



# Be Prepared To Help Set Your New Pooch Up For Success



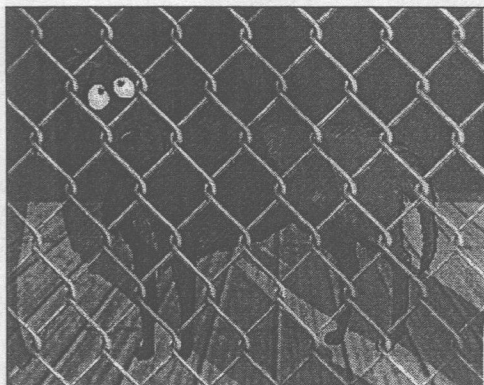
SPCA of Anne Arundel County  
1815 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403  
410-268-4388

Yes, please....  
I've been through  
a lot already.



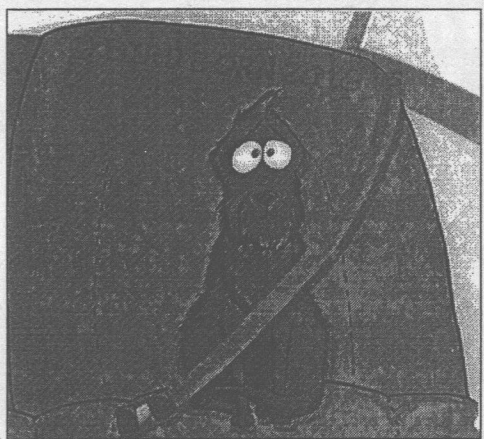


# Being intentional with your transition...



## Where am I, why am I here, and where is my family?

When dogs arrive to our facility, they are understandably confused and sometimes scared. Being suddenly removed from a family pack, especially when there are tears and long good-byes, adds stress to its psyche and immediately makes them vulnerable. Their sense of power, their need for a family of their own, and having no idea how long they will be here can look different depending on the dog. Sometimes, they maintain their composure well, sometimes the stress makes them timid and shy, sometimes things come out sideways and other behaviors creep up (e.g. assertion/aggressive tendencies). No matter how well- or not so well-behaved a dog is when it arrives for its stay with us, it is likely trying to learn how to navigate the new surroundings (sights, sounds, smells) — adding a second environmental change to the mix when adopted must, therefore, be factored into the transition.

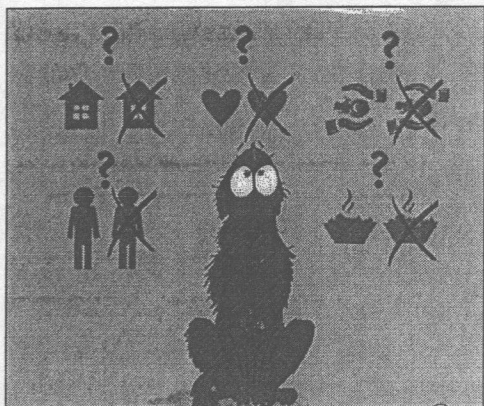


## The last time I was in a car with humans, I lost my family. Am I going to another scary, strange place?

The car ride home from the shelter is the first step of huge change for your new dog. We highly recommend you have mapped out a transition plan — in writing — and have agreed as a family what the routine will look like for at least the first two to three weeks. An example might be:



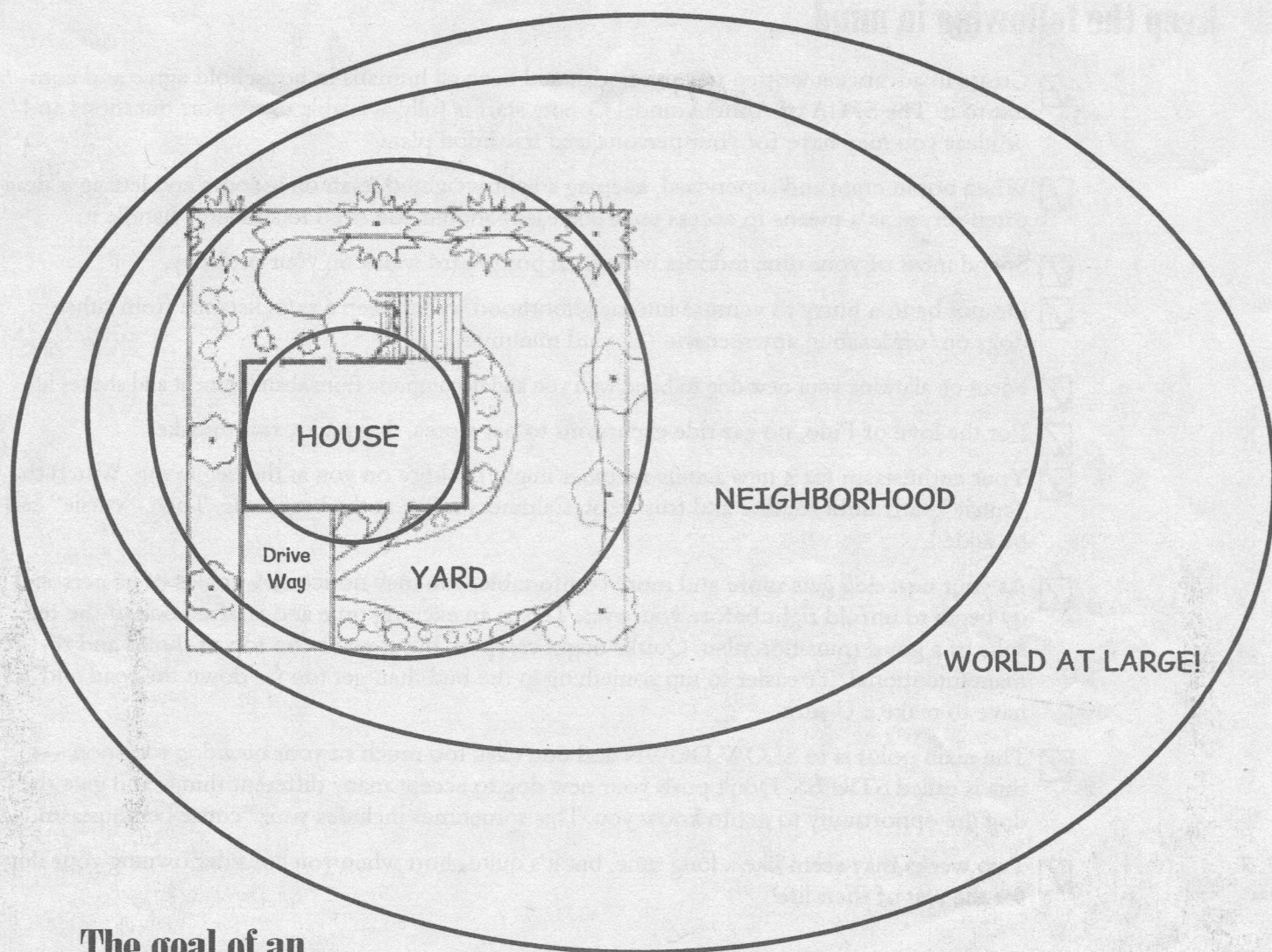
- AM 1 — Wake up and let dog out for a quick potty.
- AM 2 — Walk on leash in yard and around house to smell things.
- AM 3 — Feed breakfast.
- AM 4 — Return to crate for quiet time.
- AM 5 — Take out again on leash for potty/yard walk.
- AM 6 — Return to crate for quiet time.
- PM 1 — Take out again on leash for potty/yard walk.
- PM 2 — Return to crate for quiet time.
- PM 3 — Take out again on leash for potty/yard walk.
- PM 4 — Return to crate for quiet time.
- PM 5 — Feed dinner after another quick potty/yard walk.
- PM 6 — Return to crate for quiet time.
- PM 7 — Pre-bedtime potty/yard walk.
- PM 8 — Return to crate for bed.



Obviously, schedules vary and sometimes a crate is not advisable for some reason, so this example is not a hard and fast rule. The point is to MAKE A PLAN in advance to help the dog adjust to another new set of sights, sounds, smells, relationships, and routine and to decompress. Your home makes a lot more noises that you are aware of, but the dog will definitely hear the acorn fall on the roof and wonder what that is! Until the nuances of your particular home and family are received well and your dog knows it's in a safe situation, give space and time for him or her to adjust. Part of the adjustment, too, is for your dog to kind of "let go" of its loyalties to its previous family.



**...will only support the health of it.**



**The goal of an intentional transition plan or two-week shut-down is...**

*...to teach the dog YOU are the one to look to, that YOU are now here for them, and can trust that YOU have got their back and can, therefore, look to YOU for guidance. Remember, the dog has no idea who you are or where it is — even getting use to the sights, sounds, and smells of your house and yard is a lot to process. Once this important bond of trust is more secure, you can slowly venture out together into new situations while the process of trust in their new leaders gets more and more ingrained.*

I hope they don't ask too much of me too soon...



# Please don't "shrug off" this brochure....

## Keep the following in mind....

- ☒ Create in advance a written transition plan and have all humans in household agree and commit to it. The SPCA of Anne Arundel County staff is fully available to support questions and/or ideas you may have for your personalized transition plan.
- ☒ When not in crate and supervised, keeping a light-weighted leash on indoors and letting it drag often serves as a means to access your dog easily should you need to suddenly handle it.
- ☒ Spend most of your time indoors with leash potty/yard walks on your property.
- ☒ Do not be in a hurry to venture into neighborhood walks; keep a safe distance from other dogs on/off leash in any scenario (25-yard minimum).
- ☒ Focus on allowing your new dog to bond with you and decompress from abandonment and shelter life.
- ☒ For the love of Fido, no car ride excursions to pet stores, dog parks, and the like!
- ☒ Your enthusiasm for a new family member might backfire on you at the beginning. Watch the "cutsie" stuff until routine and trust root. Calmness is key at the beginning. Then, "cutsie" can be added.
- ☒ As your new dog gets more and more comfortable, you may notice new angles of its personality begin to unfold right before your eyes. This is an exciting time and is often one of the results of a good transition plan. Quirks might creep in, but if you're on top of things and remain intentional, it's easier to nip something in the bud than get too far down the road and have to make a U-turn.
- ☒ The main point is to SLOW DOWN and don't ask too much of your new dog too soon — this is called STRESS. Don't push your new dog to accept many different things and give the dog the opportunity to get to know you. This sometimes includes your "cutsie" enthusiasm.
- ☒ Two weeks may seem like a long time, but it's quite short when you consider owning your dog for the rest of their life!

*Your biggest challenge is going to be how to stay vigilant during the transition and not forget the importance of it.*

## Notes just for:



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