Canines as Co-Therapists in the Healing Process from Sexual Trauma

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Co-Creative Coaching and Counseling
Adapted with permission from Debra Berger, Founder of Canine Assisted Therapy, Inc (CAT) and Mack/Considerations for AAT (2016)
Beginnings…
Beginnings...

Jack was supposed to be Kalli’s Dog
But
The night Kalli and Denny brought him home and Kalli went off to bed,
Jack had other ideas
And along came Mack
The Mission was Revealed

The Team Emerged
Service Dogs, Working Dogs and Emotional Support Animals (ESA)
Service Dogs

Animals Assisting with a Human Function

Service Dogs

Assistance animals

- Helpers (i.e. hearing, sight, seizure detection)
- Visitation
- Therapy programs (physical, mental, skill-building)

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines service dogs as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal who is trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.”

Service dogs are not considered pets!
Working Dogs
Animals as Partners in Work

Search and rescue dogs
Bomb detection dogs
Police dogs
Crisis Response Canines
Therapy dogs
ESA – Emotional Support Animals

ESA are considered pets and are not covered by ADA laws but are allowed in certain housing situations and allowed to be uncrated in the cabin of an airplane.

The ES animals do not have to be dogs and do not need any special training but a person may be asked to leave if an animal is a behavioral issue.
Therapy Dogs

A therapy dog is a dog which has been specially trained to offer companionship, affection, and comfort. Therapy dogs are considered pets and are not covered by ADA laws.

Pet Therapy usually consist of Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA) and Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT). In fact, Sigmund Freud had his own therapy dog, a Chow Chow named Jofi, who hung around the office during therapy sessions. Freud himself came to the conclusion that the dog had a relaxing effect on himself and his patients (Fine, 2010). Image via online.wsj.com
History of Animal Assisted Therapy

• Prehistoric cave paintings of wolves and humans around camp fires
• Egyptians were buried with their pets
  • Tomb walls were covered with drawings of their favorite pets.
• Ancient Greeks believed that animals had healing powers
History of Animal Assisted Therapy

- 1859 Florence Nightingale wrote about pet therapy in her Notes on Nursing. “A small pet is often an excellent companion for the sick, for long chronic cases especially.”

- 1919 – Animals were used in men’s mental health in Washington D.C. and in WW2 for the treatment of “battle fatigue” now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

- 1960 - Formal documentation of pet therapy began and the term “Pet Therapy” was coined. American Child Psychiatrist Dr. Boris Levinson wrote about a using a dog to facilitate work with a child.

- 1980 – Nursing literature addressed the use of animals as “nursing intervention resources”.

Janus Moncur, LCSW, CPC, CHAIS- Therapist and Coach
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General Uses of Animal Assisted Therapy
Therapy Dog Programs – Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA)

The casual “meet and greet” activities that involve pets visiting people.

Example of AAA:

Dogs visiting residents of a nursing facility. There are no set goals for the interactions.
Therapy Dog Programs – Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)

A goal-directed intervention directed and/or delivered by a health/human service. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive function.

Examples of AAT:

Individual with Cerebral Palsy grasping a brush and grooming the dog.

Encouragement to motivate an individual to come take a walk.
Facility Dogs either live at the facility or are brought regularly to the facility and provide therapy to individuals in that facility.

- Creates a more welcoming and relaxed atmosphere
- Decreases job stress and elevates mood
- Creates a sense of comfort with where the family may be staying within the facility
- Bonding experience for family, patients and staff
Outcomes and Benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy

- Maintain a higher level of activity of living status “something to live for” significantly correlated with self care and personal health
- Increased socialization in patients with Alzheimer’s Disease
- Decreases loneliness, increases group cohesion and fosters therapeutic communication
- Enhances quality of life
- Unconditional acceptance
- Motivation
Outcomes and Benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy

Detailed descriptive articles on the positive effects of pet therapy with correlated nursing goals in a variety of health care settings.

- Decreases pain and anxiety during painful procedures
- Releases endorphins and reduces the need for pain medication
- Fosters trust and removes barriers of communication
- Assist with patient and staff interactions
- Lower blood pressure and heart rates

Cited outcomes of using AAT in critical care:

- Patients experience joy by being with the animal
- Increased participation in activities when an animal is present
- Improved patient mood after pet visitation
- Decreased anxiety in the family and the patient
Outcomes and Benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy

- Dog ownership is a significant contributor to the survival status of cardiovascular patients
- It has been proven to enhance the quality of life and increase survivability.
- Increased mood / decreased loneliness, depression and homesickness
- Decrease fears of the facility/future
- Stress reduction
- Motivation
- Relaxation of the environment
- Sense of ownership and being needed
Current AAT Applications

