

## Handling Reflection

Using the Gibbs model of reflection (Oxford Brookes University 2016), I am reflecting my canine handling skills. During a training session, at a dog rescue centre I volunteered at, I had a dog who turned to me as a warning to bite me. I was unaware until the trainer pointed it out as it was subtle behaviour, although he did keep trying to turn his body away which is a sign in the ladder of aggression (BSAVA 2009). Prior to this I was feeling confident as I had worked with him on many occasions and knew his behaviour. I was always cautious when working with him as I knew he had bitten his previous owner. After I had been told he may have bitten me, I was slightly anxious about the rest of the training session. The negative things about this experience was that I continued to feel anxious about handling him, even after handling him many times before and I didn't recognise the signs that he was stressed. However, the good thing about this experience was I was then taught how to hold the lead when handling him so that the dog and I were both safe which left me with a positive outlook. There may have been other influencing factors on his behaviour as he was in a group environment which he wasn't used to. Reflecting back, I could have kept him away from the group so that he wasn't so stressed in a group environment and I could have spoken to the trainer about how to handle him in this situation.

In future, I will always continue to observe an animal's behaviour, even if I have worked with them many times, as I can become complacent when over handling the same animal. I will also read further into animal behaviour and handling.

### References:

BSAVA (2009) Ladder of Aggression [online] Available at: [http://dogpanions.co.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Aggression-Ladder.pdf](http://dogpanions.co.uk/index_htm_files/Aggression-Ladder.pdf) [Accessed on: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016]

Oxford Brookes University (2016) Reflective writing: About Gibbs reflective cycle [online] Available at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/reflective-writing-gibbs/> [Accessed on: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016]