

The Wenatchee Valley Humane Society's Behavior Modification Program

The Wenatchee Valley Humane Society's behavior modification program is designed to meet the needs of the individual animal by reducing their FAS, increasing safety for everyone, reducing LOS, and preparing the animal for the adoption process.

Green capacity = 1-4 enrolled, unavailable dogs

Yellow capacity = 5-7 enrolled, unavailable dogs

Red capacity = 8 or more, enrolled, unavailable dogs

These numbers are guidelines to make enrollment decisions, determine pathway plans for individual animals, and manage resources wisely.

HEROIC HOUND PROTOCOL		
Categories	Heroic Hound - Available Green and Blue volunteers Staff	Heroic Hound+ - Unavailable, may graduate to Available with special handling Behavior Team and Yellow volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver Staff adoption counseling (reading behavior notes) Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package	Behavior waiver Behavior staff adoption counseling (reading behavior notes) Equipment, medication Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Medical needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities AC Staff and Vol: Play yard Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities AC Staff and Vol: Play yard Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safe Space for Decompression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC and DR staff: Environment check AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) Intake: Decompression candidate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC and DR staff: Environment check AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) Beh Staff: Moving animal to quieter kennel Beh Staff: Decompression candidate (reviewing at rounds, pathway decision) Beh Staff: Foster candidate (case by case) Beh Staff: Office time candidate
Species-typical Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing, and assisting when needed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (developing schedule, prepping)
Coping Skill Exercises	Saying Hello: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff: Tossing treats in kennel or move on 	Beh Staff and Vol: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tossing treats in kennel

	Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff: Treat Retreat Safe Animal Handling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff and Vol: Engagement principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Custom plan for barrier reactive dogs (when applicable) • Engagement principles • Treat Retreat • Follow me / hand target training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target training with novel people • Practice stranger meet and greets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Custom meet and greets • <i>Custom handling protocol (when applicable)</i> • <i>Reactivity protocol (when applicable)</i>
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Enrollment Process

Review the [Fear Pathway Planning Tool](#) for enrollment guidelines.

- Mild: Available, Enrollment into HH to prevent deterioration
- Mild to Moderate: Unavailable, Enrollment into HH+
- Moderate: Unavailable, Enrollment into HH+
- Moderate to Severe: Euthanasia
- Severe: Euthanasia

Heroic Hound+ should receive the protocol listed above for 6 days in a row. On the 7th day, the dog will receive a reassessment.

Do not enroll:

Please do not enroll the animal if they are exhibiting a combination of observed behaviors and considerations listed below after their decompression period:

- Closing distance or remains in same position while displaying threat displays, escalates quickly
- Active avoidance, pacing, fleeing, or persistently seeking an escape route
- Does not eat, catatonic
- No sociability
- Alligator rolling on leash
- Consistent FAS 5, Does not recover
- Cannot remove from the kennel
- Cannot leash due to safety (snapping at leash, closing distance)
- Bite Level 1 (snapping) and up
- Multiple triggers, difficult to predict and prevent
- Dog cannot recover in the presence of a trigger
- Cannot safely introduce to new people

Re-assessment Process

- On Day 7, the dog will be re-assessed by the behavior team. At that time, the behavior team should run the dog through the Pathway Planning Tool. The dog should show improvements from the original pathway planning score at time of enrollment.
- Improvement may include:
 - A consistent reduction in observed fearful behaviors.
 - All staff, volunteers, and adopters can handle the dog. If exceptions have to be made, the dog should be discussed at the AWSC.
 - Interventions reduce FAS.
- If the dog has made some progress but still needs support in a specific area, the behavior team should discuss the case at AWSC and determine if extending enrollment is the next pathway. For example, if the dog has started to trust the behavior team but needs additional support during meet and greets, the behavior team might extend the dog's enrollment period to work on meet and greets.
- The dog can graduate from the program early at any time. We always want to reduce LOS.

Adoption Counseling

Prior to the Meet and Greet:

- “This dog has been enrolled in the Heroic Hound program. That means we observed this behavior (list a brief description of observations) in the shelter and enrolled him/her to provide support during their stay and build their confidence.”
 - Some behaviors may include: Ears back, mouth closed, avoidance, displacement behaviors, appeasement behaviors, and threat displays.
- “You may observe these behaviors during the meet and greet and it's important to focus on 3 things.”
 - **CHOICE** - allow them to approach you, allow them to explore the space.
 - **LIMITED HANDLING** - 3 second rule only after the dog solicits attention.
 - **GO SLOW** - avoid quick movements and changing positions.
- “We're also going to give the dog some enrichment items to reduce stress.”

