

Surrendering Or Rehoming Your Dog Checklist

MY TOP 10 SUGGESTIONS

to consider doing before
surrendering or rehoming
your dog



FIRST, A VERY WARM

WELCOME



Hi, I'm Kate. I'm a professional dog trainer and certified behavior consultant specializing in fear, aggression and separation anxiety. I've helped thousands of dogs overcome issues their guardians thought were impossible – fear of strangers, separation anxiety, resource guarding, growling at toddlers and more. As a rescue advocate and volunteer for over 2 decades and a former shelter trainer, I can help you navigate this difficult decision, to rescue you and help you find the right choice for your dog and your family.

So whether you're overwhelmed with aggression, fear, separation anxiety, life with a new baby and dog or just dog adolescence, I can help and we can work together to help you figure out what's best for you and your dog.



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DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

You dreamed of adding a dog to your family and you finally did. But, your dream didn't turn out the way you thought it would. And now you're sad, conflicted and aren't quite sure what to do. You're likely getting lots of advice, perhaps conflicting and none of it feels like you're making an educated decision.

Maybe your dog has unexpected behavior issues and you don't know how to resolve them. Perhaps your family is experiencing a financial or other type of hardship. Maybe your dog was a cute puppy when you got them but is now an angsty teenager and you feel unprepared. Maybe your family is now adding a human baby and you're worried about how your dog and baby will live together. Or, maybe your dog just isn't what you thought you were getting.

What now?

Well, I'm here to help. Getting professional behavior guidance at this time is critical, not just for your dog's welfare but so you can have peace of mind in your decision, knowing you've truly given your dog the best chance at life with you. And, so that if you choose to rehome or surrender, you're setting your beloved dog up for success in their next home. **Don't you and your dog both deserve this?**

MY TOP 10 SUGGESTIONS



CONSULT WITH A QUALIFIED POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TRAINER

Not all trainers are created equally. Dog training in the US is unregulated, so even if you've worked with a trainer before, consult a qualified trainer who specializes in the in behavior issue you're having. **Never work with a trainer who suggests a prong or shock collar.** Many issues that seem overwhelming like dog/kid issues, separation anxiety, resource guarding and reactivity can be improved or resolved by working with the right trainer. The Pet Professional Guild or The Academy For Dog Trainers are both good places to locate qualified trainers. Or **schedule a session with me:**

[BOOK NOW](#)

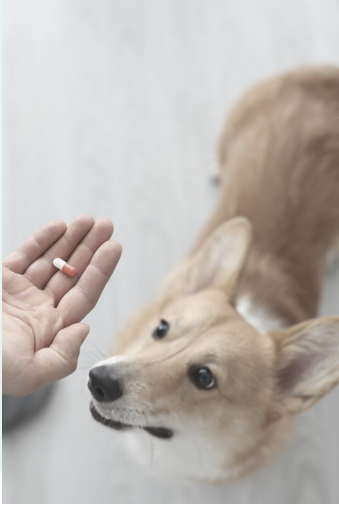


GET A VET CHECK

Especially if your dog's behavior issues are new, it's best to schedule a vet check to make sure there's not something physical going on. Pain, GI issues, allergies, anal gland issues and other physical things all can be correlated with behavior issues, including fear and aggression.

A vet is the only one who can diagnose these issues so it's important to make sure there's nothing going on physically, even if you don't think there is.

For sudden behavior changes, I usually recommend a vet check first.



3 CONSULT WITH A VETERINARY BEHAVIORIST SPECIALIST ABOUT MEDICATION

While general vets may be able to help your dog with behavior medications or diagnosis of behavior issues, there are specialists for a reason. Veterinary Behaviorists (VBs) are vets who are Board Certified and have speciality education in behavior, psychopharmacology and behavior modification. They often work in cooperation with qualified trainers like me. They can help your dog if they are experiencing behavior issues, especially fear and aggression. VBs have the designation DACVB after their name. Be cautious with anyone who markets themselves as a "behaviorist" who is not VB. Find one in the DACVB directory.

[DACVB SEARCH](#)



4 HIRE A DOG WALKER

Consider hiring a dog walker to help your dog get more exercise and enrichment, especially if your dog is stuck at home (even if you work at home) for long stretches. Some services even offer woods hikes out of the city to help decompress away from all the hustle and bustle. This can be particularly helpful for fearful dogs, to help give them a break.



