

Alternatives to Traditional Animal Assisted Interventions: Expanding Our Toolkit

People Behind the Book



Amy Johnson, EdDc, MA, MAT, LPC, CPDT-KA, UW-AAB is the director of the Center for Human Animal Interventions at Oakland University in Michigan. She developed and directs the Animal Assisted Intervention certificate program as well as other educational activities related to AAIs. She founded and is the executive director of the non-profit, Teacher's Pet, that pairs at-risk youth with harder-to-adopt shelter dogs for the benefit of both. She is the Position Statements, Competencies and Ethics Chair for the American Psychological Association Human Animal Interactions Section 13. She has presented on the topics of the Human Animal Bond and Animal Assisted Interventions for nearly 15 years and has published journal articles and book chapters on the topic. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and professional dog trainer.



Melissa Y. Winkle OTR/L, FAOTA, CPDT-KA is an occupational therapist, an author, a researcher, and an international workshop presenter in the areas of animal assisted interventions, service dogs, and program development. She is the President of Dogwood Therapy Services, President of Animal Assisted Intervention International, and adjunct faculty in the Center for Human Animal Interventions at Oakland University in Michigan. Melissa has nearly two decades of experience raising and training service dogs and dogs for AAIs and is credentialed from the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers.



Lori Kogan, Ph.D. is a Professor of Clinical Sciences for the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University. She is the Chair of the Human-Animal Interaction section of the American Psychological Association and Editor of the Human-Animal Interaction Bulletin, an open-access, online publication supported by Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Kogan has published numerous journal articles and book chapters, and co-edited books including 'Pet Loss, Grief, and Therapeutic Interventions: Practitioners Navigating the Human-Animal Bond', 'Clinician's Guide to Treating Companion Animal Issues: Addressing Human-Animal Interaction', and given invited presentations on topics related to human animal interactions in both psychology and veterinary medicine venues. She is currently engaged in several research projects pertaining to the intersection of the human animal bond and veterinary medicine.



Jen Link is a graduate student pursuing her MS in Psychological Science at SUNY New Paltz and is currently a coordinator for the Evolutionary Psychology Lab there. She received her BA in Psychology from Arcadia University and has presented at multiple conferences regarding the research she did while there. She has also contributed to a book chapter on the politics of evolutionary psychology (in press). Her research interests primarily include the Human-Animal Interaction, specifically Anthropomorphism and humans' perceptions of animals, as well as Animal Behavior and domestication more broadly.



Macy Porter, MOTR/L, RYT is an occupational therapist at Dogwood Therapy Services in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She received her Master of Occupational Therapy from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, Tennessee. She has special interests in animal assisted therapy, accessible yoga, and service dog training.



Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L is an occupational therapist from Arcadia, California who graduated from the University of Southern California. She has dedicated the past 2 years at Dogwood Therapy Services to pursue her goal of specializing in animal assisted therapy. She enjoys working with people of all abilities and ages. Phoebe has been studying the effect of training and handling styles on the human animal relationship and enjoys learning about how to strengthen the human animal bond. She has presented at state and national conferences on achieving competency and standards of practice to further the field of animal assisted therapy for healthcare and human service providers.

Special Thanks

A special thank you to all the contributors and editors for their assistance in the creation of this resource. This book is truly a collaborative effort from people all over the world involved with animal assisted activities (AAA), animal assisted education (AAE), and/or animal assisted therapy (AAT).

- American Psychological Association Human Animal Interaction Section 13 Division 17
- Julie Nettifee, RVT, VTS
- Animal Assisted Intervention International
- Activity Contributors

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The Purpose of This E-Book

This book is designed to be used by individuals or groups involved with animal assisted activities, animal assisted education, and/or animal assisted therapy. Advanced professionals in the field of AAIs contributed activities and interactions that they developed during the global pandemic to continue their volunteering or professional practice when face-to-face contact was not an option. This resource originally began as a way to share ideas about how to navigate through the pandemic. However, during the development of this resource, it became clear that having virtual, hands-off activities available as alternative options has much greater potential than merely short term substitutions during a pandemic. For example, mental health providers can include animals in therapy sessions remotely to individuals in rural areas or to clients who do not have transportation. For a volunteer handler working with a healthcare provider to assist with an immunocompromised patient, these activities could be modified for alternative visits when physical interaction is not possible. These activities can also be modified to fit basic, intermediate, or advanced level competencies for this work.

As with any new modality, continuing education and training are necessary and we direct readers to the plethora of available resources to this end. Healthcare and human service providers of AAIs must achieve competency, consider ethics from codes of conduct, and truly understand animal behavior at a species, breed, and individual level as well as humane training methods. The purpose of this book is to supplement this training, to offer alternative creative options to best fit unique circumstances and client needs.

The delivery of effective AAIs is both an art and a science. The literature is rich, and anecdotes are plenty when discussing how the mere presence of animals can motivate clients and patients to open up to the practitioner, build rapport, establish a friendly environment, and ease the anxiety from the focus being solely on the client, especially in a mental health setting. Today, a wide variety of disciplines in healthcare and human service work recognize the value and utilize the modality of AAIs. While every discipline has a different scope of practice, each works towards specific client/patient goals. Accordingly, the animal's abilities and interests must match that of the practitioner, the population, and the environment they work in. Today's practitioners and handlers need knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the realms of both humans and animals, as these shape the success of the interaction and creates the balance that makes AAIs safe and effective.

These entries indirectly involve animals, but can still provide opportunities to incorporate many recreational, therapeutic, training, or educational goals, or visitation options to remain connected to your AAI community. This e-book is the result of working with more than 50 advanced handlers and professionals in the field who shared their knowledge and experiences. We are excited to share their passion and excellent work with new and veteran handlers/providers who want alternative and novel ways to provide AAIs. Each entry includes possible outcomes, materials needed, time required, and animal preparation recommendations to help you identify which entries are most suitable for your clients/population. These entries, however, can be modified to fit alternative needs.

The most important factor for all these activities is to consider your animal's perspective - in every interaction. Every activity identifies required preparation of the animal using humane handling/training methods. A good handler takes preventative measures to keep their animal comfortable and engaged

within his/her own skill and preparation level. Again, having knowledge of your animal's behavior at a species, breed, and individual level is crucial to maintaining his/her safety and welfare. For example, if you decide to try a window visit and your dog is not interested in looking in the window, does not want to be picked up, or is exhibiting signs of stress (i.e., lip licking, blinking, head turning, etc.), then he should not be asked to continue. The experience should be positive for the animal to avoid exploitation of the animal and sending a negative message to your participant(s).

Ethics

The ethics associated with working with your animals virtually may not be the same as if you were working in person; however, it is still vital that you are paying attention to your animals' needs. Our animals must still be given consideration for their preferences, skills, and levels of training. They should still be willing participants, so if they choose not to work, they should not have to work. If the dog has been trained to look at the computer monitor when you are interacting with a client, but he would rather get a drink from his water bowl or gnaw on his squeaky toy, he should be allowed to do that. This is where you must be creative. Instead of forcing your dog to return, consider an alternative activity. It is ok to tell the client that your dog wants to play with his toy. Perhaps the client can create an obstacle course for the dog, or the client and provider can virtually bake dog cookies together. This work is not easy or predictable, but that is part of the package when working with people and animals.

Is Your Animal Right for The Job?

Having virtual or hands-off interventions widens the possibilities, but also means alterations in training or tasks for your animals. For example, having guinea pigs do window visits for those who cannot have in-person visits, the handler/provider must ensure that the guinea pig displays behaviors associated with the enjoyment of being held and even riding in the car. Having knowledge of guinea pig behavior at the species and individual levels is critical. We do not want to make the animals uncomfortable in any way. For virtual visits, the animal might enjoy resting on the lap of his handler but may not engage with the person on the other side of the screen. That is ok. There is training that can be done to guide the animal to connect with the screen, but we must be cognizant of the blue screen and the effect it may have on the animals, especially over time. Having the camera on the animal without the animal looking at the camera is an option too. Your role as the facilitator of the interaction is to guide the interaction in the way that is most appropriate for your outcomes, population, etc. Possible things to consider include:

- Is your dog skilled in intermediate obedience and responsive to your regular speaking voice, hand signals, or communication device?
- Is your animal an engaged and willing participant under your request or a client's request?
- Are you familiar with your animal's stress signals?
- The animal that is chosen as a co-therapist should be one that enhances the intervention, not one that takes the skilled provider away from the patient, client, or student.

Disclaimer

The authors of this material are not liable for any negative outcomes caused by use or misuse of the information and activities in this activity set. It is recommended that the animal's interest, behavior, and skills be professionally evaluated. For best results, evaluations should take place in the environment, with the activities and the population with which the team will be working. Humans should pursue continuing education to fulfill professional responsibilities and standards in this emerging practice area. Understand the difference between volunteer visiting standards and those for paid professional interventions (Winkle, M. & Jackson, L., 2012). The job demands are very different for both handler and dog, even if they both take place in the same setting.

AAT Canine Online Training

Contributed by Melissa Winkle OTR/L, FAOTA, CPDT-KA, Dogwood Therapy Services, Animal Assisted Intervention International President, APA HAI Member, Center for Human-Animal Interventions, Oakland University (Michigan)



Desired Outcomes:

- Enhance preparation and training of dogs for participation in virtual AAA, AAE or AAT using non-contact methods in training.
- Allow developing teams the opportunity to connect with a mentor who has experience in preparing and training dogs for virtual service

Materials:

- Canine for training
- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Canine's preferred reward(s) (i.e. food treats, toys, etc.)

Population: AAA, AAE or AAT teams in training

Time Required: Training sessions should not last more than 3-6 minutes, followed by a solid play or rest session of a minimum of 20 minutes.

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The purpose of this activity is to assist a dog to pay attention to the camera to improve human-animal interactions. It is not reasonable to expect a dog to do this for long periods of time. Each dog will be different. Do not attempt this with patients until the dog has reliability demonstrated the skill with a friend, relative and or colleague.
2. Sit across from the dog with the computer or table between you, facing the dog. No need to have anyone on the screen yet.
3. Point to the camera and when the dog even looks in that direction say "YES!" and give a treat (or toy, etc.). You are 'shaping' your dog to look anywhere at the screen.
4. With each trial, you are looking for your dog to gain more precision looking towards the actual camera lens. This is called successive approximations. You may put a yard sale colored dot

sticker or arrow where the lens is to create a better visual target, or simply use a finger to point to the place the dog should look. Each time you want him to focus a bit more on the lens; when he does, say “YES” and treat (or give toy). You can also place a treat by the lens, this is called a “lure” but don’t use it more than 2-3 times or the dog will only look for the treat.

5. Once the dog knows where to look, start increasing the duration in which he looks at the screen by 3 seconds each time before you say “YES” and treat. When the dog is able to independently look at the screen (not treats) for 10-15 seconds, you can Zoom a friend (or colleague in the group) who has things like squeaky toys, uses a happy voice, etc.
6. With the friend or colleague on a live Zoom, start at step one all over again. The condition has now changed as there is someone on the screen. The friend can use a squeaky toy (just 1 or 2 squeaks) and the second that the dog looks in the direction of the screen, either the handler or the friend on screen (but not both) can say “Yes” and the handler gives a treat or toy. Proceed through the steps above with friends on Zoom. Try it with a few different people. Incorporate laughter, calling the dog’s name, etc. Adding various sounds is important, but only one person at a time should be talking to the dog.

Modifications:

- This method could also be used for other species.

