THE ENGAGE-DISENGAGE GAME

A training game for dogs who are FEARFUL, ANXIOUS, or FRUSTRATED around a specific trigger such as another dog, person, or sound. The goal is to first decrease the dog’s fear/anxiety/frustration and then to teach the dog a new safe and appropriate behavior to do instead.

PLAY FOR 1-5 MINUTES. TAKE A BREAK. REPEAT.

**LEVEL 1: ENGAGE**

1. Start at a safe distance away from the trigger, where your dog is not reacting. Be quiet and still so your dog notices the trigger on his own.

2. **CLICK!**
   
   At the precise moment your dog ENGAGES by looking at the trigger, CLICK!

3. When your dog turns his head towards you after the click, feed a treat.
   
   If your dog reacts or is not turning back to you after the click, move further away from the trigger to reset at an easier distance.

**LEVEL 1 GOAL:**

To do at least 3-5 repetitions in a row at the same distance before moving on to LEVEL 2. A successful repetition is when your dog immediately turns back to you after the click.

If the trigger is moving or changing in intensity, keep playing LEVEL 1 until your dog has calmly looked at (or engaged with) the trigger from every direction. Then move on to LEVEL 2.

**LEVEL 2: DISENGAGE**

1. Let your dog notice the trigger again, but now wait 1-5 seconds to see if he will offer to LOOK AWAY from the trigger on his own.

2. **CLICK!**
   
   At the precise moment your dog DISENGAGES by looking away from the trigger, CLICK!

3. After the click, feed a treat.

   If your dog reacts or is not turning back to you after the click, move further away from the trigger to reset at an easier distance.

**LEVEL 2 GOAL:**

To do at least 3-5 repetitions in a row before moving 1-5 steps closer to the trigger. A successful repetition is when your dog comfortably disengages with the trigger on his own.

As you move closer, keep playing LEVEL 2 if the trigger is not moving or changing in intensity. If the trigger is moving or changing in intensity, go back to LEVEL 1 at the new distance.

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