



Fixing the Unfixable Redux:
A New Approach to Treating Separation Anxiety

By Malena DeMartini-Price and Gina Phairas






SA Challenges

The Problem:

- Poor case resolution
- Time consuming client hand holding
- Revenue loss / scheduling challenges



SA Success - Getting It Done

The Solution:

1. More effective treatment protocols
2. Change the structure of the work
3. Package it
4. Schedule our time more effectively



What It Takes

Trainers Must Have:

- Coordinating skills
- Ability to cheerlead
- Patience
- Confidence
- Optimism
- Creativity



What It Takes

Clients Must Have:


- Criteria setting skills
- Mechanical skills – rein holding
- Confidence
- Optimism



SA Diagnosis

Mild


- Pacing
- Whining
- Intermittent barking
- Mild chewing (bedding)
- Excessive greeting
- Mild depression



SA Diagnosis

Moderate


Anorexia	Panting
Constant barking	Sweaty paws
Howling	Moderate depression
Moderate destruction	Wild door dashing
Elimination	



SA Diagnosis

Severe

Self mutilation	Excessive shedding
Escapism	Severe depression
Salivation/drooling	Aggression
Severe destruction	Diarrhea/vomiting
Excessive water consumption	



SA Diagnosis & Prognosis

Mild	Moderate ←-----→	Severe
Pacing	Anorexia	Self mutilation
Whining	Constant barking	Escapism
Intermittent barking	Howling	Salivation/drooling
Mild chewing (bedding)	Moderate destruction	Severe destruction
Excessive greeting	Elimination	Diarrhea/vomiting
Mild depression	Panting	Excessive water consumption
	Sweaty paws	Excessive shedding
	Moderate depression	Severe depression
	Wild door dashing	Aggression

-----Unlimited vs. Limited Time Resources----->

-----Unlimited vs. Limited Financial Resources----->

-----Non- Emergency vs. Emergency Timeline----->

SA Prognosis

How Long Does It Take?

- Dogs learning curve
- Ability to suspend absences
- Client's time commitment to training
- No guarantees

SA Treatment Protocols

What Doesn't Work / Pitfalls

- Don't suspend absences (safe / dangerous cues)
- Plan is difficult to execute and "muddy" for the dog
- Dog suffers daily
- Constant anxiety inhibits learning
- Departure cues very salient / in constant use
- Owners take advantage of ability to leave the dog alone
- Owners practice safe absences less over time
- Plan takes more time to complete
- Owners give up

SA Treatment Protocols

What Works

Suspend Absences

Reduced stress for dog

Departure cues no longer salient

Owners highly motivated to practice

Plan completed more quickly

Better case resolution



Finding Solutions

Daycare

Dog share

Neighbors

Day training

Dog walkers

Friends / family

Community posting

Dog friendly dining

Bring dog to work

Local sitters

Local work from home personnel

Car



To Crate Or Not To Crate

Crates

Baby gates


X-pens

Freedom in the house




Effective SA Plans

Phase One
Defining separation anxiety for your clients
Don't ever lie to your dog
Nothing For Free
The "Non-follow" routine: stay and mat



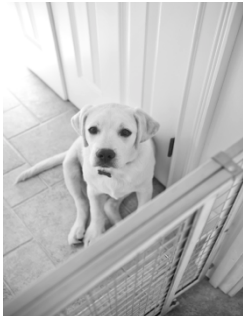
Effective SA Plans

Phase Two And Beyond
Departure cues...but NOT!
Variable ratio absences



Effective SA Plans

Phase Two And Beyond
Loving confinement (in view)
Partially obstructed
Obstructed view



Effective SA Plans

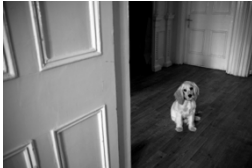
Confinement Example - Baby Gate
 Proceed at each step gradually & remain at each level until the dog is comfortable

- Allow the dog into confinement area to consume the food with the gate open
- Close the gate for intermittent seconds while standing alongside the confinement area
- Build duration from several seconds to 15 minutes while walking around in view
- Build duration from several seconds to 15 minutes going into partially obstructed view etc.