Potential Risks:

- Since the animal is not receiving direct feedback from the patient/client they may need additional feedback from the handler to stay “connected” via this method.
- The handler will need to watch for signs of disinterest, exhaustion, stress, or anxiety from the animal and allow for breaks or to have the ability to end the session, before signs of stress develop. Keep direct screen time attention brief, and have the dog do other things such as an enrichment puzzle, or obstacle course where they are ON screen but not looking at screen. The connection is made at the beginning, middle and end of sessions. That is all it takes. The rest of the time the animal is participating in activities.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

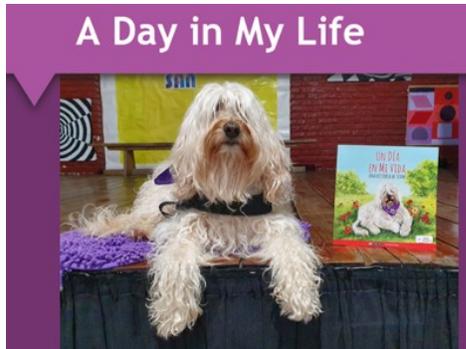
- Dog and handler should know each other well. This is meant to be fun; mistakes are also fun.
- Dogs should not be overly trained so that the interaction is natural.
- Determine what setting the virtual visit will occur (clinic, home, hospital, prison, etc.) and consider the sounds that may occur and incorporate those into training towards the end. Do not overstimulate your dog, dogs who have already worked in the setting you are now doing virtually will have already habituated these noises. But it is just a different context now.
- Keep training sessions brief (3-6 minutes at a time) and incorporate play right after. There are studies that prove the effectiveness of play on learning during training sessions.

Closing: At the ending of the session, close with something positive for the canine and the patient. This can be highs and lows. You can be anthropomorphic and speak on the dog’s behalf as well. For example, “Gertie’s high is that she made you laugh, her low is that it is time to go”.

Additional Information: This can easily be modified to work with other species. It is critical to ensure, however, that any animal has been introduced to zoom/computers/and a variety of sounds while providing a positive reinforcement method (such as treats, play, kind voice and handling, etc.).

A Day in my Life: Animal Welfare and Well-being

Contributed by Maria Daniela Balduzzi, Tierra de Encuentro, www.tierradeencuentro.com.ar,
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Desired Outcomes:

- Education on animal welfare and well-being

Materials:

- Images on PowerPoint, each representing an activity
- Stuffed dogs
- Dog food
- Water
- Leash
- Collar or harness
- Dog bed
- Dog treats
- Veterinary briefcase
- Various games for dogs
- Dog toys
- Poop toy
- Bag for dog waste (poop bags)
- Grooming supplies
- Vibrating dog brush
- Towel
- Dry shampoo

Population: Children of all abilities and adults with disabilities

Time Required: 30-60 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. In the story, Petit, an Australian Labradoodle, talks about what she needs to be a happy dog and everything the human must know to take good care of dogs.
2. Petit presents her own family, which includes a cat! Talk about the importance of making friends, how to be polite, and to not use nicknames if a friend does not like to be called that way.
3. The story discusses how important it is to have a home and that dogs cannot live alone on streets or in dog shelters. Prompt the participant to discuss with their family how important it is to make the decision to bring a dog home before they do it.

4. Petit talks about what a dog can eat and what they cannot. Petit also says she likes fresh water, talks about the importance of not leaving water in the sun, and to be sure the water is changed daily. Humans do not drink water that has been in a glass for multiple days or left under the sun!
5. Dogs need long walks and should be allowed to use their nose. Petit never goes out without her ID tag and has learned how to walk on a loose leash. When she poops, her human picks it up. Discuss the importance of cleaning up after your dog.
6. Discuss how to approach a dog if they are with their human and what to do if she is not with someone. Questions to the dog's human may include, "May I say hello to your dog? What is her/his name? Is he/she friendly? Can I pet him/her? Where does he/she like to be pet?"
7. Discuss what to do if a dog chases you. For example, "I become a tree or a stone because trees and stones are boring to dogs." Practice becoming a "tree" and a "stone" (<https://doggonessafe.com/Be-A-Tree>).
8. In the story, Petit tells us she goes to the veterinarian. This is where she gets groomed, bathed, and vaccinated. Here, the veterinarian gives some advice, such as if it is too hot outside, you should try to put the back of your hand on the street before asking your dog to go for a walk. Be careful if you take your dog in the car. Park the car under shade and open the car windows but be careful not open them too far so the dog does not jump out. Do not leave dogs alone in hot cars.
9. At the park, Petit plays with children and other dogs. Discuss guidelines for safe interactions with children and other dogs (i.e., let the dog approach the child, notice dog body language and behavior for signs of stress, etc.).
10. After a long day, she receives lots of pets but only where she likes to be petted. Discuss personal boundaries with the participant.
11. Before Petit goes to sleep, the little girl, her best friend, shares a secret with her because she knows it will be well kept. Discuss that dogs should not be disturbed while sleeping or resting.

Modifications:

- All materials can be drawn or made at home.
- During virtual sessions, participants complete all activities with a stuffed dog.
- In person, activities are completed with real dogs and handlers following the pictures and the story.
- In person, participants who are afraid of animals work with a stuffed dog.

Potential Risks:

- The participant or dog must not have allergies to any of the materials used.
- Ensure that the participant is always safely interacting with the dog.
- Games for dogs should be easy and enjoyable for the dog.
- Avoid any dog food or materials if the participant has an aversion to the smell, tactile input or allergies.
- Note dog body language and behavior for signs of stress, anxiety, fear, or fatigue. Terminate the session before signs develop.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Dogs who participate in this activity should enjoy being with kids, teenagers, and grownups
- Dogs should feel confident with all the materials used

- Dogs should be trained for any skills or cues beforehand, such as:
 - Retrieval and holding skills
 - Sit/down and stay with duration
 - Able to ignore food unless cued to eat or placed in a bowl
 - Calm demeanor
 - Walks on loose leash
- Loves to play
- Loves to be groomed
- Loves to be pet

Closing: At the end of the session, have participants thank the dog for spending time with them.

Animal-Assisted Teletherapy

Contributed by:

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- Whitney Romine, Akron Children's Hospital
- Katrina Winsor, MS ABA, MS Anthrozoology, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, The New Interdisciplinary School, APA HAI Member, International Society for Anthrozoology Member, Association of Professional Dog Trainers Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve receptive and expressive communication
- Increase attention to task
- Participate in meaningful activities
- Improve self-esteem
- Brighter affect
- Better compliance
- Decrease loneliness
- Develop guidelines for hospital approval and grow virtual programs for AAT

Materials:

- Electronic equipment for video meeting (iPad, tablet, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- HIPAA and other safety-approved computer programs for video conferencing (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Therapeutic approval for participation in AAT
- Tablet stand (optional)
- Any other items needed for the session with the animal (i.e., books, toys, puzzle toys, etc.)

Population: Individuals who receive therapy from a credentialed professional according to licensure guidelines (i.e., pediatric inpatients, adults with developmental delays, cognitive disability, mental health disorder, etc.)

Time Required: 10-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Live video session

Methodology:

1. Depending on existing protocols, it may be necessary to have interested clients sign up in advance for available time slots. If the therapist is not serving as the animal handler, the therapist and animal handler must coordinate to identify available time slots to offer AAT sessions.
2. Clients receiving rehabilitation services from a licensed professional can request AAT or the therapist/other staff members can identify clients who may benefit from this interaction.
3. The handler positions the animal to be visible on the monitor while facilitating conversations with the participant.
4. Depending on the therapy implemented, the animal can demonstrate the skill (i.e., obstacle course for physical therapy/occupational therapy) or the animal can help select the activity that the participant must complete (i.e., animal selects a flashcard with a specific activity written on it). When the participant completes a task, the animal can demonstrate tricks, play simple games, or complete enrichment puzzles as a reward. The animal may receive a treat after each cue or each time the client successfully completes their turn.
5. Additionally, a variety of activities can be incorporated without directly involving the animal, such as playing matching games, animal word searches, or drawing pictures of/for animals.

Modifications:

- Since the animal is not receiving direct feedback from the participant, it may need additional feedback from the handler to stay “connected” via this method.
- It may be easier for the handler to direct the therapy animal’s attention to the screen if the handler is behind the electronic device, rather than on the same side as the therapy animal.

Potential Risks:

- The handler will need to monitor animal signs of exhaustion, stress or anxiety. Allow for frequent breaks and end the session before signs develop.
- Facility staff may not typically have time to assist the clients with video sessions.
- Limited engagement with the video screen by the animal. Video sessions are more abstract and harder to process than the more concrete, face-to-face sessions. It is critical to ensure that the animal has been introduced to zoom/computers and a variety of sounds while providing positive reinforcement (i.e., treats, daily feeding in front of a screen, etc.).

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Trained for handling and feeding
- Exposed to computer screens
- Exposed to a variety of responses, if this is interactive (i.e., squeals, laughter, etc.)
- Target training (optional)

Closing: At the end of the session, close with something positive for the canine and the participant.

The Blindfolded Claw

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve sensory processing (i.e., body awareness, proprioception, auditory registration, tactile registration, spatial reasoning, etc.)
- Address cognitive functioning
- Improve psychosocial skills
- Improve communication
- Improve balance

Materials:

- Blindfold
- Dog treats
- Ice cube tray, muffin tin, or dog puzzle toy
- Dog mat

Population: Children and teens, people with developmental disabilities, special needs, expressive and receptive communication difficulties

Time Required: 10-20 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The client is blindfolded while the therapist/caregiver places dog treats around the room.
2. The therapist verbally directs the client to walk to the dog treat and pick up the treat.
3. The therapist verbally directs the client to place the dog treat into the muffin tin.
4. Once the muffin tin is filled, the client may give the dog treats.

Modifications:

- This activity can be modified to be easier for the client by decreasing the number and distance of treats from the muffin tin.
- The dog treats may be placed into containers to increase the size of the target.
- This activity can be modified to be more difficult by asking the client to remember a sequence (i.e., first stand up, then walk forward 5 steps, then turn right, etc.), count the number of steps, or use more specific directional cues (i.e., left hand reaches forward, move down, left, right, etc.).
- The client may be asked to pick up the dog treats using tweezers.
- This activity can be modified to be more difficult for the dog by asking the dog to stay and wait on a mat in the corner of the room (with frequent reinforcement) or can be made easier by having the dog in a separate room until all the treats have been found.
- Exchange roles such that the client must direct the blindfolded therapist to find the dog treats.
- Instead of picking up the treats, the client must cover the treats with cups.
- The treats may be placed in small containers (i.e., so that the therapist can see where the treats were placed).
- Ensure that all the dog treats are placed such that the therapist may see them on the computer screen.
- If the client does not have a dog, they may use beads/beans. For each bead they find, they earn a treat for the dog.

Potential Risks:

- The therapist must ensure that the dog is safely away from the client, so the dog does not get bumped into and the client does not trip over the dog.
- This activity is not suitable for clients who have sensory ataxia or poor dynamic balance.
- While engaging in the activity, the therapist must be aware of the client's body positioning before asking him/her to bend down, so he/she does not bump into corners of tables, furniture, etc.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

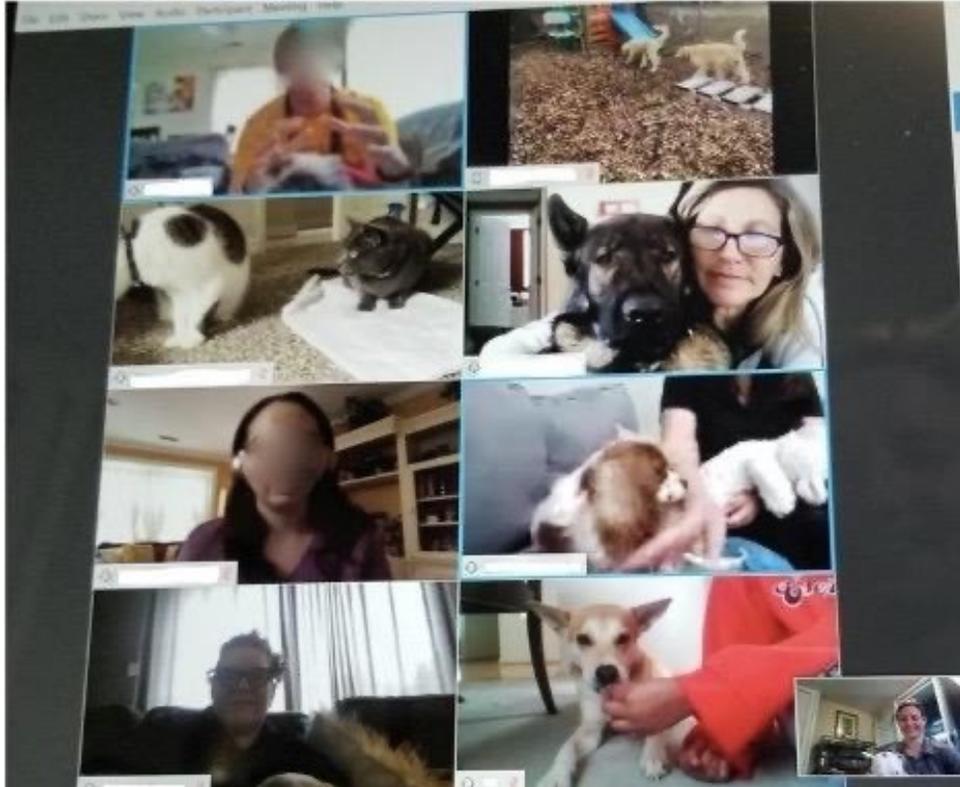
- "Leave it" cue to encourage calmness with dog treats on the floor
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Once the dog has finished eating the dog treats, the client and therapist will participate in activity cleanup and hand hygiene.

