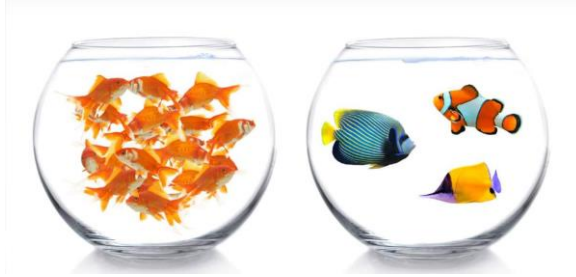
Summary

What we know is based on scientific literature and experience. Scott and Fueller 1965 wrote a paper that informed us of critical phases and the importance of early socialisation. Numerous papers have furthered this work, and current understanding within scientific literature, the dog training world, and Guide Dogs is that whilst there are rough timescales for each phase of puppy development, it is a gradual process with no exact boundaries.



Also, whilst it is important for puppies to experience new things, it is as important - if not more important that these are gradual, positive experiences for desired adult behaviours to occur. Focus on the quality of the experience rather than the quantity of experiences.

As an organisation we have sometimes focussed on getting our puppies out there socialising as early as possible, based on the historic research we have talked about. We now actively emphasise the importance of this time being about bonding, fun and play.



Our puppies still experience new things but rather than focussing on checklists as early as possible, introducing things gradually and at our puppy's pace which in some case might not necessarily be ours.

- In the first few weeks of a puppy arriving, we should try to keep as close to home as possible and as calm as possible.
- Novelty can be introduced at home to begin with and built up gradually. Busier environments such as buses, trains and shopping centres can be introduced gradually and later.
- Every puppy is an individual and so when it's the right time to do these things will differ with each puppy.



Every puppy is different so there are no specific times points of what you can and cannot do. You can take your puppy to new places but before you do, always consider:

- What will my puppy be getting from this?
- Is the environment suitable?
- Will it allow me to increase distance if needed?
- When is the best time to do this?
- Is it a positive experience for them?
- Monitor their body language to make sure they are comfortable.

Dominance theory explained

The concept of dominance theory came from a study by David Mech in the 1970's and was based on a captive group of unrelated wolves. He described how 'alpha males' would win control of their packs in violent fights with other males.



You may have heard this theory before, applied to dogs. This is the idea that dogs try and be dominant over one another, and us. You might have even come across training advice based on these ideas - e.g., eat breakfast before your dog to 'assert dominance'.

Since then, further evaluation and research has shown that instead of packs of wolves having one individual leader, they form family units that work, co-operate, and live together. Challenges to 'dominate or rule' the group are rare if they exist at all.

This [Alpha wolf](#) video is of David Mech explaining why we should not be using the terms 'Alpha' anymore after his original study. In addition, dogs didn't evolve from the wolves we know today, both wolves and dogs evolved from a common ancestor. It's like comparing us to orangutans!

Dogs do what works for them. They do things that are enjoyable, rewarding and result in a suitable pay off. For example, a dog who wants to sleep on the back of the sofa is not doing so to elevate themselves above you in the pack; they are doing it because they find it reinforcing - it is warm, comfortable, gives them access to look out of the window, and allows them to be close to you.

To summarise, the dominance theory is outdated as it made massive assumptions about wolves that have since been retracted. It shouldn't come into our thinking when we're thinking about our puppies' needs.



Managing for success

We can compare a puppy's brain to the early stages of a climbing plant, with each branch or stem representing a neural connection between different parts of the brain.

When they are young, your puppy is making lots of these pathways as part of their learning and development, just as the plant sends out lots of shoots as it establishes itself. As your puppy ages, the well-practised pathways become thicker and strengthen, while the less-used pathways wither and fade.

We train and trim the plant so that we keep the stems we want and encourage it to bloom. The aim of raising puppies is to develop the pathways and foundations we want, and let the undesirable ones die off through lack of attention and practise. This is why, preventing your puppy from behaving in undesired ways is so important. Gently guide and direct your puppy away from practising unwanted behaviour and focus on reinforcing the behaviours you do want.



What is management?



