

We can learn about our dog's behavior by observing their body language and signals that they use naturally. Watch dogs or wolves in packs interacting. It is "best" learning experience from the experts. We confuse dogs with our interpretations of signals, so doing it naturally works better! Have fun! Be safe,



Play bow or downward facing dog (Doga Pose). Let's play, not to be confused with stretching ... usually when dogs wake-up.



Sniff, hello, nice to meet you! What's your cell phone number? Give dogs the opportunity to meet-greet in safe areas and when you know the environment.



Yawning is a natural stress reliever. The message is relax and I will too.



Blinking, averting eyes, turning away is a dog trying to avoid conflict, if conflict is present! Being aware that there is a difference between noticing things just because and avoiding conflict makes a difference. Dogs explore too. If you are scowling at your dog and they turn away, the message is, "I get it and I am trying to avoid a conflict." Don't push it. You've made your point.



Sniffing in Techni-color to explore or divert attention. It could be that they are pretending to be busy while pondering what to do next or what someone else will do.



Lip Licking may indicate getting something off of the nose. Turning head while lip licking & interacting with humans or the environment, is usually a sign of stress or being unsure.

Yawning is used by wolves, dogs and can be by us to indicate, “it’s okay”. Being aware of what might stress our dogs like new sights, sounds and smells in the environment gives us an opportunity to play “dog”. We can breathe, be calm and yawn. It relieves stress in our jaws too! In Yoga, it is called the Lion’s Roar, where you stick out your tongue, tense up your face, hold and release. Ahhh ... actively applying tension to any part of our body (close fist and hold) and releasing eases tense muscles and joints.

Splitting, not shown here, but I am sure you have seen it when dogs play together, is remarkable. A dog will go between impending conflict or too much energy to “break the cycle.” *Illustrations by Allison Smith*



For more on body language visuals, see recommendations.