BYOP (Bring Your Own Pet) Yappy Hour

Contributed by Michele Pich, M.A., M.S., Assistant Director, Shreiber Family Pet Therapy Program at Rowan University



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve social interactions and social connection
- Build a sense of community with commuter and remote students
- Orientation tool before coming to college for participants to meet each other and make friends
- Depression and anxiety reduction
- Improve well-being

Materials:

- Electronic equipment for video meeting (iPad, computer or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population: College/university students

Time Required: 15-60 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. College/university students meet virtually with animal-handler teams. Participants can also include their own pets through the video conferencing platform.
2. The handlers introduce themselves and their animals. They can talk about what areas of work they do (including years volunteering, locations, populations, etc.).
3. The student can talk about their own animals and express any interest in animal-related fields of study.
4. Dogs can be asked to stay in front of the camera with treats, praise, or petting by the handler. Since multiple dogs are present on screen from handlers in different locations, they can rotate in and out of the screen as they wish, as long as at least 1 animal is present on screen at a time.

Modifications:

- This can include faculty/staff to build rapport with different offices or services at their college or University.
- This may be a group or individual virtual visit.

Potential Risks:

Note animal stress/fatigue from being in front of the screen for too long. Limit the animal's direct screen time to 3-6 minutes at a time and provide the animal with a rest break before signs develop.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Exposed to computer screens
- Exposed to a variety of responses, if this is interactive (i.e., squeals, laughter, etc.)
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing: Upon completion of the activity, the dogs are praised and given a treat.

Canine Online Training

Contributed by Melissa Winkle OTR/L, FAOTA, CPDT-KA, Dogwood Therapy Services, Animal Assisted Intervention International President, HAI Section Member, Center for Human-Animal Interventions, Oakland University (Michigan) and Christine Kivlen, PhD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor Wayne State University



Desired Outcomes:

- Enhance preparation and training of dogs for participation in virtual AAA, AAE, or AAT using non-contact methods in training
- Allow developing teams the opportunity to connect with a mentor who has experience in preparing and training dogs for virtual service
- Stress reduction for the dogs

Materials:

- Canine for training
- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Canine's preferred reward(s) (i.e., food treats, toys, etc.)

Population: AAA, AAE or AAT teams in training

Time Required: Training sessions should not last more than 3-6 minutes, followed by a solid play or rest session for a minimum of 20 minutes.

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The purpose of this activity is to assist a dog to pay attention to the camera to improve human-animal interactions. This activity helps those who have only trained in person to practice working with their dog, screen, and individuals to enhance their abilities to provide support remotely.
2. It is not reasonable to expect a dog to do this for long periods of time. Each dog will be different. Do not attempt this with participants until the dog has reliability demonstrated the skill with a friend, relative, and/or colleague.

3. Sit across from the dog with the computer or table between you, facing the dog. There is no need to have anyone on the screen yet.
4. Point to the camera and when the dog looks in that direction say, “yes!” and give the dog a treat/toy. This training is ‘shaping’ the dog to look anywhere on the screen.
5. With each trial, the dog should to gain more precision looking towards the actual camera lens. This is called successive approximations. Put a colored dot sticker or arrow next to the lens to create a better visual target. Or, simply point to where the dog should look. Each time he looks more focused on the lens, say, “yes” and give a treat/toy. A treat may be placed by the lens. This is called a “lure,” but do not use it more than 2-3 times or the dog will only look for the treat.
6. Once the dog knows where to look, start increasing the duration by 3 seconds at a time before saying, “yes” and treat. When the dog is independently looking at the screen (not at the treat) for 10-15 seconds, Zoom call a friend (or colleague in the group) who has things like squeaky toys, uses a happy voice, etc.
7. With the friend/colleague on a live Zoom call, start at step one all over again. The condition has now changed as there is someone on the screen. The friend can use a squeaky toy (just 1 or 2 squeaks) and the second that the dog looks in the direction of the screen, either the handler or the friend on screen (but not both) can say, “yes” and the handler gives a treat or toy. Proceed through the steps above. Try it with a few different people. Incorporate laughter, calling the dog’s name, etc. Adding various sounds is important, but only one person should be talking to the dog at a time.
8. If the dog likes certain toys, have the person on the screen and the in-person handler use duplicate toys. The person on the screen shows the toy and the handler provides the exact same toy. Set the dog up for success and allow them to learn that sometimes their outreach will include a computer. If this is established as a positive routine, many will learn to enjoy this as well.

Modifications:

- This method can also be used for other species. It is critical to ensure that the animal has been introduced to zoom/computers and a variety of sounds while providing a positive reinforcement method (i.e., treats, play, kind voice and handling, etc.).

Potential Risks:

- Since the animal is not receiving the direct feedback from the participant, they may need additional feedback from the handler to stay “connected” via this method.
- The handler will need to watch for animal signs of disinterest, exhaustion, stress, or anxiety. Allow for breaks or the ability to end the session before signs of stress develop.
- Keep the direct attention on the screen brief and have the dog do other things (i.e., enrichment, obstacle course, etc.) on screen but not looking directly at the screen. The connection is made at the beginning, middle, and end of sessions.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- The dog and handler should know each other well. This is meant to be fun. Mistakes are also fun.
- Dogs should not be overly trained so that the interaction is natural.
- Determine what setting the virtual visit will occur (i.e., clinic, home, hospital, prison, etc.) and consider the sounds that may occur. Incorporate those into training towards the end. Do not

overstimulate your dog. Dogs who have already worked in the setting will have already habituated to these noises. It is just a different context now (virtual).

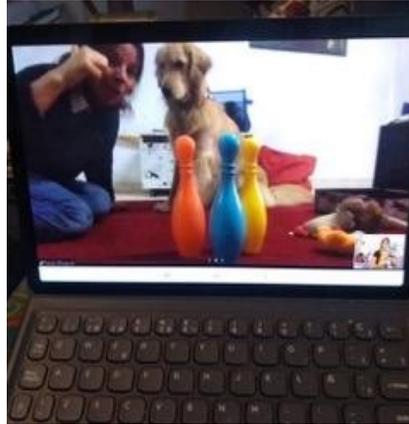
- Keep training sessions brief (3-6 minutes at a time) and incorporate play right after. There are studies that prove the effectiveness of play on learning during training sessions.
- Dogs participating in training should have already passed standard team evaluation to determine suitability for intended purpose.

Closing:

At the ending of the session, close with something positive for the canine and the patient. This can be highs and lows. You can be anthropomorphic and speak on the dog's behalf as well. For example, "Gertie's high is that she made you laugh. Her low is that it is time to go."

Cognitive Games

Contributed by Paula Ringach, [Pet Partners](#) Argentina



Desired Outcomes:

- Connect with an animal and volunteer/licensed therapist remotely to improve emotional well-being
- Preserve cognitive capabilities
- Invite participants to laugh and connect in a way to minimize thoughts about their own situation through activities that involve the dogs in funny and silly situations

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Materials needed for each cognitive game (i.e., memory cards with dog themes, colored bowling pins, numbered balls, etc.)

Population: Residents at Geriatric Hospitals and Elderly Homes

Time Required: 15-45 minutes (depending on the number of teams visiting simultaneously)

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Provide a pre-signup Zoom link for participants. Coordinate with nurses/medical staff as the teams (two or three at a time) visit a group of participants (four to six total) gathered around a notebook or tablet at the hospital dining room. Typically, the assigned participants either request to participate or the medical staff identify those who could most benefit from this interaction.
2. Cognitive games that were typically used in regular in-person visits are adapted to virtual format (i.e., recall of dog cues and their definitions, what the dog looks like when completing the cue, remembering the hand signal that goes with the verbal cue, etc.). The dogs participate in each game, performing skills such as picking up balls, touching cards, throwing bowling pins, etc.

3. Participants are involved by providing verbal cues, choosing objects, recognizing colors, numbers, or letters. Handlers make sure the cues are performed by the dogs by providing a hand signal. The hospital psychologist facilitates participation with participants on the other side of the screen.
4. The handler must be very conscious about what the camera is capturing. Activities should be performed so that the animal actions are easily perceived by participants.
5. Sessions are recorded and shared with hospital psychologists, so that they can replay the session and keep track of participants' progress.

Modifications:

- This method could also be used with other species that may visit therapeutic settings as well.
- It can also be adapted as a one-on-one visit (ideal to reach patients who are in bed), keeping sessions shorter (10-15 minutes).

Potential Risks:

- Since the animal is not receiving the direct feedback from the patient/client they may need additional feedback from the handler to stay "connected" via this method.
- The handler will need to watch for signs of exhaustion, stress, or anxiety from the animal. Allow for breaks or to have the ability to end the session, before signs develop.
- It is convenient, whenever possible, to perform these visits with two or three teams simultaneously, allowing the dogs to take turns to come into action and therefore extending the session.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- The animal should be very well trained for handling, feeding, and playing.
- It is critical to ensure that the animal has been introduced to computers/and a variety of sounds ideally while providing a positive reinforcement method (i.e., treats, daily feeding in front of a screen, etc.).
- For animals that are highly sociable, it is important to keep them involved by petting and holding them during the session, since they are deprived from physical contact with patients.
- Since virtual visits occur in the animal's home, it is important to practice extensively so that the dog considers it a "working situation" - just like in-person visits. Using the same elements as in-person visits (vest, bandana, leash...) can help the animal perform as usual.

Closing:

At the end of the session, close with something positive for the dogs and the participants, such as waving goodbye to each other, and announcing the next meeting to provide continuity.

Additional Information: <https://www.facebook.com/petpartnersarg/videos/318092389561133>

Coloring with Dogs

Contributed by Michele Pich, M.A., M.S., Assistant Director, Shreiber Family Pet Therapy Program at Rowan University



Desired Outcomes:

- Hand-eye coordination
- Prepare child for interacting with animals
- Learning names of colors
- Visual interpretation and application of colors
- Fine motor skills

Materials:

- Electronic equipment for video meeting (iPad, computer or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils
- Paper

Population: Children 2-5 years old

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The handler asks the participant to draw a picture of the animal that is placed within view of the monitor.
2. The child uses the crayons/colored pencils and paper to draw a picture of the animal while saying out loud each color that they are using to draw and color.

Modifications:

- If the participant is too young to draw the picture, an adult can create an outline of the animal so the child can color in the drawing to match the colors of the animal's coat.
- Participants learning to write letters of the alphabet can write the animal's name by copying large letters written on the screen.

Potential Risks:

Note the animal's body language and behavior for signs of stress, discomfort or fatigue.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Upon completion of the activity, the dog is praised and given a treat.