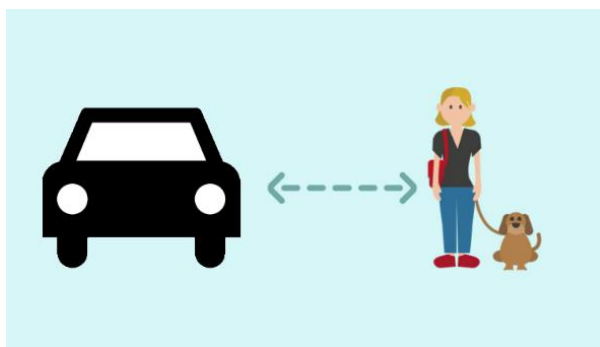
Management is a way of preventing your dog from practising unintended behaviours, behaviours we'd rather not see.

Practice makes permanent, behaviour often practiced becomes a habit and can be hard to 'unlearn'.

For example, nail biting is a habit some people have, it can be really hard to teach yourself to no longer bite your nails, and if you do, there is always the risk of picking the habit back up again for example when you are stressed. This is the same for habits your puppy picks up, such as jumping up or pulling on the lead.

Can I manage the environment to make it easier, and how can I prevent unwanted behaviour?

Something you can often do to effectively manage the environment is increase the distance to a specific trigger. For instance, if your pup shows a strong reaction to another dog/car/noise, the first thing to do is to increase the distance to this so that you can start training at a point when the dog is calmer.



Think about some behaviours you might want to avoid...

- Jumping up
- Pulling on the lead
- Counter surfing
- Eating from the bin
- Mouthing your hands
- Begging for food
- Pawing
- Chasing cats

Have this in mind when your new puppy enters your home and think how can you be proactive about preventing the behaviours from happening?

This could be making sure you don't leave anything out you don't want your puppy to get hold of - moving wires that your puppy may want to chew or moving food from worksurfaces so they're out of reach.

A behaviour that never happens can't be reinforced. If, in the past, they hadn't had any options to practice the behaviour, then they won't have learnt to do it.

Key message:

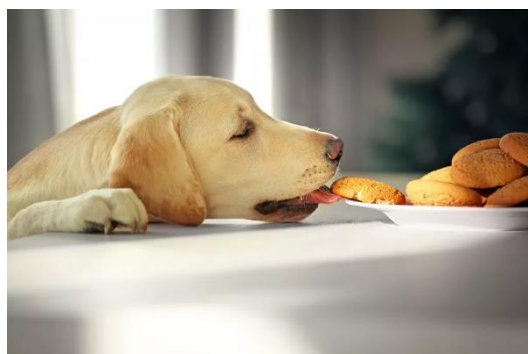
Management is about being proactive rather than reactive. Prevention is better than cure.

Change the environment - change the behaviour

Select this link to watch a video of the [Pella Shades, national TV campaign 2015: DENIED DOG](#). In this scenario, the behaviour will likely reappear when the blinds are opened, and the dog is still there but preventing the dog from practising the behaviour will help towards preventing this behaviour to become a habit. In the meantime, training can be done alongside managing the situation to teach the dog not to react to dogs outside.

Another example of how you can use management effectively is with the unwanted behaviour of stealing from worktops (counter-surfing).

By ensuring you are clearing food or items from worktops, it is less likely your puppy will jump up. And if they do, then it is not reinforced because there is no reward available for them.



Select this link to watch the well-known video [Dog out of control in Richmond Park, chasing deer. Video by Richard White](#). Here are some ideas as to what could have been done to prevent this behaviour. They could have:

- Kept the dog on lead
- Taken the dog to a quieter/deer free environment
- Taught their dog to ignore other animals
- Done better (recall) training
- Been more alert and caught the dog's attention before it noticed the deer
- Prevented their dog from chasing other animals so it does not become a habit (not easy as animals can show up unexpectedly)

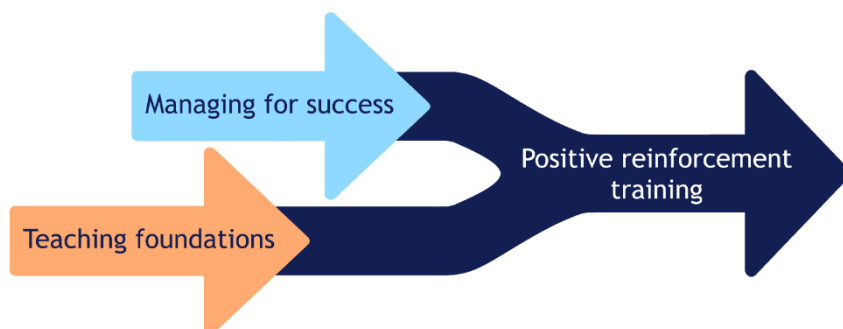
Key message:

- In some cases, management alone can be sufficient. However, it may not fully solve the problem and when the management strategy is removed it may reappear.
- Change the environment, change the likelihood of unwanted behaviour happening.
- Management is a way of preventing your dog from behaving in an undesirable way. Be proactive rather than reactive.



