



Separation Anxiety Resources for Shelters and Rescues

Free tools and guidance to help organizations support dogs with separation anxiety—from intake through adoption and beyond.

Thank you for the selfless work you do and tremendous difference you make each and every day—my gratitude for you is infinite.

Malena DeMartini



Hello and thank you—thank you for being here and for the work you do.

I am in awe of every one of you and filled with appreciation beyond measure for you, your empathy for dogs struggling with separation anxiety (and the people who love them), and your unwavering commitment to the well-being of every animal in your care.

I recognize that supporting dogs who struggle with separation anxiety in a shelter or rescue environment can feel especially challenging and, at times, overwhelming. I want you to know that I truly see your big hearts and unmatched compassion.

These resources were created with you in mind—some in response to what we heard from shelters and rescues in a 2023 survey about the resources that would most help them support dogs in their care affected by this behavior issue, and others more recently in response to what we have continued to hear from shelters and rescues since then.

There are many small, low-to-no-cost changes that can make a big difference in improving the well-being of dogs with separation anxiety in your care. These resources provide practical guidance and tools that you can use and adapt to help identify, support, and advocate for dogs who may be experiencing separation anxiety—from intake through adoption and beyond.

On the next page, you will find more information about the resources in this packet and ideas for using them to enhance the work you are already doing. In addition to the handouts that follow, I want to share one other resource with you: [Mission POSSIBLE](#).

Mission POSSIBLE is an online, self-paced course that takes learners step-by-step through how to design and implement a successful separation anxiety protocol. We offer a discount to shelters and rescues wishing to offer this course to staff, volunteers, fosters, and adopters. Please use this form to request a discount code for your organization: [Contact Form](#).

I hope these tools help make your work a little easier and further support the incredible efforts you are already making on behalf of the dogs in your care who struggle with this issue.

This work takes a village, and I want you to know that you are not alone. My team and I are here to support you.

Warmly,

Resources by Topic

Below, you will find the resources in this packet grouped by potential use. Some resources appear under more than one topic, and also the suggested uses are not exhaustive. Please use and adapt them however is best for your organization.

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Visit our shelter/rescue website!



We welcome your feedback and ideas for additional resources!

The last page of this packet contains an alphabetized list of all included resources, with hyperlinks to each individual item for easy downloading or sharing

Separation Anxiety Screening Tool

This tool is intended to help identify potential separation-related behaviors. It is not intended to determine severity or predict recovery, but rather to gather helpful behavioral information. Because separation anxiety is difficult to identify in a shelter or rescue environment, this tool should be used only when a home history is available, such as at intake when a dog is surrendered from a home, when a dog has spent time in a foster home, or as a tool for newly adoptive families to capture early observations.

Dog's Name: _____

Date: _____

Caregiver's Name: _____

Relationship to dog (circle one): Owner Foster

When your dog is left home alone, how often have you noticed the following behaviors?	Unsure	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Vocalization (e.g., whines, cries, barks, howls)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seems restless, unable to settle, or paces	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shakes or trembles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scratches, paws, or jumps at doors or windows	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Destroys things in the house ¹	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has no interest in eating food or treats	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Urinating or defecates ²	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drools or pants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Greets you with extreme excitement or has difficulty calming down when you return	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gets nervous when you get ready to leave	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

For any behaviors that happen "sometimes," "usually," or "always," do they happen **only** when your dog is home alone?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, which ones?

¹ If the dog is destructive when people are home versus just when left home alone, an additional consideration is potential boredom.

² If the dog eliminates when people are home versus just when left home alone, an additional consideration is a house training issue.

Is the dog left in a crate or another confined space (e.g., a gated room) when home alone?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Sometimes
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If yes, how often have you noticed the following behaviors?	Unsure	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Appears unable to settle or remain comfortable in the confinement area/crate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attempts to escape or has broken out of the confinement area/crate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Injures themselves while trying to escape (e.g., broken teeth on crate bars, scrapes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

For any behaviors that happen “sometimes,” “usually,” or “always” when your dog is left in the confinement area/crate, do they happen only when your dog is home alone in that space?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If yes, which ones? ³		

Is the dog afraid of thunderstorms, fireworks, and/or other noises? ⁴	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure
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Have there been any recent changes in the dog's health (e.g., pain, illness, allergies, injury)? ⁵	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure
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Have there been any big life changes recently (e.g., baby, marriage, divorce, change of house)? ⁶	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Unsure
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Notes/Comments:

³ If the dog exhibits any indicated behaviors in the confinement area/crate when people are home versus just when left home alone, an additional consideration is further conditioning of the confinement area/crate.

⁴ If the dog is afraid of thunderstorms, fireworks, or other noises, but does not show signs of separation anxiety every time he is left alone, an additional consideration is noise sensitivity or phobia.

⁵ Changes in a dog's health can impact alone-time behavior, and it is important to do a medical rule-out at the onset of new or undesirable alone-time behaviors.

⁶ Big shifts in a dog's environment can sometimes lead to new or undesirable alone-time behaviors.

Understanding Separation Anxiety



What is separation anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a panic issue—a genuine fear of being home alone akin to a phobia. For dogs in the clutches of this condition, alone time is truly terrifying. Have you ever known someone who is afraid of flying, spiders, or public speaking? If so, you understand how real and overwhelming that scary thing can feel to them. Dogs struggling with separation anxiety experience that same kind of panic when they are left home alone. They are having a hard time, not giving you a hard time.

What are some common indicators of separation anxiety?

Many dogs with separation anxiety will display one or more of the following behaviors when left home alone:

- Periods of crying, barking, or howling.
- Inexplicable urinating or defecating.
- Destruction of furniture, walls, windows, doors, or flooring.
- Self-injury while attempting to escape.
- Pacing, panting, and/or drooling.

These behaviors are distressing for both the dog and their human(s), though please remember that your dog is not acting out of spite, but rather fear. More importantly, you did not cause your dog's fear of alone time. *This is not, nor could it be, your fault.*

What causes separation anxiety?

We know a lot about what does not cause it; yet, we know very little about what does. There are studies to suggest that genetics likely play a role in separation anxiety and also that it is a myth that only dogs from shelters and rescues are afflicted. Recent research has also dispelled a few other causation myths, for example that separation anxiety is not caused by showing your dog affection, letting them sleep in your bed, celebrating their birthday, taking them with you everywhere, or a lack of structure. If it were, just think about how many more dogs would suffer from this issue!

Is separation anxiety treatable?

Yes! Just like any fear, phobia, or anxiety issue there are safe and effective treatments that can help dogs overcome their fear of alone time. The most efficient and effective way—the gold standard—to help dogs overcome separation anxiety is a process called “systematic desensitization.” This process involves beginning with a period of alone time that the dog can handle comfortably, which may be a very tiny amount (that is OK), and then gradually and systematically increasing that exposure as they start to learn alone time can feel safe. Over time, this process helps your dog to be comfortable for longer stretches and be alone as needed without distress.

Can I leave my dog home alone?

The kindest thing to do for a dog suffering from separation anxiety—and a requirement of effective training—is not exposing them to any terrifying alone time, whether managing the issue or working a training protocol. This does not mean you need to be with your dog 24/7—friends, family, pet sitters, daycare, and other creative options will do. Remember, the goal is to change your dog’s emotional response to alone time, which means we cannot expose the dog to scary absences without compromising their welfare and potential for progress.

What about medication?

Research supports the use of behavior medication in conjunction with behavior modification as an effective strategy for treating separation anxiety. Please consult with your veterinarian or a veterinary behaviorist if you have medication-related questions or to see if your dog may benefit from anti-anxiety medications.

Will a crate “fix” separation anxiety?

As tempting as it may be to crate or confine a dog with separation anxiety, doing so often makes their panic response to alone time worse. Confinement anxiety is common in dogs with separation anxiety, and many dogs struggling with this issue do better when they are not crated during absences. While being comfortable in a crate (or another confined space) can be an important life skill for a dog to learn, crating during alone time does not address the underlying fear driving their distress. The goal of crating is often to prevent undesirable behaviors when a dog is home alone—such as destruction, house soiling, or attempts to escape—but it does not treat the panic that is causing those behaviors in the first place.