Meet and Greet:

SETUP:

- The adoption counselor should choose a quiet and familiar (if possible) location to support the needs of the animal.
- The adopter should walk ahead of the dog and exit ahead of the dog.
- The adoption counselors should avoid giving the client treats to prevent luring the dog to them. In fact, having treats in the meet and greet could provide false assumptions about the dog's engagement motivation. The handler can be giving the dog food.
- Please keep the leash attached at all times.
- Longer meets can also help the dog not feel rushed into the social interaction.
- If the dog is having a hard time opening up in the space, it might be helpful to go for a walk. The adoption counselor should hold onto the leash. This gives the dog an opportunity to sniff and decompress.

INTERACTION:

- Staff members should focus on 3 things:
 - **DEMO** - show the client what you want them to do.
 - Practice: **choice, limited handling, go slow**
 - Sit on the ground or in chairs (environmental cues)
 - Toss food away so the dog has spacial relief (treat retreat)
 - Toss food into the enrichment items
 - **BODY LANGUAGE** - narrate the body language they are observing as a learning opportunity for the client.
 - **REDIRECT** - if the client is doing something that is hard for the dog, ask the client to engage in a different behavior. See examples below.
- For Heroic Hound+ there might be a custom adoption meet and greet procedure that is conducted by the behavior team.
- If the meet and greet does not go well (dog's FAS increases, especially despite the efforts listed above), end the meet right away, and notify the behavior team, enter notes into the dog's profile.

Client Behavior	Staff Prompt
Reaching over the dog's head and the dog is uncomfortable.	"He loves it when you scratch under the chin."
Asking the dog to sit and the dog is not sitting.	"I am not sure he knows that yet, but watch him play find it." Then demo Find it.
Cornering the dog and the dog is uncomfortable.	"Let's move towards this part of the yard to allow him some space."
The dog is escalating (signs of fear, growling).	"It seems as though he/she is getting too stressed, let's end the meet and discuss our options."

POLISHED PUP PROTOCOL		
Categories	Polished Pup - Available Blue volunteers Staff	Polished Pup+ - Unavailable, may graduate to Available with special handling Behavior Team and Purple volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver Staff adoption counseling (reading behavior notes) Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package	Behavior waiver Behavior staff adoption counseling (reading behavior notes) Equipment, medication Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Medical needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities AC Staff and Vol: Play yard Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities AC Staff and Vol: Play yard Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Environment check AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) Intake: Decompression candidate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Environment check AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) Beh Staff: Moving animal to quieter kennel Beh Staff: Decompression candidate (reviewing at rounds, pathway decision) Beh Staff: Foster candidate (case by case) Beh Staff: Office time candidate
Species-typical Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing, and assisting when needed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (developing schedule, prepping)
Coping skills	<p>Saying Hello:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff: Click for calm or move on <p>Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff: Proactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find it Capturing Optional: AC Staff: Nosework - <i>some exceptions might be assigned to purple volunteers</i> <p>Safe Animal Handling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff and Vol: Engagement principles All Staff: Basic Kennel Routine 	<p>Beh Staff and Vol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click for calm Engagement principles Basic Kennel routine Proactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find it Capturing, RofR Reactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find it Stiff arm Separation Radio Chain leash

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff: Reactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find it ○ Stiff arm ○ Separation ○ Radio ○ Chain leash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy outlet and self control outlets: Find it games, Scent work, Tug/drop it • Teach alternative responses: Capturing calm behavior, Place • Practice stranger meet and greets calmly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Custom meet and greets
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Enrollment Process

Review the [High Arousal Pathway Planning Tool](#) for enrollment guidelines.

- Mild: Available, Enrollment into PP to prevent deterioration
- Mild to Moderate: Unavailable, Enrollment into PP+
- Moderate: Unavailable, Enrollment into PP+
- Moderate to Severe: Euthanasia
- Severe: Euthanasia

Polished Pup+ should receive the protocol listed above for 6 days in a row. On the 7th day, the dog will receive a reassessment.

