

Managing the Numbers
Behavioral Considerations and Self-Assessment Tool

Welsh Terrier Club of America

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DO YOU HAVE TOO MANY DOGS? CHECKING IN WITH YOURSELF: EVALUATION OF DANGER SIGNS

This questionnaire is not intended to be a diagnostic tool. If you suspect that you may have hoarding tendencies, please seek an evaluation by a mental health professional.

SCORING GUIDE: Add up the responses to all the questions for a total score. The higher your final score, the more likely it is that you may be suffering from animal hoarding.

Answer the following questions using the grading scale below:

1 (not at all) **2** (a little bit) **3** (somewhat) **4** (quite a bit) **5** (very much)

		Score
1	My number of dogs have interfered with my social relationships.	
2	My dogs are a source of conflict with my family and/or others.	
3	I am not sure how many dogs I actually have.	
4	I spend most of my finances to provide for my dogs.	
5	I have difficulty navigating my home due to all of the animal crates, dog-related items, etc.	
6	I avoid having people to my house/kennel.	
7	I experience anxiety and/or discomfort at the thought of parting with any of my dogs.	
8	Others may find it difficult to walk through my house because of all the clutter.	
9	It is difficult to find things in my house.	
10	My furniture (table surfaces, etc.) cannot be used as intended because it is covered with things.	
11	I have had accidental breedings.	
12	I keep more puppies from my litters than I place.	
13	I don't always care for my dogs in an appropriate way.	
14	I know people think I have a lot of dogs, but I don't agree.	
15	I hide from people the number of actual dogs I have.	
16	I know I have a lot of dogs, but still desire to have more.	
17	I sometimes neglect my own self upkeep because I am too busy caring for my dogs	
18	It is hard for me to stay on top of grooming my dogs.	
19	I can't imagine my life without my dogs.	
20	I often feel lonely.	
21	People comment that my house has a bad odor.	
22	Law enforcement officials have come to my home regarding noise, smell, or complaints by neighbors or others.	
	TOTAL	
	Divide TOTAL by 22 to evaluate your score using the 1 to 5 scale described above.	

FIVE WAYS TO HELP SOMEONE WITH TOO MANY DOGS

Please note: The following guidelines are intended for non-emergent situations involving “too many dogs.” Anytime it becomes apparent there are animals in imminent danger, make a report to the local police or sheriff and to the local humane society. Animal cruelty is a crime.

1. Identity the situation

If somebody finds the courage to share their concern of having too many dogs, it is important to capitalize on this breakthrough right away. Or, when it is thought someone is experiencing a problem with the number of dogs, diplomatically broach the subject in a non-threatening manner.

- Ask questions
- Listen
- Take a non-judgmental stance
- Show understanding
- Reserve (hold off) offering suggestions or assistance at this time

2. Build a Bond of Trust

Let them know you care about them. Although they may deny the extent of the problem, letting them know you care will help keep the issue from destroying the relationship.

- Work toward mutual trust
- Show concern for their well-being (avoid reference to mental health)
- Display empathy
- Your role in the process of establishing mutual trust is key to a positive outcome

3. Figure Out the Severity of The Problem

Help the individual to better understand their unique situation and help them to identify the challenges the current situation presents.

- Provision of care for the dogs
- Impact on the dogs' well-being
- Impact on the individual's well-being
- Anytime it is apparent there are animals in imminent danger, make a report to the local police or sheriff and to the local humane society, and discontinue following these guidelines as it is now an emergent situation

4. Wait for Acknowledgement of a Problem before Offering Help

It is important to wait for the individual's readiness or expression of admission of feeling overwhelmed or conflicted by the number of dogs.

- Moving too quickly in offering assistance could be seen by the individual as aggressive causing the individual to "shut down"
- Continue to maintain the bond of trust while focusing on mutually identified problems and needs, taking one step at a time
- Once the individual expresses readiness, offer your willingness with helping to facilitate a plan to downsize

5. Make a Plan

The process of developing a plan, with both short-term and long-term goals, is best done in a cooperative manner.

- Allow the individual to feel in control
- Focus on and respect the individual's values, wants and needs
- Offer specific assistance when moving forward with implementing the plan. Instead of asking, "how can I help?", offer your assistance with specific tasks
- When offering assistance with specific tasks, be mindful of respecting and maintaining the individual's sense of privacy and control
- Recruit others who might be willing to help, if not directly with the individual themselves, then as a resource for you
- Keep in touch and check in with each other, often and as needed
- Timelines and goals may need to be revised
- Give genuine kudos to the individual as positive steps, no matter how small, are achieved
- Be aware of the possibility of relapse

HOW TO BUILD OR MAINTAIN A ROBUST BREEDING PROGRAM WHILE MANAGING THE NUMBERS

1. Evaluate Resources
2. Identify goals
3. Refine Mindset
4. Build Relationships
5. Make a Plan

RESOURCES

The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium
(HARC) <http://vet.tufts.edu/hoarding/harc.htm>

<https://nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse>