

Private Training vs. Group Obedience

Written by: Sam Kabbel, CPDT-KA, President, Pet Behavior Solutions
www.petbehaviorsolutions.com

Have you ever wondered which is better – private or group training? We receive many calls for obedience training for dogs. Some people specifically ask for either private lessons or group training but most have no idea how to choose which is better for their situation. Here is a list of pros and cons for each to help you to decide which is best for you and your pet!

Private training pros

- Tailored specifically for your training goals
- Scheduled at your convenience
- Lessons are held in your home
- Minimal distractions compared to group training
- Lessons are more practical (e.g., commands are taught and practiced for how you want to use them – stay when the front door is opened, not jumping on company, coming when called in your neighborhood, sitting and downing incorporated into your household routine)
- You get all the attention during the lesson
- Lessons can be scheduled in any environment that you want your dog to behave (e.g., parks, coffee shops, etc.)

Group training pros

- Other dogs provide distractions to practice the exercises
- Less expensive
- Having other students and dogs creates a little competition to work the exercises (No one wants to have the only dog who didn't practice the homework!)

Private training cons

- More expensive
- No peer camaraderie or competition to work the exercises
- No other dogs to provide a distraction to practice the lessons

Group training cons

- Instructor or trainer's attention is divided by all the students in the class
- The group setting of a class is very distracting for the dogs which presents challenges when learning something new
- Can be difficult to apply the lessons outside of the classroom in the environment in which you need your dog to comply (e.g., the front door, out on the park, when company comes over, etc.)

Did you know that 96% of dogs surrendered to animal shelters have never had any formal training? Whether you choose group training or private lessons, training is extremely important! Dogs need to know basic commands in order to be well mannered. Basic commands can keep your dog safe as well. Come and stay are two very important safety commands because they control your dog's movement. Training can make you proud of your dog and gives you quality time together!