

## ANXIETIES/FEARFULNESS/PHOBIAS

There are many reasons why a pet may become anxious, fearful or phobic including genetics, species, breed, lack of socialization, experiential, threats or conflicts between animals in a household. All too often, the specific event or cause may never be identified.

Anxious/fearful/phobic behaviors have many possible reasons and levels of intensity. Some manifestations can include aggressive displays. Sometimes anxieties/fears/phobias can be linked experientially to a specific event. In other pets, they progress over time and get worse. The deterioration of senses with aging can also result in anxiety/fearful/phobic responses to things that before were OK.

The earlier behavior modification intervention is implemented, before the behavior becomes severe and the symptoms are relatively mild, the chances are better for successful treatment. It is most common for people to seek help only after the dog becomes unmanageable or is either hurting itself or damaging property/possessions.

Before embarking on a behavior modification program, the pet should have a thorough medical exam from his/her veterinarian to ensure the cause is not a medical condition.

Caution should be taken in use of methods to deal with anxiety/fear/phobias that may worsen or reinforce the behavior, i.e. crating, verbal/physical punishment or extreme training protocols.

For severe cases of anxiety/fear/phobia, anti-anxiety medications may be available from your veterinarian for use while initiating a longer-term behavior modification program. Any over-the-counter product that will be ingested by the pet should be reviewed with your veterinarian. In some cases, the following over-the-counter products also may be helpful:

ThunderShirt Wrap - Available at HSVB Pet Shop.  
StormDefender.com  
TheAnxietyWrap.com

*The above 3 products are based on the hug therapy concept for people. See paper by Dr. Temple Grandin on wraps at [www.grandin.com/inc/squeeze.html](http://www.grandin.com/inc/squeeze.html).*

Dog Appeasing Pheremone/(DAP) or Feliway for cats, in spray, collars & antomizers (pheromone therapy-available in the Humane Society pet shop) - Sold as Comfort Zone for Dogs or for Cats if purchased at local pet shops

CalmingCollars.com (uses natural herbal blends)

CalmPro.com (L-tryptophan tablets)

CalmStress (chamomile herbal tablets) at GoodPet.com

Rescue Remedy (available in the Humane Society pet shop)

Bach flower remedies (aroma therapies) - available at local health food outlets

Results of products may vary from pet to pet. When contacting vendors, take the time to clarify return policies if items don't work for your pet.

For behavior modification assistance, contact the Humane Society's Pet Behavior Help Line, 388-3331, Ext. 19, or <http://hsvb.org/pbdownloads.asp>.

The Humane Society offers three Puppy & Dog Training Classes each week—Wednesday at 11AM, Thursday at 7PM and Saturday at 1 PM. The class is a 6-week session; each once-a-week class is about 1 hour. For information contact Connie at 772-388-3331, Ext. 19.