What about food toys?

Like crates, using a food toy to help your dog relax home alone will not “fix” separation anxiety. Some dogs are too stressed to eat when home alone, and those that do often fall into panic the moment the food is gone. Food can also put extra emphasis on the exit routine. Interactive feeding toys can play an amazing role in your dog’s overall wellbeing and enrichment, but will not help your dog overcome their fear of alone time. Until a dog feels relaxed and safe alone for at least 30-60 minutes, we do not suggest introducing a food toy during alone time.

Where do I turn for support?

You are NOT alone! Caring for a dog with this issue is emotionally draining, and we know separation anxiety is one of the leading causes for relinquishment and re-homing. Please don’t wait until you’ve reached the end of your rope to reach out for support from a qualified dog behavior consultant and/ or veterinary professional.



Learn more about separation anxiety

<https://malenademartini.com/>



Explore our resources for guardians

<https://malenademartini.com/resources/>

In-Shelter Strategies for Supporting Dogs with Separation Anxiety



Identifying and treating separation anxiety within the shelter environment are both extremely difficult; however, there are many ways to support dogs who may struggle with being alone while in shelter. Even seemingly small things can make a big difference while they wait for a home. You are likely doing many of these things already, but perhaps the suggestions below will spark a few new and feasible ideas.

Strategy: Reduce Alone Time Whenever Possible

Any additional breaks, even if short, can help reduce stress and improve quality of life.

- Allow dogs to spend time with staff in offices or during meetings.
- If safe for the dog, bring them along for daily shelter activities.
- Encourage volunteers to spend extra time with these dogs.

Strategy: Provide Breaks from the Shelter Environment

Even a few hours away from the shelter can provide valuable decompression time.

- Arrange short outings with volunteers or a longer “dog’s day out.”
- Provide sleepovers or overnight stays with staff or volunteers.
- Encourage short-term foster placements if/when possible.

Strategy: Support the Dog’s Daily Needs

Focusing on the dog’s physical and other emotional needs can help reduce overall stress.

- Provide extra enrichment opportunities.
- Offer exercise and chances for exploration when possible.
- Reduce unnecessary environmental stressors.

Strategy: Teach Them Something Fun or Functional

Helping dogs learn new skills or a cute trick can improve their chances of adoption.

- Train a fun behavior like “paw” to impress a potential adopter.
- Practice basic manners like sit, down, and come.
- Help them learn how to walk politely on leash.



The welfare of these dogs can be compromised due to the challenges of their condition. To maintain the highest quality of life for these dogs while in the shelter, consider beginning conversations early about the potential use of behavior medication with the shelter or rescue veterinarian (or other veterinary partner).

Separation Anxiety in Dogs

Dispelling Common Myths



Dogs with separation anxiety must be crated.



Confinement anxiety is common in dogs with separation anxiety. Most dogs do better without being crated.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read this blog: [Crates and Separation Anxiety Training](#)



Leaving the dog with a food toy will give them something to do and relax.



Some dogs are too stressed to eat when left alone. Others fall into panic the moment the food is gone. Food can also put extra emphasis on the exit routine.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read this blog: [The Trouble with Food Toys](#)



Getting more exercise will cure separation anxiety.



Exercise is excellent for all dogs, but being exhausted from physical activity will not “cure” separation anxiety.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read this blog: [Exercise –The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread?](#)



Getting another dog will help the dog struggling with alone time.



Getting another dog will not “fix” separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is a fear of being alone without a *human*, not a lack of companionship in general.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read these blogs: [Fixing Separation Anxiety with Another Dog - Yay or Nay?](#) and [Separation Anxiety and a Second Dog – Will it Help?](#)



The dog can sometimes be left alone during separation anxiety training.



This is incorrect! When working a separation anxiety protocol, it is essential the dog is not left home alone other than while training.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read this blog: [Problem-Solving the Puzzle of Alone Time Management](#)



Letting them “bark it out” will help the dog “get over it.”



Humans don’t just “get over” fears of spiders, or heights (or anything) by repeated exposure at panic-inducing doses; dogs will not either.