Research supports AAT for:

- Autism
- Dementia
- Depression
- PTSD
- Schizophrenia
- Substance Dependence
- Other mental illnesses and disorders in individuals, groups, family therapy, with children, adolescents & adults – from
Animals as Helpers with Childhood Development

Cuddly Plush Animals

Stories and Metaphors for Learning Life Lessons
Benefits to Humans: Childhood Development

Pets:

- Provide a sense of security and self-esteem
- Facilitate play, exploration, independence
- Facilitate an understanding of life events and life-changing events
- Promote responsibility, nurturing, loyalty, empathy, sharing, and unconditional love
Benefits to Humans: Childhood Development

Animals in classrooms:
- Motivate students to work well and learn
- Improve behavior
- Provide care-giving opportunities important to psychological development
Van der Kolk (2014) informed, “In the past two decades it has become widely recognized that when adults or children are too skittish or shut down to derive comfort from human beings, relationships with other mammals can help” (p. 80).
In addition to the well-known benefits of unconditional love and acceptance, relaxation and slowed heart rate, one of the major reasons that AAT is so effective is that interaction with domestic animals significantly increases the oxytocin levels, particularly for women, as compared to other relaxation techniques such as reading (which results in decreased oxytocin levels) (Fine, 2010).
Beetz et al., (2012) wrote that oxytocin is, “…released via eye contact, but in particular, via pleasant tactile interactions which seem to play a major role for the OT-mediated decrease of stress levels. OT effects may be triggered in response to single meetings with animals…” (p.12).
Chandler (2012) pointed out, the advantage of a canine co-therapist over a stuffed toy is that “...the animal responds in kind with affectionate behaviors that reinforce the therapeutic benefits of the touch” (p. 168)
Modalities and Interventions

AAT can be paired with most other therapeutic techniques and interventions that the therapist already practices. The presence of the therapy dog allows a client temporary relief and support to examine uncomfortable issues more thoroughly (Chandler, 2012).

“The therapist’s orchestrated interactions between the client and the therapy animal as well as between the client and the therapist are a vital component to the success of therapy” (p. 166).
Modalities and Interventions

- Animal Assisted Play Therapy ® (AAPT®) was developed by Risë Van Fleet by combining Play Therapy and AAT – [www.iiaapt.org](http://www.iiaapt.org)
Modalities and Interventions

- Bonnie Martin – Pet Assisted Play Therapy – (PAPT)
Mack Moncur-Lee

Certified Canine-Assisted Therapy (CAT) and National Crisis Response Canines
Modalities and Interventions

Real-life Case Study of Sexually Abused Adolescent Female
AAT Program Ideas

- Pet Friendly Therapy Sessions
- Groups/Retreats
- Training Groups for Ownership
  - Domestic Violence
  - Grief and Bereavement
  - Self-Esteem
Ethical Considerations for Canine Co-Therapists

Number one consideration in any work must be: **Safety of client, canine co-therapist and you**

- Therapists need training in a recognized animal assisted therapy program that addresses the ethical considerations of touch between children and canines.

- The canine co-therapist also needs extensive training specifically with each population to work with, i.e.: children, mentally ill, crisis, etc. in sessions.
Ethical Considerations for Canine Co-Therapists

- Include an Informed Consent that specifies the factors and boundaries involved in the inclusion of canines in therapy that all addresses the therapeutic variable of touch between the client and canine.

- The client and in the case of a child client, the parent are educated on the appropriate interactions of touch between the child and canine. The child specifically is taught how to pick up on the cues of the canine, and the therapist is trained to monitor all interactions.

- The therapist takes responsibility for prevention and handling acts of aggression—either by the client to the dog, or the dog to the client.
Ethical Considerations for Canine Co-Therapists

- The client’s cultural background related to touch must be considered.
- The client’s history related to touch and trauma must be an included factor.
- Therapist self-awareness regarding biases and countertransference related to touch that may emerge during canine assisted sessions must be explored.
- Document any significant incidents involving touch during the sessions, as well as consultation from peers and legal counsel regarding any ethical issues.
- Malpractice insurance must be secured which includes the canine’s involvement in sessions. (NASW has such a policy)

From Dr. Janet Courtney’s publication in process, with the expertise of Bonnie Martin.
Requirements for Animals

Requirements should include:

- American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Certification
- Dogs should be at least 1 year old and have lived with the owner/handler for at least 6 months
- Well socialized to people, other dogs and exposed to a variety of environments
- Should be carefully evaluated for the appropriate temperament and personality and the evaluation should take place in an environment unfamiliar to the dog
- Temperament and training should fit the work that the dog will be doing
- Periodic re-evaluation of the dog
THERAPY DOG ORGANIZATIONS

