



What is important to watch and why?

1. Which people and animals are members of the house?

Dogs living with just one person are most affected by separation anxiety. Loss of a long-term friend – another dog or cat which the dog was familiar with from puppy years, can be a very significant event. Getting a new companion rarely works.

2. What is the dog's relationship with other people in the household?

The dog does not miss the people it is not strongly attached to as much as the person(s) it finds most important there. It is not always the head of the family as we perceive it.

3. Does the dog show big dependence on one person?

The affected dog is usually "glued" to the one it has the strongest bond with. The dog lies on the person's feet or next to him/her on the couch, follows him/her around the house, cannot relax in another room and jumps up anytime it feels the owner is about to leave.

4. What is household's daily regimen?

It is ideal for the dog when there are daily regimens that keep the dog informed that everything is as it should be. Irregular work shifts, occasional evening absence of the owner or business trips when the dog is alone for a long time or is watched by unfamiliar people are risky.

5. What is the regimen of feeding, walking, playing and exercising?

These information are important so that the owner can plan training process accordingly. It is easier to teach the dog solitude when it is used to work with its owner and be motivated to learn something new. Learning solitude is difficult for the dog that never works with the owner.



6. What does problematic behavior look like?

It is important to consider all the details in time perspective – how much in advance the dog starts to behave nervously, what it looks like, when the anxious behavior is the strongest, if the symptoms gradually go away or are equally intense the whole time the owner is gone.

7. When did this behavior first occur?

Some dogs that have been brought home as grown puppies or were adopted from a shelter may show anxious behavior from the very first day during which they form a strong bond with the owner.

It is common for the separation anxiety to be preceded by the owner being home for an extended time (illness, maternity leave, unemployment) or owner's absence on the other hand (holiday, long business trip, hospital stay). It can also be developed after separation from a dog or a cat it was used to while at home.

8. Under what conditions does this behavior occur?

Is the dog calm when a familiar person is at home? Does it tolerate at least short "ritual" departures such as going shopping (symbolized by a shopping bag) or going out with a garbage bag?

9. How does the owner react?

Does he/she scold or beat the dog because of broken things or wet carpets? Does the owner put the dog in a cage, tie it or give it an electric collar?

10. How does the dog typically welcome the owner and how does he/she react?

Is the welcoming very frantic? Does it involve jumping, whining and rapid breathing? Does the dog look guilty, crouches, hides or lies on the back?



11. What are the habits before the departure and how does the dog react?

The dog starts being nervous when it spots first signs that usually lead to owner leaving. Does it react to all the departure the same way or differently when it happens in the evening, on weekends etc? Is it different from the behavior during the week? Does the dog react differently when family members leave one by one and when they leave together? Is the dog calm during some members' departure and anxious when others leave? How long after the owner's departure does the dog start to show symptoms of stress? It is typical for separation anxiety that the dog is anxious before the solitude itself and the biggest stress comes just after or soon after the departure.

12. Where is the dog while the owner is gone?

Does the dog move around the whole flat or house when the owner is not at home? Is the dog's space limited? How does the dog react when it is being put in a limited space?

13. How does the dog behave while left in a different environment and with other people?

Is it possible for the dog to stay calm when left with relatives or friends? Does it eat and drink? Does it rest? Does it play? Does it communicate?

14. Does the dog get along well with other dogs?

This is important to know in cases when the dog spends some time in a dog hotel or other similar facility with other dogs during his therapy.

15. Does the dog show signs of other fear or phobia?

Unstable dogs that suffer from fear of storms, fireworks or similar stimulus often suffer from separation anxiety as well. Treatment of the separation anxiety in these dogs is time-consuming and it is common for them to never fully recover from this anxiety.
