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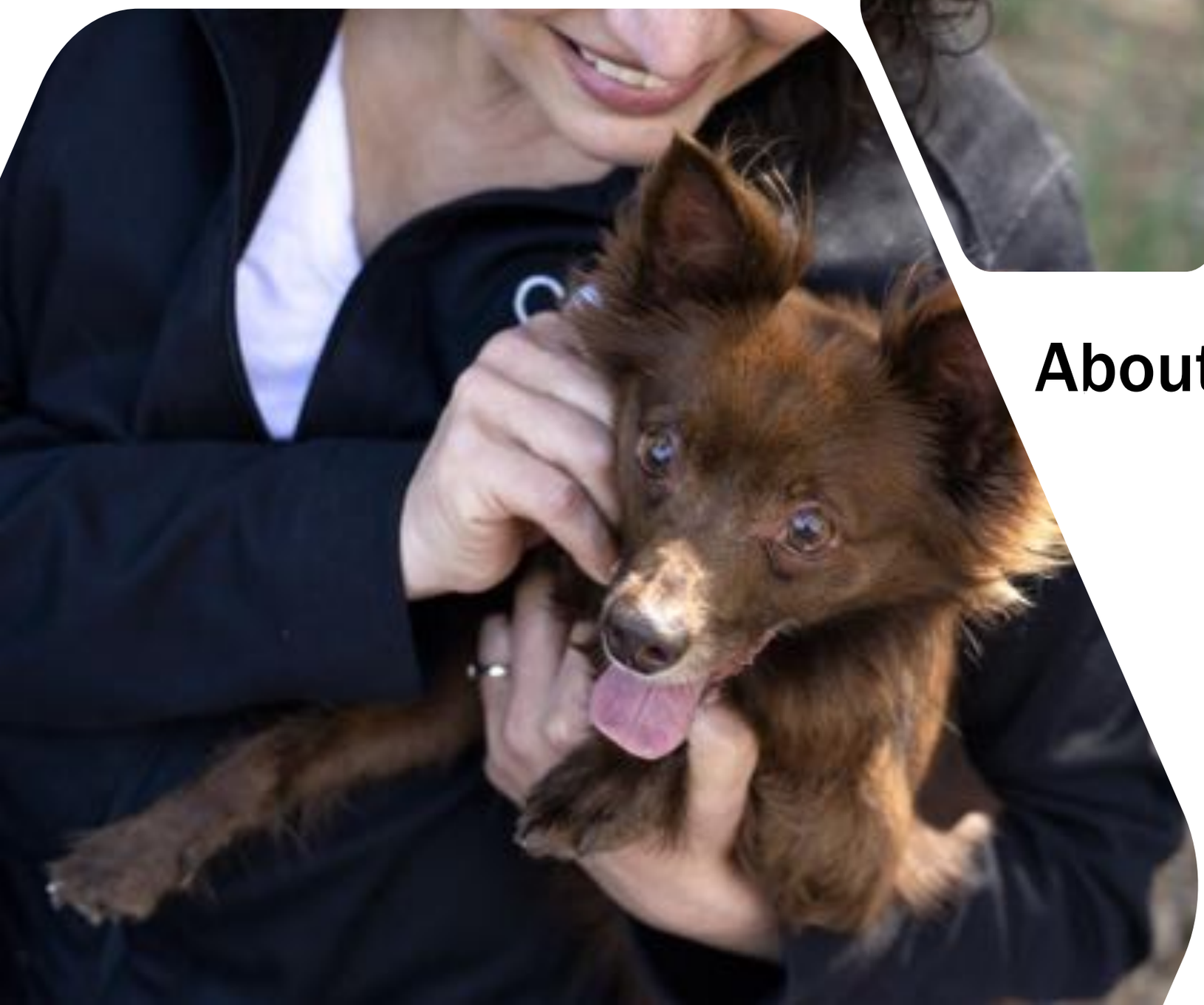
Malena DeMartini

