AVAIYA UNIVERSITY

The "Panic Event" First-Aid Checklist

What to do immediately after the scary thing happens.

Don't Panic. Just Pivot.

We've all been there.

You're walking your dog, having a nice time, and then—*BAM*.

Maybe a loose dog charges you. Maybe a car backfires like a gunshot right next to you. Maybe a stranger reaches out to grab your dog without asking.

Your dog explodes. They are barking, lunging, or shaking uncontrollably. Your heart is pounding in your chest. The adrenaline is flooding both of your systems.

In that moment, it's hard to think straight. But what you do in the next 15 minutes matters more than almost anything else in your training journey.

This checklist is your emergency protocol. It's designed to stop the spiral, lower those cortisol levels (stress hormones), and help your dog shake off the trauma so it doesn't stick.

Keep this on your phone. When things go wrong, just follow the steps.

The Emergency Protocol: Step-by-Step

Phase 1: The Immediate Aftermath (0–5 Minutes)

1. Create Distance (The "Run Away" Game)

Don't stand there and try to "calm them down" while the trigger is still nearby. Your dog's brain is in survival mode; they can't hear you.

- **The Move:** Turn around and move away *fast*.
- **The Vibe:** Try to be jolly, not frantic. Say, *"Let's go, let's go!"* in a high-pitched, silly voice. Jog away if you have to. Distance is safety.

2. The "Scatter Feed" Reset

Once you're at a safe distance (behind a car, around a corner, or down the block), stop.

- **The Move:** Take a handful of treats and throw them into the grass or on the ground.
- **Why this works:** To find the treats, your dog has to put their nose down and sniff. **Sniffing lowers the heart rate.** It physically forces their brain to switch from "Fight or Flight" mode to "Foraging" mode.

3. Check Your Own Breathing

Your dog is attached to you by a leash. If you are tense, holding your breath, or angry, that energy travels right down the leash to them.

- **The Move:** Take a massive, deep breath. Shake out your shoulders. If you're upset, it's okay to cry, but try to keep your body language loose.

Phase 2: The Ride Home (5–30 Minutes)

4. End the Walk

Do not try to "finish the walk" or force them to walk past the scary spot again to "show them it's okay." That's human logic, not dog logic.

- **The Move:** Go home immediately. If you drove, get in the car. If you walked, take the quietest, easiest route back.

5. Quiet the Car

If you are driving, turn the radio off or play soft classical music.

- **The Move:** Keep the environment low-stimulation. No yelling at traffic. Just calm vibes.

Phase 3: The Recovery Period (The Next 72 Hours)

6. The "Cortisol Vacation"

Here is the science part: When a dog has a major panic event, cortisol (stress hormone) floods their body. **It takes up to 72 hours (3 days) for those levels to return to normal.**

- **The Move:** For the next 3 days, put your dog on a "Vacation."
    - **No** stressful walks (stick to the backyard or very quiet potty breaks).
    - **No** guests coming over.
    - **No** intense training sessions.
    - **No** crowded places.

7. Passive Comfort

Let them decompress in their safe space.

- **The Move:** Give them something to chew or lick (like a stuffed Kong or a bully stick). Chewing and licking release endorphins that help wash away the stress hormones.

What NOT To Do (Common Mistakes):

- **Don't Scold:** Never yell at your dog for reacting. They didn't choose to be scared. Yelling only confirms that the situation was dangerous.
- **Don't Force Interaction:** If they snapped at a person, do not make them "make friends" with that person afterward.
- **Don't "Ask for a Sit":** In the heat of the moment, don't demand obedience commands like "Sit" or "Heel." Their brain is offline. Just get them to safety.

Conclusion: You Handled It.

If you're reading this after a bad event, take a deep breath.

One bad incident does not undo all your training. Healing isn't a straight line; it's a jagged line with ups and downs. Today was a "down," and that's okay.

You got your dog to safety. You advocated for them. You are helping them recover.

Go home, dim the lights, cuddle your dog (if they want it), and be kind to yourself. You can try again in a few days.

-iKE, Ande, Bowie The Dog, AVAIYA & Happy Healthy Dog