Effective SA Plans

Phase Two And Beyond
 The Front Door

Splits
 Repetitions
 Pauses
 Exiting the door - no cue word needed



Effective SA Plans

The Front Door
 Splitting Criteria:

Repeat each level until the dog is comfortable before proceeding:

- Walk 4 paces toward the front door
- Walk all the way to the front door without touching it
- Walk to the front door & touch the door, but not the knob, etc.

Pause in between repetitions in order to allow the dog to be fully settled

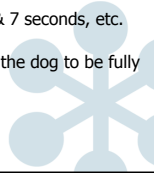
Effective SA Plans

Exiting Example

Repeat each level until the dog is comfortable before proceeding

- Walk out front door, close it and return immediately
- Walk out front door, count to 1 second and return
- Mix up absences out front door between 3 & 7 seconds, etc.

Pause in between repetitions in order to allow the dog to be fully settled



Effective SA Plans

Phase Two: Building Duration

Threshold watching




Structure It



Structure It
Packages

Why Use Packages?

- Cases are more likely to be solved
- Improve relationship between dog and guardian
- Relief of stress and anxiety for dog
- Maximizes income




Structure It
Packages

What Clients Need:

Initial Consults
History taking, assessment, and an outline of beginning training steps

Weekly Support
Training steps, pre-scheduled phone check-in (30 min), client emails

Phone / Email Support
Additional support billed at an hourly rate



Structure It
Packages


Initial Consult

Package Includes:

3 - 4 Days of Contact Per Week

Two hours a week of support:


- review tape or phone appt. (30-45 min)
- email support (2)
- emergency support (30 min.)



Structure It
Packages

Pricing


- Pay for initial consult separately
- Charge a weekly rate
- Require a minimum number of weeks
- Include extra support time at hourly rate



Structure It

Payment Policies

- Take payment upfront
- Payment plans




Structure It

Cancellation Policies

- Good cancellation policies protect against loss of income
- If your policy does not do this, it's not working

Cancellations weaken the training program and make it more likely clients will give up before it's complete

- No cancellations



Schedule It

Relieve frustration, schedule time for the unexpected

What SA Schedules Need

- Initial consults
- Weekly support
- Email / phone support
- Marketing time

Schedule It

	Mon	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
9 am							
10 am		SA Phone/ Email Support - Clients A & B	SA Phone/ Email Support - Clients C & D	SA Phone/ Email Support - Clients A & B	SA Phone/ Email Support - Clients C&D	SA Phone/ Email Support - emergency	
11 am							
12pm							
1 pm							
2 pm						2:30 Client Appt. - New SA Client Consult	
3pm							
4 pm			Video Review / Video Conference - Client A & B	New SA Client Initial Consult	Video Review / Video Conference - Client C & D	SA Client Prep	
5 pm							
6 pm				Client Appt. - In person or via video conference			
7:30 pm			SA Client Appt.				
8:30 pm							


Schedule It

	Mon	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
9 am		Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	
10 am		SA Phone/ Email Support	SA Phone/ Email Support	SA Phone/ Email Support	SA Phone/ Email Support	SA Phone/ Email Support	
11 am		Day Train #1	Day Train #1	Day Train #1	Client Prep	11:30 Client Appt. - Transfer	
12pm							
1 pm		Client Prep	Client Prep	Client Prep	Marketing	Client Appt. - Transfer	
2 pm		Day Train #2	Day Train #2	Day Train #2	Marketing	2:30 Client Appt. - Initial Consult	
3pm					Marketing		
4 pm			Video Review / Video Conferences	Client Appt. - Initial Consult	Video Review / Video Conferences	SA Client Prep	
5 pm		Class Setup	Marketing	Client Appt. - Initial Consult			
6 pm		Class	Marketing	Client Appt. - Initial Consult			
7:30 pm		Class	SA Client Appt.				
8:30 pm		Take Down					

Successful SA Trainers...

Successful SA Trainers

- Are paid for their time
- Set clients up for success
- Use technology to work smarter
- Protect their schedules
- Make time for marketing



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dogtec