Separation Anxiety Mission Possible



About me & Tini DeMartini

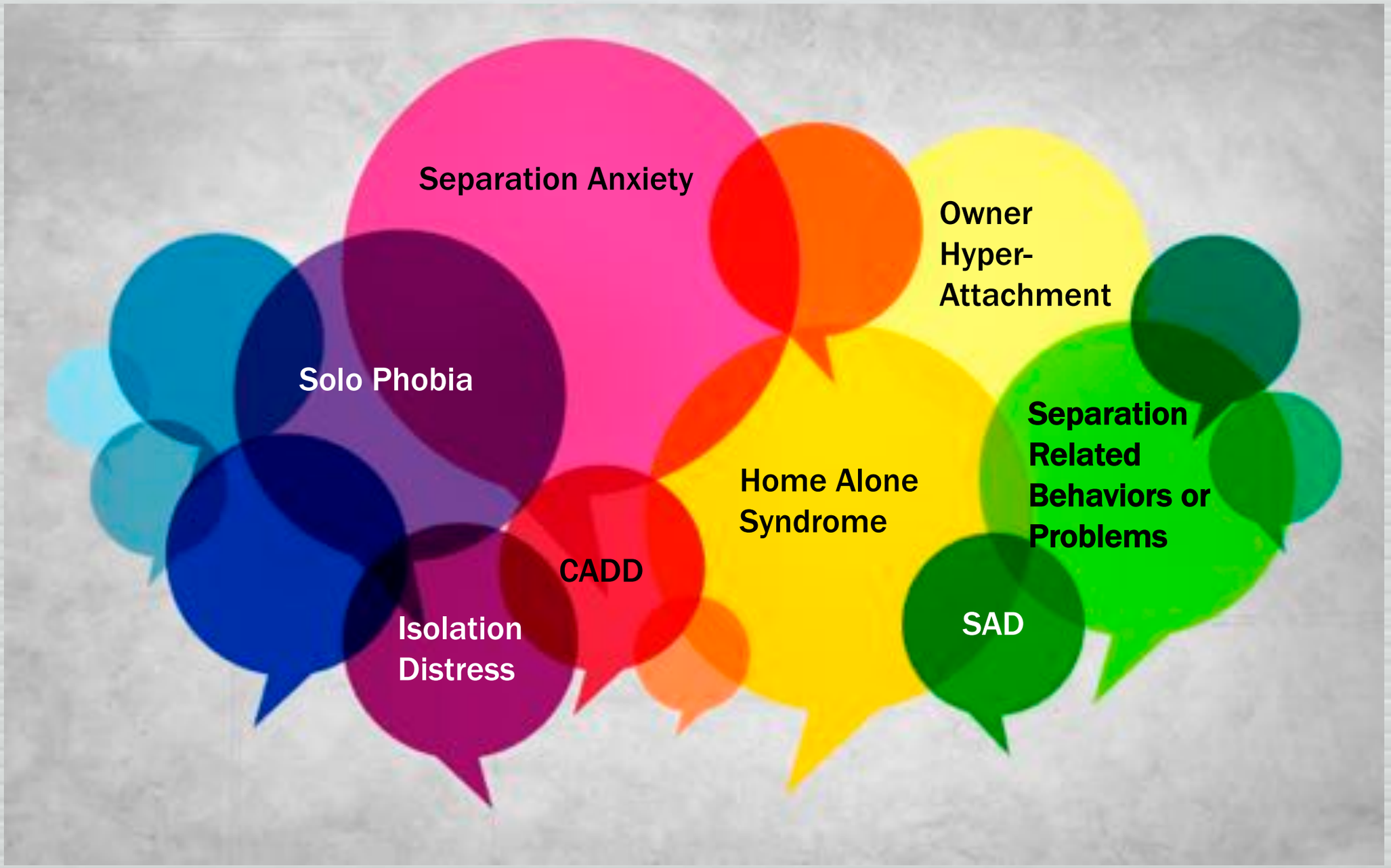
(and introducing Maybell)

Separation Anxiety - Defined

“Undesirable behavior problems that occur during owner absence are published under various expressions, such as separation anxiety, separation-related problems, isolation anxiety, separation reactions, separation-related distress, and separation anxiety syndrome.”