Do not enroll:

Please do not enroll the animal if they are exhibiting a combination of observed behaviors and considerations listed below after their decompression period:

- Significant mouthing
- No sociability
- Indiscriminately, persistently, and/or intensely pursues or lunges toward a stimulus
- Mouths with significant pressure. May break the skin. May hold or hold and shake. Bite level 2 and up
- Dog may bark or repetitively shriek.
- May jump and/or mount frenetically, possibly in a repetitive manner, impossible to redirect or difficult to remove physically
- Multiple triggers, difficult to predict and prevent
- Dog cannot be handled without adept defensive handling
- Cannot safely introduce to new people, Moderate - Significant mouthing exists

Re-assessment Process

- On Day 7, the dog will be re-assessed by the behavior team. At that time, the behavior team should run the dog through the Pathway Planning Tool. The dog should show improvements from the original pathway planning score at time of enrollment.
- Improvement may include:
 - A consistent reduction in high arousal behaviors.
 - All staff, volunteers, and adopters can handle the dog. If exceptions have to be made, the dog should be discussed at the AWSC.

- Interventions reduce FAS.
- If the dog has made some progress but still needs support in a specific area, the behavior team should discuss the case at AWSC and determine if extending enrollment is the next pathway. For example, if the dog has reduced high arousal behaviors with the behavior team but needs additional support during meet and greets, the behavior team might extend the dog's enrollment period to work on meet and greets.
- The dog can graduate from the program early at any time. We always want to reduce LOS.

Adoption Counseling

Prior to the Meet and Greet:

- "This dog has been enrolled in the Polished Pup program. That means we observed this behavior (list a brief description of observations) in the shelter and enrolled him/her to provide support during their stay, teach life skills, and impulse control."
 - Some behaviors may include: Jumping up, mounting, mouthing, reactivity
- "You may observe these behaviors during the meet and greet and it's important to focus on 3 things."
 - **CHOICE** - allow the dog to explore the space and move freely.
 - **ACTIVITIES** - we're going to use snuffle mats, nosework boxes, and toys to redirect the dog's focus and provide them with an outlet.
 - **REDIRECT** - we're going to use food and games to redirect the dog when he/she seems overstimulated.

Meet and Greet:

SETUP:

- The adoption counselor should choose a quiet and familiar (if possible) location to support the needs of the animal, preferably outdoors.
- The dog should be dragging a slip leash/leash, especially during the beginning of the interaction as a safety measure.
- The adoption counselors should hold and provide the treats first so they can manage the interactions. Managing the interaction includes:
 - Redirecting with Find it
 - Redirecting to snuffle mats and enrichment items
- Once the client has observed how to use the food, the counselor can give the client some treats.
- If the dog is having a hard time regulating during the meet, it might be helpful to go for a walk. The adoption counselor should hold onto the leash. This gives the dog an opportunity to sniff and decompress.
- Longer meets can also help the dog decompress and engage without overstimulated behaviors.

INTERACTION:

- Staff members should focus on 3 things:
 - **DEMO** - show the client what you want them to do
 - Practice: **choice, activities, redirect**
 - Find it
 - Be hands-off

- **BODY LANGUAGE** - narrate the body language they are observing as a learning opportunity for the client.
- **REDIRECT** - if the dog is getting too overstimulated, ask the client to engage in a different behavior. See examples below.
- For Polished Pup+ there might be a custom adoption meet and greet procedure that is conducted by the behavior team.
- If the meet and greet does not go well (dog's FAS increases, especially despite the efforts listed above), end the meet right away, and notify the behavior team, enter notes into the dog's profile.

Client Behavior	Staff Prompt
The dog is jumping up/mouthing the patron and the adopter does not know what to do.	<p>Step on the drag line and start playing Find it away from the adopter. Continue to scatter quickly until the dog is settling down. Ideally, toss the food into grass or enrichment items. If the dog cannot settle, I would end the interaction or take a walk.</p> <p>"He seems to be having a hard time settling, let's go for a walk." "He seems to be having a hard time settling, let's end the meet and discuss our options."</p>
Asking the dog to sit and the dog is not sitting.	"I am not sure he knows that yet, but watch him play find it." Then demo Find it.

CLEVER CANINE PROTOCOL

Suspect behavior deterioration and also consider these categories: breed, age, crate rest, KC, custody, LOS

Categories	Clever Canine - Available Blue volunteers Staff Behavior Team and Purple volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver (if applicable) Staff behavior counseling, includes reading behavior notes Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities • AC Staff and Vol: Play yard • Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Environment check • AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) • Beh: Kennel placement, prioritize large housing • Beh: Foster candidate (case by case) • Beh: Office time candidate
Species-typical Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Beh: Edit the enrichment plan for that specific animal when needed
Coping skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff: Click for calm • All Staff: Optional Games: Find it, Treat Retreat • Beh and AC: Based on the individual animal, choose enrichment options below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nosework - <i>staff and volunteers</i> ◦ Enrichment yards ◦ Office time ◦ Off-site adventures ◦ Training ◦ Agility <p>Staff Handling Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff: Engagement principles • All Staff: Basic Kennel Routine

Adoption Counseling

Depending on the dog's behavior, please follow the Fear or High Arousal protocols.

