How to Train a Service Animal?

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***Introduction***

A service animal is trained to perform the tasks which can overcome the disability of his owner. A service animal is allowed to accompany his owner to many places where other pets are not acceptable. This research deeply discusses the overview of steps which the animal requires for performing the tasks related to disability for their owner.

**Discussion**

In order to train the service animals, one has to teach them the skills of a basic command. They have to be able to stay, sit, come on cue and lie down. The animal requires to move next to the trainer in a controlled way as it is necessary for control over the animal. For this purpose, one could use hand signals and verbal cues as commands. The principle of clicker training is also essential for marking the exact moment of animal's good behavior and then rewarding it with the help of click-clack noise. In this way, the animal acquires to connect the click-clack with a treat and through the noise marks it can work eagerly by following the down payment on a treat. It should also be kept in mind that purpose of this method is only for awarding the animal and if he shows no response to it than do not punish him as it only teaches him to be scared of the trainer. It is important to train the animal about good behavior and basic obedience1.

It is also significant that animal should only focus on the trainer and not anyone else in the surrounding. This step is very important because if the animal does not focus on the trainer, he may miss the help of his controller. The animal should also know the signal that makes him realize that its off duty. Some specialized skills are also essential for training the animal which can be dependent on the disability of the trainer. For example, if the trainer is deaf, then he can teach the animal to alert him about the ringing of the doorbell, alarm of smoke detector, or can also inform him about any phone call. Similarly, if the trainer has any type of mobility problem, then he might want the animal to bring small household things like phone, remote, or keys. All these processes should be done in small steps. For, example if the trainer wants the animal to fetch his keys, he would make him realize about it, picking them up, and bringing it to the trainer by using cue word "keys" and reward2.

It is also important to train the animal regarding treating the public. Good manners are necessary for the people accepting the animal which includes defecating and urinating only on commands, showing no interest in smelling things in the stores, walking in a calm manner, and showing no aggression to other animals and the general public. Most importantly, all service animals should be neutered, and all these animals tend to be less aggressive. For example, if the trainer is training a service dog, then he should try to neuter or spay the dog when they are of almost six months of age for preventing females coming into distracted males and heat1.

***Conclusion***

So, it is concluded that if someone has a well-trained service animal, he can access to all public areas with his friends. In order to train the service animal, an owner should ask for the help of an organization which trains the service animal. Training a service animal needs a lot of time and effort to overcome the disability, so be realistic and try to find an alternate and easy way for the disability-related task.

End Notes

1. Isaacson, M., Wyatt, M., & Worley, J. (2017). professor Paws Project: Service Dog Education for Allied Health Students. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 71.
2. Mills, M. L. (2017). Invisible disabilities, visible Service Dogs: the discrimination of Service Dog handlers. Disability & Society, 32(5), 635-656.