Teaching foundations

Our puppies are always learning, and every situation is a chance to shape their behaviour. We want to be ready to reinforce the good things they do and actively ensure that they have many positive experiences in all situations.



What behaviour do I want to see?

Positive reinforcement training is about combining managing the environment for success and applying this when teaching foundations (rewarding all desired behaviours).

Combined, they are key to achieving the behaviours we want. By managing for success, we can make it easier to teach a behaviour and by teaching and reinforcing behaviours, they will likely need less management in the long term. Desired behaviours are behaviours we want to see.

Key message:

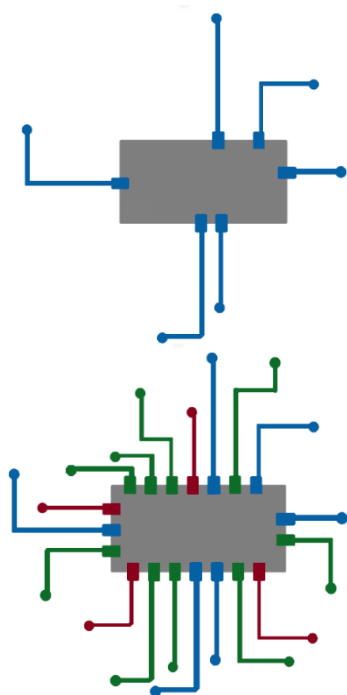
We can become good at managing our puppies and it can then be easy to forget that we need to teach our puppies what it is that we want them to do. We need to do both to achieve the desired behaviour in the long term.

1. Is everything set up to promote what I want?
2. What is my puppy learning?



Natural and problem behaviours

Natural behaviours are important for your puppy's welfare, and you want to encourage them, but at the right time and in the right context. If a puppy has not learnt when natural behaviours are appropriate, then they can become problem behaviours. Some natural behaviours that could become problem behaviours are digging, barking, running, exploring which are all natural behaviours for a puppy.



Imagine that your puppy is a circuit board. When they are born, there are pathways that are already there, and this is their genetic background.

These are demonstrated by the blue pathways in the photo on the left.

As they develop, the pathways they have become more established and increase in number. These connections are made from their experiences and environment. For example, behaviours that we teach them, as well as behaviours they learn in everyday life.

Once a pathway has been established, you can't erase them - so the connection will always remain. We can teach them to behave differently, however, that can be time consuming.

Try to create as many positive (green) connections as possible and avoid creating the problem (red) connections by setting your puppy up for success and managing the environment or the situation. In addition, you teach them what behaviours are rewarding by reinforcing these behaviours using anything your puppy finds rewarding (food, praise, toys etc).

Often, problem behaviours are natural behaviours that have not been managed correctly, or have been reinforced at the wrong time, therefore further establishing a connection. This means that without intention, we have taught a puppy a problem behaviour. Our puppies are always learning and every interaction we have with them shapes their behaviour.

You know your puppy best...

Use that knowledge to set your puppy up for success so they learn the behaviours and concepts we want them to learn and avoid them learning undesired behaviours.



Being a partnership

So much of what we've covered in this guidance is dependent on partnership.

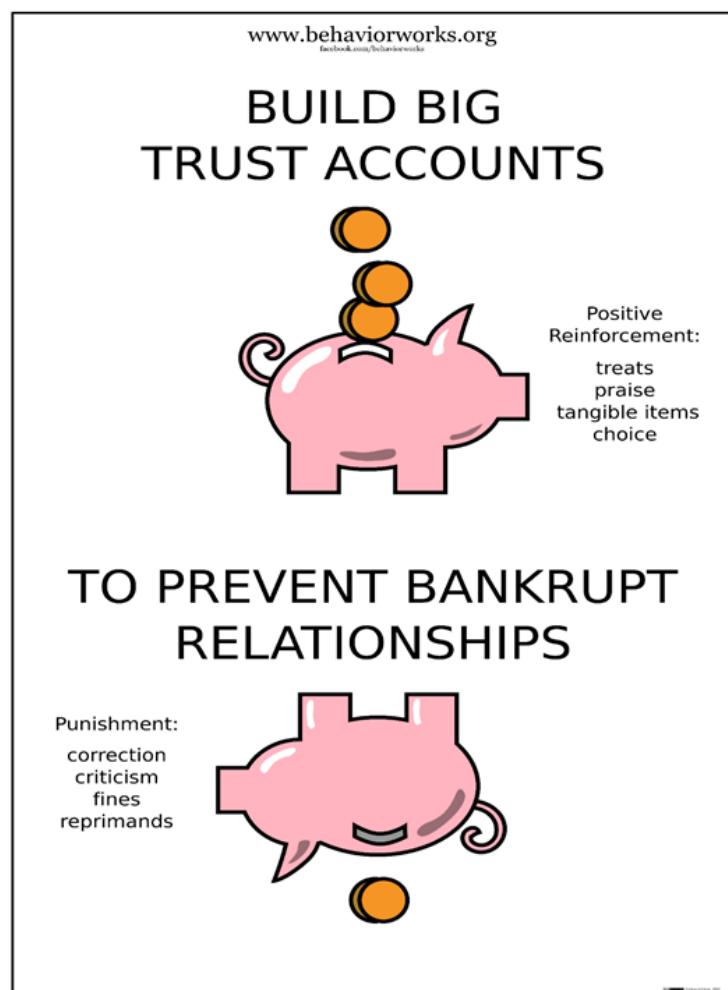
Whatever your puppy's future role, their success will depend on their ability to enter into a mutually beneficial partnership with their future partner or companion. This starts with you.

You will develop your puppy's ability to do something for you that they may not have chosen to do, because you have built a solid and trusting relationship with them based on you working together. You will also do things that are solely for their benefit and enjoyment.

Is this adding to the trust/life bank account?

The following video is an animation created by Dr Susan Friedman explaining the term trust/life bank accounts (the audio starts after 20 seconds). Select the link to watch [Trust Accounts - Behavior Works](https://www.behaviorworks.org/trust-accounts).

When we train our dogs with positive reinforcement, we talk about trust accounts. The video explains that if your puppy has a bankrupt account, it's really difficult for them to learn. Think of some things that you have done that have been a deposit in your puppy's account. Every dog is an individual so what is a deposit for some won't be for another.



What is my puppy telling me?

- How do dogs communicate whether they have enjoyed or disliked an experience?
- How do we know if it is a deposit or a withdrawal for them?

Their body language, particularly the subtle signs, is key. How we build these 'life bank accounts' leads in and out from our puppy's body language.

Being your puppy's safety net

Both puppies and adult dogs can be scared by novel experiences or specific threats. When these situations arise it's important your puppy regards you as their safety net.

By consistently reinforcing appropriate behaviour and avoiding the use of punishment, you will maximise the welfare of your puppy and build a supportive relationship. Your puppy will view you as someone who will protect them and provide support and comfort.

Your puppy will naturally turn to you for support when they are unsure or uncertain. You can strengthen that natural instinct by responding in a way that helps them feel more secure.

For instance, you can reduce the intensity of the situation or use food to reinforce their decision look to you. The food can also help to build a positive association with the situation.

Are we working together?

Why is trust and partnership so important?

A lot of Guide Dog Owners talk about the partnership rather than the guiding tasks that their Guide Dog performs, and this is key to their success. A Guide Dog learning to become a partnership is a journey that starts with you. Though their time with you is limited, the building blocks of trust and teamwork will last their lifetime. Let's look at two examples:



A Buddy Dog partnership

When Jago's buddy dog, Sam, arrived in their lives, his family couldn't have predicted the difference Sam would make. The quote below is from his parent:

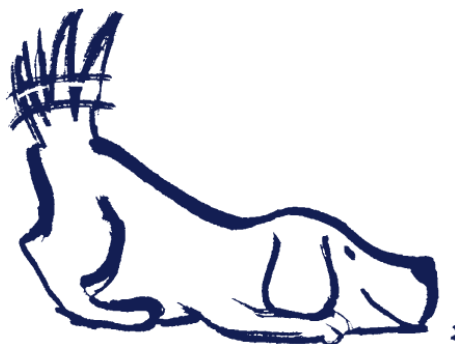
"Jago is leaving the house for walks with huge enthusiasm, speaking to people, chatting with me instead of hiding in his room, and most importantly has been asleep before midnight every night! That might sound late but it's a huge improvement for Jago, and even better he is sleeping in his own bed with Sam! I haven't had my bed to myself for years, it's heaven!"