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read this blog: [Safety First: The Key to Real Progress with Separation Anxiety](#)



Spoiling the dog and offering them too much affection causes separation anxiety.



Go ahead and be as loving as you’d like! In fact, you are only doing good by doing so. Any comfort you give should be enjoyed freely!

💡 **Want to learn more?** Read these blogs: [Gimme Some Lovin'](#) and [You Did Not Cause Your Dog's Separation Anxiety](#)



Creative Ideas for Managing Alone Time

How can I help a dog in my care who has separation anxiety?

By opening your home to a dog with separation anxiety you have already given this dog a tremendous gift—thank you! One of the most important parts of helping these dogs is to avoid exposing them to the scary stimulus of alone time. This means ensuring the dog is not left home alone while in your care outside of specified training times, if applicable. We recognize that managing absences can feel like a big, potentially daunting, task. The good news is it does not need to be you that is always personally with the dog.

Why do I need to manage the dog's alone time?

Asking caregivers to not leave the dog alone at home without a human present is truly not an arbitrary requirement that we have chosen for improving the dog's quality of life. Management is an essential part of the learning process because we cannot expose the dog to full-blown scary absences without severely compromising the potential for them learning alone time can feel safe. While dogs possess the ability to absorb and process information, we must remember that they are forming connections in the brain through repeated exposure to alone time. If that exposure is too great, the connections will not be positive ones. That repeated stress will impact their ability to learn alone time can feel safe.

How can I manage the dog's alone time?

Please remember, it does not need to be you that is always personally with the dog. Consider your individual dog's needs first. Some dogs flourish at doggie daycare, while others prefer to lounge on a person's lap in a quiet home environment. Managing absences might feel overwhelming because of the anticipated financial investment, so here are a few low-to-no-cost ideas to consider:

- Reach out to the shelter or rescue to see what support options may be available.
- Ask friends, family, trusted neighbors, or foster volunteers with the shelter/rescue for help. Many people are happy to lend a hand when asked.
- Arrange short-term coverage for quick errands or appointments (for example, the dog spending time at the shelter office or with another staff member or foster). Or, take the dog with you if they can go!
- Use grocery delivery or curbside pickup to reduce time away from home.
- Post in your apartment, condo, or local community spaces to find nearby helpers who enjoy spending time with dogs.



For more ideas on how to get creative with managing absences, please read these blogs: [Crowdsourcing Alone-time Alternatives](#) and [Problem-Solving the Puzzle of Alone Time Management](#).



Writing Adoption Cards for Dogs with Separation Anxiety

***How much information should we share?
Will being transparent minimize chances of adoption? What information will help ensure a successful placement?***

These are common questions when writing adoption cards for dogs with separation anxiety (or any special care need). It's important to be honest about the dog's needs while also offering hope. Separation anxiety should be presented just like other special needs (e.g., diabetes, mobility issues): some extra care is required. Remember, this is a quality of life issue for both the dog and the adopter, so it's essential that adopters understand the dog's needs up front.

Consider writing adoption cards that both include a call to action and a message of hope. The chart below offers ideas for balancing transparency with optimism when doing this.

Ways to Be Transparent	Ways to Offer Hope
• Explain this is a panic issue. • Describe the behaviors they'll observe if the dog is left home alone. • Explain the need for having, initially, 24/7 care/companionship. • Share that patience, creativity, and dedication are key to successful training.	• Explain that separation anxiety is treatable and can be overcome. • Identify any resources already in place to help the dog. • Describe any post-adoption supports that will be offered. • Remind them they are not alone.

Some Examples: There is no one "right" way to include some or all of the tips above, and the lists above are not exhaustive—there are countless ways to balance hope and transparency! If you need some language to inspire you, here are some examples you are welcome to use or adapt:

- His family is the most precious thing in his life; more important than food, water, or comfort.
- Incredibly loving and enjoys being around people. Delights in attention and affection from humans.
- Time and attention: They will thrive in a home where they receive plenty of love, attention, and human companionship.
- Helping the dog to overcome this issue requires patience, consistency, and potentially ongoing support from a veterinarian or behaviorist.
- Needs a patient and understanding guardian who can provide the necessary support and training to help them overcome their separation anxiety.
- Commitment to training: The adopter should be committed to providing ongoing training and support to help the dog overcome their separation anxiety.



