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About Dogs LLC
Behavioral Consulting &
Relationship Training

What to Expect from a Behavioral Consultation and How to Prepare for the Appointment

Thank you for inquiring about the behavioral consultation services offered through About Dogs LLC. Dr. Ward is experienced in addressing the behavioral problems of dogs and the concerns of their guardians. The goal of the behavioral appointment is to help you to understand your dog's behavior and to help you and your dog to live together more comfortably and safely.

How to Prepare for the Initial Appointment

Appointments in Your Home:

Please make sure that you haven't fed your dog a full meal for at least 6 hours prior to the appointment. Dr. Ward uses food treats during the appointment, so it's important that your dog is slightly hungry and motivated to work for food. You may want to have 1 cup of your dog's favorite treats available. Please let Dr. Ward know in advance if your dog has any food allergies or restrictions.

Ten-fifteen minutes before the appointment, please have your dog is in a crate, behind gates, in a back room, or outside in the yard. You can provide a special chewy or a Kong toy stuffed with a small amount of canned dog food or peanut butter to help keep your dog occupied. Shortly after arriving for the appointment, Dr. Ward will ask you to bring your dog out so that they can meet.

Appointments at the Ann Arbor Animal Hospital:

When you arrive at the Ann Arbor Animal Hospital (2150 West Liberty, Ann Arbor), come into the hospital using the side entrance right next to the drive-through window. There are stairs immediately to your left that will take you to the 2nd floor. If you go through a second set of doors on the first floor, there is an elevator immediately to your left. We will be meeting in the large training room on the 2nd floor.

What to bring:

- Please bring your dog or dogs.
- Family members who regularly interact with the dog(s).
- We request that you have 1 adult handler for each dog.

- If your dog is aggressive to people or other dogs and you need assistance bringing him/her into the building, let Dr. Ward know in advance of the appointment or call 734-358-1972 from your car upon your arrival.
- Favorite treats, especially if your dog has food allergies
- Bring a chew bone, a stuffed Kong toy (stuffed with some canned dog food, peanut butter, etc.), or other favorite chew/food toy for your dog to work on during the discussion portion of the consultation. This will help to keep your dog occupied. The 2.0-hour consultation can be lengthy for some dogs, and we want your dog to be as comfortable as possible during the appointment.
- Favorite mat, blanket, or dog bed

Videos and photographs of your pet and his/her environment can be very helpful. If you can safely video your pet exhibiting the problem behavior (e.g., video your dog home alone when separation anxiety is suspected), please do so. *Please do not put your dog or people in a dangerous situation to obtain video.*

The Initial Behavioral Appointment

Before your appointment, Dr. Ward will review your dog's behavioral history form (downloadable from the "[Behavioral Consults](#)" page of the [AboutDogsLLC.com](#) website) and any relevant video (up to 3 video files). The behavioral consultation, which will take place at your home or the Ann Arbor Animal Hospital (located at 2150 West Liberty, Ann Arbor), lasts approximately 2.0 hours. It may take more than one appointment to thoroughly address all behavioral problems if multiple, complex issues are present. During the consultation, Dr. Ward will discuss the concerns described in your behavioral history form and observe your dog's behavior. She may perform behavioral tests to better assess your dog's personality. Behavioral tests are not designed to frighten or provoke your dog, only to provide clarification of your dog's behavioral responses if needed.

Dr. Ward will discuss motivations and factors contributing to your dog's behavior problem and formulate an individualized treatment plan. Treatments always include reward-based behavioral modification exercises, humane training and control aids, and environmental management.

After Your Initial Appointment

A written comprehensive treatment plan will be provided within 1 week of the appointment. A copy of the plan will also be sent to your dog's primary care veterinarian. After the initial consultation, we welcome your brief phone calls and e-mail communications for progress reports, clarification, or questions. Should you need more extensive support before your next appointment (see follow-up appointments, below), telephone and in-person appointments are available.

Follow-Up Appointments

Follow-up sessions are almost always recommended. Behavioral problems often have complex causes, and, therefore, often no quick-fix solutions. Although some dogs show improvement very rapidly, long-term changes in your dog's behavior will take time. Follow-up appointments are important because they allow Dr. Ward to monitor your dog's progress and make adjustments to the treatment plan as the dog's behavior and family dynamics change. A follow-up appointment is recommended 2-4 weeks past the initial appointment.

In-person follow-up appointments are scheduled for 1.0 hour, but telephone appointments may be scheduled for 30 minutes. Please note that telephone consultation appointments require pre-payment. The number of follow-up appointments is dependent upon the nature of the problem(s), the animal(s), and the family, but most cases benefit from an average of 1-3 follow-up appointments.

Cancellation and Rescheduling

Due to the amount of time devoted to each appointment, Dr. Ward can only see a limited number of appointments each week. About Dogs appreciates the courtesy of early notification if you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment. Please provide a minimum of a 72-hour notice of cancellation on all follow-up appointments. About Dogs LLC reserves the right to charge a cancellation fee for all appointments (including follow-up appointments) cancelled or rescheduled within 72 hours of the appointment.