That dog barking at you across the street?

There's a lot you can do. Most of it is nothing.

Reactive dogs are everywhere, and they aren't dangerous. They're overwhelmed. The way you pass one, every single time, either makes the next pass easier or harder. Ten small habits make those moments better for the dog, for the person holding the leash, and for you.

Ten ways to be a reactive dog ally

1 Cross the street.
A dog barking or lunging, or a person stopping to manage one, is your cue. Crossing gives them room and gives everyone a chance to reset.

2 Wait before unloading your dog from the car.
A dog bursting out of a car door is a lot for any dog. If someone is passing with theirs, give it a minute.

3 Take the hint.
If a handler steps aside, turns around, or is clearly working to calm their dog, don't keep walking toward them. Friendly intentions still add pressure.

4 Ask before approaching or petting.
Not every dog wants to be greeted, and kids need reminding. Strangers don't touch you without asking. Same rule for dogs.

5 Keep your own dog close.
Friendly doesn't always mean welcome. A dog rushing up, on a flexi leash or off leash, is a nightmare for a reactive dog.

6 Don't stare.
Direct eye contact from a stranger can feel like a threat. Glance and move on.

7 Skip the judgment. Offer a nod.
Reactive dog guardians often feel isolated. A nod or a quiet "you're doing great" can be appreciated more than you can imagine, and remembered for years.

8 Step aside on narrow paths.
On trails, beaches, and sidewalks, leash up if they're leashed and step off to the side. Few dogs can pass close without discomfort, even when you can't see it.

9 Go easy on sudden noise.
Slamming doors, skateboards, horns, leaf blowers. When you can, keep it down around a dog and their handler.

10 Pass it on.
Share this page with friends, family, and dog-loving neighbors. More allies means easier walks for everyone.

Give them space. Be an ally.

reactivedogreset.com/reactive-dog-allies

Scan for the full guide, a short occasional email with one thing to try on your next walk, and a place to share your own story. No dog required.