



PET-ASSISTED THERAPY BENEFITS IN A PAWPRINT

What is Pet-Assisted Therapy?

PAT is a therapeutic tool that brings pets and people together to enhance well-being and education. Trained pets, working as a team with the handler, are used as catalysts to meet activity and therapeutic goals. The team integrates pets, usually dogs, in an approved setting, and in collaboration with staff, for therapeutic goals. These individuals comply with the legal and ethical requirements of his/her profession, as well as local, state and federal laws relating to this adjunct activity or therapy.

Who can benefit?

A wide spectrum of populations, including individual's with physical, physiological and psychological challenges in a variety

of approved environments. .

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Physiological:

- Animals can contribute to the patient's recovery from an illness or injury.
- The presence of animals lowers blood pressure.
- Caring for animals may increase a person's self-care skills.

Psychological, Therapeutic and Social:

- Engaging the client in conversation
- Building rapport and trust
- Good for emotional well-being
- Aids therapists in treatment objectives with the client: Tasks, Goals, Responsibilities.
- Motivational factors enhance cognitive behavioral change and task completion.
- Socializing: the animal is a catalyst helping to break down barriers of communications.
- Self-management and monitoring of emotional and behavioral changes by client and therapist through writing, drawing, observations of verbal and non-verbal language.
- Sparks the spirit of cooperation and interaction
- Social Phobias
- Overcome fear
- Unconditional positive regard and companionship
- A reason for living – being needed
- Increased self esteem / confidence mastery / empowerment
- Increased problem solving skills

- Increased attention span
- Increased ability to organize
- Increased ability to concentrate
- Facilitates expression of feelings
- Increasing perceptual skills
- Improved attitude about life
- Develops understanding and sensitivity in relationships
- Provides Humor to lighten situations.
- Mental stimulation: Visiting dogs cause a chain reaction of laughs and conversation among clients, staff and family members.
- People from dramatically different cultures & lifestyles can talk about their dogs. The common experiences allow people to initiate conversation, share moments, laugh / cry.

Physical:

- Increased balance
- Increased endurance, stamina, energy
- Increased mobility, flexibility Increased use of affected extremities
- Increased strength & coordination
- Increased fine & gross motor skills

Speech and Language:

- Initiates speech
- Improve description skills
- Improve auditory memory skills
- Improve articulation skills, voice quality, fluency