Copycat

Contributed by Ellen Herlache-Pretzer, Ed.D., MA, OTRL, CPDT-KA, Paws with a Cause, Animal Assisted Intervention International Member

Desired Outcomes:

- Trunk control and stability
- Gross and fine motor coordination
- Sequencing
- Visual-perceptual skills
- Visual scanning
- Crossing the midline

Materials:

Therapist/dog team:

- Whiteboard and marker
- Rectangular or tube-shaped items the dog can comfortably pick up or push (i.e., pieces of appropriately sized dowel or PVC pipe, or notecards folded in half), approximately 6-12 inches long

Client:

- Toothpicks (if the participant has more significant motor control issues or does not have toothpicks available, he/she could use other items – see “Modifications” for suggestions)

Population: Clients with a variety of concerns, such as deficits in trunk control, visual scanning, gross/fine motor skills, or visual/perceptual skills

Time Required: May be adjusted based upon therapist/client needs and time constraints

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Prior to beginning the activity, the therapist will instruct the client (or someone who is with the client) about positioning for the activity (i.e., how the client should be positioned and supported, where the toothpicks should be positioned in relation to the client, where the toothpicks should be placed for picking up and setting down, etc.).
2. The therapist will place slips of paper containing simple three-letter words or picture outlines in a hat. The therapist will draw a slip of paper out of the hat, then write/draw the word/picture on the whiteboard.



3. When the therapist says, “go,” the therapist/dog team will start to construct the word/picture by having the dog pick up a piece of dowel from a designated location and drop it in the correct position on the floor, as cued by the therapist. The team will then get a second piece of dowel and drop it in the correct position, as cued by the therapist. This process will continue until the word/picture is complete.
4. At the same time, the client will start to construct the word/picture, by picking up ONE toothpick (using the hand specified by the therapist) and placing it in the correct position on a designated surface. The client will then pick up a second toothpick (using the hand designated by the therapist) and drop it in the correct position. This process will continue until the word/picture is complete.
5. Whoever correctly finishes the word/picture first earns a point. Points can be recorded on the whiteboard as a tally mark.
6. Once everyone has completed the word/letter, the materials (dowels/toothpicks) are placed back in their starting spots. The game can continue for as many rounds as desired.
7. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins!



Modifications:

- The height of the surface from which the dog must pick up and drop the item.
- The material/type of item used to grade activity for either dog and/or client.
- The size (diameter/length) of the item used to grade activity for either dog and/or client.
- Client positioning (sitting or standing).
- Height of work surface for client.
- Amount of support provided for client’s positioning.
- Location of items (picking up and dropping).

Potential Risks:

- For the dog, consider burnout from too many repetitions of retrieving.
- Note dog body language and behavior for signs of stress, discomfort, and fatigue.
- For the client, consider potential skin scrape (from sharp ends of toothpicks).
- For the client, consider loss of balance/fall risk (if not positioned/supported appropriately).

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

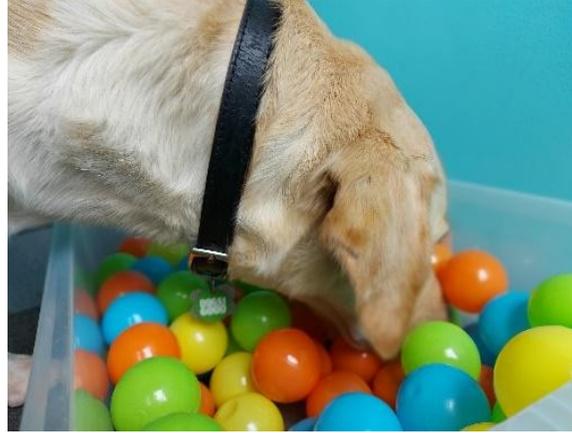
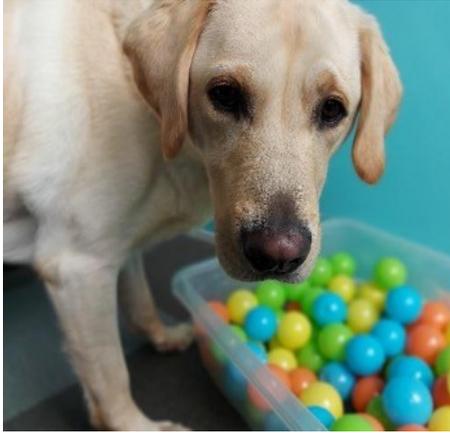
- Solid take it, hold, and drop cue OR able to push/nudge items on the floor on cue for a short distance
- Due to the number of repetitions, the dog should find retrieving enjoyable.

Closing: When the therapist is ready to conclude the activity, he/she will inform the client that they will complete one final round (word/picture). Once the final round is completed, the therapist or client counts tally marks and calculates final scores. Whoever has the most points wins!

Additional Information: The therapist should be in contact with the client prior to initiating the activity to be sure he/she has access to all required materials (toothpicks, etc.) and work surfaces are set up in an appropriate manner to assist in achievement of therapeutic goals for the activity. The client may need an assistant present to help with positioning, cuing, etc. during the activity. Discuss this with the client in advance.

Counting Game

Contributed by Claire Lush, Community Dog Handler at [Dogs for Good](#), Animal Assisted Intervention [International](#) Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Learn addition/subtraction/multiplication with the numbers 1-10
- Turn-taking
- Problem solving

Materials:

- Ball pit (see-through container)
- Balls
- Numbered stickers (1-10)
- Dog bed or mat

Population: Primary school aged children and those with special education needs

Time Required: 20-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Number the balls using the numbered stickers.
2. Encourage the group of participants to ask the dog to fetch two balls out of the ball pit and show the numbers to the participants.
3. Participants are asked to add, subtract, or multiply the numbers together, depending on their specific learning outcome for that lesson.
4. The dog is asked to wait on a bed/mat while the children work on solving the math problem.
5. Ask the children for the answer and if they are correct, the dog may high five or bark to say, "well done."
6. Repeat steps for 5-10 more math problems.

Modifications:

- Increase or decrease the number of balls used for the problem.
- Increase or decrease the numbers used for the problem.
- Change the object that the dog retrieves if the dog does not like balls (i.e., toilet paper rolls or favorite toys)
- Adapt for any math problem for primary school aged children and those with special education needs.

Potential Risks:

- Make sure the activity is set at the right level for the participants, so they do not become frustrated or anxious.
- If the dog does not respond to verbal cues through the webcam, teach a hand signal that you can use to help support your dog.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Enjoys retrieving objects
- Verbal and hand cues to place balls on a surface or in the handler's hand
- Sit/down and stay with duration on a mat
- High five or bark towards the webcam on cue

Closing:

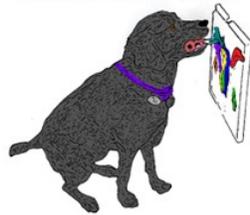
Once all the balls have been retrieved out of the pit and the math equations have been solved, the participants can say "thank you" and "bye" to the dog. The dog may approach the webcam and nose touch to say goodbye to the participants to end the session.

Customized Coloring Book

Contributed by Katrina Winsor, MS ABA, MS Anthrozoology, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, The New Interdisciplinary School, APA HAI Member, International Society for Anthrozoology Member, Association of Professional Dog Trainers Member

PAINTING WITH PET PALS

THE NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOOL



NIS



**NEZZY loves
chewing on her
favorite toy bone.**

Can you color
Inez's bone
GREEN?

of NIS

Desired Outcomes:

- Provide recipients a connection with therapy animals when face-to-face visits and interactions are not appropriate
- Fine motor skills
- Participation in meaningful activity

Materials:

- Smartphone or tablet
- Photos of animals to put into a coloring book
- “Colorscape - color your photos” smartphone/tablet application

Population:

- Any individual who would benefit from the therapeutic activity of coloring
- Individuals who would enjoy coloring custom-made pictures

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Using a smartphone/tablet that supports the “Colorscape - color your photo” application, upload photos of the animal into the application.
2. Edits may be made to remove the background of the image. Edits can also be made to enhance or clearly define the image to be colored in later.
3. Once satisfied with the final image, it can be exported or printed out. If desired, the image can be imported into another program (i.e., PowerPoint) as an image. From there, storylines or directions may be added to each page.
4. The final product can be printed out or emailed to clients.

Modifications:

This application can be used for any species of animals if photo permissions are obtained for the use of any photo.

Potential Risks:

Photos must be taken safely with animal welfare in mind. Ensure that the animal is displaying comfortable and relaxed body language.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

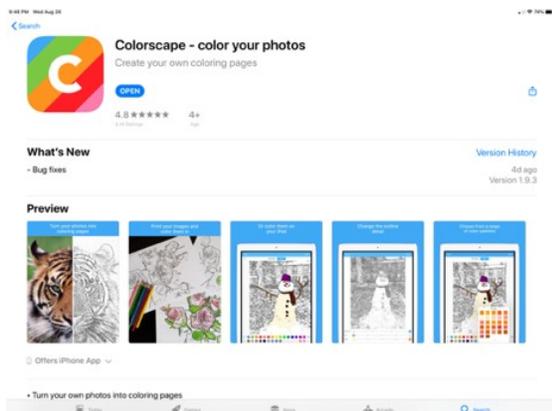
- Any appropriate photo permissions should be obtained.
- Sit/down and stay with duration for taking photos

Closing:

The participant may show the animal-handler team the completed coloring page once he/she has finished.

Additional Information:

Colorscape is a free app for mobile devices and can be downloaded from both the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, or directly from the website at <https://colorscape.co/>.



Dog Bingo

Contributed by Julia Winters, Dementia Dog Project, [Dogs for Good](#), Animal Assisted Intervention
[International Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Encourage people to participate in a group activity through a virtual platform.
- Enable people who live in more remote areas to access groups and make social connections.
- Increase/improve social skills, communication, number learning/recognition, and concentration.

Materials:

- Balls with numbers on them (1-20)
- A clear container (ideally) for the balls to go into (needs to be big enough for the dog to comfortably put his head in to retrieve the balls)
- Treats to reward the dog
- A mat for the dog to settle on
- Bingo cards

Population: Group session for up to 8 participants in the early to moderate stages of dementia

Time Required: 20-25 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Each participant receives a bingo card with 9 numbers between 1 and 20
2. The dog will be asked to retrieve a random ball, return it to the handler and settle back on the mat (dog gets a treat).

3. The handler will call out the number with dog-themed bingo lingo (see Additional Information).
4. Continue steps 3-4 until someone gets a full house (all 9 numbers).
5. The game has finished when someone has a full house.

Modifications:

- Participants can be encouraged to get involved with the bingo lingo or talk about their own dogs. This also allows the dog to have a short break.
- Participants may guess whether the dog will retrieve a “higher” or “lower” number next.
- The session can be made shorter or longer depending on the amount of numbers used and time in-between numbers being called.
- Pictures may be used instead of numbers.
- Custom-made bingo cards may be made to follow themes.

Potential Risks:

- Very low risk to clients, although clients may want/need someone with them to support them.
- The activity is quite repetitive and tiring for the dog, so sessions should be kept short and the number of sessions per day/week must be considered

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Solid retrieve
- The dog gets enjoyment out of the game
- Calm behavior around balls
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

The session finishes when the first client has a “full house.” This can then be followed with virtual ‘prizes’ where appropriate, or other fun ways to celebrate the win and leave the session on a positive note.

Additional Information: Video link - <http://dementiadog.org/virtual-therapy-sessions/>

Dog Bingo Lingo:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Fetch the ball | 11. Two little sticks |
| 2. Sit boy sit | 12. One dozen treats |
| 3. Got the fleas | 13. Unlucky puppy |
| 4. Bark at the door | 14. Valentine’s Day |
| 5. Pond dive | 15. Postman’s been |
| 6. Old dog, new tricks | 16. Grooming time |
| 7. All dogs go to heaven | 17. Yearly vaccine |
| 8. Shut the gate | 18. Dinner time |
| 9. The ball’s all mine | 19. Paws all clean |
| 10. (insert own dog’s name) den | 20. <u>SQUIRREL!</u> |

Dog Blog

Contributed by Caryn Friedlander, Whatcom Hospice, Volunteer (Bellingham, Washington)
www.dogbloggery.com



Desired Outcomes:

- Encourage parents to read aloud to their children
- Encourage/improve reading skills
- Improve writing skills
- Encourage creative/expressive writing among youth
- Reduce stress
- Small respite from work for facility staff

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, phone with camera, or camera that downloads to computer)

Population: All populations, all ages

Time Required: Variable, depending on familiarity with creating a blog. This may take anywhere from a few days to 1 week, and then about an hour a week to create and post new blog entries.

