




Module 2: Body Language Basics Study Aids

Our learning begins using photographs to ensure the subtle differences in postures are noted and understood. As you progress through the course we will add video. Video will often be shown in slow motion to facilitate learning as regular motion is very fast for the human eye.

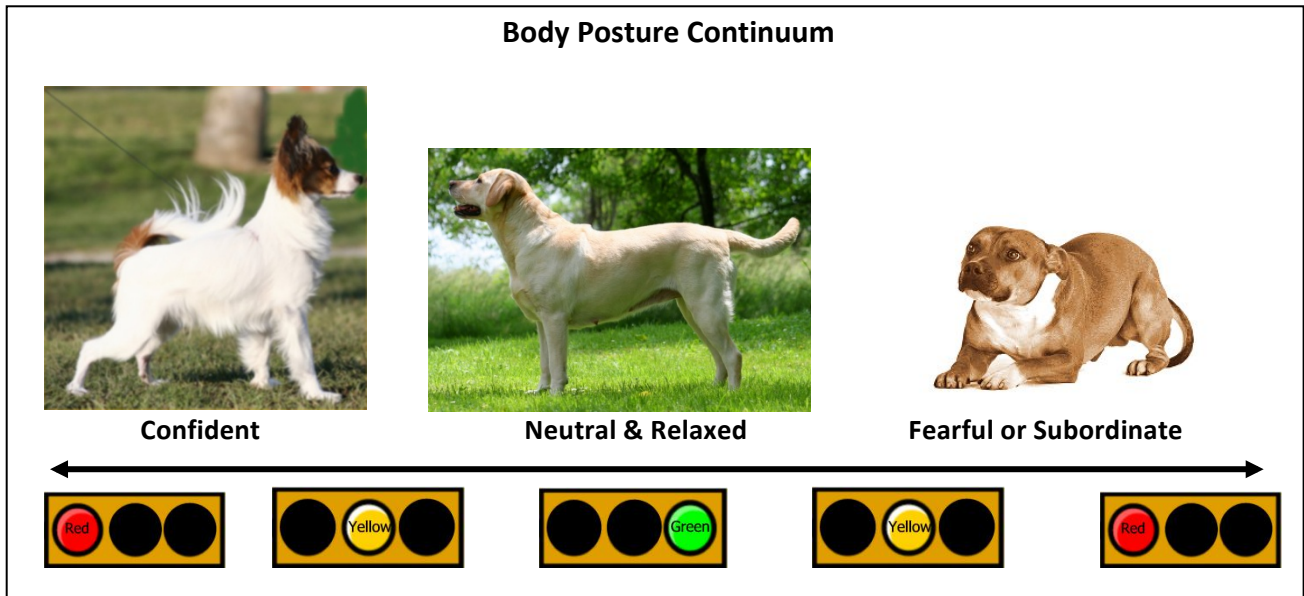
Dog Language

- Dogs communicate with body postures, facial expressions and vocalizations
- Much of the language is subtle and occurs extremely fast
- To avoid miscommunications we need to learn their language

Dog Management Traffic Signal

Management Signal	Color	Meaning
	Green	Positive situation for approach & dog management.
	Yellow	Concern for miscommunication or conflict. Monitor situation with caution. Watch for signs of stress, fear, alert or other warning signals.
	Red	High risk, work to diffuse situation or safely exit. Risk of conflict is increased due to high arousal, extreme stress, or fear.

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Confident	Neutral & Relaxed	Fearful & Subordinate
Tall, weight forward on front legs	Balanced on all four legs	Low, weight shifted backward toward rear
Dog appears large		Dog appears small
Stiff legs	Lacks tension	Legs crouched
Body movement is stiff and tense	Movement is relaxed, loose and curvy	Body movement is tense and slow

Ear Positions

- Neutral position (natural carriage)
- Forward from neutral
- Backward from neutral
- Flattened against head
- Sideways

Ear Management Traffic Signal



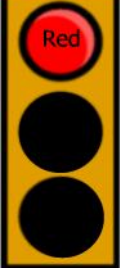
Management Signal	Ear Position	Dog Emotion	Meaning
	Neutral	I'm at ease	Relaxed
	Erect	What's that?	Attentive, Interest
	Backward	I'm no threat	Friendly, Subordinate
	Forward	I'm in charge	Confident
	Flattened	I'm scared	Threatened
	Spread Sideways	I'm not sure	Anxious, Unsure

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Tail Positions

- Neutral position (normal carriage)
- High – horizontal or higher
- Low
- Speed of wag

Tail Management Traffic Signal

Management Signal	Tail Position Or Movement	Dog Emotion	Meaning
	Neutral position	I'm at ease	Relaxed
	Large wags at moderate speed; may be in circles	I like you	Friendly, Happy
	Small wags at moderate speed	Hello	Friendly Greeting
	Wags at slow speed	I like that I don't understand	Pleased Problem solving
	High position	I'm in charge	Confident
	Low position	I'm no threat	Subordinate (less confident)
	Fast small wags	I'm interested	Excitement
	Slow & small rhythmic wags	I'm watching with concern	On guard