5 INCREASE ENRICHMENT USING FOOD TOYS & PUZZLES

Enrichment isn't optional. Giving dogs appropriate species and breed outlets for their normal dog behaviors like digging, chasing, sniffing, scavenging and hunting is essential and can help to alleviate behavior issues stemming from boredom or not having legal outlet to do normal behaviors. Using mealtime as enrichment time and feeding from food or puzzles toys, or using their meal ration for games or training is an easy way to increase enrichment opportunities.



6 INCREASE DECOMPRESSION WALKS AND SNIFFARIS

Get out of the routine of doing strict, regimented, militaristic, heeling walks and let your dog go on a "sniffari", where your dog gets to decide what direction to walk, how long to sniff and what to do. Research suggests **sniffing makes dogs feel good**, so providing your dog with more sniffing opportunities like sniffaris, scavenger hunts, nose work classes and hide and seek can help your dog be less anxious. The part of the brain that is activated by sniffing (the "seeking system") is also the part of the brain that releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter important in regulating anxiety so let your dog sniff!



7 TRY DOGGIE DAYCARE

Increasing your dog's off-leash access to other dogs can be a great way to burn off extra energy and have socialization with their own species. Often isolation from other dogs can result in frustration and this commonly pops out in leash reactivity so if your dog is leash reactive and you think "my dog wants to go after every dog on leash so they can't go to daycare" it might actually be the opposite. Consulting with a qualified trainer to help you work through this possibility is important but if you already know your dog has a past history of playing well or being indifferent off-leash, consider doggie daycare as an option.



8 ARE THERE TEMPORARY OPTIONS OR MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS?

If your family is experiencing a hardship, like loss of a job or housing, there may be temporary alternatives like a low cost vet care, assistance finding dog-friendly housing or dog food banks. Consider temporary dog boarding or a short-term foster until you get back on your feet or find appropriate housing.

For behavioral issues, often management can be a solution without any training. Put up baby gates to separate dog and toddler. Use a crate or baby gate to give your dog a safe space if they guard chews or food. Sometimes very little training is needed to get relief to problems. A qualified trainer can help you come up with solutions.



IS THIS A PHASE THAT WILL PASS?

Dogs, just like humans, have different developmental periods in their life and it's possible some of the behavior issues or concerns you're having are completely normal for your dog's age. We all know to expect play biting & mouthing, housetraining issues and chewing on inappropriate items when our dog is a puppy. But often overlooked are that adolescence (6-18 months) and social maturity (2-3 years old) bring their own set of behavioral challenges like decreased sociability, selectivity about playmates and play styles.



GATHER MEDICAL RECORDS

If you have decided you need to surrender or rehome your dog, gather their medical records and any other relevant information that will help their new owner or the facility know what your dog's history is. It's essential to be as transparent and honest in this information transfer, as knowing your dog's history, good and bad, is important in helping match your dog to an appropriate home moving forward.



WHAT NEXT?

You're probably feeling overwhelmed at the idea of rehoming or surrendering your dog and not sure what to do next, almost like a deer in the headlights, not knowing what the right thing to do is. You might feel **embarrassed, ashamed or guilty**. Lots of people may be giving you unsolicited, unhelpful or even bad advice. As a fear and aggression specialist

I've helped clients navigate tough decisions like rehoming, surrendering and other difficult outcomes.

Even if you've tried training in the past and feel like it didn't work, I'm here to tell you that details matter in training.

The quality of your trainer and the guidance you were given matters, a lot. If you were given bad advice, like to use a shock or prong collar, we now know that punishment-based training can make fear and aggression problems worse.

Getting a professional, unbiased assessment about your dog's issues, how you're coping, what you're thinking, what your concerns are and **what the best thing to do for everyone involved, canine and human**, is essential. I am here to help. You don't need to, and shouldn't, do this alone.

Schedule a safe, non-judgemental **1-on-1 session** today to help you navigate the tough choices ahead.

NEED MORE HELP?

Navigating tough, emotional decisions about your dog's future is hard and you shouldn't do it alone. Get a professional, compassionate, non-judgemental assessment, from a qualified behavior expert, the comfort of your home.

Schedule your private 1:1 consult to have me help you navigate how to have the best life possible for you and your dog.

BOOK NOW

