
BOOK NOW
PROFESSIONAL DOG REACTIVITY SPECIALIST
Welcome to the
Professional Dog Reactivity Specialist Programme

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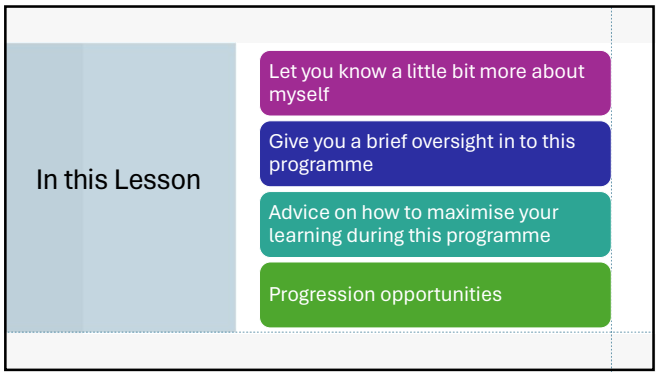
In this Lesson
Let you know a little bit more about myself
Give you a brief oversight in to this programme
Advice on how to maximise your learning during this programme
Progression opportunities

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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
APDT IRELAND
Creedons Dog Care
Leading the Way in Superior Dog Care
Newcastle University
IAABC
Creedons College
Adult Education in the Pet Industry
IRISH VETERINARY JOURNAL
Iris Tréidliachta Éireann
EXPERT WITNESS

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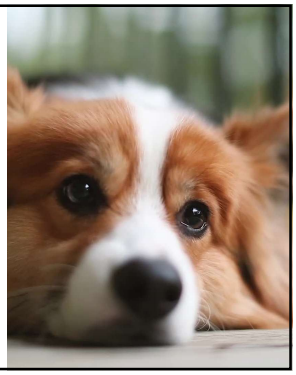
Oversight in to the PDRS Programme

- My goal is to equip you all with the skills, knowledge, and qualifications to treat many, many cases of reactivity over the coming years, and to make the lives of the dogs in your community so much better, one dog at a time.
- My goal is to also inspire you to carry on learning, and to have a thirst for knowledge that turns upskilling into your hobby!
- I have designed a programme that I believe hits every nook and cranny of reactivity, so you will never look at reactivity the same ever again!
- The modules we will cover include…



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- Module 1
  What is 'Dog Reactivity'? And What is it Not?
- Module 2
  The Biology of Reactivity
- Module 3
  Understanding Subtle Pre-Reactivity Communication
- Module 4
  The Do's and Don'ts for Reactive Dogs
- Module 5
  Management Techniques to Reduce Reactivity
- Module 6
  Training Exercises to Set up for Success
- Module 7
  Plan A Behaviour Modification for Reactivity
- Module 8
  Behaviour Modification When Plan A Doesn't Work
- Module 9
  Hosting Reactivity Workshops – With Real Life Case Studies
- Module 10
  Coaching Clients through Reactivity Recovery – With Real Life Case Studies
- Module 11
  Practical Hosting of Reactivity Consultations – 2 day workshop
- Module 12
  Practical Hosting of Reactivity Workshops – 2 day workshop

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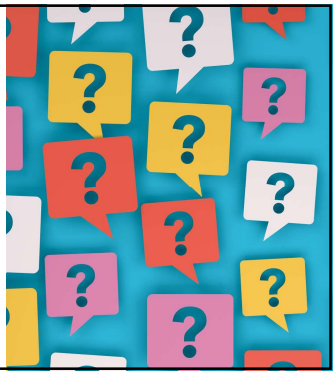
Maximise Your Value!

- Ask questions
- Revise
- Chat with your peers
- Research your competition
- Promote your knowledge



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Progression Opportunities

My website

Mentoring

PDBC

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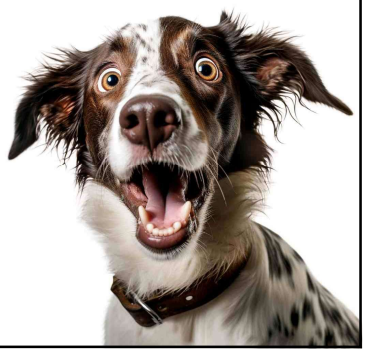
Lets Get Started!



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What is Dog Reactivity? Why do Labels Matter?

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- To treat we must diagnose, to diagnose we must define
- A diagnosis is not a personality type
- All behaviour is transient
- We must have the ability to label, and see beyond the label

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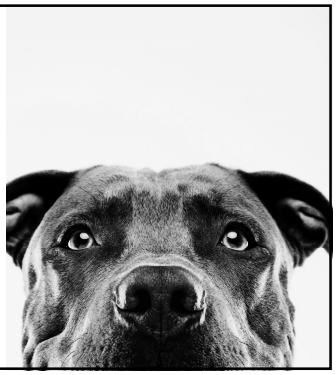
Definition of Reactivity

- "A reactive dog is one with an abnormal level of arousal in response to a normal stimulus." - whole-dog-journal.com
- "one who overreacts to normal situations that other dogs would take in stride." - Cornell Richard P. Riney Canine Health Center
- "respond to a situation (or a trigger) in a more intense way than you would expect, like overreacting to a sound or the presence of another person or animal" - animalhumanesociety.org
- "Dogs who respond to normal, common occurrences with abnormal and excessive levels of arousal are often termed reactive." - akc.org



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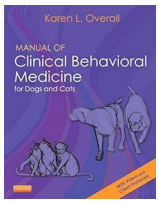
Bow Down to the Queen



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Behavioural Aggression – Moyer 1968

- – Regularly referenced and accepted breakdown of categories of aggression – but not an exhaustive list
- Predatory
- Maternal
- Intermale
- Fear-Induced
- Irritable
- Territorial
- Instrumental / Learnt

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- "As noted by Moyer (1968), phenotypic or phenomenologically categories of diagnosis can be especially useful when aggression is a concern because of behaviours that would otherwise reinforce problematic and / or dangerous conditions (dominance etc)

- Manual of Clinical Behavioural Medicine for Dogs and Cats
- By Karen L. Overall · 2013

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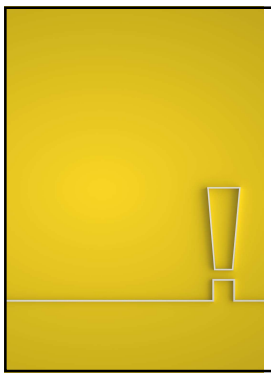

- 2. They allow us to identify behaviours that can be modified in a contextually meaningful way and
- 3. They presume nothing about the underlying neurophysiological and genetic basis for the behaviour
- Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats
- By Karen L. Overall · 2013

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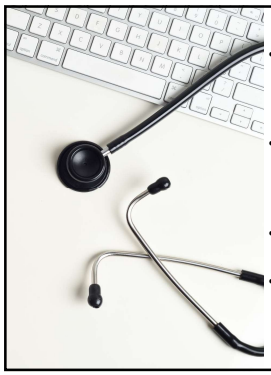

- Finally, a diagnosis allows us to interpret rare non-specific signs within a context in which the dog can be helped (Ghaffari et al. 2007)"
- A diagnosis also allows us to group together animals expressing similar behaviours for the purpose of gathering data on methodology that is effective.
- Manual of Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Dogs and Cats
- By Karen L. Overall · 2013

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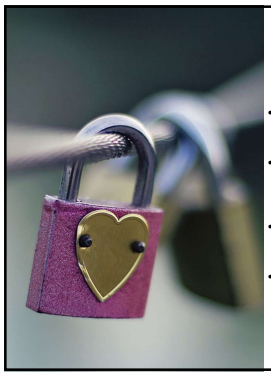

Reactivity – Everywhere – Always

- In reality the majority of all behaviour modification is based on reactivity – a dog carrying out a behaviour as a reaction to a trigger.
- However, the phrase reactivity is often used to describe on leash reactivity, with the presence of the leash potentially simply restricting the dogs opportunity to carry out other behaviours.
- Our understanding of, and treatment of, reactivity predominantly focuses on on leash dog to dog reactivity.
- However this course will educate you on how to understand reactivity in many different circumstances, and the treatment programmes we discuss will be applicable to a variety of reactive behaviours

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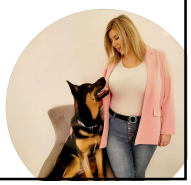
Working Definition

- "Reactivity in dogs is seen the presence of a specific trigger elicits a surge in adrenaline and cortisol in the dog, resulting in a display of aggressive behaviours without the trigger warranting such a response
- The trigger can be the presence of another dog, human, vehicles, or specific to certain dogs, certain humans, certain behaviours, or certain vehicles.
- Behaviours can include, but are not exclusive to, staring, growling, barking, lunging, snarling, air snapping and biting.
- Physiological changes can include but are not exclusive to muscles becoming tense, piloerection, increased heart rate, increased respiration rate, pupil dilation, and lack of cognitive ability"
- - Nanci Creedon 2024



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Terminology to Understand

Baseline – the dogs body is physiologically in homeostasis, the dogs nervous system is in 'rest and digest mode' the dog is not displaying reactive behaviours

Trigger – the stimulus that elicits a reactive response. A stimulus can technically be anything that causes the senses to take information to the dogs brain for processing.

Threshold – The level of exposure to the stimulus that elicits reactive behaviours

Reactive response is typically barking, lunging, frantic movements, hypervigilance

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Measuring Your Starting Point

Trigger	Large Black dogs	small white dogs	children on skateboards
Void Trigger	Familiar large black dogs		When children approach from in front at low speed and stop moving when 10ft away
Threshold	100 ft	80ft	10ft
Reactive Response	Barking, lunging, slipping, redirecting on to leash	Barking, lunging, slipping, redirecting on to leash	Freezes, head turn, low growl, refuses to walk forward
Frequency	4 out of 10	8 out of 10	10 out of 10
Recovery Time	10 seconds	30 seconds	hypervigilant until out of sight - has remained vigilant for 60 seconds or more

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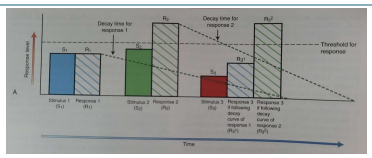

The effect of repeated exposure to triggers before the dog has physiologically returned to baseline. This illustrates how critical recovery time is after exposure to a trigger, or reactive episodes.

After the first exposure to a trigger stimulus, the dog has not reached the threshold for response. The handler may be lulled into a false sense of security, that the stimulus is not a trigger. However if the subsequent exposure comes before the dog has returned to baseline, repeat exposures are likely to elicit a response and push the dog over threshold.

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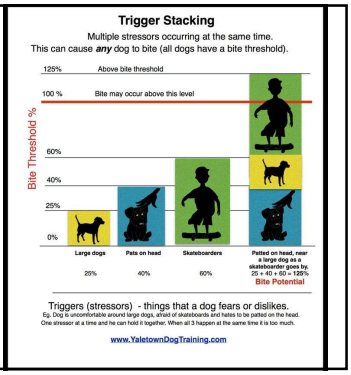
This can often be explained to clients as trigger stacking



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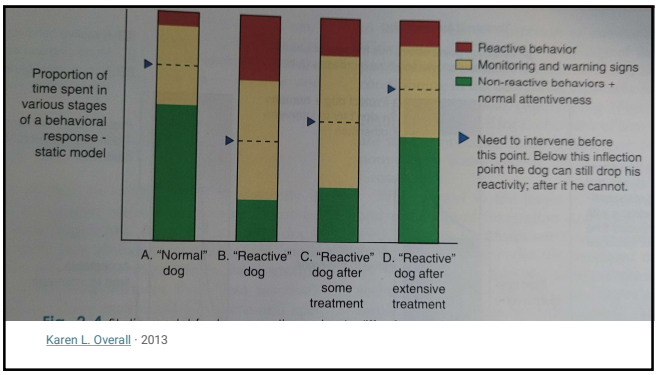

Karen L. Overall · 2013

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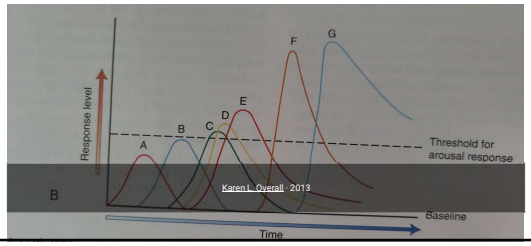
The response of different dogs to triggers – each dog is different, some go over threshold, some don't, some recover to baseline quickly, some don't.
The ability to measure exposure levels that elicit threshold, recovery time, return to baseline time are all vital in measuring improvements and recovery.



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Measuring Reactivity

- Threshold
- An imaginary line where they are unconcerned about their triggers
- Seesaw
- The threshold is different for all dogs, and different within the one dog at times
- If the threshold is very low the dog may require controlled environments for behaviour modification

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Measuring Reactivity

Frequency

How often does your dog go above threshold?

If you pass 10 dogs on a walk and they react to 5, they have a 50% frequency of reactivity

A high frequency of reactivity may mean training needs to be in controlled environments

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Measuring Reactivity

RECOVERY TIME

HOW LONG UNTIL THEY RETURN TO THE 'REST AND DIGEST' STATE

A LONG RECOVERY TIME MAY REQUIRE CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS FOR BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

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What is Not Fit In To Our Reactivity Box

- We will focus on reactivity in this course typical of the previous slides
- However, what cases are outside of this remit, and do not fit in to our Professional Dog Reactivity Specialist remit?

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'Normal' Behaviour

- Your dog bit the vet? So!
- Your dog defended itself? Good for them!
- Your dog is in pain? Call your vet!
- You took your dog to the dog park? Why!

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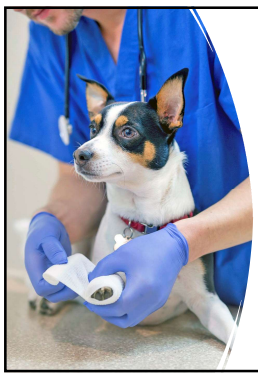

Pain and Reactivity

- Massively underdiagnosed
- Vet checks are important
- Brushing up your own knowledge on medical conditions is important
- Building a strong relationship with your clients vet is important

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Potential underlying Medical Causes and Contribution to Rule Out

- Muscle strains
- Arthritis
- Dental disease / fractures
- Ear infections
- Anal gland inflammation / infection (can also impact scent)
- Compromised sensory intake
- Skin problems
- Hormonal changes
- High blood pressure
- Altered thyroid
- Brain tumours / brain inflammation

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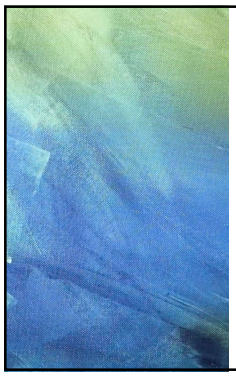

Working with your Vet Together

We will spend more time with the dog in its natural habitat , or observe more movement, spend more time with the dog

Build a good relationship with your vet in a symbiotic manner

Trust your gut with medical complications

Just because a dog seems 'normal' it doesn't make it normal – e.g. BOAS.

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Predatory Aggression

- Predatory behaviours – often silent, often opportunistic, the dog is physiologically in 'control'
- True predatory behaviours are rare, especially in dog to dog circumstances
- Some breeds and some individual dogs may be more likely to carry out predatory aggression toward dogs than others, often mistaking a smaller dog for a prey species

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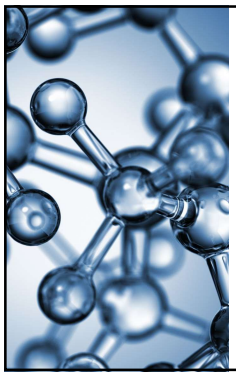

Trained Aggression

Different to learned aggression, where aggressive behaviours are rewarded by the dogs handlers

The dog will often escalate their aggressive behaviours when the behaviour is reinforced

The dog will regularly practice and perfect their repertoire of aggressive behaviours

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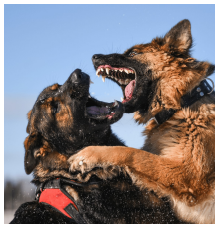
Intrinsically Motivated Aggression

- Some individual dogs enjoy practicing ritualised aggressive behaviours on other dogs
- Aggression is a behaviour based on survival
- Expressing aggressive behaviours can be a natural species-specific behaviour
- Engaging in dog-to-dog fights, and coming out the victor can be internally reinforcing for the dog



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Normal Responses

- Aggression is an essential element to survival
- Dogs will display aggressive behaviours towards other dogs at an appropriate level as part of communication
- Often clients need educating on what is appropriate for their own dog
- Discussing dog to dog sociability is often required
- These cases can still be taken on, but focus more on appropriate interactions and owner education

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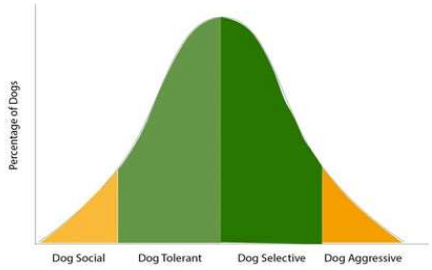
Dog Sociability is a Spectrum



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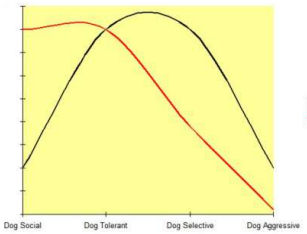

Reactivity Can Be NORMAL!

