



# Dog Owner Consultations: How to Guide a Sitter or Walker for Your Challenging Dog

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## Who We Are

At Challenging Dogs Pet Care, we specialize in providing boarding, sitting, daycare and walking services for dogs who have various kinds of behavior challenges. We work with dogs who are fearful of new people or who lunge and bark at other dogs while on a walk. Some of the dogs we work with do not like being handled or have a leash attached to their collar. In all of our work with clients and their dogs, we use only reward-based approaches and do not punish or use aversive equipment.

## Are You in Our Service Area?

**Yes:** If you are in the Baltimore, Washington, DC or Richmond, VA area, then we can provide services if we have availability. Contact us at [info@challengingdogs.com](mailto:info@challengingdogs.com) for more information.

**No:** But what if you're outside of the service area and still would like help with your challenging dog? You might be in one of these situations:

1. You know a pet sitter but you're not sure if they can take care of your dog.
2. You have a friend, neighbor or family member who would like to take care of your dog but needs more knowledge and skills to be able to do it.






## How We Can Help You

Challenging Dogs staff have worked with hundreds of clients to develop a trusted relationship with their dogs and provide sitting, boarding, daycare, and walking services. We know how to:

1. Set up and conduct introductory visits to help your dog get to know a sitter in a safe, non-threatening way,
2. Address issues such entering the house when you're not there or putting on a harness, and
3. Walk reactive dogs while avoiding triggers, providing distractions and teaching dogs how to have calm behavior when they see other dogs.

The consulting services we provide are listed on the next page.

Email Susan Aceti at  
[saceti@challengingdogs.com](mailto:saceti@challengingdogs.com)  
for more information or to  
request a consultation.

Consulting Services	Details	Cost
 <b>30-minute Zoom call to identify issues</b>	Fill out a short form before the call to summarize the issues you want to address. Participate in a half hour call to review the issues.	\$45
 <b>Identify a Sitter/Walker</b>	Challenging Dogs identifies potential candidates, evaluates them with your input, finalizes the selection and contracts with the sitter/walker. Training and support for the sitter/walker is covered under the services below.	\$240
 <b>Two-, three- or five-hour consults</b>	Zoom calls for personalized consultation with you and your sitter/walker.	\$140 / \$210 / \$350
 <b>Virtual Training and Follow-up</b>	Virtual training for you and your sitter/walker. Includes a 1 – hour training via Zoom and 6 thirty-minute follow-up sessions to troubleshoot additional issues. If needed, additional consultation packages can be purchased after the training.	\$430
 <b>Sitter/walker bookings</b>	Bookings made through Challenging Dogs to use our scheduling and invoicing system. Challenging Dogs staff set up and monitor communication with you and the sitter/walker during all bookings and assist in resolving any issues.	<i>Standard Challenging Dogs service rates</i>

## Identifying a Sitter/Walker

If you do not have a sitter/walker you would like to work with, we will work with you to identify a potential candidate. Here are the steps:

### Find a Candidate

#### What we will do:

1. Identify candidates from local pet sitting companies, Rover.com, Care.com and other relevant sites.
2. Forward candidates to you.
3. Provide you with a sample email that provides details on your collaboration with Challenging Dogs and a request for services.

#### What you will do:

Review candidates and reach out to those you are interested in.

### Evaluate and Finalize Candidate Selection

#### What we will do:

1. Set up Zoom introductions with potential candidates (up to 3 candidates).
2. Run a background check on the selected candidate.
3. Provide the selected candidate with details on collaborating with Challenging Dogs and a contract for sitting, including negotiating the split in training cost between you and the candidate.

### Train and Support Sitter/Walker

#### What we will do:

1. Provide a virtual training for you and your sitter/walker that is customized to your dog(s) and the services you are seeking. Provide follow up sessions to continue support through the getting to know you process or to resolve ongoing issues.
2. Book services through Challenging Dogs' customer portal (includes collecting all the information a sitter would need for a stay (such as feeding and meds), providing the sitter access to that information during the stay, and invoicing you for the service.
3. Challenging Dogs will pay the sitter/walker fee directly to the sitter/walker.
4. Set up a text group communication system to stay in touch with the sitter/walker during sitting stays and/or to report on walking progress.

Consulting Topics		Details
<b>1</b>	Getting to Know Reactive or Fearful Dogs	Preparing and arriving for the first visit, conducting visits in a non-threatening way, using treats effectively, taking breaks, coming in and leaving, and scheduling strategies.
<b>2</b>	Dog Body Language	Dog body language 101 and how to apply it to getting to know a new dog, and sitting, boarding, and walking situations.
<b>3</b>	Walking Reactive Dogs	The three lines of defense: avoidance, distraction, and the gold standard: teaching a dog to choose to turn away from another dog (or other scary thing)
<b>4</b>	Addressing Specific Fears	The slow, incremental process of helping a dog overcome specific fears such as going in or out of a house or vehicle, having a harness or leash put on or attached through small steps towards the end goal and big rewards for progress.
<b>5</b>	General techniques for reducing fear, anxiety, and stress	Enrichment practices and timing, when to walk and when not to walk, white noise machines and music, respecting personal boundaries.