Cannas, S., Frank, D., Minero, M., Aspesi, A., Benedetti, R., Palestrini, C., 2014. Video analysis of dogs suffering from anxiety when left home alone and treated with clomipramine. Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research 9, 50–57.

Separation Anxiety - Defined



SAD = separation anxiety disorder
CADD = canine alone distress disorder

Separation Anxiety - Topics

- Prevalence
- Associated Behaviors
- Genetics
- Assessment
- Feeding Toys
- Confinement

- - - - - - -

- Medication
- Management
- Prevention or Optimization
- Training, Severity & Success

Separation Anxiety - Prevalence

“Over the past four decades, [separation anxiety] has been the most commonly discussed disorder in published studies of experimental research and retrospective research in the fields of applied animal behavior and veterinary behavior.”

Ogata, N. (2016) Separation anxiety in dogs: What progress has been made in our understanding of the most common behavioral problems in dogs?

Separation Anxiety - Prevalence

“Between 22.3–55% of the general dog population are believed to show these signs, and they make up between 14 and 40% of dog behavior referral cases.”

de Assis Luciana S., Matos Raquel, Pike Thomas W., Burman Oliver H. P., Mills Daniel S., Developing Diagnostic Frameworks in Veterinary Behavioral Medicine: Disambiguating Separation Related Problems in Dogs. Frontiers in Veterinary Science Vol6 (2020) p 499

Separation Anxiety - Prevalence

“Separation-related problems may therefore be underestimated if elimination does not occur, destruction is absent or minor, and if no one hears the dog vocalize.”

Palestrini, C., Minero, M., Cannas, S., Rossi, E., & Frank, D. (2010). Video analysis of dogs with separation-related behaviors. Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 124(1), 61-67. doi: 10.1016/j.applanim.2010.01.014

Separation Anxiety – Associated Behaviors

Correlation does not imply causation!

Separation Anxiety – Associated Behaviors

Behavior	SA dogs (%)	Non-SA dogs (%)
Destruction	72	3
Vocalization	61	5
Elimination	28	2
Shadowing or following owner closely	84	64
Signs when owner puts on coat or shoes	70	32
Excessive greeting upon owner's return	63	31
Disinterest in eating when alone	47	21
Behavioral signs of depression	59	16
Drooling excessively/Vomiting/Diarrhea	20	0

Flannigan, G., & Dodman, N. H. (2001). Risk factors and behaviors associated with separation anxiety in dogs. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 219(4), 460-466.

Separation Anxiety – Associated Behaviors

“Spoiling a dog, at least by allowing it to sleep on the bed, feeding it from the table, taking it on errands or trips, and allowing it on the furniture, does not correlate with separation anxiety.”

McCrave, E.A. (1991). Diagnostic criteria for separation anxiety in the dog. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 21(2), 247-255

Separation Anxiety – Associated Behaviors

Non-SA Influences

- Letting dog sleep on your bed
- Feeding dog food from the table
- History of abuse
- Taking dog on errands or trips
- Failure to obedience train
- Failure to be your dog's pack leader
- Celebrating a dog's birthday
- Talking to your dog as if he were a person
- Lack of structure or discipline
- Improper crate training

Separation Anxiety - Genetics

“One causal factor may be heritable.”

Sherman, B. L., & Mills, D. S. (2008). Canine anxieties and phobias: an update on separation anxiety and noise aversions. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 38(5), 1081-1106.

Separation Anxiety - Genetics

“We demonstrated an association between a haplotype flanking drd2 and SRBs in the study population of golden retrievers .”

“Each finding brings us a little closer to understanding the biochemical pathways of behavioral disorders, such as separation-related distress, and the possibility of better targeted medications to improve the quality of life of affected animals.”

Rooy et al., 2016. Evaluating candidate genes oprm1, drd2, avpr1a, and oxtr in golden retrievers with separation-related behaviors. Journal of Veterinary Behavior, 16:22-27

Separation Anxiety - Assessment

Separation Anxiety - Assessment

Why Assess?

- Definitively rule out any other possibility
- Establish the threshold for beginning criteria setting
- Gather information to share with the vet
- Decide about your comfort level in taking the case?