Service Delivery: Virtual blog

Methodology:

1. The purpose of this activity is to feature the therapy animal in an interactive blog. This serves as an alternative to in-person visits for sites where the animal therapy team volunteers (i.e., hospice houses, schools, literacy organizations, libraries, assisted living facilities, mental health facilities, etc.). This can also be expanded to the general public via online presence.
2. Write a weekly newsletter/blog post using the voice of the therapy animal. The content may include stories and photos from the dog's perspective.
3. Topics might include day-to-day activities or educational topics such as therapy animals, reading, cooking, nature, etc.
4. Include a submission link for readers to encourage interactivity. Provide prompts/questions to engage readers and explain how to submit their story in every post.
5. When you receive responses, include them in the next blog post.

Modifications:

- A printed version of the blog (i.e., Word document, letter with photos, etc.)
- For children too young to read/write, parents can read aloud to them. They could help the child write a story and take pictures for submission to the blog.
- If the volunteer is uncomfortable/unfamiliar with technology, they can create weekly newsletters via Word document with photos attached and email it to the facility where they previously volunteered.
- The blog can be used in addition to in-person interactions.

Potential Risks: None identified.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Photogenic animal for ongoing engagement and sequencing of posts

Closing: Not applicable.

Additional Information: See author contact information at beginning of activity to find examples.

Dog Breed History Lesson

Contributed by Shannan Anderson, CTRS, Recreation Therapist and Therapy Dog Volunteer Coordinator for Rehabilitation Program, HAI Section Member

Desired Outcomes:

- Increase memory strategies and skills
- Increase attention and comprehension
- Increase self-confidence
- Distract from typical therapy tasks

Materials:

- Information about history of dog breeds

Population: Individuals with memory loss from a stroke, brain injury, or other medical condition affecting an individual's memory

Time Required: 30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The handler asks the participant what dog breed they would like to learn about.
2. The participant listens to a history about the chosen dog breed. The history may include:
 - a. Where the dog breed came from
 - b. What type of work the dog was bred to do
 - c. What the dog typically looks like
 - d. Temperament and energy levels
 - e. Care, grooming, exercise, and training needs
 - f. Fun facts
3. The participant is then quizzed on the information he/she learned.

Modifications:

- This can be expanded to include information about other species of animals.
- Trivia questions can be used.
- There can be a role change in which the participant reports a segment of history and the handler is quizzed.

Potential Risks: None identified.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required: None identified.

Closing:

- The handler and the participant may have a closing discussion to process what went well, if objectives were met and what they enjoyed best.
- Review progress made within the session and potential goals for the next visit.
- Assess the individual's mood, motivation, and pain levels by asking directly how they are feeling after the session.

Dogs & Children Distance Learning Together

Contributed by Kate Drescher, PsyD, [APA HAI Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Draw parallels between how the dog learns at home and how the participant learns when doing their own schoolwork online
- The dog will enjoy some fun, stimulating activities with his/her handler
- Strengthen relationship between handler and dog
- Strengthen the dog's skillset

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Materials used in training (i.e., clicker, treats, leash, toys, bed/mat, etc.)

Population: School-age children and their caregivers

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The handler selects a cue the dog will learn during the session (i.e., sit, stay, shake, down). Choose a training space that has minimal distractions and that the dog is familiar with. Set up the training space with all needed materials prior to the video conference.
2. The handler explains the goal of the training session to the participant (i.e., practice a previously learned skill and/or learn a new skill, then reflect on how the dog's learning process compares to their own learning processes).
3. The handler asks the child about some of the ways he/she learns new academic skills. For example, do they learn spelling words by writing them down many times (repetition)? Do they

learn to expand their vocabulary by sounding out new words (taking small steps)? Do they make up games/songs to remember math facts (making learning fun)?

4. Explain that dogs learn in much the same way that they do! Dogs learn best with repetition, with small, incremental steps, and learn best when playing games!
5. The handler can use clicker training (if that is a training technique the team uses) to work on a specific cue. The handler introduces the concept of clicker training as a method dogs use to learn new skills.
6. The handler lets the child choose between 2-3 cues that the dog could work on during the session.
7. Brainstorm how the skill can be broken up into small steps (i.e., if the dog is first learning “down,” the dog is rewarded for looking down, sitting, bending his elbows, putting his whole body on the ground, and rolling his hip to the side). Explain how in each trial, the dog is repeating the motor plan and slowly adding more steps as he gradually masters this skill.
8. Discuss with the child how to break their learning tasks into smaller steps (i.e., begin with the idea, make an outline, create more details, then write the paragraph).
9. Talk about how dogs love to play training games! The learning is more engaging when it is joyful for both dogs and children. Brainstorm with the child about how they can make their learning more fun (i.e., singing songs, making games, etc.). Some children may benefit from discussing why they are learning a subject (i.e., learning math to one day have money in the bank and know how to use it wisely).
10. The training game should only last 3-5 minutes to prevent dog burnout. After the dog has completed the cue, he/she receives a reward. Talk to the participant about how it is important for them to take breaks when studying/learning.
11. Discuss with the child about how they can reward themselves for giving their best effort and mastering a skill (i.e., having a snack, playing with their dog, skateboarding with friends, etc.).
12. The handler pauses between repetitions, sets, and at the end of the session to check in with the child and ask them to share their observations of the dog’s behavior and notice how the therapist’s actions promoted learning. This could lead to a discussion about how a child feels his/her teacher helps him/her learn most effectively as well.
13. The handler can ask the child to identify a new skill or assignment he/she can work on after the lesson. They can talk about how to set up the workspace (dedicated learning space with minimal distractions). Discuss how the child can break the task into smaller, achievable steps. Finally, talk about a reward that the child could have after the task is completed.

Modifications:

- If the participant has a shortened attention span, decrease the length of the activity.
- If the canine does not want to participate (based on behavioral observation), the handler can talk with the child about how the dog learns to elicit his/her comments about their own learning. This could also serve as a nice discussion starter about the child’s own hesitancy to engage in learning.

Potential Risks:

- Note dog body language and behavior for signs of stress, anxiety, fear, or fatigue.
- The dog may not want to engage in the session. Choose activities that the dog highly enjoys and schedule the session when the dog is most active and interested in engaging.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- The handler should understand canine behavior and have a history of working with the dog to learn new skills using positive reinforcement, reward-based methods.
- The canine should have familiarity of basic cues and enjoy engaging in training using positive reinforcement training/handling.

Closing:

The handler and child can determine an activity to work on after the session, brainstorm how to break the task into manageable units, make it fun, and decide on an intrinsic reward. The handler can follow up with the child on successes/challenges during the next session.

Egg-citing Colors

Contributed by Macy Porter, MOTR/L, [Dogwood Therapy Services](#), [AAII Member](#), [APA HAI Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Visual perceptual skills
- Attention to task
- Following directions
- Teamwork
- Working memory

Materials:

Therapist/dog team:

- 5 plastic Easter eggs of different colors (i.e., pink, blue, orange, yellow, and purple)
- 5 treats to go into the eggs
- Dog mat

Client:

- 5 objects of corresponding colors (i.e., pink, blue, orange, yellow, and purple)

Population: Pediatrics

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Fill each plastic egg with 1 treat and ask the dog to stay on a mat.
2. Place five eggs in front of the dog or hide them around the room.
3. Ask the dog to “find it” and search for one egg.

4. The client identifies the color of the egg that the dog finds and searches for their object of the corresponding color.
5. Repeat steps 3-4 until all 5 eggs have been opened.

Modifications:

- The client's object can be a reward (i.e., favorite toy, snack, etc.) or instructions with various movement activities to complete (i.e., 5 jumping jacks, bear crawls for 30 seconds, etc.).
- The eggs can have various instructions for the client inside of them (i.e., walk like a dog, make a silly face, etc.).
- If the dog has difficulty opening the egg to find what is inside, they can be asked to retrieve it and drop it in the therapist's hand to open.
- The therapist may need to bring the egg close to the screen so the client can identify the color.
- A parent or caregiver can be asked to hide the client's objects around the room for the client to search for.
- The client may be asked to gather materials before the session starts or the therapist can set up the treats/eggs while the client searches around their room to identify objects with corresponding colors.
- The therapist may cover the screen to hide the egg that the dog chooses so that the client must use working memory to identify which color was chosen based on the colored eggs that are left over.

Potential Risks:

- If the dog has difficulty grading his/her mouth, they may bite too hard when retrieving the egg and accidentally ingest plastic.
- The dog may have difficulty with impulse control and waiting before finding the next egg.
- The client may have difficulty identifying the colors of the eggs if they are pastel colors.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Gently opening plastic eggs with either their mouth or paw
- "Leave it" while waiting to find the next egg
- Search for an object with a "find it" cue
- Retrieve objects on cue
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Once all 5 eggs are found, the activity is over. The therapist and client can discuss the easiest and hardest colors to find for both the client and dog.

Figure 8's with Winston

Contributed by Lori Lambert, COTA/L & Winston



Desired Outcomes:

- Self-regulation
- Body awareness
- Balance
- Motor planning skills
- Vestibular input

Materials:

- Enough space to walk a figure 8 course
- Two cones, chairs, or other suitable markers

Population: Pediatrics and adults

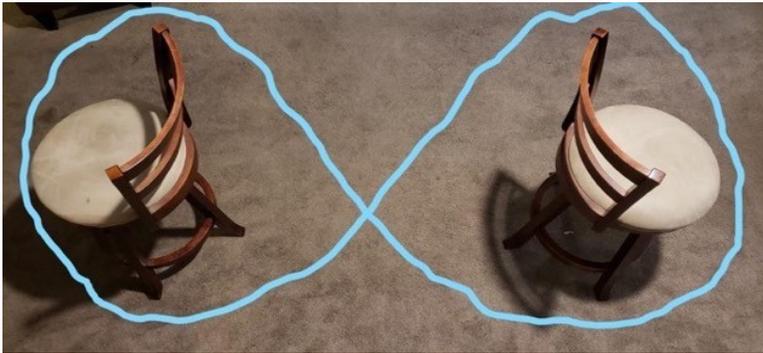
Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Place 2 chairs or cones about 3-4 feet apart. If they are too close, the client may get dizzy.
2. Stand next to one marker on your right and ask the dog to “sit” or “stand” to your left.
3. With a “let’s go” cue, walk to your right around the first marker and when you walk between the two markers, go to the right side of the second marker, circling to the left. Treat the dog periodically as you walk to maintain their attention.
4. Continue going left around the second marker until you come back to your starting point (walking a full figure 8).

5. Repeat at a slow, methodical pace for at least 5 repetitions to produce a calming effect, which is how it is primarily used. If desired, a faster pace can have an alerting effect on a client with low arousal.
6. The therapist and the dog can demonstrate to the client how this activity is performed and then the therapist can observe the client performing the task providing verbal cues, as necessary. If the therapist believes the client is proficient with the activity, the therapy team and the client can perform the task simultaneously.

**Modifications:**

- Add a more challenging element by having the client answer questions or clap to the beat of music being played while walking. For example, have the client name a food that starts with the letter A, B, C, etc.
- Moving the markers further apart will decrease the chance of a client getting dizzy.
- Some clients may require additional visual cues like painter's tape placed in the figure 8 pattern. Arrows can be added as needed. Chalk may be used if the activity is conducted outdoors.
- Add 1 or 2 more markers in a line to practice weaving like in canine agility courses. This allows both the client and the dog to practice body awareness and motor planning.

Potential Risks:

- If the client is working with the dog in person, he/she may step on or trip over the dog. The dog's leash or the markers may also be tripping hazards.
- Going around the markers may cause the client to get dizzy. Make sure appropriate supervision is provided.
- When working remotely, the handler must be aware of how closely the dog is walking to avoid stepping or tripping over the dog and/or leash.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit and release with verbal or nonverbal requests
- Take treats from a handler/client gently
- Heel with or without a leash

Closing:

Provide a verbal prompt such as, "we will do these 2 more times" to signal to the client that the task is almost completed.

Funny Dog Videos

Contributed by Shannan Anderson, CTRS, Recreation Therapist and Therapy Dog Volunteer Coordinator for Rehabilitation Program, HAI Section Member

Desired Outcomes:

- Decrease pain
- Increase mood
- Elicit smile and laughter

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Videos of animals on YouTube or similar video streaming site

Population: All populations across the lifespan

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

Show funny videos of animals or have a handler show a video they made of themselves with his/her animal.

Modifications:

- To elicit a conversation about animal welfare, talk about how the animals may be feeling in the videos based on their body language or behavior.
- The length of the video may be adjusted to the individual's attention level or interest.
- The participant can operate the computer/iPad to improve proficiency with electronic equipment.

Potential Risks:

Note animal body language and behavior for signs of stress/discomfort before selecting the video.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required: None identified.

Closing:

- The handler and the participant may have a closing discussion to process what went well, if objectives were met and what they enjoyed best.
- Review progress made within the session and potential goals for the next visit.
- Assess the individual's mood, motivation, and pain levels by asking directly how they are feeling after the session.

Go Fish Dog Treats

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Strengthen fine motor and gross motor skills
- Increase range of motion
- Improve eye-hand coordination
- Improve visual motor skills
- Improve motor planning

Materials:

- “Fishing pole” (i.e., a chopstick, paper towel roll, or pool noodle)
- String or yarn
- Non-toxic tape
- Paper
- Lightweight dog treats (i.e., Cheerios, Kix, unflavored popcorn, or “pupcorn”)
- Dog mat

Population: Children and teens with developmental disabilities, gross motor and fine motor delays

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. To set this activity up, cut a piece of paper into a 2 inch diameter circle. Cut two 1 inch slits in the middle of the circle about 1 inch apart. Cut a piece of string approximately one arm's length long (a child's string will be shorter, which will be more appropriate for their height). Take one end of the string, string it through the two slits of the paper circle and tie a double knot. Turn the piece of paper around (double knot face down) and place a 2 inch piece of tape, folded sticky side out, onto the piece of paper. This will be the "hook." Tie the other end of the string onto the "fishing pole." (See picture below).
2. Ask the dog to stay on a mat.
3. Place the lightweight dog treats across the floor and ask the client to "fish" for the dog treats.
4. Once they have caught a dog treat "fish," give the treat to the dog.

Modifications:

- This activity can be modified by increasing/decreasing the length of the fishing pole (i.e., using a chopstick, paper towel roll, pool noodle, etc.), the length of the string, and the size of the paper "hook."
- The dog may be lying on a mat while the client is fishing or in a separate room until the client has completed the task.
- For video sessions, if the client does not have a dog, he/she can fish for cotton balls, paper fish, etc. Every "fish" he/she catches earns a dog treat for the therapist's dog.

Potential Risks:

- The therapist must keep inventory of all items and ensure that the dog does not eat non-food items such as chopsticks, tape or paper.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- It is essential that the dog does not jump on the client when it sees dog treats.
- Comfortable with humans moving in various positions (i.e., sitting, standing, kneeling, bending forward, etc.)
- Useful cues include "go to bed," "stay," and "leave it."

Closing:

When all the treats have been collected and the dog has finished eating, the client and therapist will participate in activity cleanup and hand hygiene.



Hide and Treat

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve visual perceptual skills
- Strengthen fine motor skills
- Increase range of motion

Materials:

- Dog treats
- Tweezers
- Muffin tin or ice cube tray

Population: Children and teens

Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The therapist/caregiver places dog treats around the room while the client is not looking.
2. The client must find all the treats scattered across the room by picking them up with tweezers and bringing them back to the muffin tin/ice cube tray.

3. Once the client has found all the treats, the dog can eat the dog treats out of the muffin tin/ice cube tray.

Modifications:

- This activity can be modified to be easier by decreasing the number of treats and the area in which the treats are placed.
- It can be made more difficult by using a more cluttered background (i.e., patterned tile, carpet, etc.).
- For video sessions, if the client does not have a family dog, treats can be substituted for beads/beans. For each bead the client finds, the therapist's dog earns a treat. Ensure that all treats can be seen on the computer screen.

Potential Risks:

- The therapist must be aware of the dog's location in the room and ensure that the client does not bump into or trip over the dog.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Useful cues include "go to bed," "stay," and "leave it."
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Once the activity is completed and the dog has eaten all of the treats, the client and therapist will participate in activity cleanup and hand hygiene.

Homeschool Lessons for Older Children

Contributed by Ann Davidson, [Canine Therapy Corps](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Academic
- Learning new information

Materials:

- Dog treats
- Dog puzzle toy
- Toys
- Leash
- Any additional supplies typically used for an in-person session

Population: Students aged 7-18 who are homeschooled

Time Required: 15-30 minutes, depending on the age and attention span of the child

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The handler teaches the child something new about animals, their care, training, and the various types of work they can do.

2. They can review the differences between service animals, emotional support animals, and therapy dogs.
3. The handler may describe the types of work the dog did/does live, demonstrate some of the dog's skills, and explain how those skills can help people.

Modifications:

- Older children tend to be more engaged if they are asked to speak. First, try asking them what working animals they have seen and what they think the animals do, then provide more information.
- Allow the child to give cues to the dog.

Potential Risks: None identified.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic cues (i.e., sit, down, stay, etc.)
- Basic therapy dog skills (i.e., performance of therapy dog evaluation exercises, typical exercises the dog might perform with in-person patients, etc.)

Closing: Give the dog a treat after completion of cues. Ask the child to summarize what they learned.

Homeschool Lessons for Younger Children

Contributed by Ann Davidson, [Canine Therapy Corps](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Arithmetic
- Communication
- Provides parents a “break” from lesson planning while the child is occupied with something else

Materials:

- Dog treats
- Dog puzzle toy or cupcake tin with tennis balls to cover the treats
- Toys
- Leash

Population: Students aged 3-8 who are homeschooled

Time Required: 15-30 minutes, depending on the age and attention span of the child

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Practice arithmetic with the participant by asking how many slots are in the puzzle toy and add up the total number of treats to place in the puzzle toy.
2. When the dog is finished, check to make sure the dog ate all the treats. If they did not, subtract how many treats are left from where you started.

Modifications:

To focus more on communication, you can ask the child to identify different dog body parts as you point to them and/or work on combining hand and verbal cues for the dog to perform.

Potential Risks:

If an adult is not physically present with the child, he/she may get distracted.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic cues (i.e., sit, down, stay, etc.)
- Experience with a dog puzzle toy
- For identification of body parts, the dog should know “stay” with duration

Closing:

Give the dog a treat after completion of cues. Ask the child to describe what they liked about working with the dog to further promote communication skills.

HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response Virtual Visit Program

Contributed by Whitney Romine, BS, State Coordinator-OH, Virtual Visit Task Force Member, HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response Virtual Visit Task Force

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduce stress and fear
- Promote social engagement
- Promote relaxation
- Elevate mood
- Improve rapport and receptivity with environment and staff
- Foster participation and collaboration

Materials:

- Electronic equipment for video meeting (iPad, computer or suitable electronic device with camera)
- HIPAA and other safety-approved video conferencing platforms (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population: Children, adults, first responders, and victims of crisis/disaster

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. To request a virtual visit, go to www.hopeaacr.org and click on the “Request a Virtual Visit” button in the top right-hand corner. Fill out the request form and click submit.
2. A HOPE AACR regional manager or HOPE Agency Representative (HAR) will reach out to the requesting organization to clarify any details and schedule a visit day and time.
3. Staff will initiate a call with a HOPE AACR volunteer via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Facetime, or other approved video conferencing software. The HOPE volunteer will initiate conversation by introducing themselves and their dog and sharing what HOPE does.
4. Potential activities include talking to or about the dog with the handler, reading to the dog, guessing the number of treats the dog can catch, and playing a familiar game with the dog.
5. When the visit appears to be wrapping up or the participant/dog becomes disengaged, the HOPE team will thank participants for inviting them to a virtual visit and politely excuse themselves.
6. Participants may terminate in-progress virtual visits for any reason. HOPE volunteer teams may also terminate their visit at any point as needed, such as a medical emergency, stress, prolonged human/canine disengagement or bathroom break.

Modifications:

- Many video conferencing services have a closed captioning feature for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Potential Risks:

- Cross-contamination involving tablet devices if not properly sanitized in-between visits.
- HIPAA/privacy breach if the connection is not properly set up or compliant via the organization's Information Services policy.
- HIPAA/privacy breach if volunteer/participant does not conduct visits in a private location where others could overhear the conversation or see the participant.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic dog skills and cues
- Exposed to computer screens
- Target training (optional)
- Sit/down and stay with duration (optional)

Closing:

Upon completion of the activity, the volunteer(s) thank participants for the visit and logs out of the videoconferencing software. Volunteers are encouraged to reward their dogs frequently.

Additional Information:

Prior to scheduled visits, it is recommended to do a test call with the participant in the setting they will be using. This allows you to identify connectivity, video, or audio issues.

Individualized Patient Counselling

Contributed by Kathryn Kimbley, MSc, [HumAnima CIC](#)

Desired Outcomes:

- Sequencing
- Improve cognitive abilities (i.e., stroke survivors) and new learning pathways
- Fine motor and gross motor skills
- Improve self-confidence and independence
- Learning about themselves and others
- Observation of healthy relationship development through the handler's relationship with the dog
- Learning, creating, observing, and maintaining social, personal, and interpersonal boundaries
- Developing self-care, self-awareness, coping skills, and strategies
- Learning forgiveness and acceptance
- Addressing issues of guilt and shame

Materials:

- Cell phone or phone with speaker ability
- Private, soundproof room
- Laptop with software for internet calls (i.e., Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.)

Population: Young adults, adults, and older adults with challenges including, but not limited to, depression, anxiety, grief, bereavement, work/ life balance, relationship challenges, addiction, low self-esteem, "Imposter Syndrome," chronic illness, dementia, learning disabilities, domestic violence victims and survivors, sexual abuse victims and survivors, child abuse victims and survivors

Time Required: 50 minutes

Service Delivery: Video and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Weekly/bi-weekly/monthly basis appointments are made directly with the client to support identified needs. This is a private one-to-one counselling session using a predominantly person-centred counselling approach but also occasionally implementing solution-focused techniques and/or mindfulness techniques.
2. Animal assisted therapy (AAT) is applied and incorporated in sessions where the client has chosen to have a dog present. AAT is applied in a mainly indirect manner where the client is free to interact with the dog.
3. The dog is never present during the first session, as this is kept for contracting with the client, collecting client information, explaining the process, expectations, and responsibilities of the counsellor and client, primary impact measurements, and for the client to present their issues, concerns, and life challenges that brought them to counselling. The dog joins the handler, the counsellor, and the client during their second session.

4. There will be brief instances of the dog being invited to be present in front of the laptop camera. The dog is invited to jump onto the sofa next to the handler and is treated when he/she looks in the direction of the computer screen.
5. The client may be invited to interact with their own companion animals if they have one. Typically, this may involve learning how to teach their companion a new trick, which is particularly good for developing sequencing skills, patience, independence, confidence, new interests as well as improving their mental health through physical activity and interaction with their own companion animals.
6. The client is directly provided links to existing training tutorial videos from YouTube. The videos may also be in relation to the client's personal goals, aims, and objectives and/or is material to help them progress through beneficial activities such as mindfulness or guided meditations, including body scans.