BIG FEELINGS PROTOCOL: LEASH REACTIVITY

Categories	Leash Reactivity - Available Blue volunteers Staff Behavior Team and Purple volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver (if applicable) Staff behavior counseling, includes reading behavior notes Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities • AC Staff and Vol: Play yard • Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Environment check • AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) • Beh: Kennel placement, prioritize large housing • Beh: Foster candidate (case by case) • Beh: Office time candidate
Instinctual behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing, and assisting when needed)
Coping skills (staff and volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beh: Proactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage, Disengage ○ Let's Go! ○ Capturing • All Staff: Reactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find it ○ Treat magnet ○ Create space ○ Environmental visual barriers

Adoption Counseling

Prior to the Meet and Greet:

- “This dog has been enrolled in the Big Feelings program for leash reactivity. That means we observed this behavior (list a brief description of observations) in the shelter and enrolled him/her to provide support their stay.”
 - Some behaviors may include: Barking, lunging, growling, backing up, pulling
- “You may observe these behaviors during the meet and greet and it’s important to focus on 3 things.”
 - **ACTIVITIES** - we’re going to use snuffle mats, nosework boxes, and toys to redirect the dog’s focus and provide them with an outlet.
 - **REDIRECT** - we’re going to use food and games to redirect the dog when he/she seems like they are going to be reactive.
 - **HANDS-OFF** - avoid touching the dog when he/she is reacting.

Meet and Greet:

SETUP:

- The behavior team should choose a quiet and familiar (if possible) location to support the needs of the animal, preferably outdoors.
- The dog should be dragging a slip leash, especially during the beginning of the interaction as a safety measure.
- The behavior team should hold and provide the treats first so they can manage the interactions. Managing the interaction includes:
 - Redirecting with Find it
 - Redirecting to snuffle mats and enrichment items
 - Demonstrating engage and disengage
- Once the client has observed how to use the food, the counselor can give the client some treats.
- If the dog is having a hard time regulating during the meet, it might be helpful to go for a walk (quiet route). The adoption counselor should hold onto the leash.

INTERACTION:

- Staff members should focus on 3 things:
 - **DEMO** - show the client what you want them to do
 - Practice: **activities, redirect, hands-off**
 - Find it
 - Engage, disengage
 - **BODY LANGUAGE** - narrate the body language they are observing as a learning opportunity for the client.
 - **REDIRECT** - if the dog is getting too reactive, ask the client to engage in a different behavior. See examples below.
- If the meet and greet does not go well (dog’s FAS increases, especially despite the efforts listed above), end the meet right away, and notify the behavior team, enter notes into the dog’s profile.

BIG FEELINGS PROTOCOL: RESOURCE GUARDING

Categories	Resource Guarding - Available Blue volunteers Staff Behavior Team and Purple volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver (if applicable) Staff behavior counseling, includes reading behavior notes Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities • AC Staff and Vol: Play yard • Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Environment check • AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) • Beh: Kennel placement, prioritize large housing • Beh: Foster candidate (case by case) • Beh: Office time candidate
Instinctual behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing, and assisting when needed)
Coping skills (staff and volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff: Proactive management strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading body language ○ Exchange games ○ Free feeding • All Staff: Reactive management strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't engage and leave

BIG FEELINGS PROTOCOL: HANDLING SENSITIVITY	
Categories	Handling Sensitivity - Available Blue volunteers Staff Behavior Team and Purple volunteers
Includes	Behavior waiver (if applicable) Staff behavior counseling, includes reading behavior notes Equipment, medication (if applicable) Sell training supply package
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC: Medical needs are met
Physical Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC Staff and Vol: Leash walks, sniffing opportunities • AC Staff and Vol: Play yard • Beh Staff and Vol: Playgroup (if applicable)
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Environment check • AC: Visual barriers on the kennel (crates) • Beh: Kennel placement, prioritize large housing • Beh: Foster candidate (case by case) • Beh: Office time candidate
Instinctual behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC: Daily in-kennel enrichment (prepping, distributing, and assisting when needed)
Coping skills (staff and volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beh and HC: Custom management strategies to complete any necessary medical attention (sedation, lickimats, muzzle) • Beh: Desensitization/counterconditioning to dog's sensitive areas • **Please see fear protocol if dog also exhibits fear of people and/or the environment