



## Canine Noise Phobia

Sensitivity to noise is one of the most common behavioral concerns of dog owners.

76% of dogs with noise phobias also show a phobia of storms.

### Signs of Storm-Related Anxiety:

- Pacing
- Panting
- Vocalizing
- Pawing (attention-seeking)
- Escape attempts
- Avoidance
- Hiding
- Increased activity
- Freezing
- Destruction
- Self-trauma

85% of dogs with storm or noise phobias also have signs of separation anxiety.

A dog's fears can diminish its quality of life

### Thunderstorm Phobia

- ❖ Both underlying anxiety and learned response to storms may influence the development of storm-related fears.
- ❖ A phobia is an exaggerated fear that is out of proportion to the level of danger and is generally maladaptive.

- ❖ Storm phobia can interfere with the dog's quality of life and the dog-owner interaction.
- ❖ An individual dog's reaction to thunderstorms may be categorized as normal, fearful, anxious, or phobic.
- ❖ Dogs that are afraid of thunderstorms normally respond by attempting to escape, hide, or seek comfort during a storm.

## Treatment

Consists of a combination of Environmental management, Behavior Modification, and anxiolytic medications and/or pheromone/flower essence therapy.

- ❖ Encourage the use of a "safe" area in the home where visual and auditory stimuli can be reduced (closet, bathroom, basement).
- ❖ Mask thunderstorm sounds with competing noises, such as fans, music, T.V., or white noise. "Through a Dog's Ear" is calming music cd for pets.
- ❖ Apply a sound-muting head wrap.
- ❖ Dog Appeasing Pheromone (Adaptil - formerly DAP) – A synthetic pheromone that can reduce anxiety (available as a spray, collar or diffuser)
- ❖ Harmonease: A trademarked flower essence therapy with anxiolytic properties. It has performed well in clinical trials. [www.vpl.com](http://www.vpl.com)
- ❖ Anxiolytic medications are often prescribed by a veterinarian to facilitate behavior modification.
- ❖ Behavior modification is the most effective means of helping a dog overcome storm phobias. A plan is customized to each dog and takes into consideration the level of their fear. Desensitization and counterconditioning are often at the center of the treatment but other approaches can aid training.