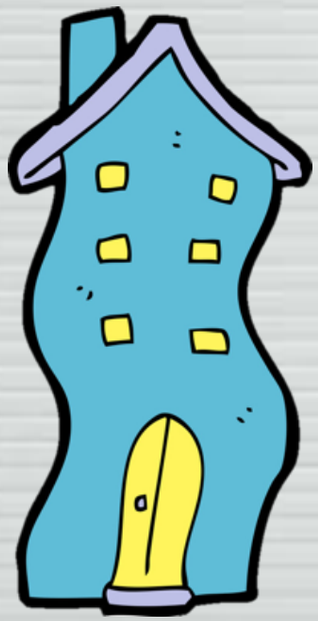
Separation Anxiety - Assessment

Alice
Screamer

Betty
Disaster

Carol
Weeper

Separation Anxiety - Assessment



Ace
Vocalizer

Buddy
Demolisher

Charlie
Eliminator

Separation Anxiety - Assessment

Separation Anxiety - Assessment

Can Categorizing Hurt You?

- Speaking to clients
- Speaking to veterinarians
- Predicting timelines

Separation Anxiety - Assessment

The DOG sets the pace

Separation Anxiety – Feeding Toys

Separation Anxiety – Feeding Toys

“Providing a food-stuffed toy did not have a significant effect on the incidence of separation related behaviors.”

Sargisson, R., 2014. Canine separation anxiety: strategies for treatment and management. Veterinary Medicine: Research and Reports 143.

Separation Anxiety – Feeding Toys

“If the owner’s absence elicits anxiety, the stimuli that precede the absence will also elicit a degree of anxiety.”

Borchelt, P.L., Voith, V.L., 1982. Diagnosis and Treatment of Separation-Related Behavior Problems in Dogs, Symposium on Animal Behavior, 625-635.

Separation Anxiety – Feeding Toys

Separation anxiety absence rehearsals should be non-contingent. Turning SA behavior modification into an operant session can be problematic.

Separation Anxiety – Confinement

Separation Anxiety – Confinement

“In our study, cage confinement seems to increase the “discomfort” response. Behaviors, such as yawning, and lip licking were performed significantly more by caged dogs than dogs allowed to run freely or confined in a room.”

Palestrini, C., Minero, M., Cannas, S., Rossi, E., & Frank, D. (2010). Video analysis of dogs with separation-related behaviors. Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 124(1), 61-67. doi: 10.1016/j.applanim.2010.01.014

have
a
break!

Separation Anxiety – Medication

From a technical perspective, medicine is part of management. We are managing the internal setting events for the behavior.

Separation Anxiety – Medication

“It should always be used as an adjunct to behavioral therapy as a means of achieving homeostasis more quickly, thereby increasing the likelihood of behavioral therapy being successful.”

Appleby, D., & Pluijmakers, J. (2004b). Separation anxiety in dogs: The function of homeostasis in its development and treatment. Clinical Techniques in Small Animal Practice, 19(4), 205-215

Separation Anxiety – Medication

All of the FDA approved medications for separation anxiety are indicated to be used as part of a comprehensive behavioral management program.

https://animaldrugsatfda.fda.gov

Separation Anxiety – Medication

"When we try to reserve the use of drugs as a last resort… this is similar to saying that we don't want to use insulin in a diabetic patient unless he's crashing with DKA, or that we don't want to treat an infection with antibiotics until full-blown sepsis sets in – it makes no sense to withhold a basic treatment option with minimal risks and lots of potential benefits, until the situation becomes truly desperate."

- Dr. Jen Summerfield

http://www.drjensdogblog.com/behavior-medication-first-line-therapy-or-last-resort/

Separation Anxiety – Management

Separation Anxiety – Management

“To achieve optimal progress during the treatment period, the dog should only be subjected to separations it can tolerate.”