Adoption Counseling Strategies for Discussing Separation Anxiety

Best practices for preparing adopters and supporting successful placements.



Remember, this is a quality of life issue for the dog and their caretakers. Adoption counseling conversations should balance giving potential adopters the information they need to make an informed decision **and** offer a sense of hope—separation anxiety IS treatable!



Here are four key talking points we recommend including in your adoption counseling conversations. The bullet points underneath each talking point are simply suggestions for details and/or language to include when meeting with interested adopters.

1. Be open and honest about what separation anxiety is—this is important so that adopters can make an informed decision.

- Separation anxiety is a debilitating panic issue, a fear of being home alone.
- We know more about what doesn't cause it than what does. Research suggests genetics may play a role and also that it's a myth that only shelter or rescue dogs develop it.
- Like dogs with other special needs (e.g., diabetes, mobility issues, seizure history), dogs with separation anxiety require specific care and management, especially initially.
- It is treatable, and dogs with separation anxiety can learn that being left alone is safe with the appropriate training and support.

2. Discuss what training entails so they can set realistic expectations.

- Training to help a dog overcome separation anxiety takes time. It can be helpful to think in terms of months, not days or weeks—but also not years.
- Progress looks different for every dog. There's no quick fix, but it is achievable.
- Systematic desensitization is the safest and most effective approach to help dogs overcome separation anxiety. It involves beginning with a period of non-stressful alone time for the dog, which may be quite short, and gradually and systematically increasing that time as they learn alone time can feel safe.
- Medication can be part of the treatment process. If the dog is already on medication, discuss plans for ongoing veterinary or veterinary behaviorist support. If not, explain that research supports medication combined with training and encourage adopters to consult their veterinarian.

3. Help them understand why managing absences is critical.

- When working a separation anxiety protocol, it is essential the dog is not left home alone other than during training. Ensuring the dog does not experience any scary absences is critical to their learning alone time can feel safe.
- It does not need to be the potential adopter(s) that is always with the dog. Friends, family, pet sitters, and other creative management options will do.
- This is temporary only until the dog can be successfully left alone.

4. Remind potential adopters they are not alone.

- Explain the type of post-adoption support you provide, such as follow-ups, training resources, or referrals.
- Highlight any additional support offered specifically for dogs with separation anxiety.



Share one or more of these resources with interested adopters before, during, or after the adoption counseling session to help them better understand what it means to care for a dog with separation anxiety and set everyone (and dog) up for success. We've grouped them by topic.

Learning more about what separation anxiety is (and isn't):

- PDF: [Understanding Separation Anxiety](#)
- PDF: [Separation Anxiety Myths](#)
- PDF: [How to Help a Dog Overcome Separation Anxiety](#)
- Blog: [FAQs Unpacked: Providing Answers and Dispelling Myths](#)
- Blog: [Beyond the Door: What Separation Anxiety Really Looks Like](#)
- Podcast: [Talking Separation Anxiety](#)

Managing absences:

- Blog: [Management is Key](#)
- Blog: [Problem-Solving the Puzzle of Alone Time Management](#)
- Blog: [Behind the Scenes of Managing Absences](#)

Separation anxiety is treatable:

- Blog: [A Success Story in the Making](#)
- Blog: [The History of a Dog Who Overcame Separation Anxiety](#)

Getting started with training:

- Blog: [Unleashing New Hope! Introducing Mission POSSIBLE 2.0](#)
- Self-paced online course: [Mission POSSIBLE*](#)
- PDF: [Mission POSSIBLE](#)

*Mission POSSIBLE is an online, self-paced course that takes learners step-by-step through how to design and implement a successful separation anxiety protocol. We offer a discount to shelters and rescues wishing to offer this course to staff, volunteers, fosters, and adopters. Please use this form to request a discount code for your organization: [Contact Form](#).

Structuring the Adoption Counseling Conversation

Consider using this 4-step approach to structure your adoption counseling conversation in a way that balances giving adopters the information needed to make an informed decision and offering a sense of hope. Throughout the conversation, remember to lead with empathy, listen to understand, remain curious, and respond honestly.