Modifications:

- This activity can take place virtually with modifications during times of illness/isolation and can also take place in-person when above risks are reduced/eliminated.
- Trick training is brilliant for working with clients as there are varying levels of difficulty and complexity that the client can choose to undertake.
- The client can choose to work on tricks with the counsellor or problem solve how to teach the trick themselves.
- The activities can be adapted according to the client's specific goals, aims or objectives and the limitations are really the counsellor and clients' imaginations. Naturally, the counsellor is there to guide clients and support them through their activities as they complete them.
- There are also specific activities that would normally be done in face-to-face sessions that can be done by the client provided they are able to print, have access to paper, colouring pencils, pens and pencils, scissors, glue, old magazines, etc. that require a bit more creativity and imagination. Again, the client can undertake these activities during their session or on their own.

Potential Risks:

- This activity should only be performed by those who have been trained in mental health.
- As with any counsel, concerns related to the clients' state of mind must be assessed to limit the degree of traumatic emotions that may arise, without another person in the room physically to support them. In some cases, it may be necessary to ensure the client has another person accessible during or after counsel.
- In addition, any animals participating within this setting must also be monitored for excessive stress-related responses as they cannot physically move towards a person to comfort them, which at times will cause more concerns with the animal.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Animal participating should have already passed standard evaluations (list) to determine suitability for intended purpose.
- Exposed to computer screens
- Exposed to a variety of responses, if this is interactive (i.e., squeals, laughter, etc.)
- Trained to sit in a variety of settings and positions (i.e., dog learns to sit on a specific type of chair and face in a specific direction)

- In the UK, whilst there are no prerequisites as AAT is not regulated, it is recommended practitioners aim to at the very least complete the KCGC Puppy, Bronze, Silver, Gold and ideally Platinum Certificates.
- Familiarisation with Pets As Therapy (PAT) assessment process and expectations (recommended).

Closing:

Closing is done gradually and over a period of 10-15 minutes depending on the activity. The client is reminded of the time and invited to consider “winding down” the activity they are currently completing. For example, if this is trick training, this may involve a summary or revisit of what has been explored and the context of what has been learnt as well as what the client has identified as the activities relevance to their own situation.

In-person Social Distancing

Contributed by Michele Pich, M.A., M.S., Assistant Director, Shreiber Family Pet Therapy Program at Rowan University



Desired Outcomes:

- Tactile interaction
- Improve social distancing resilience
- Anxiety and depression reduction
- Functional communication

Materials:

- Leash
- Outdoor location with ample space for social distancing (if needed)
- Face masks (if needed)
- Hand sanitizer
- Baby wipes
- Non-Contact Forehead Infrared Thermometer (if needed)
- Chairs
- Yoga mats (or other easily sanitized mats) for the ground

Population: Children 6-17 years old

Time Required: 15 minutes

Service Delivery: In-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Set up yoga mats and chairs in a suitable outdoor setting that is quiet and private.
2. The dog is to remain on a 6-10ft leash (depending on specific program requirements). The handler should extend his/her arm as much as possible to maintain a minimum 6ft distance (if needed/desired). An additional chair can be used as an armrest to prevent arm fatigue.

3. The handler asks the recipient to use hand sanitizer thoroughly on both hands. The participant can pet, cuddle, or play with the animal (when no other dogs are in visual sight). The student and the handler can build rapport by talking about the dog and discuss support, adjustment, and difficulties in social distancing with family/friends. They can also discuss strategies for interaction while social distancing (including discussion of virtual interaction options).
4. Limit interaction to 15 minutes.
5. The handler asks the recipient to use hand sanitizer thoroughly on both hands after visiting with the therapy animal.

Potential Risks:

- If this is a new environment for the animal, it may be difficult to focus on the visit due to novel sights, smells, sounds, etc.
- The animal should be secured to a leash to prevent them from attempting to leave the area and potentially become lost.
- The animal may have difficulty carrying out known skills and cues in a less familiar environment.
- Unexpected distractions in the environment may decrease attention and the animal's ability to fully participate.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- The animal must be comfortable around people wearing masks or face shields (if these are used/needed).
- Desensitization training to tolerate the smell of hand sanitizer may be necessary (if used/needed).
- The animal should be exposed to the outdoor space on numerous occasions with just the handler before participating in a session.
- Impulse control and "leave it" cue to ignore distractions in the environment
- Reliable recall if the leash is accidentally dropped

Closing:

Upon completion of the activity, the dog is praised and given a treat.

Life Goes On: Letters to Participants

Contributed by Kate Miller, Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC) at Colorado State University and Ruth Olsen

News Alert - Thief on the Run In Sun City

For the third time in August a thief has entered a home in Sun City. Rascal reports during the day someone entered his bedroom and stole his blanket right off his bed. He describes the blanket as forest green with



pictures of doggies and dog bones and a small hole in it.



Home video shows it was dragged out of his bed by a short blond with a slender build, big brown eyes and long fast legs.



In prior incidences, the blanket appeared back in his home in different rooms, without any damage to his prized possession. There is no sign of anyone breaking into his room or any other valuable toys removed.

According to Rascal, he is unaware of anyone in Sun City who would do such a devious thing to him, as he is loved by all he meets. He is heartbroken and having trouble sleeping without his beloved blankie.



If anyone can identify the person in this photo, please contact Rascal at Dog Missing Blanket.com. He is offering a reward of letting the finder have the honor of petting him for one hour.

**Suspect Apprehended:
Brooklyn Rose was caught in the act by her brother, Rascal!
Case Closed!**

Hi There !!! My name is Marcus and I'm a German short haired Pointer! I wanted to write to introduce myself and say "hello" in hopes of making your day a happy one! I have a full life: I volunteer with HABIC visiting a middle school - Boy is that fun!! when I am not doing that, I like to go to the mountains and relax... oh yeah, I also like to RUNTY. I'm a really fast dog so I love to be off my leash because my mom only has two leas so she is not fast at all!!!






Whenever I am at home, I love to nap. I'm not really supposed to be on the couch, but sometimes my mom lets me - That is a good day!!! Thanks for reading my letter - I hope it made you happy!! Take good care, Marcus ♡

Desired Outcomes:

- Facilitate comfort
- Improve emotional well-being
- Improve morale
- Provide participants with something positive to focus on

Materials:

- Personalized images/photo cards of specific therapy animal
- Pens, markers, and note paper
- Address listing
- Suggested phrase sheet for volunteers

Population: All populations that volunteer visiting teams typically interact with (i.e., long-term care facility residents, first responders, college/university students, hospital patients, etc.)

Time Required: Varies

Service Delivery: Letter

Methodology:

1. The purpose of this is a letter-writing campaign from volunteer visiting teams to encourage and express to participants that they are being thought of during periods of isolation.
2. On a weekly or monthly basis, volunteers determine which groups they will be developing cards and letters for and work either in groups or individually. This light-hearted activity can involve a broad age range of volunteers.
3. The letters can come from both the animal's and the handler's point of view.
4. The letters can either be mailed or emailed to the Activities Director at each facility.

Modifications:

- The letters may include electronic greetings, video greetings or handwritten notes.
- This activity can be completed by a wide variety of individuals. Cards and notes should be reviewed by a primary animal volunteer (i.e., if they are coming from one animal that visited this home for example) prior to sharing. Ensure volunteers are using appropriate phrases and language.

Potential Risks:

Contagions have the potential to enter a facility through the mail. For this reason, it is recommended to address the letter to the Activities Director at the facility. The Activities Director can make copies of the letter and distribute the copies to participants. Letters may also be emailed to eliminate any possible source of disease transmission.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration for taking photos

Closing: Not applicable.

Additional Information:

Letters can also be sent to first responders (e.g., fire/rescue/police departments) to ensure that local first responders in the region receive positive notes of encouragement, letters of support from the assistance dogs, therapy dogs, and their handlers. It can be beneficial to provide knowledge that first responders are appreciated by many and their efforts are not going unnoticed, even by the dogs in the region.

Map the Cup

Contributed by Macy Porter, MOTR/L, [Dogwood Therapy Services](#), [AAII Member](#), [APA HAI Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Directional terminology
- Spatial operations
- Visual perceptual skills
- Position in space/body awareness
- Attention span
- Sequencing
- Initiation, follow through, and termination
- Expressive and receptive communication
- Interpersonal skills

Materials:

- Lightweight plastic or paper cups
- Treats
- Dog mat
- Blank paper and writing utensils or digital “whiteboard”

Population: All populations

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The dog is either asked to wait on a mat/bed within view of the monitor or outside of the room while the activity is set up.

2. The client and therapist work together to create a map of the room the dog will be working in and designate 10 places that the treat and cup should be placed. The room should have minimal clutter and obstacles.
3. The client uses the map to direct the handler where to go in the room using directional terminology (i.e., backwards, left, right, forward, etc.).
4. The therapist places the treat on the ground and puts the cup directly over it, face down.
5. Once all 10 treats and cups have been placed on the ground, the dog comes into the room and searches for the treats placed under the cups.

Modifications:

- If the dog is not familiar with this activity, smelly, high value treats may be helpful.
- The game can be completed without a map and the client directs the therapist in whatever direction they see fit.
- If the client has a pet dog at home that is appropriate to participate, the therapist and client roles can be reversed.

Potential Risks:

- The room should be clutter-free and the treats should be placed away from anything that the dog may easily trip over.
- If the dog is unfamiliar with this activity, he/she may have difficulty catching onto the game initially.
- The dog may be very excited when searching for the treats, so it may be helpful to keep the computer on a raised surface. If the client's dog is participating, the client may need to be seated in a safe place when the dog comes into the room.
- If the dog is unfamiliar with this activity, they may be fearful of the noise the cup makes when moving against a hard floor.
- The dog may be more interested in playing with the cup than finding the treats. The handler can present a treat to the dog and trade the cup for a treat.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

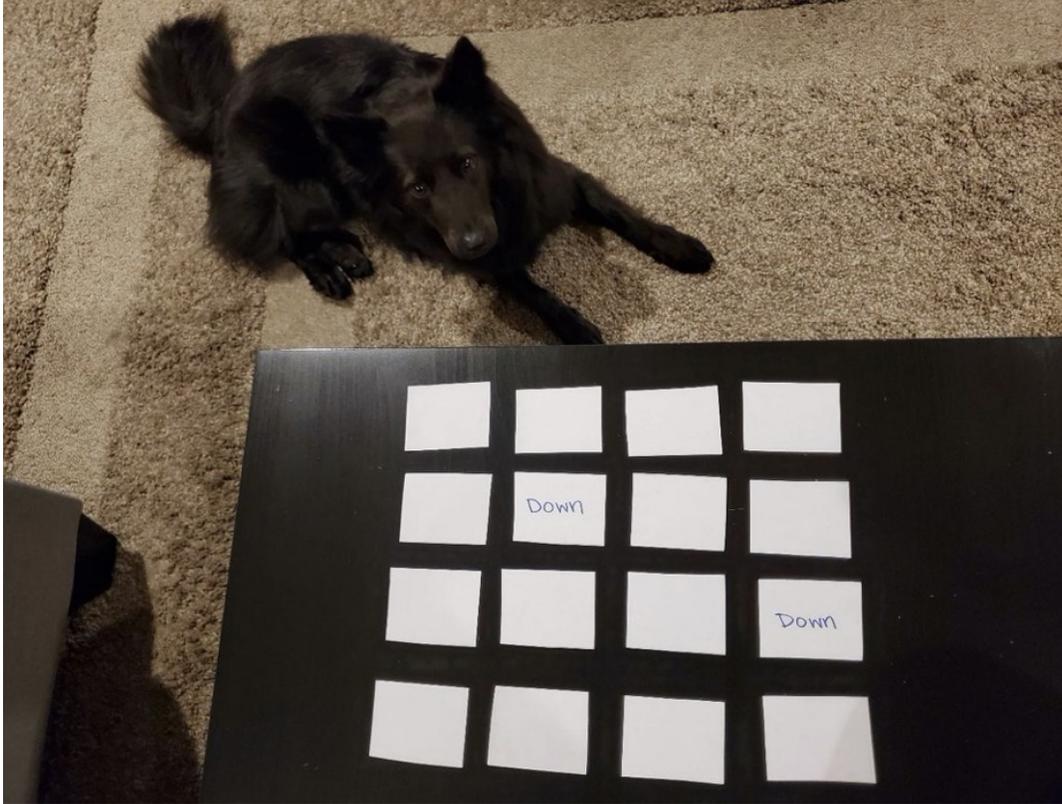
- Interested in searching for treats in the room
- "Find it" cue so that they know to look for a hidden treat
- Not startled by unexpected noises, such as a cup moving against the floor

Closing:

Once the dog has found all 10 treats and all the cups are stacked and picked up off the floor, the game is over.

