

## Is Your Dog **STRESSED?**

Being around new people and dogs, trying to learn new things and missing usual nap times can lead to stress. The following provides what to look for and what to do if you see your dog stressing out.

### **Signs of Stress or uncertainty:**

- Head down/held low (may be turned away from other dogs/people)
- Tail low or tucked between legs (may wag weakly)
- Mouth closed/may see wrinkles at corners of mouth
- Ears held back/low (if tall ears: they may stick out to the sides or be folded against the head)
- Hair on the back may be raised (esp. near the tail)
- May roll on it's back with belly exposed
- May urinate while crouching or on it's back
- May "freeze" and be stiff all over/glassy eyed or will show body tension and stiff movements
- May try to run away (usually with tail tucked and head low)
- May growl, snap, show teeth or whine
- May repeatedly bark with a short, high-pitched yap or yelp
- May be constantly moving, restless or have decreased activity levels
- Won't sleep or rest
- May try to hide in or behind things
- Quick yawning (looks nervous, not tired)
- Excessive drooling, "ropes"
- Trembling
- Feet sweaty (leaves paw prints that evaporate quickly)
- Disinterested in food
- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Excessive and/or sudden hair loss
- White rim of eye showing more than usual
- Muscle ridge visible around the eyes or mouth
- May show calming signals like lip licking, ground sniffing, shaking (like when wet) or scratching

### **What to do:**

Give your dog a rest and take a break from the activity. Take a walk with your dog to let them 'unwind' and get out some pent up tension. If your dog needs a nap, find a quiet place for him to take one. If he is not comfortable in the location where activities are taking place but he is comfortable in your car and it's not too hot, maybe you could park your car in the shade where there is much less traffic and let the dog rest in there. Be sure to check on him often to be sure the shade has not moved and of course, leave windows open for ventilation.

Don't over do it. Learning and the various dog activities (and troop meetings) should be fun for both you and your dog. If you or your dog is stressing out, take a break and let you and/or your dog recover from the high level of activity, learning and socialization. Be patient and do your best to try to understand and listen to the signals your dog is sending to you. Stress and lack of sleep can cause increased aggression in dogs, just as it causes short tempers in humans. Being aware of this fact and taking measures to alleviate the causes will go a long way toward the enjoyment of the time you spend with your dog for both you and your dog.