

**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:

