

### **SEPARATION ANXIETY BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**

#### **While at home:**

- Provide adequate, appropriate exercise and play opportunities.
- Do not reinforce clingy, attention-seeking behavior.
- If the dog is hyperattached (follows you around the house, often in physical contact), give low-key praise for calm, obedient behavior while not in physical contact with you.
- Practice “place training,” rewarding the dog for remaining in a down-stay position in a comfortable resting area as you (with training success) gradually move farther away.
- Desensitize the dog to relevant departure clues; pick up keys, purse, or briefcase multiple times per day without leaving, and ignore the dog’s response.
- If the dog is aggressive when you depart, practice sit-stay exercises in the departure area, using small food rewards. Reward the dog for sitting calmly as you step away, approach the door, turn the knob, and so on. Be positive, and proceed slowly.

#### **When preparing to depart:**

- Set the household environment (e.g., radio, lights) 30 minutes before departure; avoid last-minute alterations that become triggers for departure.
- Avoid interacting with the dog for 30 minutes before departure.
- Leave the dog in a comfortable, warm, safe confinement or drop off at dog day care.
- Provide “enrichment” (e.g., special chew toy, food-filled toy, comfort object) at time of departure.
- Be low key on departure.
- If the dog is aggressive when you depart, briefly review sit-stay exercises in the departure area before actually leaving.

#### **On return:**

- Do not scold or punish the dog.
- Be low key when you arrive.
- Ignore greeting behavior until the dog has all four feet on the ground, then modestly greet the dog.