1. Open with qualities that make this dog a great fit for this potential new home.

- What basic manners or fun tricks does the dog know?
- Does the dog love to play fetch? Go for a trail run? Snuggle on the couch?
- What positive improvements or new learning has the dog demonstrated while in the shelter/with a foster?

2. Talk openly and honestly about separation anxiety.

- Separation anxiety is a panic issue, a fear of being home alone that is akin to a phobia.
- When left alone, dogs often display periods of vocalization, urinate or defecate, and destroy furniture, door frames, and carpets.
- It is OK to bond with and love your dog! This is not caused by showing your dog affection or letting them sleep in your bed.
- Separation is treatable; there is hope!

3. Discuss management and training needs.

- To help the dog overcome this issue, it's essential not to expose the dog to any scary alone time.
- You do not need to be with the dog 24/7. Friends, family, daycare, and other creative options will do.
- Crates, food toys, and extra exercise will not solve the issue.
- Training takes time and involves beginning with a period of alone time that is not stressful, and gradually and systematically increasing exposure at the dog's pace.

4. Close by adding to the qualities that make the dog a great fit for this potential new home.

- What about this dog's personality is sure to make people smile?
- Are they good with other people, kids, dogs, and/or cats?
- Do they have a favorite snack that gets them excited? Or a favorite cute sleeping position?

How to Help a Dog Overcome Separation Anxiety



Your dog is not giving you a hard time, they are having a hard time.

Separation anxiety is a panic issue; it is not a rational fear, at least not to us. Dogs suffering from separation anxiety are experiencing the equivalent of a panic attack every time they are left alone.

✓ **DO:** Manage the dog's alone time so they don't have any unsupervised absences outside of specified training.

✗ **DON'T:** Wait it out if the dog is vocalizing; remember, they are panicking, not misbehaving.

✓ **DO:** Take things gradually so the dog can learn alone time is safe.

✗ **DON'T:** Resort to punishment that will likely exacerbate the problem.

✓ **DO:** Ensure the dog gets adequate exercise and enrichment each day.

✗ **DON'T:** Expect that tiring your dog with more exercise will resolve separation anxiety.

✓ **DO:** Help the dog to become comfortable alone without distractions.

✗ **DON'T:** Rely on food toys.

✓ **DO:** Spend time determining where the dog is most comfortable home alone.

✗ **DON'T:** Assume the dog has to be confined to lessen destruction or be safe.

✓ **DO:** Love on and be affectionate with the dog.

✗ **DON'T:** Withhold love and affection—those things do not cause separation anxiety!

Separation anxiety IS treatable!



Learn more about separation anxiety

<https://malenademartini.com/>



Getting Creative with Critter Care

Post-adoption Support for Dogs with Separation Anxiety

Welcoming home a new dog can be heartwarming and overwhelming in equal measure. When welcoming home a dog with separation anxiety, those first weeks together also come with navigating how to meet the dog's special care needs alongside those of the family.

What is Critter Care?

A package of post-adoption supports sent home with newly adoptive families to set them and their dog up for maximum success.

There are countless ways shelters and rescues can offer post-adoption support to families adopting dogs with separation anxiety to help minimize the overwhelm for everyone (and dog). Many of those supports can be low-cost or no-cost. Among those is sending families home upon adoption with some Critter Care—a package of resources with the right information and support to help them set up those special care needs.

Critter Care Considerations

Shelter and rescue organizations vary dramatically from large to small, heavily funded to no funding, and considerable staff to volunteer only. The good news is you can customize your Critter Care package to meet your organizational capacity. We know that families often need support, especially early on, with three care needs: managing alone time, training, and veterinary/medication needs. We suggest including at least one resource related to each of these need areas in your post-adoption Critter Care package. We have included a few ideas for consideration below. Please know this list is not exhaustive and that Critter Care supports are only limited by our creativity—the potential resources for inclusion are endless!



