



# Companion Animal Practitioner Training

## Case Studies

Case Study 5  
*Miller Man*

Name: [REDACTED]  
Address: [REDACTED]  
Tel: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

**My notes:** *I was referred by my vet to Janet and Tracy and began working with Miller in the summer. At the time I began working on them, they, everyone was on board to do the work we would do, a lot of which was guided and supported by Kathy Cascade through my communications with her.*

*Because our work is so extensive in application and time, I will give a broad report.*

## Animal's Name

Miller – Mixed breed

5 years old (now)

Miller is on medication for anxiety (his medication just changed to a decrease in fluoxetine and adding trazodone).



## Background

Miller was adopted at about 2 years old. His home life consists of “Number One” - as she is called – is Janet. There is no “number two”. Her partner is Tracy whom he has bitten twice lately (once with deep penetration, blood and bruising) and that have a 16 year old daughter whom Miller has lunged at “for no reason” twice and a 14 year old son, Dane whom he has bitten two weeks ago.

I began working with them in the summer and we worked together for about 8 months.

Family dynamic – Janet reads EVERYTHING on dog training and “Puppy culture” and is on multiple “dog training” social media sites, blogs etc. She is constantly working her dog – whether it is nose game, shaping, clicker, TTouch (once I worked with them and we made some specific changes) etc. Her near-entire focus is Miller. Tracy has a more passive relationship, has “tried” TTouch and at the same time she is 350 pounds, a very different personality and is the one Miller has bitten most of late. Essentially, Janet does everything with the dog. She is the only one who can walk him (Miller will growl and lunge and probably now bite if anyone tries to put harness on him which also means they can’t even hire a dog walker). Janet does all the clicker work, all the dog walking, positive work, etc. Tracy does some TTouch now, after working with me though less and less. Dane does less and less with Miller though he was doing more when I was working with them. Abby, is afraid of Miller.

(When I first started working with Miller) – he was “highly touch sensitive” (Janet’s



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words), reactive, fear aggressive (maybe?), actively wants to “go after” other dogs especially black dogs, snaps, possessive of Janet and protective.

He has no dog socializing other than Bella who isn’t interested in him for play but does like being around him.

**REASON FOR SEEKING HELP**

- Miller had “stranger danger” according to them. I did not see that. I saw, as you will see below, a dog with no boundaries and sense of personal space.
- Miller was HIGHLY reactive and confrontational with dogs he saw at any distance. He would growl, dig his back legs into the ground and kick back several times, lunge toward dogs across the street.
- He would not allow anyone other than Janet to harness him. He would growl, snap and go 0-60, as they said.
- Leash puller, aggressor toward other animals
- “Resource Guarder” as Janet told me though I think it’s her he is guarding

**Client’s View of Animal**

Janet adores Miller and I believe that the rest of her family does and at the same time Tracy has often called him “The Asshole” though she is a kind person, and not an aggressive person. His behavior towards her, the kids and the dogs at a distance is what led to the term that Miller was “an asshole” today.

**OVERVIEW**

Aggression	Fear aggressive (I am not sure if it’s fear aggressive. He is touch sensitive yes, but seems to actively become aggressive toward animals at a distance) He seems over protective to me.
Fears	Touch on his body (better now), harness -always a problem. Touch on ears, paws, grooming etc.
Health Concerns	Food allergies, medicated for anxiety, itchy ears, skips with his hind leg at times
Personality	Bossy, assertive, playful at times, can be sweet, can be happy, does not play with other dogs – that is not an opportunity he gets



**Consultation**

Date	July we began our work...for about 8 months, we worked together	Location	Outdoors: neutral school yard on weekends, neighbourhood streets, in their home
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**Practitioner Observations**

- When I first met them, it was clear that Janet was “Number 1” – she was constantly petting him, praising him, talking to him, treating him etc. whereas the rest of the family was far more passive and Tracy was even slightly disinterested, never ever using her voice to speak to him or anything. She was the opposite of Janet.
- Miller had exceedingly poor boundaries and sense of space – he approached strangers hard and fast, including me, as though to demand something or confront them. If you gave him a treat, he came straight on and very close.
- They use(d) obedience or, “tricks and training” to get him out of situations that were triggering – constantly getting him in a sit, or “touch” or “look” or whatever was him obeying to distract him.

**TTouch/Techniques/Materials used and Response**

I consulted with Kathy Cascade a number of times about this dog and his family and the first thing I began working on with them was teaching them about SPACE – getting them to get out of his face, get their hands off his body so constantly, let him have moments to be a dog and not always about obedience.

An overview of my work with this family and Miller:

- Began with first several sessions in school yards on weekends where it was quiet.
- Lots of work around observing Miller and getting to understand what SAFETY and SPACE for a dog means
- Lots of practice with slow approach to stranger (me) to begin working on his boundaries, teaching them about giving him CHOICE, and teaching Miller about feeling safe to have choices
- Instructed (or invited) family to back off him and also introduced the intention of Calm and Neutral
- Got him on the TTouch Harness and 2 point contact with instructions for them on how to work with him with this
- Walks with Bee-line and interchanging between me and #1 (Janet) and then me and Tracy and then me and Dane and me and Abby (he showed strong attachment to Janet and would not walk with us without her walking with us so we did that for a couple of sessions)
- Worked with Tracy, or Dane, or Abby and eventually me taking the lead and starting with Janet always walking with us and then a bit of taking Miller



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away while Janet stayed quiet and neutral and then letting Miller go back and check in with her. Also, a lot of talk about not pushing a dog to their end point and setting up for success though in our second session I did the opposite. We had had such a successful session with the Bline and TTouch harness and lead walking, I introduced them to the basic 1/3 wrap, and I did not use a demo dog. I put the wrap on Miller's back and then off and did it again and he snapped. I pushed him too far because I fell into the "it's going so well, let's do one more thing" BIG LESSON FOR ME that day!

- I did not touch Miller until about a month into our work though I made a huge mistake in one of those earlier sessions when I took the lead and went to demo stroking on the lead and he turned and lunged and snapped at me. I missed the signals that he was done for the session, and neglected to take into account that me being on the other end of the lead would be a stressful thing for him
- Started having Miller's walks be with other family members and Janet and eventually them taking the lead for a while. They did this for some time and eventually went back to it being Janet solely, again.
- We practiced Bee-line work in fields, along with Bella as they get along quite fine.
- Confidence course including labyrinth with each family member walking through it on lead with me and with Janet - which we should have done more of in retrospect
- I introduced wraps, which Janet practiced and maybe Tracy did a couple of times. He's never been able to accept or tolerate a head wrap
- Lots of the TTouches – which both Janet and Tracy would do though now it's basically only Janet and only on his body, not limbs or head
- Janet and I would take walks together where we would each take the lead of each other's dog for half a block (Because I was also trying to help Bella with her sep anxiety with me), and then give each other back our dogs. We did that several times and it helped them each become increasingly comfortable with having the other on the lead ends.

### **Miller's Progress:**

- With slow, small amounts of work in small increments Miller - once given a lot of space, including his own space: a crate in their family room for him to go in and relax – he became more comfortable and in some cases only tolerant of touch. He also grew very comfortable with me touching him though touch remained something to be done in very short intervals.
- He became so much better with boundaries. It seemed the more they backed off him, the more he backed off of doing that fast, hard approach at them and me.
- He seemed happier, less reactive to dogs at a distance though that never "went away" and of late has increased.
- He began coming to his family for closeness or attention rather than them



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coming to him

- He became very comfortable with me touching him and eventually I became the next person whom he would allow to put the harness on and even walk and sometimes come and spend the evening with me so Janet and Tracy could have a night out (that and having Bella around was a huge stride for him)
- His playful, sweet side of his personality came out
- I noticed he skipped less and less on that back hind leg (this has come back more and more which Janet says is a slipping patella tendon but I believe it's an emotional response showing up in behavior)
- I saw that with SPACE and calm and neutral and also, limits to Miller (not letting him have the roam of the house and front window to bark out at), Miller became less bold, less bossy and more sweet, playful and observed him make choices like walk away and create space for himself if he wanted or go to his crate for more space.
- There was a two month period where Miller unfortunately was put into his crate when the family was watching TV in the evenings because he had twice lunged after the daughter in the hallway and so, she would not go into the living room if he was there unless he was in the crate

### **OWNER FEEDBACK**

I have several emails and notes on my work with Miller and the feedback from Janet and Tracy. Of late, I was offered this from Janet.

*We adopted Miller in July and our vet thought he was about a year at the time. Within a week of adopting we'd fallen in love and over the next couple of weeks recognized Miller is reactive to space pressure, body handling and touch, people, and other dogs. He is on fluoxetine to help reduce his anxiety as we help him gain more trust, confidence and balance.*

*Over the time we've had him we've trained with counter conditioning and positive reinforcement. At the suggestion of our vet, we decided to participate in a case study for Tellington TTouch with trainer-in-training Jenn Forgie.*

*Jenn has worked with us to learn TTouch techniques and approaches. She taught us the importance of space and management in our interactions with Miller; giving him room to move away and keeping everyone safe as we did our work. Because he is so sensitive to space, this has been really key. She has taught us to use body wraps, we've done body confidence training with different surfaces and directions, and balance work to help Miller be as non-reactive as possible.*

*Miller has benefitted greatly from TTouch work, gaining trust and being less reactive to physical contact. Changes we have noted since beginning TTouch work:*

- *He will seek us out for physical contact. This is significant, because he is a very touch*



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*sensitive dog.*

- *He is more space tolerant and will move away rather than snap if he is uncomfortable in his space.*
- *His ability to be focused and balanced in training has improved.*
- *His overall happiness has improved.*

*Jenn has been extremely supportive in our work with Miller, and we are thankful. She is always quick to respond to issues and come up with solutions to challenges as we move through our lives with Miller. We are thankful we've learned about TTouch and will continue to use it to support Miller.*

### **PRACITIONER FEEDBACK**

He and his family made huge strides in our work together in those 8 months and at the same time it's been ups and downs. Over the months following our work, the family slipped back into their old roles – let Janet do everything and Janet goes into over-compensating mode – back to being overly praising, treating, touching, talking, in his face, the only one who can walk him etc. etc. Miller has grown increasingly reactive over the last few months as these old dynamics crept back, and has now bitten his family members three times (from 0 – 60 )and I myself feel I cannot trust him.

My sense is that they have reverted back to old dynamics....Janet never rests about Miller – she is constantly working on him, or with him or questioning why this and why that and of late isn't seeing that they have reverted back to old dynamics, isn't seeing that she is constantly focused on him again and is thinking the pharmacy mixed his meds wrong and that is why he is being more highly aroused. I have also observed that Tracy does less TTouch work with him and during the days he has the full frontal living room window to sit on the couch and bark at people and dogs again, is now jumping up on people he knows, getting back into personal space again and seems generally more agitated.

Honestly, I don't know when Miller ever gets to just be a dog. We were doing so well with his progress and at the same time, I recognize now that there is only so much I can do – for any family – when working with their animals. I did learn so much from working with Miller that I have taken to my work with other reactive dogs.