

Functional Socialization

The Misconception

There is often a misconception that dogs need to interact with many people and dogs when socializing; in actuality, the opposite is true. As you can see with the chart below, this makes up for only a small portion of your dogs socialization needs. If you allow your dog interact with multiple dogs and people on your walks you set unrealistic expectations for future walks. Socialization is about showing your dog that various things exist in the world such as different surfaces, sights, sounds and "beings" so they become desensitized and can settle in any environment.

The Modern World

Domesticated dogs are perfectly equipped to explore the wild, but their nervous system just can't keep up with all the stimuli and expectations of modern society. To our dogs, it can feel like a life-or-death situation when we don't expose them to stimulating environments and teach them how to behave when in them.

The Goal

The goal of functional socialization is to show your dog your expectations on how to behave and be neutral in various situations. It is also YOUR responsibility when socializing them to teach them how to be optimistic around new stimuli and build their confidence through obedience and boundaries. Obedience skills are confidence exellorators when socializing!