Appleby, D., & Pluijmakers, J. (2004b). Separation anxiety in dogs: The function of homeostasis in its development and treatment. Clinical Techniques in Small Animal Practice, 19(4), 205-215

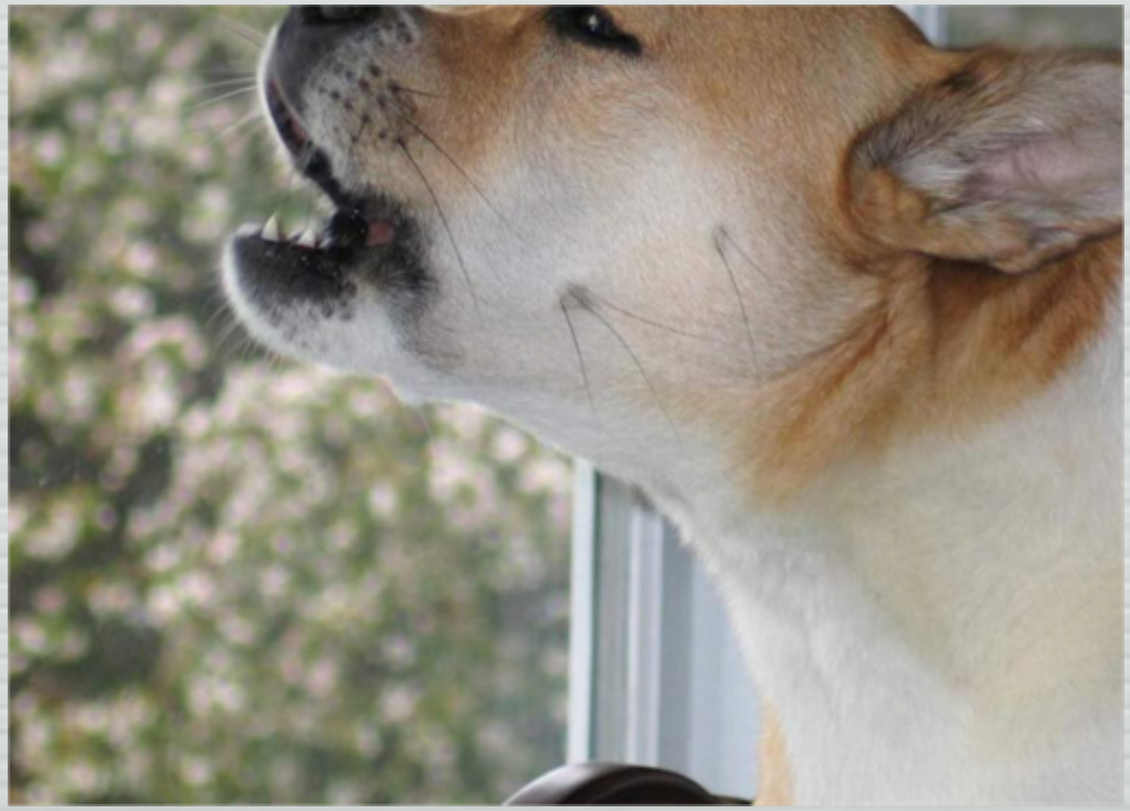
Separation Anxiety – Management

“The purpose of environmental management is to reduce manifestation of signs and reduce strain in the household to permit time for behavior modification and pharmacotherapy to become effective.”

Sherman, B. L., & Mills, D. S. (2008). Canine anxieties and phobias: an update on separation anxiety and noise aversions. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 38(5), 1081-1106.

Separation Anxiety – Management

“Throughout this process, it is essential that the intensity of the stimulus is never presented at a level that elicits the fear response or sensitization to the stimulus and worsening of the fear response rather than desensitization will occur.”



Ballantyne, K.C., 2018. Separation, Confinement, or Noises: What is Scaring That Dog? Veterinary Clinic of North America: Small Animal Practice, Vol 48(3), pp 367-386

Separation Anxiety – Management

2,398 prospective clients

50%
Already suspending or willing to do so immediately

85% on board

Source: Malena DeMartini Inc.

Prevention or Optimization

Separation Anxiety – Training

Separation Anxiety – Training

This is Akkuma's Initial Assessment

(Note: The first noise you hear is the pet bird.)

Malena DeMartini

Separation Anxiety – Training

Separation Anxiety – Training

“We suggest that the predictability of the owner’s departure should be increased and to highlight the importance of context in order to reduce in the dog chronic anxiety and contextual fear associated with the departure of the owner.”

