

Trauma Alert & Support Service Dog Program

Task Specifications

TASK 1. ALERT TASKS

The service dog is trained to recognize and respond to behavioural, physiological, or environmental indicators associated with the handler's disability. Upon detecting these indicators, the dog provides a clear trained alert to notify the handler that intervention strategies may be required.

Alert tasks may include Panic Attack Alert, Dissociation Alert, and Emotional Escalation Alert.

The service dog's alert training in application will:

- Increase awareness of developing symptoms
- Support earlier intervention and self-regulation
- Reduce severity and duration of episodes
- Improve safety and independence in daily life
- Allow timely implementation of coping strategies

TASK 2. INTERRUPTION TASKS

Interruption tasks may include Panic Interruption, and Dissociation Interruption.

The dog may interrupt symptoms through physical contact, nudging, persistent engagement, tactile stimulation, or other trained behaviours designed to redirect the handler's attention and disrupt the progression of an episode.

The service dog's interruption training in application will:

- Disrupt escalating symptom cycles
- Redirect attention to the present environment
- Improve responsiveness to coping strategies
- Reduce duration and severity of episodes
- Support increased functional independence

TASK 3. GROUNDING TASKS

Grounding tasks may include Deep Pressure Therapy (DPT), Chin Rest, Lap Pressure, Body Contact, and Tactile Grounding.

These tasks provide sensory input intended to assist the handler in maintaining awareness of the present environment while supporting emotional and physiological regulation.

The service dog's grounding task training in application will:

- Promote nervous system regulation
- Improve body awareness and grounding
- Support emotional co-regulation
- Reduce intensity of anxiety and panic symptoms
- Improve recovery from dissociative episodes
- Enhance overall safety and stability

TASK 4. NAVIGATION TASKS

The service dog is trained to assist the handler with safe movement through challenging environments and situations that may trigger or worsen disability-related symptoms.

Navigation tasks may include:

- Lead Through Crowds
- Room Search

These tasks assist the handler in navigating public environments while reducing stress, hypervigilance, and environmental overwhelm. Room searches may also be used in the home environment to provide reassurance, reduce anxiety, and support feelings of safety before entering a space or settling to rest.

The service dog's navigation training in application will:

- Improve confidence in public environments
- Reduce environmental stress and uncertainty
- Assist with safe movement through crowded areas
- Increase independence during community access

TASK 5. SAFETY TASKS

The service dog is trained to perform behaviours that enhance the handler's physical and psychological sense of safety.

Safety tasks may include:

- Buffering
- Cover / Watch Back
- Boundary Maintenance
- Retrieve Emergency Kit

These behaviours are designed to reduce vulnerability, create personal space, and assist the handler during periods of heightened anxiety or distress.

The service dog's safety task training in application will:

- Increase feelings of security
- Improve personal-space management
- Reduce hypervigilance demands
- Support independence in public settings
- Provide access to emergency supplies when needed

TASK 6. RETRIEVAL & ASSISTANCE TASKS

The service dog is trained to retrieve, carry, locate, and manipulate commonly used items required by the handler.

Tasks may include:

- Retrieve Daily Items
- Locate Items
- Retrieve Dropped Items
- Carry Small Items
- Open Doors
- Close Doors

The service dog's retrieval and assistance training in application will:

- Improve daily independence
- Reduce physical and cognitive demands
- Increase efficiency in daily activities
- Provide practical assistance during symptomatic episodes

TASK 7. MOBILITY & STABILITY TASKS

The service dog may be trained to provide balance assistance where appropriate and safe for the individual dog and handler team.

Mobility and stability tasks may include:

- Balance Assistance

The service dog's mobility task training in application will:

- Improve stability during periods of dizziness or disorientation
- Increase confidence during movement
- Support safer mobility in daily environments
- Reduce risk associated with symptomatic episodes

TASK 8. RESPONSE SEQUENCES

The service dog is trained to perform multi-step response chains that combine alerts, interruptions, grounding behaviours, safety tasks, and retrieval tasks into a coordinated response.

Response sequences may include:

- Panic Response Sequence
- Dissociation Response Sequence
- Public Overload Response
- Flashback Recovery Sequence

These integrated task chains are customized to the handler's disability-related needs and provide comprehensive support during symptomatic events.

The service dog's response sequence training in application will:

- Provide structured support during episodes
- Reduce recovery time
- Improve handler safety
- Increase independence in public and private settings
- Enhance overall task reliability and effectiveness