Resources to Support with Managing Absences

- Provide business cards/contact information for local pet sitters, daycares, and dog walkers
- Offer a list of foster families willing to help cover absences
- Include a couple of hours of pet-sitting support from a shelter volunteer
- Share these blog posts: [Crowdsourcing Alone-time Alternatives](#) and [Problem-Solving the Puzzle of Alone Time Management](#)



Resources to Support with Training Needs

- Refer them to a [Certified Separation Anxiety Trainer](#)
- Share [Mission POSSIBLE](#) and your shelter/rescue discount code.*
- Compile a behavior modification “handbook”—digital or hardcopy—to help them understand and begin the training process. Consider selecting among the free materials below:
 - PDFs: [Understanding Separation Anxiety](#), [Separation Anxiety Myths](#), [How to Help a Dog Overcome Separation Anxiety](#), [Mission POSSIBLE](#)
 - Blog posts: [FAQs Unpacked: Providing Answers and Dispelling Myths](#), [Getting the Right Information First](#), [Safety First: The Key to Real Progress with Separation Anxiety](#), [Beyond the Door: What Separation Anxiety Really Looks Like](#)
 - Podcasts: [Separation Anxiety Explained](#), [Talking Separation Anxiety](#)



Resources to Support with Veterinary/Medication Needs

- Offer a free evaluation with either a shelter or local veterinarian
- Send them home with a few-week supply of any medications the dog is currently on
- Share this directory of veterinary behaviorists: [American College of Veterinary Behaviorists](#)
- Share these blog resources: [Medication](#)

*Please reach out using this form if you don't yet have a Mission POSSIBLE discount code: [Contact Form](#).

Mission POSSIBLE : There IS HOPE!

What Is Mission POSSIBLE?

Mission POSSIBLE is an online, self-paced course designed for guardians of dogs with separation anxiety looking for an accessible and comprehensive do-it-yourself training resource. You'll learn the ins and outs of separation anxiety and how to set you and your dog up for success while training. In the course, Malena and her team of separation anxiety experts guide you step-by-step through the process of creating and implementing a successful separation anxiety training plan for your dog.

What Does Mission POSSIBLE Provide?

Learners will find sections, each broken down into several lessons focusing on key components of the training process, that include:

- Step-by-step instruction on how to begin (and continue) your separation anxiety training.
- Written and audio/visual content, as well as downloadable resources and planning tools.
- Discussion boards that Certified Separation Anxiety Trainers read and respond to daily—you will not be alone in this course!
- A community of others also taking their dog through a separation anxiety protocol.

What Will I Learn?

By the end of this course, you will know and be able to:

- Describe what separation anxiety is—and what it isn't—and understand why desensitization is the gold standard for treatment.
- Recognize common myths surrounding the causes and treatment of separation anxiety.
- Identify your dog's alone-time anxiety indicators.
- Plan for and implement a step-by-step behavior modification protocol to help your dog overcome separation anxiety.

How Long Will It Take?

The estimated time to complete the course—excluding the time spent doing Missions and Assessments with your dog—is approximately 4–5 hours, which you can complete at your own pace. Once you enroll, you have lifetime access to the course.

How long it will take for your dog to overcome separation anxiety is a more complicated—and an impossible—question to answer definitively. Just as each human learner progresses at their own pace, so does each dog. What I can tell you is that separation anxiety is treatable. While the training process may take longer than you might hope, it is often not as long as you might fear. A helpful way to set realistic expectations is to think of the journey in months, not weeks or days—and months, not years or the rest of your life with your beloved dog.

Start your Mission POSSIBLE Today!

<https://malenademartini.com/mission-possible-2-0/>



Resources by Title

Below is a hyperlinked list of all the resources included in this packet. Each link will take you to an individual copy of the resource, making it easy to download or share.

[Adoption Cards](#)

[Creative Ideas for Managing Alone Time](#)

[Getting Creative with Critter Care](#)

[How to Help a Dog Overcome Separation Anxiety](#)

[In-Shelter Strategies](#)

[Mission POSSIBLE](#)

[Separation Anxiety Myths](#)

[Separation Anxiety Screening Tool](#)

[Strategies for Discussing Separation Anxiety](#)

[Structuring the Adoption Counseling Conversation](#)

[Understanding Separation Anxiety](#)



We welcome your feedback and ideas
for additional resources!