- Canine Assisted Therapy
  www.catdogs.org
- Delta Society
  www.deltasociety.org
- Humane Society of Broward County
  www.humanebroward.com
- Therapy Dogs, Inc.
  www.therapydogs.com
- Therapy Dogs International
  www.tdi-dog.org
CHECKLIST TO START YOUR OWN PROGRAM

- Waivers
- Liability
- 501(c)3
- Program Proposal
- Approval – Decision maker
- People Needed
- Budget
- Protocol
- Location
- Letters – family
- Pre and post measures
- Curriculum
- Type of animals
- Adoption Policies

Used with permission from
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Director of Animal Assisted Therapy Certificate Program
Director of Center for Human Animal Interventions
Oakland University, Rochester, MI 2008
The Mission Continues...

Special Thank You to Marcella of Wild Eyes Photography
www.wildeyesgallery.com
The Secret to "Pet Therapy"

“My therapy is quite simple: I wag my tail and lick your face until you feel good about yourself again.”
ADDITIONAL READING


Benefits of Animal-Assisted Therapy at a Veterinary School by Deborah Linder, Tufts Veterinary School


Coping with Life Changes & Transitions: The Role of the Pet by Karen Allen.


ADDITIONAL READING

Doggie ‘doctors’ diagnose their owners’ ills: Canines’ keen sense of smell, intuition helps them detect people's disease by Kim Campbell Thornton, MSNBC contributor, August 27, 2008

• The Effects of Animals on Human Health and Well-Being. Wells, D.L. Journal of Social Issues. 2009 Sep; 65(3); 523-543.


• Feature Article: Developing a Physiology of Inclusion: Recognizing the Health Benefits of Animal Companions by James Lynch.

• A Four-Legged Cure by Heather Grimshaw - Thrive nyc, July 2008

• Furry Families: Making a Human-Dog Family Through Home. Power, Emma. Social & Cultural Geography, 2008 Aug; 9(5): 535-555. Correspondence to Power, Department of Human Geography, Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia; epower@els.mq.edu.au


ADDITIONAL READING

• The Healthy Pleasure of Their Company by Karen Allen (part of Companion Animals in the Community.)


• The Illusion of Love: Does a Virtual Pet Provide the Same Companionship as a Real One? Chesney, Thomas; Lawson, Shaun. Interaction Studies, 2007; 8(2): 337-342. Correspondence to Chesney, Division of Information Systems, Nottingham University Business School, Jubilee Campus, Wollaton Road, Nottingham, UK NG18 1BB; thomas.chesney@nottingham.ac.uk


• Loneliness: A Health Hazard of Modern Times by Susan L. Duncan.

ADDITIONAL READING

- Pets and Human Health in Germany and Australia: National Longitudinal Results. Headey, B., Grabka, M. M. Social Indicators Research, 80(2) 2007 Jan:297-311.
- Recent Discoveries About Our Relationships with the Natural World by Leo Bustad.
- Recent Studies on How the Presence of Pets Affects People During Life Transitions by Ann Howie.
- The Role of Pets in the Social Networks of Children, Adolescents, and Elderly People by June McNicholas and Glyn M. Collis
ADDITIONAL READING

• Studies of Loneliness: Recent Research into the Effects of Companion Animals by Andrea Leigh Ptak

• Study Results: Stress in Pet Owners and Non-Pet Owners by Jill Kraus


• The Use of Canines in the Detection of Human Cancers. Gordon, Robert T; Schatz, Carole Beck; Myers, Lawrence J.; Kosty, Michael; Gonczy, Constance; Kroener, Joan; Tran, Michael; Kurtzhals, Pamela; Heath, Susan; Koziol, James A.; Arthur, Nan; Gabriel, Madeleine; Hemping, Judy; Hemping, Gordon; Nesbitt, Sally; Tucker-Clark, Lydia; Zaayer, Jennifer. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 2008 Jan-Feb; 14(1): 61-67.

• Veterinary Students’ Attitudes About the Legal Status of Dogs and Cats Francois Martin1, Sylvia Glover JD21 Center for the Study of Animal Well-being, Washington State University, United States, 2WSU Office of the Attorney General [Presentation from the 11th International Conference on Human-Animal Interactions, People & Animals: Partnership in Harmony, Tokyo, Japan, October 5-8, 2008]
REFERENCES


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Johnson, A. Oakland University


Martin, B. (2012). Pet Assisted Play Therapy (PAPT): The theory and dynamics of PAPT... your pet assistant can be much more than a friendly visitor. Port Richey FL.


www.wsj.com/.../SB1000142405274870388690.. Beside Freud’s Couch

