

BARRIER FRUSTRATION



If you have ever witnessed a dog, whether in a kennel in a shelter or fenced in area, you might have noticed the dog seems to be barking, lunging, and often showing teeth at the front of the kennel or the fence they are behind. However, in many cases, as soon as the kennel door is opened, or the dog is let out from behind the fence they are the sweetest pup. This contradictory behavior is what we call **Barrier Aggression** or **Barrier Frustration** - intense behaviors (growling, barking, lunging) that a dog only exhibits at barriers (cage door or fences) but nowhere else. It looks scary, but it's simply a display of a dog's excitement and frustration at the inability to get to what they want to be near - be it other dogs or people. In order to prevent these over the top barrier displays from getting worse, this behavior should ALWAYS be managed.

Effective management will involve ALWAYS supervising them when in a fenced yard. Use food and toys to redirect them away from fences with other dogs are nearby. Lead them away with gentle leash pressure when the toys or food are ineffective.

To change their behavior to other dogs through fences be sure to take stinky, cheesy, meaty treats into the yard. Have a calm familiar dog on the other side of the fence off leash. Approach the fence with your dog on a loose leash at a distance where they can remain calm. Every time they look at the other dog through the fence feed her a treat! If she does not take food, then move further away or try engaging her in a game with a toy.

The goal of fence training is to teach your dog that seeing dogs through fences equals food and toys. After several training sessions watch for your dog to notice (engage) the other dog through the fence and look back at you (disengage) for treats or toys. When she does look back say "Yes" and toss a toy AWAY from the fence or feed a HIGH value treat. We call this game "Engage/Disengage". You are now on your way to a happy and focused dog instead of a fence "trash talker." This video gives you a general idea of what this might look like: [Engage Disengage Game](#).