Amat M., et al, 2014, Separation anxiety in dogs: the implications of predictability and contextual fear for behavioural treatment. Animal welfare, 23:263-266

Separation Anxiety – Training

Separation Anxiety – Training

- Desensitization: to make (a sensitized or hypersensitive individual) insensitive or nonreactive to a sensitizing agent.

Separation Anxiety – Training

"The goal of treatment is to reduce the anxiety associated with the owner's departure rather than to attempt to treat the symptoms of elimination, destructive behavior, or vocalization directly. This is accomplished by a series of planned departures of gradually increasing duration."

McCrave, E.A. (1991). Diagnostic criteria for separation anxiety in the dog. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 21(2), 247-255

Separation Anxiety – Training

“Interestingly, the dog that had the highest percentage of successful trials also had the owner wo increased the departure duration the slowest and had the greatest number of short departures. The authors concluded that systematic desensitization was the critical component for successful treatment and that counterconditioning and other behavioral advice did not influence the behavioral outcome.”

Feuerbacher, E., & Muir, K. (2020) Using Owner Return as a Reinforcer to Operantly Treat Separation-Related Problem Behavior in Dogs. Animals Journal

Separation Anxiety – Training

Separation Anxiety – Training

Data Tracking Sorted by Mission Number

Mission Number	Mission Date	Mission Time	Final Duration	Person(s)	Feeding Time	Exercise in min	Environmental Influences	Mission Rating
1	1/4	6:15 am	5	P	6:45 am	30	Vet Visit	2
2	1/5	10:30 am	9	C	7:10 am	60	None	1
3	1/6	9:00 am	6	CP	7:00 am	0	Construction Noise	3
4	1/7	6:45 am	10	CP	7:15 am	15	Raining	3
5	1/8	7:00 am	13	C	7:45 am	45	None	1
6	1/11	8:45 am	9	C	7:30 am	60	None	1
7	1/12	8:00 am	8	CP	7:00 am	15	Thunderstorm	3
8	1/13	10:45 am	15	C	6:00 am	45	None	1
9	1/14	7:00 am	19	P	7:45 am	30	Windy	2
10	1/15	9:30 am	12	P	8:00 am	30	Passed Reactive Dog	1