- Do we have unrealistic expectations of our dogs?
- Are we putting them in unfair situations?
- It's OK not to be OK with all dogs!
- Dog aggression is unusual in dogs and puppies.

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What is Reactivity?

- Aggression is NORMAL
- Reacting is NORMAL
- Overreacting is abnormal
- Multiple motivations

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Initiating Factors Potentially Leading to Reactivity

- Hyper motivated to greet
- Poor Socialisation
- One trial learning
- Offensive fearful behaviours
- Genetic
- Aversive techniques association
- Resource guarding
- Proximity Sensitivity
- Unpredictably Reactive
- Barrier Aggression

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Flat Pack Dogs

- Frustration and anger are both emotions while aggression is a behaviour. Frustration is an emotion experienced when we are blocked from achieving a goal.
- often experience anger in relation to the object of our frustration - that is, toward whoever or whatever we believe is blocking us from achieving our goal.
- Hyper Motivated to Greet
- Barrier aggression
- Often seen in rescue dogs
- Kennelled during Sensitive Period
- Window / Fence / Car Barkers

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Mal-socialised Dog

- Puppy farm capital of Europe
- Underqualified puppy part hosts
- The Zoomies effect
- The bully and the victim
- HPA Axis inability to recover

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One Trial Learning

- Could be offender or the victim
- Massive emotional impact
- Owner introduces avoidance
- Becomes a 'big deal'
- Often recovery more difficult as fear stored in the amygdala

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Offensive Fearful Behaviour

- Fear is a massive motivator
- Avoidance smarter than escape
- Control It Before It Controls You!
- If it isn't broke don't fix it
- Scary Movie factor

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Genetic

- Stressed mummy – stressed babies
- Early Learning Centre
- Breed sensitivity

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Aversive Techniques Association

Pain and associations can form quickly

Survival is essential so frightening away sources of pain is beneficial for survival

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Resource Guarding

- Sweets in your Pocket
- Previously threatening experience
- Rescue dog in love

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Proximity Sensitivity

- Cool Calm and Collected – Until I'm Not!

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Does Genetics Matter

Some strains of dogs, cats and mice have genetic lines or strains that are more reactive than others.

Genotype can change in utero or due to epigenetics, leading to more reactive tendencies

Studies have shown that pups separated from their dam an litter at 30-40 days found that early separation was a significant predictor for excessive barking, fearfulness on walks, and reactivity to noises, toy and food guarding behaviours and attention seeking behaviours (Pierantoni et al. 2011)

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Oh, Stress!

- Glucocorticoids
- Chronically elevated glucocorticoids, both during and after pregnancy, effects learning on a cellular level.
- It appears to affect the hippocampus development, which is the part of the brain where associations are formed
- It can also effect the development of the amygdala 0 which is responsible for developing and modulating fear

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Green et al 2011

- Studies in rats find that elevated stress before birth, and chronic ongoing stress can result in lower levels of extinction of cue conditioned fear, causes shrinking of the hippocampus, and facilitates fear conditioning in the amygdala – so basically a stressed mum can result in offspring who can't recover when they get a fright, whether its a real fright or not, and they can't form proper memories so instead form fear associations.

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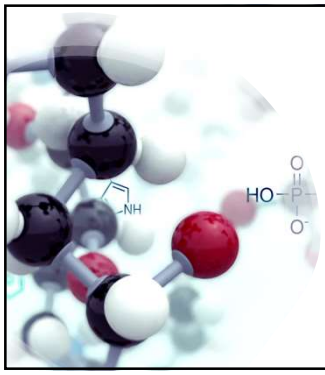

- Prenatal exposure to maternal stress can cause epigenetic methylation of glucocorticoid receptor promoter regions, which cause hyper reactivity in rodents and humans,
- Basically stressed mums cause a chemical reaction where a small molecule gets added to the DNA which can turn on or off a gene. This changes the infants DNA by signalling to the stress hormone 'door' to be switched to open.

Radtke et al 2011

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Battle of the Leash – A Necessary Evil

- The leash is often the predominant contributing factor to elicit the behaviour
- A leash is completely unnatural
- The dog has no agency in moving toward, nor moving away, different stimuli
- From a young age they will learn that the leash takes away agency

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References

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