

UNDERSTANDING STRAY DOGS

*Learning to Read and Respect
Their Language*



Why Stray Dogs Are Different

Some stray dogs have never met kind humans.

Others have learned to be careful because of bad experiences.



Every stray dog is different -
and they all speak with their bodies!

How Dogs Communicate

Dogs don't use words like people. They use their bodies to show feelings



Their ears



Their eyes



Their tale

Their posture



If we watch carefully, we can understand their feelings.

Triggers – What Stresses Dogs

Dogs can feel stressed when they are scared, uncomfortable, or unsure. Here are some things that can make a dog feel stressed:



Loud noises (fireworks, cars, shouting)



Fast movements (running, sudden moves) or being chased



Strangers (unknown people getting too close)



Crowds (lots of people at once)



New places (unfamiliar smells, noises)



Taking away food or toys (resource guarding)



Other dogs trying to steal food or space

How to Recognize a Stressed Dog

When dogs feel stressed, their bodies show signs.

Watch closely — it helps us keep them safe and calm.



Yawning



Lip licking



Turning the head away



Whale eye (seeing white in the eye)



Crouching low



Tucking the tail



Ears flattened back

The 4 Fs – How Dogs React to Stress

When a dog feels stressed or threatened, it will try to feel safe again. They show their stress in one of four ways:

- 🎛 **Fiddle** – nervous behaviors like crazy playing or sniffing
- ⚡ **Fight** – barking, growling, showing teeth
- 🏃 **Flight** – running away, avoiding
- 📖 **Freeze** – suddenly stopping, unable to move





Flight:
"Most dogs prefer to run away from danger instead of facing it."

Fight:
"When scared and cornered, a dog might growl or bark to protect itself."



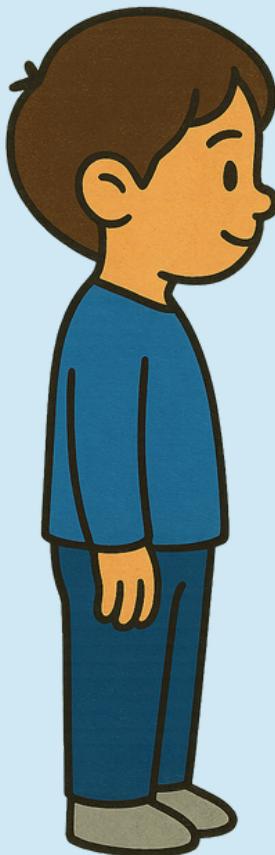
Fiddle:
"Dogs sometimes play, lick or sniff when they're nervous. It's like saying: 'I'm not sure.'"

Freeze:
"Some dogs become very still, like statues. They feel very scared."



What Can You Do?

Dogs don't speak with words, but they tell us a lot with their bodies. When a dog shows signs of stress - like yawning, turning away, or freezing - here's what you can do:



Give the dog space.

Step back and don't reach out.

Stay calm.

Don't scream, run, or wave your arms.

Don't stare.

Looking straight into a dog's eyes can feel scary for them.

Let the dog choose.

If it walks away, let it go. Don't follow.

Never touch a dog that shows fear or growling.

The dog is asking for distance.

Understanding body language helps us keep everyone - dogs and people - safe.