

LIONS FOUNDATION OF CANADA
DOG GUIDES
La Fondation des Lions du Canada
CHIENS-GUIDES



Dog Body Language

- What it is and why it's so important
- Human Greetings
- Dog Greetings
- Signs of stress
- Anticipatory Behaviours
- Cut-Off aka Calming Signals
- Distance-Increasing Signals
- Distance-Decreasing Signals



The Importance of Understanding Body Language

- Stress Reduction
- Increases positive interactions with their environment
- Builds trust in humans as handlers
- Reduces the risk of aggression and bites
- Can help you identify when you might need to reach out to puppy rep for training help



Human Greetings

- Stand up Tall
- Direct Eye Contact
- Straight-line approach
- Reach towards with hand
- Leaning or looming overtop
- Pat on top of head
- Smiling/showing teeth
- Picking up/hugging



Dog Greetings

- Come in loose and from below
- Averted Gaze
- Curved, indirect approach
- Sniff hind end
- Limited physical contact



Greeting Behaviour

Human/Primate Manners

- Upright posture
- Direct eye contact
- Direct, straight approach
- Reach towards face, pet head
- Picking up or hugging

Dog/Canine Manners

- Lower posture
- Averted gaze
- Curved, indirect approach
- Sniff hind end
- Minimal physical contact

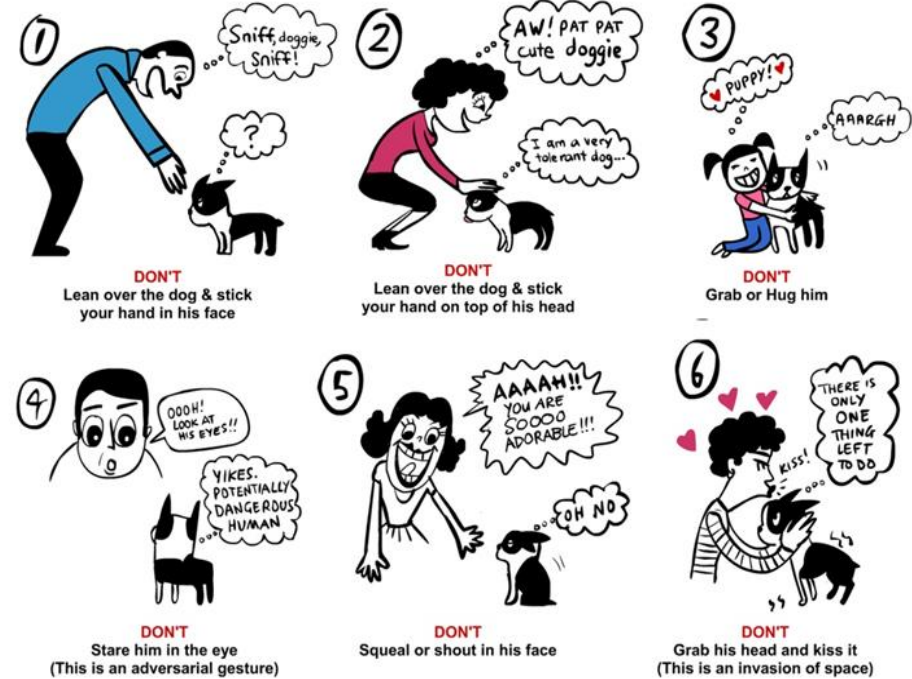
The Most polite way to greet a dog

- No direct eye contact
- Let them approach YOU
- Crouch sideways, get lower to the ground to their level
- Pet on side of face or body
- 3 second rule

The majority of people greeting our puppies will NOT be doing so politely. How do we manage that?

HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!
I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.



Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a great big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

THE CORRECT WAY:



- * No Eye contact
- * Let the dog approach you in his own time
- * Keep either your SIDE or BACK towards the dog (non-threatening posture)



Stress in dogs

- Stress: a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances
- Dogs are not stressed equally by the same circumstances
- Not all stress is “bad”. But...
- Stress can lower the threshold for aggressive behavior
- Stress levels can change moment to moment
- Stress inhibits learning

Signs of “normal” Stress in dogs

- Yawning
- Panting (when not overheated)
- Spatulated tongue
- Sweaty Paws
- Stretching
- Excessive Shedding
- “checking out” their genitals



Signs of “unsure” Stress in dogs

- Slow motion movement
- Lip-lick
- Paw-lift
- Trembling
- Drooling
- Weight shifted backwards
- Not eating/refusing treats
- Not responding to cues/sniffing/ignoring



Signs of “bad” Stress in dogs

- Ears pinned back
- Muscle ridges (eyes and mouth)
- Dilated Pupils
- Tail tucked
- Low body posture
- Puffing cheeks
- Increase respiration rate



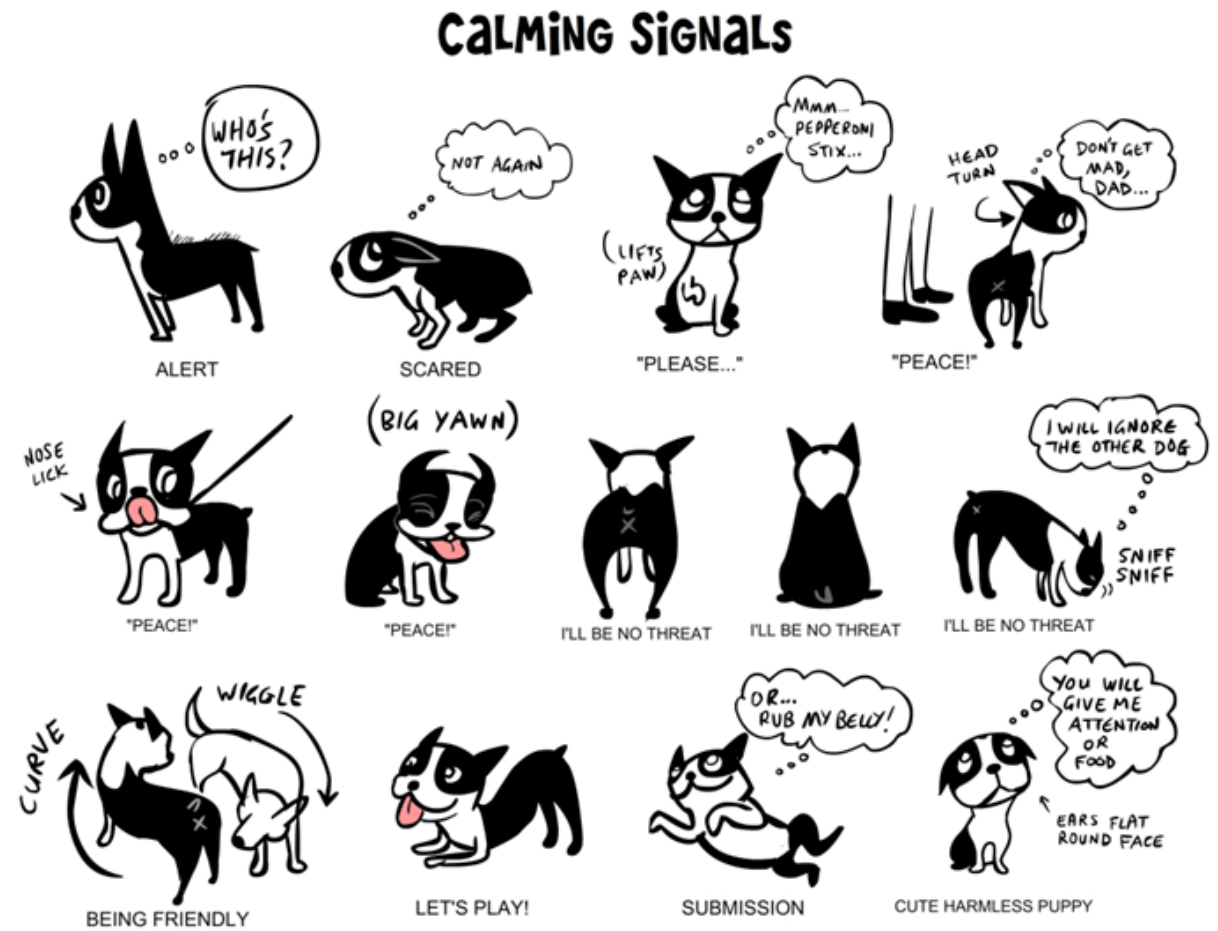
“Exciting” Stress

- Often a sign of “good stress”
- Still increases arousal and can lower threshold to aggression
- Examples:
 - Whining, panting, barking
 - Teeth chattering
 - Raised hackles
 - Penis crowning



Cut-Off or Calming Signals

- Behaviours that are used to avoid conflict or to suppress aggressive behavior in others
- Often seen during greetings
- Often used to avoid or escape
- “I mean you no harm, don’t bother with me”



Calming Signals

- Looking away
- Turning whole body away
- Raising a paw
- Lick lip
- Sniffing the ground
- Sneezing (1 or two BIG sneezes)
- Scratching
- Excessive blinking, squinty eyes
- The “shake off”
- Single lick “kiss to dismiss”



Warning Signals



- Behaviours used to signal others to back off from them or their possessions
- In response to a perceived hostile situation
- Type of signal can indicate confidence level of the dog
- “If you don’t back off I might have to bite you”

Examples of warning signals

- Ears and body weight forward
- Tense body/face and/or lowered head/neck
- Tail wagging high, fast, flagged
- Heightened postures
- Muzzle punch
- Hard eye
- “whale eye”
- Body Freezing
- Showing teeth
- Growling
- Rolling onto back submissively, sometimes even squirting urine



Good signals

- Play Bow
- Easy wagging tail (full body wag, windmill tail)
- Submissive grin
- Submissive Licking
- Relaxed Body Posture
- Soft Eyes



Questions?

Video resources

- [Bing Videos](#)
- [Bing Videos](#)