

Managing Resource Guarding in a Foster Home



Things to Remember:

- Resource Guarding is not something you can train out of a pet- it is something you can manage.
- The behavior has occurred, therefore there is potential for it to occur again.
- Never discount behavior because it was only shown in the shelter or in a behavioral evaluation.
- Be careful as you begin to learn your new foster dog!
- Sometimes behavior will lessen as the dog settles and creates bonds, but the potential never goes away.
- Value is in the eye of the beholder-Some dogs love used tissue, others love tennis balls and others don't love anything that much.
- YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL IT HAPPENS.

***Please Contact our emergency number 425-314-3653 if you are struggling with any foster pet with any behavior issues.**

What is Resource Guarding:

Resource Guarding is a normal behavior that is displayed by dogs. This stems from self-preservation instincts and Individual differences in personality and temperament. This behavior can be dependent on many factors like recent history, relationships to certain people.

Some Triggers can Include:

- Toys
- Food and Treats
- Food Bowl (filled with food or empty).
- Bones and Edible Dog Chews
- Space (dog bed, crate, their position on the couch or bed)
- Their owner (from other pets in the home or even from other people)

Warning Signs to Watch for:

Obvious Signs: Growling, Lunging, Biting and Air Snapping (no-contact bite).

Subtle Signs: Freezing, Eating faster, Taking item and moving away, Braced body position over the item, Side eye staring or tracking of the person or pet approaching, Raising lips and baring teeth, Ears pinned flat against the head and Hard stare.

Managing This Behavior in a Home:

- Do not give access to items the dog guards if not a necessity.
- Do not approach, touch or interact with the dog while they are engaged in whatever they guard.
- If needing to move the dog, use targeting, treats, and recall training- do not physically move the animal or try to take it from them.
- If the dog picks up an item it shouldn't have- let it go!
- Accept that there will be accidents and maybe a trip to the vet vs. the hospital (for the people) is better. We would rather the pup need some medication or a check up rather than you getting bit!

Managing This Behavior Around Other Pets:

- Resource Guarding with people doesn't always transfer to resource guarding with other pets, but it is always better to be safe than sorry!
- Feed pets separately utilizing different rooms or a gate.
- Give treats and rewards that the pet can eat in one bite or chew to prevent hoarding and later snaps.
- Pick up any long-lasting chews like bones, antlers, rawhides, horns, and also any toys.

Training to Make Management Easier:

With any foster pup, any extra training- obedience, tricks, or house training makes them even more adoptable and desirable! With a dog with resource guarding, working on training helps with confidence and can make managing resource guarding easier to the people who live with the pup!

Leave it

Drop

Trade Games

Building Trust (This behavior can be relationship dependent)

Loose leash walking

Any Basic Obedience Training



Other Tips:

- Don't punish them for growling or showing that they are uncomfortable. All you've done is make a dog bite more likely. If your dog learns that growling to express their discomfort at your approach results in an aversive- yelling, scolding, etc. then next time you may not get that warning sign!
- Don't play with their food. Many people think that by handling their dogs food while they are eating, or putting their hands in the bowl while they are eating is desensitizing them to it. This can backfire, and then you create a dog who snaps when they reach for the bowl or a dog that lashes out even at just their walking by the bowl.

***Remember that Resource Guarding is not something that you can train out of a dog, it is something that you manage. Many of the dogs and puppies at NEAS come to us with no history and may demonstrate Resource Guarding. Accidents happen in a home setting, and there is always a learning curve when working with behaviors like these!**