A Guide Dog partnership

When 21-year-old Stacey's sight suddenly failed as part of an ongoing medical condition she completely lost her central vision. Stacey endured a battle with her illness for 3 months in hospital before she was finally discharged. "I felt all my happiness and bubblyness go away," Stacey says. "I couldn't go out by myself."

Luckily, Stacey was soon introduced to her guide dog Toffee. "Toffee looks at me to tell me that I can do it. He's my ray of sunshine," Stacey told us. Toffee will soon be overcoming his biggest job yet - walking with Stacey down the aisle.



Are we both enjoying this?

This is another way of thinking about things that you may not have previously considered, take a moment to read the poster below which is 'A dog's emotional cup' by Sarah Owings and Lil Chin.

A Dog's Emotional Cup

Every dog has a cup that needs to be filled—with social connection, security, access to reinforcers, and enrichment.

Some dogs seem to have a full cup most of the time, either because of a genetic pre-disposition, or because they have learned good ways to get a refill.

Most things that dogs do are completely normal—including the annoying stuff, like DIGGING up the garden, CHASING cats, or BARKING at the mailman. But all dogs show signs of stress when their cups get near empty.



Signs your dog may be coping with an empty cup

- * hoarding resources, over-protective
- * over-reacting, or shutting down when exposed to new things
- * restlessness
- * slow to recover from exciting events
- * changes in appetite
- * escalating behaviors to get something or to get away from something
- * increased grumpiness, or flare-ups
- * intense social appeasement

What refills a dog's cup:



- ♥ Doing Dog Things: SNIFFING, CHEWING, FORAGING, BARKING, DIGGING, PLAYING
- ♥ Being included in the family (dogs/humans)
- ♥ Freedom to move
- ♥ Freedom to make choices
- ♥ Ability to control outcomes and get reinforcers
- ♥ Unconditional love and attention
- ♥ Good health: nourishing food, no parasites, etc.
- ♥ Having a safe, quiet place to rest
- ♥ Predictable routines and interactions
- ♥ Getting to do things a dog loves to do

What empties a dog's cup:



- ▲ Social isolation
- ▲ Long periods of confinement with no enrichment
- ▲ Poor nutrition, untreated illness, or pain
- ▲ Denied access to reinforcers
- ▲ Scary or unpredictable reactions from important humans
- ▲ Over-stimulation (over-exercised) or not enough
- ▲ Set up to fail, and then punished for it
- ▲ No preparation for challenging situations
- ▲ Unclear training: not knowing how to get reinforcement
- ▲ No one responding when expressing a need
- ▲ Too much "impulse control" (i.e. no sniffing, no eating, no exploring, no barking, no doing Dog Things) for too much of the day

Words by Sarah Owings
Art by Lili Chin
Inspired by THE EMOTIONAL CUP by Uppility

The other end of the lead

Also think about your cup too. We've talked about looking at what our puppies are saying about a scenario, but it is also important to think about the other end of the lead...are you enjoying this?

We are not saying that every moment should or will be rosy (standing in the rain and getting up in the night in the early days spring to mind) but you should feel that overall, you are enjoying what you are doing and are also in the right frame of mind for this scenario.

If you're not, or you know your mind will be elsewhere, perhaps there is another time better suited to practice an activity?

If you find yourself struggling to find time to practice something or you feel it's something you consistently want to put off, then it's important to talk to your Puppy Development Advisor.

Summary



This overview has demonstrated why our 4 PREP principles underpin our advice, support, and guidance. We are not expecting you to remember everything covered, but hope you feel that you can take some of this away to apply and build on your existing knowledge and experience as you start, or continue, to raise our puppies.

Whatever the situation when working with your puppy, and regardless of whether you have worked or are yet to work on something, try to think;

- What do I need to know?
- What do I need to manage?
- What do I need to teach?
- How do I partner with my puppy?

End of document