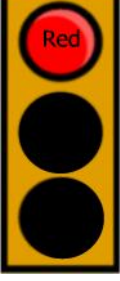
Facial Tension

- Neutral expression: muscles loose and relaxed
- Tense: visible and pronounced wrinkles around muzzle and forehead

Eyes

- Neutral: soft eyes and small pupils
- Larger pupil: higher level of arousal
- Hard eyes and dilated pupil: high confidence or threat
- Half-moon eyes (whites visible): fearful state
- Smaller and elongated: passive, less confident signal

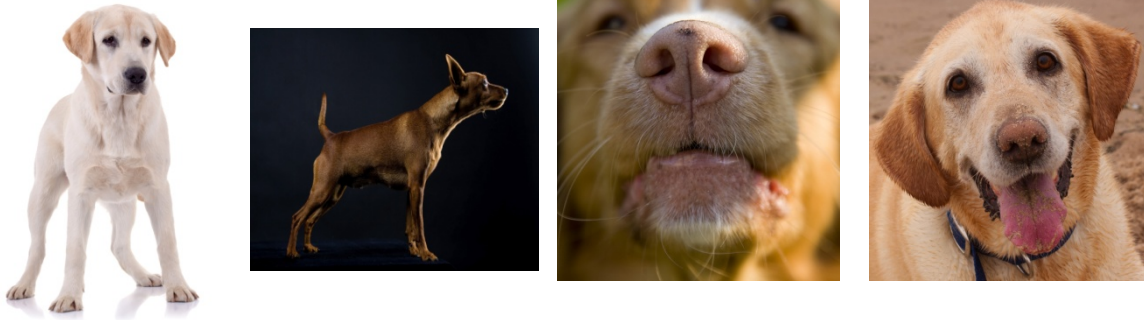
Facial Expression (Eyes & Muzzle) Management Traffic Signal

Management Signal	Facial Expression	Dog Emotion	Meaning
	Relaxed muzzle & forehead	I'm happy	Relaxed
	Soft eyes	I'm happy	Relaxed
	Blinking eyes	I'm no threat	Friendly, less confident
	Look away; avoids eye contact	I'm no threat	Less confident, lower in rank
	Mouth slightly opened or softly closed	I'm happy	Relaxed
	Slight wrinkling of muzzle & forehead	I'm concerned	Alert
	Narrow elongated eye	I'm no threat	Less confident
	Mouth pursed forward in "C" shape & mostly closed	Go away	Annoyed; confident dog
	Lips drawn back & mostly closed	Go away	Annoyed; subordinate dog
	Mouth wide open, lips drawn back with panting	I'm afraid I'm in pain	Fear in a less confident dog, stress signal
	Hard eyes with direct staring	I challenge you Stop that!	Threat signal
	Half moon eyes	I'm scared	Threat signal
	Mouth pursed forward in "C" shape & showing teeth	Go away	Warning; confident dog
	Lips drawn back & showing a lot of teeth	Go away	Warning; fearful dog
	Mouth closed tight with tension	I challenge you Stop that!	Threat signal

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All of these “words” put together communicate how the dog is feeling. You will look at each “word”: the body posture, ear position, tail carriage and facial expression together to accurately read each dog. Understanding the complete sentence will keep you safe when working with dogs in your pet care center.

Reading Body Language



Notes:




Scent Communication

- Most highly developed sense
- Often first sense used in communication
- Eliminations provide long-distance communication
- Dogs sniff in common pattern during greeting

Vocal Communication

- Back-up body language signals
- Differ in sounds and meanings
 - Barking
 - Growling
 - Howling
 - Whining
 - Whimpering
 - Yelping
 - Screaming
 - Champing

Vocal Management Traffic Signal

Management Signal	Sound	Dog Emotion	Meaning
	Short bark "ruff"	Hello, let's play	Pleasure & excitement
	Bark rising in pitch	This is fun	Enjoyable play
	Howl	I hear you	Group howl
	Champing	I'm satisfied	Friendly & no threat
	Growl (soft & playful)	I want to play	Playful & excited
	Whine	I want	Excited & eager
	Rapid barking	Calling the pack	Alert call or alarm bark
	High pitch barking	Help, I don't like this	Stress signal
	Single sharp bark	Stop! What's that?	Surprise or annoyance
	Soft short growl	Stop!	Warning
	Whine (low)	What's that?	Alert
	Moaning bark	I'm not sure about this!	Anxious
	Long deep low growl	Back off! Beware!	Annoyed confident dog
	Growl-bark	I'm upset! I'm frightened!	Fearful annoyed dog that if pushed may fight
	Long growl with pitch changes	I'm very terrified!	Extreme fear of more submissive dog
	Whine	I need	Distress or fear
	Whimper	I hurt, I'm scared	Stress
	Yelp	I'm hurt & scared	Injured; physically or emotionally
	Scream	Help, Help! I'm very scared!	Extreme fear; sound can trigger prey drive in other dogs

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Identify the traffic color signal of each dog photo shown during the DVD session.



Traffic Signal Color: _____



Traffic Signal Color: _____



Traffic Signal Color: _____



Traffic Signal Color: _____

Summary

- Look first at dog's body posture
- Green postures are safe to approach and indicate good health
- Yellow postures are a warning signal – take action for your safety or for dog's health
- Red postures indicate an unsafe situation for you or the dog