Legend: 1=Great 2=Good 3=Fair

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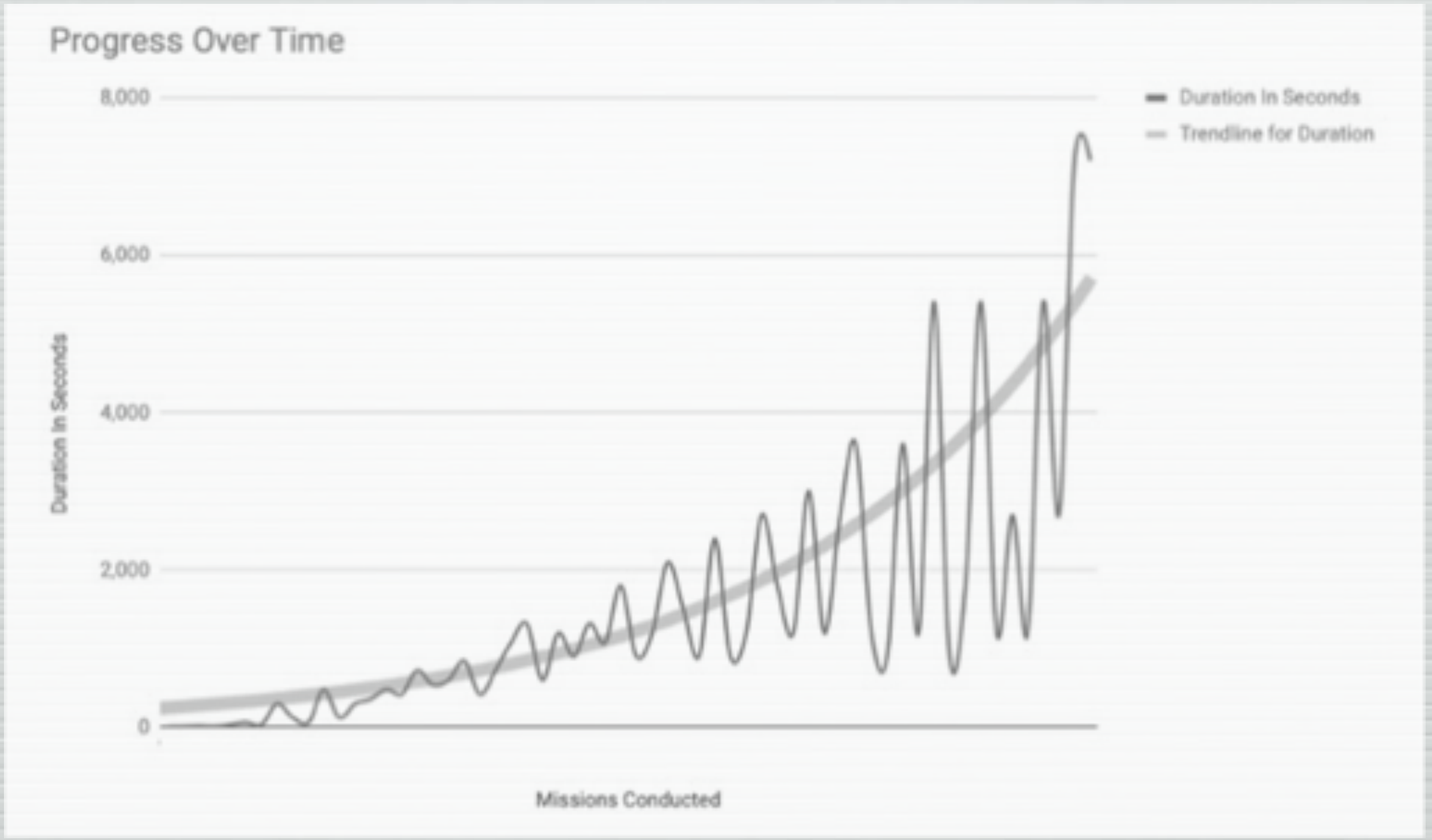
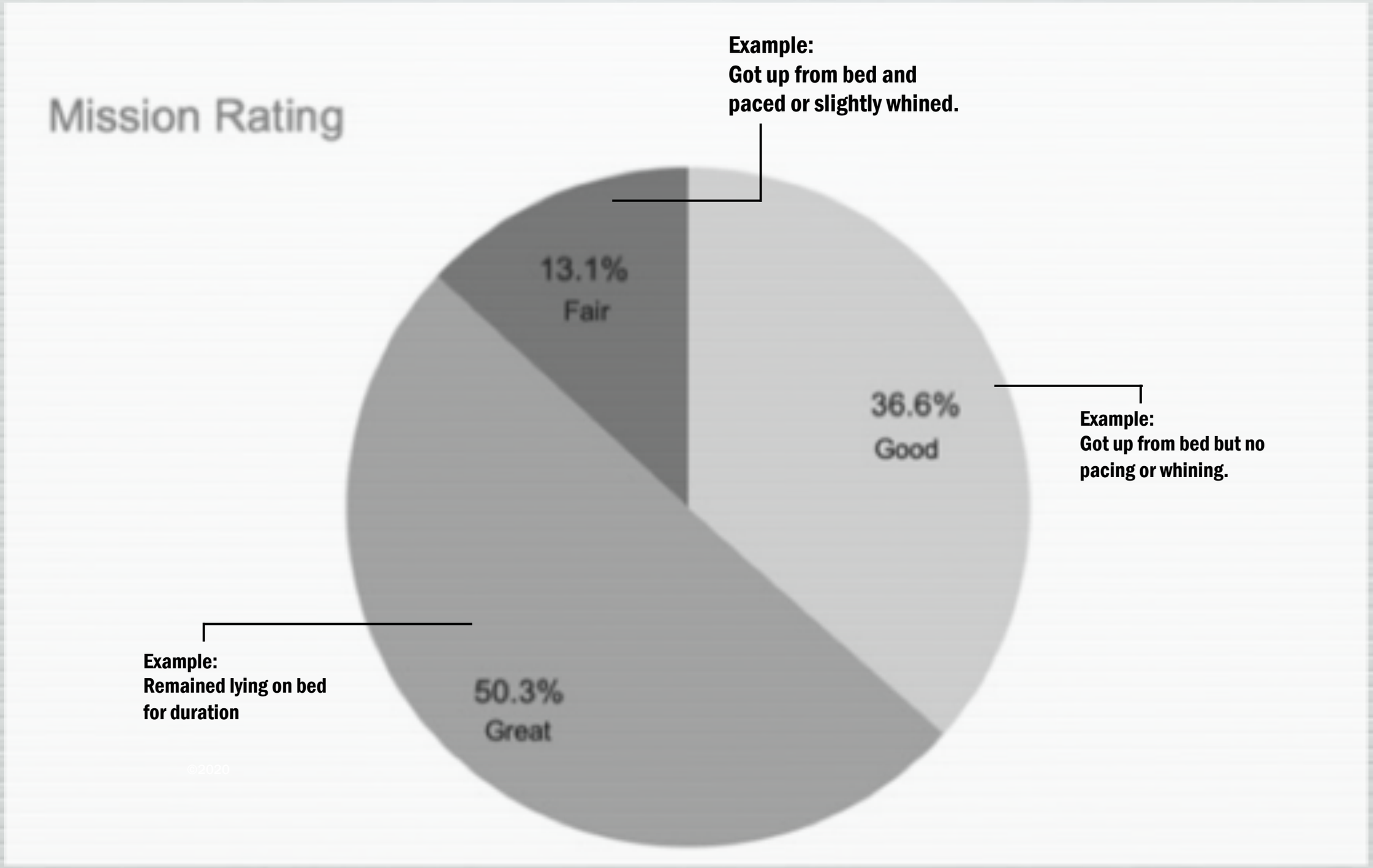
Separation Anxiety – Training



