

## SELF-DEFENSE AND ENCOUNTERING DOGS IN THE FIELD

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She/her/hers

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### DOG BITE STATISTICS



- Approximately 4.5 million dog bites occur in the United States each year
- 800,000 of those bites require medical care.
- Dog bites occur to 1 out of every 73 people in the US

Data from the CDC: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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### DOG BITE STATISTICS



- Most people are attacked or bitten by a dog that they know
- All dogs *can* bite. There is limited and conflicting data on which types of dogs bite most often

Data from the CDC: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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HOW DO YOU STAY  
SAFE WHEN YOU  
ENCOUNTER DOGS  
WHO ARE  
UNKNOWN TO YOU?

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### A MORE SUBTLE EXAMPLE...



<https://www.sciencedirect.com/aggressive-body-language-2/>

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### A MORE SUBTLE EXAMPLE...



<https://bestlifeonline.com/photos-dogs-babies/>

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### CALMING SIGNALS & STRESS SIGNALS



These are clearly communicated  
by dogs when they are  
uncomfortable



Most dogs read these signals  
well, humans are not terribly  
good at it!



When you ignore these signals,  
you put the dog in a situation  
where they may feel they need  
to escalate their behavior

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### 1. WHALE EYE

- Whites of the eyes are clearly visible



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### 2. LIP LICKING/TONGUE FLICKS

- Occurs when there is nothing there to lick

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### 3. LOOKING AWAY / AVOIDANCE

- Dog may turn their eyes, head, or their entire body away

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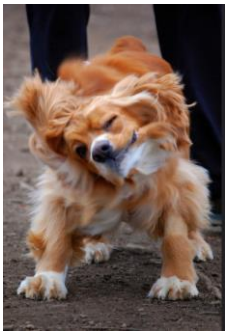
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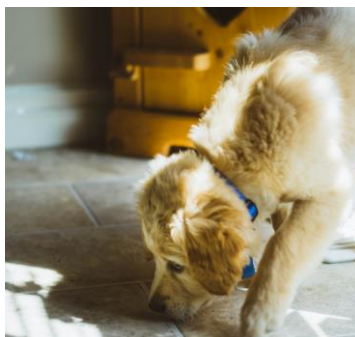
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**8. TAIL IS TUCKED,  
EARS ARE BACK**

- You may also see crouching



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**9. 'TAP OUT'**



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmrXOgZIW\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmrXOgZIW_M)

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## SUMMARY: CALMING SIGNALS & STRESS SIGNALS

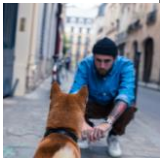
If you see clusters of calming signals/stress signals, the dog is communicating their discomfort

The context matters e.g., if a dog is relaxed and tired, a yawn is probably not an indication of discomfort

Use YOUR calming signals if you think the dog is worried

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IF YOU MUST  
APPROACH A  
DOG WHO IS  
WORRIED:



DON'T DO THIS!

- Avoid eye contact/avert your eyes
- Turn your body sideways
- Use a soft voice
- Keep your movements small and slow
- Let the dog approach you at their own pace
- Bring food with you and toss the food *away* from your body
- Create distance when you can
- Avoid meeting dog in a small space

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## A REAL-LIFE SITUATION



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v3ZJCvCsFw>

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## REVIEW: HOW MANY SIGNALS DO YOU SEE?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZw-jgCRPFA&t=28s>

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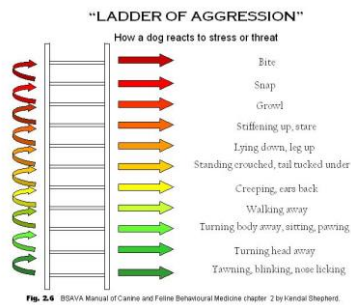
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## CANINE LADDER OF AGGRESSION



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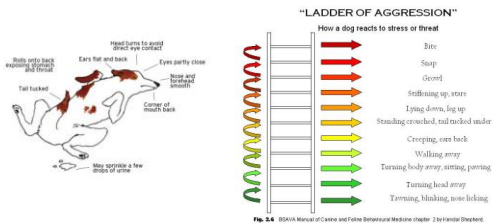
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## MOVING UP THE LADDER OF AGGRESSION



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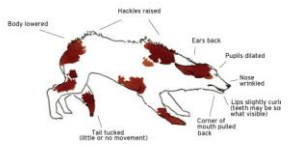
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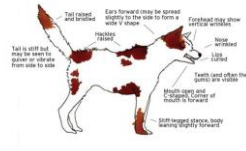


## THREATS OF AGGRESSION: NOW YOU'RE IN REAL TROUBLE!

Defensive posture



Offensive posture



<https://modernmagazine.com/articles/how-each-your-dogs-body-language/415>

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## KNOWING SOME 'TYPES' OF AGGRESSION CAN HELP YOU READ THE CONTEXT

Fear: occurs when the dog is feeling scared/worried	Dominance: a reaction to a social situation	Possessive: over a valued resource	Protective: defending a member of the social group
Territorial: defending space	Pain-related: occurs when the dog is in pain or discomfort	Redirected: when the dog is prevented from attacking the primary target	Socially facilitated: occurs when other dogs display aggressive behavior

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## DOGS AT RISK FOR AGGRESSION

- Sexually mature dogs – over a year
- Dogs that are not spayed or neutered
- A dog not kept as a family pet
- A dog that is tethered/chaired up/confined
- The dog has been abused or neglected by the owner
- Although most bites occur from a dog that is known to the victim, fatalities are higher when the dog is not known to the victim

<https://nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/injurious-dog-bites/>

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## HOW TO APPROACH AN 'AGGRESSIVE' DOG



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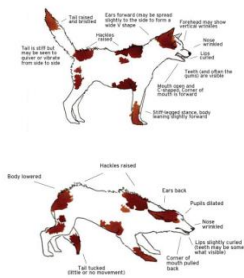
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### IF YOU OBSERVE THESE THINGS:

- Hackles are raised
- Dog has frozen in place
- Dog's body is stiff
- Dog is growling
- Teeth are visible



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## USE **YOUR** CALMING SIGNALS TO DE-ESCALATE THE SITUATION



DO NOT RUN  
or move quickly



Avoid eye  
contact



Slowly turn your  
body sideways



'Ignore' the dog



Blink softly



Move away  
slowly if you can

<https://positively.com/animal-advocacy/dog-bite-prevention/what-to-do-when-a-dog-attacks/>

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## WHAT TO DO IF THE DOG ATTACKS YOU

- Try to put something in their mouth to re-direct the bite – your bag, a jacket, etc
- Try to be quiet – screaming/yelling may make the attack worse
- Try to cover the dog's head with something so that they cannot see
- Do not punch/kick at the dog – causing the dog pain may escalate the attack
- If the dog keeps biting – roll up into a ball and protect your head and neck until they stop

<https://positively.com/animal-advocacy/dog-bite-prevention/what-to-do-when-a-dog-attacks/>

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## BITE EVALUATION SCALE

- **Level I: air snaps – warning 'bites'**
- **Level II: Air snap with skin contact. Might see a bruise or redness.**
- **Level III: 1-4 punctures from a single bite, not deep**
- Level IV: 1-4 punctures from a single bite, DEEP
- Level V: Multiple level IV bites, slashing
- Level VI: the victim has died as a result of the attack

Dr. Ian Dunbar's Bite Evaluation Scale Association of Professional Dog Trainers (n.d.) An assessment of the severity of biting problems based on an objective evaluation of wound pathology. <https://apdt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ian-dunbar-bite-evaluation-scale.pdf>

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## BE PROACTIVE: EMERGENCY TOOLS TO CARRY WITH YOU

- Spray deterrent
- Noise maker
- Wooden spoon
- Umbrella
- Food



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## BE PROACTIVE: TOOLS TO CARRY WITH YOU

Michael Shikashio

[www.agressivedogs.com](http://www.agressivedogs.com)

**YouTube channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu6tNW922csP3cTYq0tJA>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5aKUrpLkco>

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## IF YOU HAVE BEEN BITTEN

- Find out who the dog owner is so that vaccination records can be obtained
- If the dog is a stray, call animal control
- Seek medical care – there is a high risk of infection
- If you do seek medical attention, you are required by law to report the dog bite
- North Carolina law requires a dog who has bitten a person to be confined for observation for 10 days

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QUESTIONS?

**Resources:**

Michael Shikashio  
[www.agressivedogs.com](http://www.agressivedogs.com)

Victoria Stillwell  
[www.positively.com](http://www.positively.com)

**Dog body language resources:**

Lili Chin's [work](#). She has also published [a book](#).

Work by Sue Sternberg, including [this book and video collection](#) on dog behavior/body language

Videos by Kristin Crestejo, found [here](#).

Work by Turid Rugaas: <http://en.turid-rugaas.no/>

Feel free to contact me:

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## HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE! Please show dogs some respect.



<https://www.doggiedrawings.net/freeposters>

During this is a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a giant hug and face in an intense. What's that except you said that wasn't you. Amn the right to defend yourself?

### The correct way:



## DOGGIE LANGUAGE

Translating the Doggie Language



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