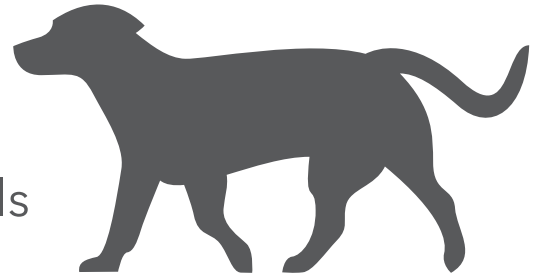


Can Animals Increase the Benefit of Therapy?

Using Dogs to Address Therapeutic Goals and Increase Well Being.



Did you know Shandy Clinic offers Animal Assisted Therapy?

Animal Assisted Therapy is simply, planned and structured therapy sessions designed to target your child's therapy goals through inclusion of a therapy dog.

Skills Addressed Through Animal Assisted Therapy

Fine Motor Skills

Opening pockets to get treats for the dogs, placing clothes pins on the dogs leash, handwriting cards for dog.

Balance

Holding challenging positions to build core strength and balance in order to pet the dog or throw the ball.

Self Care & ADL's

Child and dog together wash their face, brush their hair, put on clothes, cut nails, eat together etc.

Executive Functioning

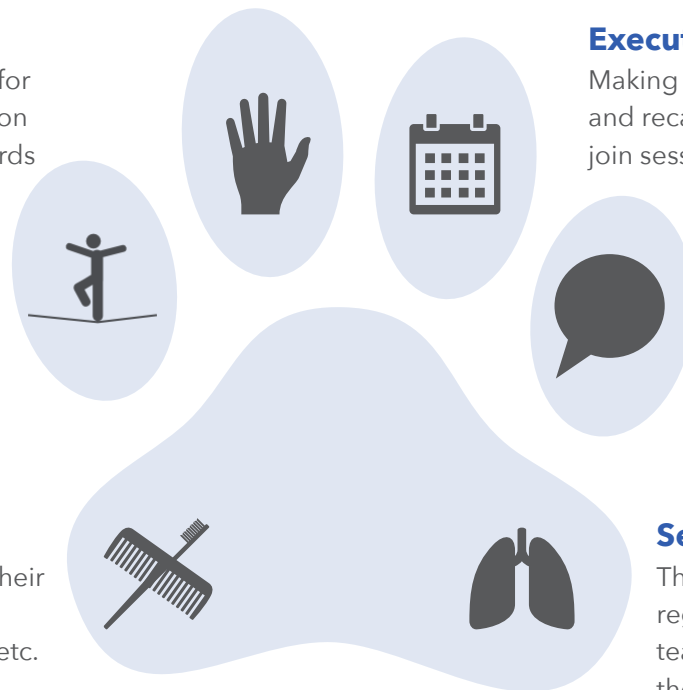
Making dog treats, keeping a calendar and recalling dates that the dogs will join sessions, dog "memory".

Speech & Language

Articulation for a dog to understand commands, social & pragmatic language to learn about the dog from a handler.

Self Regulation

The presence of the dog itself is regulating. In addition, we can teach deep breathing by matching the dogs breathing rate.



Animal Assisted Therapy Shows Measurable Results in...

Physical

- Lower Blood Pressure
- Slower Heart Rate
- Increased Physical Strength
- Improved Tolerance of Sounds, Textures, and Smells

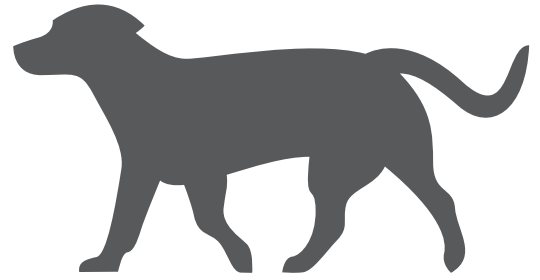
Psychological

- Stress Reduction
- Improved Focus
- Increased Emotional Support & Well Being
- Reduced Aggressive Behaviors
- Decreased Anxiety

Skill Performance

- Improved Eye Contact
- Increased Attention
- Improved Social Skills
- Increased Confidence

Top 5 Benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy



Using Dogs to Address Therapeutic Goals and Increase Well Being.

1. Stress reduction

Numerous studies have shown that working with therapy dogs decreases your heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol (stress hormone) (HABRI, 2017; Pet Partners, 2017; Melson & Fine, 2015). When children are more regulated during their therapy sessions they can better attend to challenging therapy tasks for a longer period.



2. Increased Social Interactions

In the non-judgmental presence of an animal we see that children become more confident in interacting with peers and adults. Studies show improvements in eye contact, participation in back and forth conversation, and functional play, especially when the task is centered around a therapy animal. (Andreason, et al., 2017; O'Haire, McKenzie, Beck, & Slaughter, 2015).

3. Increased Sensory Tolerance

Therapy dogs can provide a safe and enjoyable way to build tolerance of sounds, textures, and smells. The calming pressure input of a paw on a leg or sitting in a lap is a powerful regulator (Grandin, Fine, O'Haire, Carlisle, & Bowers, 2015). Imagine how rewarding touching a slimy and smelly tennis ball can be when the dog is so excited to be interacting.



4. Reduced Impulsive Behaviors

Many children innately recognize a need to control their bodies in order to be safe in the presence of an animal (Andreason, et al., 2017; O'Haire, McKenzie, Beck, & Slaughter, 2015). In AAT sessions, children who normally struggle with gentle touch or safe boundaries show remarkable ability in the presence of a therapy dog and translate this skill to other situations.

5. Improved Attention

The inherent motivation and comfort a therapy dog provides is a natural facilitator for attention, especially in more challenging tasks that without the animal may only be completed in short periods. Whats even better, is we are seeing improvements in this skill carried across settings. (Andreason, et al., 2017; O'Haire, McKenzie, Beck, & Slaughter, 2015)



Why Do We See Greater Success with Animal Assisted Therapy?

Biophilia-

The human drive to pay selective attention to other forms of life and make contact with other species, including plants and animals, which improves cognition, health, and well-being. (Fine, Tedeschi, & Elvove, 2015).

