

ROCKSTAR DOGS



LEASH REACTIVITY BLUEPRINT

A Step-by-Step Course for Dog Owners

Created by RockStar Dogs Training and Behavior Online Academy

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How To Use This Workbook

Use this workbook alongside the course to track progress, reflect on challenges, and capture wins.

Goals - set your intent for each module.

Homework - check items as you complete them.

Notes - record observations and adjustments.

Trainer's Tips - read the yellow-bordered tips and notes beneath them.

Trainer Feedback - space for personalized guidance.



Module 1 - Diagnose the Problem

Goals:

- Identify what function the behavior serves - from the viewpoint of the dog (escape, avoidance, or self-reinforcement).
- Pinpoint your dog's specific triggers - other dogs or animals? People? Cars, trucks, other noises?
- Recognize whether your own responses may be contributing to, or reinforcing, the behavior.

Homework:

- Keep a trigger journal: log situations, distance, intensity, and your dog's response.
- Note your own handling - were you anxious? Did you pull, speak, or reward in ways that might reinforce the behavior?
- Keep exposures very brief
- Were you able to redirect your dog and reinforce more appropriate responses?

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Don't skip this step! The clearer you are about triggers, the faster progress will come. Keep your journal consistent.

Every detail matters - even small changes in distance, intensity, or timing can affect your dog's responses to a trigger.

Trainer Feedback:



Module 2 - Management to Prevent Rehearsals

Goals:

- Break the existing pattern for your walks. Understand how frequent rehearsals strengthen reactivity.
- Learn management strategies to set your dog up for success.

Homework:

- Choose safer walking routes with fewer triggers.
- Practice calm leash handling techniques daily.
- Ensure that routines inside the home help your dog learn impulse control in situations they find very stimulating.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Every rehearsal makes the habit stronger. Prevention isn't a shortcut – it's the foundation for change.

“Structure beats chaos. Set the stage so your dog can win.”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 3 - Building Alternative Behavioral Responses

Goals:

- Spend plenty of time on this step. Build new behavioral responses and HABITUATE it. You must override old habits with new new habits.
- Teach focus-on-handler patterns (verbal cues, leash yielding, “let’s go”, “get it” and “come”).
- Habituate new behaviors until they become the dog’s default response.
- Avoid superstitious associations (the trigger makes bad things happen).

Homework:

- Choose safer walking routes with fewer triggers.
- Practice calm leash handling techniques daily.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Reinforce heavily in this phase — it’s like tuning your instrument before the concert.

“Five successful reps in a row beats one difficult attempt.”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 4 - Layering Non-Triggering Distractions

Goals:

- Introduce NON triggering distractions - something that interests the dog, but has a positive association for your dog, to strengthen new behaviors.
- Practice calling your dog away from the distractions (leash pressure, “let’s go” or “come”, “get it”).

Homework:

- Work with mild distractions (such as a neutral dog, toys, food on the ground, interesting smells, noises).
- Call your dog away, reinforce engagement.
- Repeat until your dog is able to stay engaged with you easily.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Start small. If your dog succeeds five times in a row, you’re at the right level. If not, make it easier with greater distance, shorter duration or less intensity.

“Distraction practice is rehearsal for the big show.”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 5 - Controlled Trigger Setups

Goals:

- Expose your dog to low-intensity triggers, keeping exposure under threshold.
- Read body language, and be aware of their fuse. Be ready to redirect early, BEFORE they react, and reward cooperation and focus.
- Observe if your dog begins to anticipate the redirect. If so, take a little time before turning away and reward, reward, reward to build positive associations.
- Do repetitions moving away from and returning to the trigger.

Homework:

- Arrange safe, controlled setups with plenty of distance.
- Redirect before reactions to build positive associations.
- Reward calm engagement with you.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Make it fun for your dog, alternate playful interactions with you in between repetitions of approaching the trigger. Keep sessions short and successful, reward liberally.

“Your timing is your dog’s lifeline. Watch closely and give the guidance they need”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 6 - Introduce Conditioned Interrupters

Goals:

- Learn how to apply a conditioned interrupter if they blow up. Say “Out” or “No” BEFORE the consequence which allows for a softer punisher.
- Practice calm turn-aways, then reward when they follow you.
- Stay in the area, with just enough movement away to allow a reset, then repeat.

Homework:

- Be sure you aren't putting your dog in a situation they aren't adequately prepared for.
- If your dog is struggling, give them more distance, less intensity or duration to take the stress level down.
- Be consistent! If you use the conditioned interrupter cue, make sure you apply an appropriate consequence immediately after.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Have an exit strategy before you need it. When you stay calm it helps your dog be calm.

“When in doubt, get out – then reset and try again at a low level they can handle.”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 7 - Facing Uncontrolled Triggers

Goals:

- Carefully manage unexpected encounters.
- Use distance, brief exposures, pre-emptive redirects, and exit strategies.
- Don't over-correct, but don't rely solely on redirect/reinforcement either.
- If the trigger is too intense (such as too many triggers, or too close), interrupt, redirect, get out of dodge.
- Then return to the area after triggers are gone and practice your redirect strategies, making sure the dog is under threshold.

Homework:

- Walk in varied environments, staying alert (but relaxed!) for uncontrolled triggers.
- Pre-emptively redirect before your dog reacts.
- Don't be too predictable, mix it up. Practice in easy scenarios sometimes, and more challenging situations other times.
- As your dog progresses, allow them to look at the trigger briefly before re-engaging their attention.

Notes:

Write your observations, successes, or struggles here...

Trainer Tips:

Proofing is practice under pressure – keep it fun and upbeat.

“Real world practice makes reliable dogs.”

Trainer Feedback:



Module 8 - Consider Alternative Activities

Goals

- Learn when to pause or adjust training.
- Recognize when alternative activities may be preferable to walking in certain environments.

Homework

- Create an “alternative activities” list (movement puzzles, puzzle feeders, yard training, sniffing games, structured play).
- Reflect on progress in your training journal.
- Continue working to establish new patterns and habits. This work takes time, keep at it to maintain your dog’s improved behavior on walks!

Notes:

