

Things to Consider before Rehoming Your Dog for Behavioral or Medical Reasons

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At Our Companions, we periodically receive requests for assistance to rehome a dog. Our aim is to save the home whenever possible as there are often many ways to address behavioral or medical conditions that enable the dog to remain in his or her own familiar environment. Recently we sat down with Canine Operations Director Marie Joyner to learn more about how to prepare a dog for rehoming when remaining in the current home is truly not in the best interest of the pet.

Rehoming a canine companion is very stressful, especially for a fearful dog. Uprooting the dog and placing him or her in unfamiliar surroundings can take a toll on a pet. We take these inquiries very seriously and work to help the owner explore every option for correcting behavioral issues or getting medical conditions under control to help the dog remain in his or her home.

If the result is that there is no alternative and rehoming is anticipated, then we ask our clients to plan in advance as much as possible for finding the dog a new home. This allows us to help make each dog the best that he or she can be and increase the chances that this pet will appeal to adopters.

We start with an evaluation to understand what the situation is. If there's a health concern involved, we ask our clients to bring the dog to the vet to determine what the cause is and get the issue under control. If the evaluation shows that the issue is behavioral, we ask our clients to take an obedience course with us to teach the dog to focus and learn the appropriate behaviors. We may even suggest a consultation with a Behaviorist with academic credentials.

Part of our approach also involves informing potential adopters of each aspect of the dog's behavior that we are aware of – both the positives and negatives – so that they can be properly prepared for how the dog will fit into their home. And we offer the adopters a reduced price to attend our training classes, which the dog has just completed, to ensure that they can understand and reinforce what the dog already knows. This helps maintain a sense of familiarity in the new home and sets him or her up for success with a new family.

The importance of training throughout a dog's lifetime can't be emphasized enough and he or she can benefit from training at any age. Consistent training and proper socialization are keys to success with any dog, and it is particularly important with puppies. When raising a puppy, exposing him or her to new people, pets, experiences and environments is critical to having a well-adjusted adult dog. In the long run, it leads to more satisfying relationships between dogs and their human companions as well as other pets.

Our goal is to do what is in the best interest of the dog. More often than not, providing the proper training and support makes the difference in helping the dog to remain in his or her home.