Separation Anxiety – Training



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Separation Anxiety – Training

“Although treatment was eventually successful for all dogs, there was considerable individual variation in both rapidity and variability of progress.”

Butler, R., Sargisson, R. J., & Elliffe, D. (2011). The efficacy of systematic desensitization for treating the separation-related problem behaviour of domestic dogs. Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 129(2), 136-145.

Separation Anxiety – Training

“If diagnosed and treated correctly, the prognosis for a dog with separation anxiety is excellent.”

McCrave, E. A. (1991). Diagnostic criteria for separation anxiety in the dog. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 21(2), 247-255.

Separation Anxiety – Training

"Owners should be encouraged that it is never too late, or a case is never too bad to contemplate treatment, because these factors do not seem to affect prognosis and treatment is relatively straightforward for most owners."

Sherman, B. L., & Mills, D. S. (2008). Canine anxieties and phobias: an update on separation anxiety and noise aversions. Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice, 38(5), 1081-1106.

Bibliography in Order of Presentation

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Tiira, K., Sulkama, S., Lohi, H., 2016. Prevalence, comorbidity, and behavioral variation in canine anxiety. Journal of Veterinary Behavior 16, 36–44.

Rooy et al., 2016. Evaluating candidate genes oprm1, drd2, avpr1a, and oxtr in golden retrievers with separation-related behaviors. Journal of Veterinary Behavior, 16:22-27

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Borchelt, P.L., Voith, V.L., 1982. Diagnosis and Treatment of Separation-Related Behavior Problems in Dogs, Symposium on Animal Behavior, 625-635.

Hetts, S., 2012. The Latest On Separation Anxiety, Integrative Veterinary Care Journal

Feuerbacher, E., & Muir, K. (2020) Using Owner Return as a Reinforcer to Operantly Treat Separation-Related Problem Behavior in Dogs. Animals Journal

Butler, R., Sargisson, R. J., & Elliffe, D. (2011). The efficacy of systematic desensitization for treating the separation-related problem behaviour of domestic dogs. Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 129(2), 136-145.

Time for questions!

CSAT

Certified Separation Anxiety Trainer

malenademartini.com