

DOGS AND SEPARATION ANXIETY DURING COVID-19

Living with Covid-19 has affected all of us in one way or another. The same may be true of our dogs. In addition to dog adoptions being at an all-time high, and many households already having dogs, it is not uncommon for at least one adult to be working from home due to Covid. With these changes in household routines, some dogs may develop separation anxiety when their pet parents return to their offices or end up leaving their dogs home alone for longer periods of time. While this usually happens when pet parents leave the house, some dogs are showing separation anxiety behaviors even when the pet parents are simply in a different room from their dogs.

How do I know if my dog suffers from separation anxiety?

Dogs that have separation anxiety become overly attached to their family members. When separated from their pet parents, they become extremely anxious and show distress behaviors. These distress behaviors can include howling, barking, destroying things in the house, or defecating or urinating in the house. Others become very quiet and withdrawn and refuse to eat food or treats left for them. Dogs may only eat the food or treats when the owner returns. In many cases, the dogs will start exhibiting their anxiety when the pet parents begin preparing to leave.

Most dogs with separation anxiety will try to remain close to their pet parents as much as they can when the pet parents are home. They even may follow their pet parents from room to room.

In addition to the behaviors described above, the dogs may also be restless, shake, shiver, or salivate. While these behaviors usually occur every time the pet parent leaves, they also can happen only during certain departures, such as leaving for work.

What do I do to avoid separation anxiety in my dog?

First take your dog to the vet and make sure there isn't a medical reason for the change in behavior. If you no longer have a routine in place for your dog because of the changes caused by Covid, start a routine for your dog now, develop a schedule and do your best to stick to it even while working at home. Don't wait until it is time to return to your physical office to start a routine. As a sudden change in routine causes stress in dogs. For additional information, tips and resources for working with separation anxiety, check out the links below.

Links to Resources About Separation Anxiety

Your Dog's Friend has an article on this topic that includes a number of references at the end of the article:

<https://yourdogsfriend.org/help/separation-anxiety/>

The following is a recorded workshop offered by Your Dog's Friend on separation anxiety:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGEGdJpTVi0&t=2s>

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/dog-care/common-dog-behavior-issues/separation-anxiety>

Below are links to a three-part series on separation anxiety:

<https://www.rover.com/blog/separation-anxiety-dogs-happen/>

<https://www.rover.com/blog/setting-separation-anxiety-dog-success/>

<https://www.rover.com/blog/heres-real-way-train-dog-separation-anxiety/>

There are certified dog separation anxiety trainers who specialize in working with dogs with separation anxiety. The first link is an article about online training in this area and the second link is to the website that is offering this training:

https://www.petproductnews.com/archives/certified-dog-anxiety-trainer-launches-online-training-program-to-treat-canine-anxiety/article_cb6228b5-977c-5cf0-a97d-8973540ad419.html

https://www.petproductnews.com/archives/certified-dog-anxiety-trainer-launches-online-training-program-to-treat-canine-anxiety/article_cb6228b5-977c-5cf0-a97d-8973540ad419.html

<https://malenademartini.com/about/why-hire-csat-trainer/>

Your Dog's Friend's resources section of their web site provides a list of local, force-free trainers and behaviorists. It includes the following trainers who have certification in separation anxiety training.

My Fantastic Friend

Jessica Ring, CPDT-KA, CTC, PCBC-A, PMCT, **SA Pro Trainer (Separation Anxiety Pro Trainer)**

Ellicott City, MD

www.myfantasticfriend.com

jessica@myfantasticfriend.com

443-741-1044

Semi-private group classes and private in-home classes for puppies, basics and tricks. Behavior consultations for problems including separation anxiety. Day training in Howard County and surrounding areas. Online training options available for classes and consultations.

Well Done Charlie

Toni Clarke, CTC, VSA-CDT, **CSAT (Certified Separation Anxiety trainer)**

Capitol Hill

www.welldonecharlie.com

toni.clarke@welldonecharlie.com

202-854-9221

Private, in-home dog training and behavior modification. Serving Capitol Hill and the Washington, DC metro area. All issues, but with a special focus on helping anxious dogs deal with the noise and bustle of the city.

Tracy Krulik, CTC, **CSAT (Certified Separation Anxiety trainer)**

Ashburn, VA

www.ispeakdog.org

tracy@ispeakdog.org

Separation Anxiety training: Stop the barking, howling, frantic running, peeing, destruction, and injuries

when you're not home with your dog. This private training is done remotely; so, it's possible to work with your dog no matter where you live.