

Canine Temperament Testing Techniques: A Variety of Paradigms

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Temperament testing of adult dogs today covers a broad spectrum of techniques depending on the intended objective: Shelters with their limited resources may use various physical approaches to determine “adoptability,” whereas the evaluation of dogs for public service, such as animal-facilitated therapy, tends to focus more on good manners, people orientation and absence of nervousness in the presence of unfamiliar sounds, movements and equipment. In contrast to these diverse paradigms, Sue Sternberg has developed a basic set of criteria especially for shelter dogs. Though not all of the steps in that protocol may be applied by a given shelter, they offer harried shelter workers guidelines in making difficult life or death decisions.