

Many dogs can have some anxiety meeting new people. Just because a dog approaches someone to investigate and sniff them, does not mean they are ready to be grabbed and pet by a new person. These are a couple things we can do to really help build their confidence and trust in people:

1) TOSS TREATS BEHIND

When they meet a new person, you can have the person at first toss treats behind the dog so that they are not being lured closer to the person. This teaches the dog they can walk away if scared, and builds trust because we aren't using treats to trick them into coming closer than they are comfortable with.

2) 3-SECOND PETTING

Before a dog is allowed to approach anyone, they should have very loose body language, be able to eat food, and be able to recall and disengage from the person before they are allowed to greet them. When the dog is ready to meet a new person, have the person start by just petting for a couple of seconds, 3 seconds max, and then stop and give the dog a break. This gives them the choice to either walk away or ask for more attention. This will help build their confidence and trust.

3) EYE CONTACT

Direct eye contact and staring at dogs can be intimidating and make them uncomfortable. It is best to avoid making prolonged eye contact until the dog knows you well.

4) LEASH TENSION

The pressure on the leash can make some dogs react poorly. Try to keep a loose leash and make sure the dog is calm and not lunging or pulling excessively to get to someone. If the dog seems over-aroused, give them some space and allow them to calm down at a distance before letting them approach anyone.

1) BODY LANGUAGE

Watch the dog for signs of being uncomfortable. Some more obvious signs are barking, growling, lunging, baring teeth, or hair standing up. Some not so obvious signs we tend to miss are a tucked tail, body low to the ground, cowering, rolling over onto their back, lip licking, pinning their ears back to their head, excessive licking, stiff body, tail not wagging. Although these are not aggressive displays, they are all signs that the dog is uncomfortable with what is happening.