

## **Reading your dog's body language so you know how he/she is feeling**

Dogs use their bodies to speak to each other and to us. It's important that you pay attention to your dog's body postures and signaling in order to be able to know how he/she is feeling at any given moment. Below are some things to look for that will help you speak 'dog'.

If your dog is feeling happy you might see the following body postures or signals:

- Low (below the horizon of the back) wagging tail
- Happy face - open loose mouth, no tension around eyes
- Wiggly body (loose muscles)
- Jumping up and down in place

If your dog is feeling playful you might see the following body postures or signals:

- Bouncy movements
- Play bow (butt end up, front end down)
- Low (below the horizon of the back), usually fast wagging tail

If your dog is feeling stressed or anxious about something you might see the following body postures or signals:

- Tongue flicking
- Lip licking
- Yawning
- Blinking
- Panting
- Drooling
- Avoiding eye contact (head turned to side)
- Sweaty paw prints
- One front leg held up (may switch between them)

If your dog is feeling afraid you might see the following body postures or signals:

- Lowered body
- Ears back
- Tail tucked
- Whale eye (exposing the whites of their eyes)
- Trembling

When you see your dog exhibiting signs of stress, anxiety, or fear remove him/her from the situation. Do not yell at your anxious or fearful dog - this will only make him/her more anxious or fearful.

If its an environmental stressor upsetting your dog, like a thunderstorm or the sound of a chainsaw next door - comfort your dog or try to get him/her into a more positive emotional state by bringing out the toys or the yummy treats.

If the stressor is another dog - move your dog away and let him/her feel safer while looking at the dog at a distance.

If the stressor is person - ask the person to stop approaching your dog and to turn side-ways so that he/she is less threatening. You can have the person toss some yummy treats to your dog if you/they have any.

It's always important to pay attention to your dog so that you know how he/she is feeling in every situation.