Animal Assisted Therapy

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Definitions

- **Pet visitation**- volunteer pets or the patient’s own pet comes to the facility for a visitation and is not used in a therapy activity

- **Companion animals**- pets that live within the patient’s home or resident animals within a medical facility (cats at Sunrise, Sassy at Ponca, Regency)
Definitions continued

- **Animal-assisted therapy** - using the animals as a complement to the therapeutic activity

- **Service Dogs** - dogs that have been specially trained to aid people with disabilities. (Guide dogs, hearing dogs, canine companions, seizure dogs, brace dogs)
History

- Use of animals in therapy dates back 200 years
  - York Retreat - institution for people with mental illness
  - 1942 Pawling Air Force Convalescent Hospital
  - 1960’s – Pet Facilitated Psychotherapy
More than just dogs

- Tropical fish
- Finch “communities”
- Hippotherapy or Equine Therapy
  - “The outside of a horse is the best thing for the inside of man”
- Dolphin human therapy
- Cats, llamas, guinea pigs, snakes
Benefits

- Reduce stress & anxiety
- Refocus attention outside of the patient
- Reduce blood pressure & heart rate
- Increase motivation
- Increase vocalization
- Elevate mood
- Help people cope with changes
Benefits Continued

- Unconditional Love
- Non-judgmental
- Increased participation in treatment
- Attempt exercise longer or at higher challenge level
- Sensory stimulating
- Residual benefits
- Stress reduction for staff
Avoiding Risks

- Effective training & testing of animals
- Thorough training of personnel
- Patient orientation
- Close supervision of animals & personnel
- Post treatment feedback
Getting Started

www.scstars.com
(712)239-5042

www.deltasociety.org

American Kennel Club
www.akc.org

Canine Good Citizen
www.akc.org/love/cgc/index/cfm

www.tdi-dog.org
Temperament Testing

- True testing places dog in stressful situation
- Areas tested:
  - Obedience Review
  - Grooming
  - Reaction to Sound
  - Tolerance
  - Reaction to sight
Breaking the Ice

- Verbalization
  - People will often talk with dogs & not humans
  - Reminisce
- Communication other than verbal
  - Facial Expressions
  - Laughing
  - Using communication device
Rapport and trust
Physical Activities

- ROM/Strengthening/Endurance
  - Place dog on high or low mat
  - Wrist weights
  - Person can be standing or sitting
  - Position dog to be more or less challenging to the client
  - Petting or grooming
More Fun!!

- Standing & Sitting balance
  - Play fetch – ball or Frisbee
  - Vary way client throws
  - Wrist weights
  - Balance Disk/Foam block
  - Reach outside of comfort zone
  - Low reaching
Speech Activities

- Have clients give commands to dogs
  - Verbal – Speech therapy
  - Hand signals
  - Routine or steps to the task
    - Works memory
    - Problem solving
    - Sequencing
Be Creative

- Dogs can be used in place of just about any modality within therapy
- Not only benefits the clients when you use the dogs more but it also benefits the dogs
Clean-up

- No matter how much your dog is groomed, hair will be left behind – sweep it up!
- Provide lint brush for client clean-up (can be used as another treatment task)
- Follow Universal Precautions
Suggested Reading

- Animal Assisted Therapy: A Guide for Health Care Professionals and Volunteers
  By Shari Bernard, OTR

- The Healing Power of Pets
  By Dr. Marty Becker

- Good For Your Animals, Good For You
  How to Live and Work with Animals in Activity and Therapy Programs and Stay Healthy
  By David Wahlman-Thomas and Andrea Ellis

- Animals in Institutions
Give your dogs a job!

- Payment is being able to get and give unconditional love
- More attention and love = happy dog
- Happy dog = healthy dog
Service Dog Sites

- www.adionline.org
- www.helpingpaws.org
- www.deltasociety.org
- www.caninecompanions.org
- www.pawswithacause.org
- www.domesti-pups.org