

Session 1 Welcome

SESSION SAFETY & EQUIPMENT



The right equipment can make training easier for both you and your dog. Training tools should be easy to use and do not need to be expensive or fancy. Take some time to research the different tools available and understand how they are designed to be used. Try different options to discover what works best for you, your dog, and your training goals.

- Training Collar
- Treat Pouch
- Training Mat
- Water Station
- 2 Leads - 1 Standard & 1 Long

- Stay Together: Students must remain with their group and may not leave without the knowledge and permission of their Teacher or Trainer.
- Dogs on Lead: Dogs must remain on lead and at least 5 feet apart at all times unless directed otherwise by the Trainer.
- Know Your Boundaries: Learn the difference between a boundary and a barrier, and understand why both are important for safety.
- Focus & Attitude: Keep your head in the right place. Being distracted, frustrated, or careless can create unsafe situations for you, others, or the dogs.
- Respect the Dogs: Treat every dog with patience, kindness, and respect. Never intentionally frighten, tease, or harm a dog.
- Respect the Team: Students are expected to treat Coaches, Trainers, staff, volunteers, and fellow students with respect.
- Speak Up: If something makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or unsure, tell your Teacher, Trainer, or the Director. Your concerns will be taken seriously.

CANINE COMPANION TRAINING GOALS

CALM

MY GOAL FOR YOU (DOG) IS GROWTH,
SAFETY, AND HAPPINESS - STAY CLOSE
TO ME, LOOK TO ME AND I WILL LEAD YOU

CONSISTENT

THERE WILL BE CLEAR BOUNDARIES FOR
SAFETY NO WISHY-WASHY TO DAMAGE
YOUR TRUST I WILL HOLD THE LINE
AND STAY TRUE BLUE

LOVING

I WILL BE FIRM (BUT NOT HARSH) NO MATTER
HOW YOU (DOG) BEHAVE. I WILL BE FAIR
I WILL BE CURIOUS, HAVE EMPATHY & GRACE
I WILL DO THE HARD THINGS FOR BOTH OF US

LEADER

I WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND LEARN
SO I CAN TEACH & TRAIN YOU (DOG).
NEW THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW &
OLD THINGS THAT NEED TO GO



WE WILL ALSO

- Learn the tools you need to teach your dog new things.
- Learn how to interrupt and change unwanted behaviors.
- Develop clear communication skills with your dog.
- Learn the importance of boundaries, safety, and consistency.
- Learn to own your mistakes and learn from them.
- Choose to respond rather than react. Reactions are ridiculous!
- Move from frustration to curiosity. Your dog is not trying to frustrate you; they are telling you something. Be curious about your dog's behaviors and reactions. Ask yourself, "What is my dog trying to tell me?"
- Remember, this is not about dominance. It is about learning, growth, and building a relationship.
- Build a strong relationship. Play games, go for walks, spend time together, and care for their needs.
- Set goals for you and your dog. Choose a couple of small habits you can practice each day.
- Practice with your dog twice each day for 5–10 minutes. Be patient—you are both learning!
- Build a canine toolbox for your specific dog using treats, toys, praise, redirection, and touch.

SKILLS

THESE ARE THE DOG TRAINING SKILLS THAT WE WILL FOCUS ON FOR TRAINING.

WHEN WE START WE SAY:
"DOG'S NAME"
We can use a lure to get their attention if necessary.

WHEN WE END WE SAY:
"BREAK" OR "OK"



FALLING DOWN & GETTING UP

On this journey to becoming a True Blue Leader, you will:

Fall down, make mistakes, get discouraged, and maybe want to quit.

But you will not fail because you will:

Get up and go again, learn from your mistakes, and turn your discouragement into encouragement (self & others)

Quit making excuses for why you can't and find a way to say "I DID IT!"

ATTENTION	LOOK AT ME - EYE CONTACT "DOG'S NAME" & "LOOK AT ME"
WALK	HEEL & LOOSE LEAD WALK "LET'S GO" & "WITH ME"
WAIT	PAUSE - BARRIER TO ACCESS "WAIT" AND "OK" WHEN RELEASED
PLACE	GO TO MAT, SETTLE & WAIT "OK" WHEN RELEASED
SIT & DOWN	FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS AND STAY IN POSITION TILL RELEASED
STAY	LONG TERM - SETTLE - WAIT TILL "OK" WHEN RELEASED
RECALL & TOUCH	COME WHEN CALLED AND TOUCH MY HAND

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

To build a strong relationship with your canine companion, you need to get to know them. Many different things can influence how a dog behaves, learns, communicates, and responds to correction.
Understanding what may influence or trigger your dog's actions and reactions—including fight, flight, or freeze—can help you better understand your dog, communicate more clearly, and build a stronger relationship based on trust.

PACK POSITION

Dogs have different personalities and may naturally take on different roles when interacting with other dogs and people. One way of thinking about these differences is Front, Middle, and Back. These are not fixed labels but can help us observe how a dog tends to respond to their environment.

FRONT

Role: The leaders and protectors.

Traits: Confident, assertive, and bold.

Function: They decide where the group goes and face dangers head-on.

Need: They require clear rules and a human leader, or they will try to take charge themselves

MIDDLE

Role: The mediators and peacekeepers.

Traits: Happy-go-lucky, playful, and stable.

Function: They act as the social glue. Communication Specialist

Need: They enjoy interacting with everyone and adapt easily to new friends

BACK

Role: The early warning system.

Traits: Highly sensitive, cautious, and alert.

Function: They watch for subtle changes in the environment and warn others of danger coming from behind.

Need: They need a calm, quiet, and safe space to feel secure

AGE & HEALTH

A dog's age and physical health can influence behavior and learning.

- YOUNG DOGS — Focus on building your relationship, establishing consistency, and teaching good habits.
- OLDER DOGS — Old habits can be difficult to change, but older dogs can still learn new skills. Focus on teaching and reinforcing the behavior you want.
- ILLNESS & INJURIES — Pay attention to sudden changes in behavior, appetite, energy, movement, or sleep. Changes in behavior may sometimes be connected to pain, illness, or injury.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Your dog's past experiences—or lack of experiences, can influence how they respond today.

Consider their experiences with:

People • Other animals • Environments • Sounds • Handling • Training • Abuse or neglect • Accidents or injuries • New situations

Instead of simply asking, "Why is my dog behaving this way?" become curious and ask: "What might my dog's past experiences be telling me about this behavior?"

BREED TYPE

There are hundreds of recognized dog breeds, each developed with different purposes, traits, instincts, and physical characteristics.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) organizes recognized breeds into seven groups:

SPORTING - HOUND - WORKING
TERRIER - TOY - HERDING
NON-SPORTING

Knowing your dog's breed or breed mix can give you clues about natural instincts, energy levels, behaviors, and activities they may enjoy.



DRIVES & FOCUS

Their drive is where their focus is. EYES - NOSE - EARS - MIND

PACK DRIVE - Focused on and following their leader
PREY DRIVE - Focused on distractions such as animals, sounds, smells
DEFENSE DRIVE - Focused on protecting self, other animals, their people, and property

Notes & Review