Matching Cues Memory Game

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Strengthen fine motor skills and hand strength
- Increase endurance
- Improve social skills
- Improve working memory
- Improve bilateral coordination

Materials:

- Paper
- Pen, pencil, markers, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Dog treats

Population: Children, teens, or adults with special needs, developmental disabilities or difficulties with cognitive functioning

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The client and therapist decide on 8-16 cues that they can ask the dog to complete.
2. The client cuts a large piece of paper evenly into 16 or 32 rectangles and writes the cues on one side of the paper, ensuring there are two copies of each cue.
3. Once completed, the pieces of paper are shuffled, and placed cue face down on a table.
4. The client and therapist take turns flipping over the cards. When one has found the matching pair, they ask the dog to complete the cue.
5. The process is repeated until all cues have been completed or before the therapist notices the dog is displaying signs of fatigue/stress, etc.

Modifications:

- The activity may be graded by increasing or decreasing the number of cards.
- Instead of using cues, ask the client to complete an enrichment action for the dog (i.e., sing the dog a song, give the dog 3 treats, etc.).
- The activity may be made more difficult by asking the client to define the cue from memory before asking the dog to complete it.
- For video sessions, the therapist and client must have the same cue cards. When the client cues the dog on screen, have the client participate by saying the cue and saying, “yes” to mark the moment the dog completes the task.

Potential Risks:

- The therapist must be aware of dog fatigue and signs of stress to ensure that the dog does not burn out (ideally, no more than 5-7 minutes of continuous cuing).
- The therapist must also notice when the client begins to show signs of dysregulation and grade the activity down to decrease frustration.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic cues (i.e. sit, down, catch, watch me, etc.)
- Be proficient at completing cues with clients
- Comfortable around the population

Closing:

Once the activity has been completed, the therapist and client will participate in activity cleanup and hand hygiene.

Memory Game

Contributed by Shannan Anderson, CTRS, Recreation Therapist and Therapy Dog Volunteer Coordinator for Rehabilitation Program, HAI Section Member

Desired Outcomes:

- Increase memory strategies and skills
- Increase self-confidence
- Increase attention to detail
- Distract from typical therapy tasks

Materials:

- 12 dog-related items
- A tray or table to display items

Population: Individuals with memory loss from a stroke, brain injury, or other medical condition affecting an individual's memory

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The service provider shows the participant a tray/table of 12 dog-related items.
2. The service provider removes one item while the participant looks away from the tray/table.
3. The participant guesses which item was removed after studying the tray/table of items again.

Modifications:

- Increase/decrease items used on the tray to make it easier/harder.
- More items may be removed to increase the difficulty.

Potential Risks: None identified.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required: None identified.

Closing:

- The handler and the participant may have a closing discussion to process what went well, if objectives were met and what they enjoyed best.
- Review progress made within the session and potential goals for the next visit.
- Assess the individual's mood, motivation, and pain levels by asking directly how they are feeling after the session.

Peanut Butter Art

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Section Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve social skills
- Improve sensory processing (i.e., tactile, olfactory, etc.)
- Strengthen fine motor skills

Materials:

- Dog safe peanut butter (no xylitol)
- Q-tips
- Paper plate
- Bowl
- Dog mat

Population: Children and teens

Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Scoop 1 teaspoon of peanut butter into the bowl.
2. Dip peanut butter with a Q-tip and draw a picture.
3. The dog licks away the peanut butter art once it is completed.

Modifications:

- The activity can be made more difficult for the client by using various utensils (i.e., spoon, fork, tweezers, paintbrush) or textures (i.e., pudding, condiments).
- The activity can be made more difficult for the client by providing a drawing prompt.
- It can be modified to be easier by allowing the client to use his/her fingers.
- This activity can be made more difficult for the dog by asking the dog to leave it/wait and complete a cue before licking off the art.
- It can be modified to be easier for the dog by having the dog in a separate room until the art is completed.
- The peanut butter may be substituted with dog treats.
- The activity may be completed as a turn-taking game (i.e., Pictionary, hangman, tic tac toe).
- The therapist may copy the client's work of art and give it to their dog.
- For video sessions, the client may give the peanut butter to their family dog.
- The client licks off their own work of art while the therapist's dog receives a treat.
- If playing Pictionary, the client guesses the therapist's picture and if he/she guesses right, the dog can lick the plate.

Potential Risks:

- To ensure that the dog does not eat too much peanut butter, measure out approximately 1 teaspoon beforehand.
- The therapist must also keep inventory of all items and be sure that the dog does not eat non-food items (i.e., drawing utensils, paper plates, or Q-tips).
- To prevent zoonotic risk factors, the therapist must use disposable dishes or designated dog dishes and the client must wash his/her hands after this activity.
- The therapist must also ensure that the client/dog does not have food allergies beforehand.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- The dog must be calm around high value treats and not jump on humans holding the treats.
- Useful cues include "go to bed," "leave it," "stay," and "wait."

Closing:

Once the dog has finished licking off the peanut butter, the client and therapist will participate in meal cleanup (i.e., disposing or washing dishes, wiping counter) and hand hygiene.

The Pet Away Worry and Stress Program (PAWS)

Contributed by Tanya K. Bailey, MSW, LICSW, PAWS Program Coordinator, Boynton Health,
University of Minnesota



Desired Outcomes:

- Increase participants' sense of belonging and engagement to each other, campus life, and the university
- Increase participants' resilience
- Increase participants' knowledge of stress management skills and resources

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population: College/university students

Time Required: 60 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Typically, each PAWS virtual session is staffed by two people: one who is the greeter and the other who is the program coordinator and assigned Zoom host.
2. AAI teams register for each Zoom session and sign on 30 minutes prior to opening the session for participants. Typically, 6-10 teams and an average of 40 participants are on each session.
3. Participants must register for the PAWS session through the University-hosted Zoom platform, and they are sent an email invitation with a secure link and password to gain access on the day of the session. This email invitation also provides information and instructions for the day of the session, stating, "Thank you for registering for PAWS virtual. We look forward to seeing you. When you sign on, you will be in a waiting room until the session begins. Upon entering the main Zoom room, you will see a roster of which animals are attending along with their corresponding

breakout room. Please tell the host which room you would like to join. You can always come back to the main room and ask to go to another breakout room.”

4. Depending on the number of registered participants, teams are divided into breakout rooms so that there is an approximate ratio of 1 room for every 10 participants. Breakout rooms should have no fewer than three teams in order to maintain safety and security for all participants.
5. When the virtual session begins, all participants in the waiting room are admitted and they see, via a shared screen, an image welcoming them as well as pictures and names of the animals present on that day’s session.
6. PAWS staff welcome each participant by name, answer any questions, and ask which breakout room that participant would like to visit first. The participant is assigned to that room by the Zoom host and can return at any time to the main Zoom room but must be moved to any other breakout rooms by the Zoom host.
7. In the breakout rooms, the teams and participants engage in many of the same ways that they would if sessions were in-person and on campus. Conversations cover meeting any new students, explaining PAWS – its history, the breeds, species, and numbers of animals involved in the program, the frequency and logistics of the weekly sessions – and answering a lot of questions about each animal.
 - Almost always, participants discover shared aspects in these conversations – “I lived in that ResHall my first year too.” “I had that professor for Biology – the quizzes are so hard!” “I’m thinking of switching my major to (topic). Are you glad you’re studying (topic)?” “Wow, I’m from that area too and I never thought I’d meet someone here who’s from my hometown.” All of these conversations – as basic and general as they may seem – are important aspects of helping students develop a sense of belonging to a very vast and diverse university community.
 - Data clearly demonstrates that establishing connections during the first year is more predictive of college student retention than academic success. PAWS also helps to reinforce weekly stress management themes developed by Boynton Health’s “de-stress” program. So often, students share that they believe they are alone in their feelings or experiences of struggle; therefore, PAWS contributes to the multiple health promotion messaging campaigns to support student mental health.
 - When participants enter the Zoom session, they see a graphic that highlights that week’s theme – “making connections,” “self-validation,” “preparing for a transition,” etc. – and these same images are posted to PAWS social media accounts. The teams are also prepared each week by having three main talking points that emphasize life skills development and help normalize mental health self-care.

Modifications:

The method for this program could be modified to fit other groups of individuals and lengths of time.

Potential Risks:

- Participants may be triggered if the Zoom or other video conferencing service is not secure so that unauthorized users can “Zoom bomb” and insert highly inflammatory material into the session.

- Should a participant discuss concerning thoughts or behaviors, the AAI team may not know what appropriate mental health resources are available and how to convey this information to the participant.
- Discussions shared among participants may evoke sensitive or difficult emotions such as grief or apprehension.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- All AAI teams who work in PAWS are registered therapy animal teams through one of four national registering organizations: Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Intermountain Therapy Animals, Pet Partners, or Therapy Dogs International. The handler of each team must also complete a required program application, orientation, and background check.
- It is helpful if the handler of the AAI team is familiar as well as comfortable using Zoom (or other video conferencing) technology so they can assist their animal in engaging with the camera in whatever way is in the animal's best interest (i.e., some animals may prefer to rest in their bed and other animals may prefer to be energetic through tricks or playful behavior).

Closing:

Five minutes before the end of the virtual session, a message is sent to all participants by the Zoom host thanking everyone for coming, that the session is ending soon, and reminding them when the next virtual session is occurring. PAWS teams are brought back together to debrief and share any information specific to that day's session.

Pre-recorded Video Message from Animal Friends

Contributed by Katrina Winsor, MS ABA, MS Anthrozoology, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, [The New Interdisciplinary School](#), [APA HAI Section](#) Member, [International Society for Anthrozoology](#) Member, [Association of Professional Dog Trainers](#) Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Provide recipients a connection with therapy animals when face-to-face visits and interactions are not appropriate
- Improve participant's emotional well-being by providing animal-related content to increase positive affect

Materials:

- Smartphone/tablet
- Photo of an animal (must be a direct headshot)
- "My Talking Pet" smartphone application

Population: Individuals who would enjoy receiving a pre-recorded video message from a therapy animal

Time Required: 10 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. This activity is designed to provide an asynchronous interaction (animal-related engagement) between the participant and the animal. Messages can be recorded after a session and sent to the participant as a fun way to provide positive feedback. The messages can also list activities that the animal and participant will engage in to prime the participant for his/her upcoming session.

Lastly, the messages can motivate a participant to engage in therapeutic activities between sessions.

2. Using a smartphone/tablet that supports the application “My Talking Pet,” a photo can be uploaded, or a new photo may be taken.
3. Following the directions within the application, outline the animal’s face, eyes, and mouth. Next, record a voice message that is personalized for the participant.
4. The speed and pitch of the recorded message can be adjusted after recording. Once completed, the recording can be saved onto the smartphone or sent directly through the app to an email address for sharing.
5. There is a free version of the application that comes with a watermark on the final video. Alternately, there is a subscription option that allows you to remove the watermark from the videos.

Modifications:

This application can be used for any species of animals if photo permissions are obtained for the use of any photo.

Potential Risks:

- Minimal potential risks, provided that the recipient will not be upset or confused by receiving a video where an animal appears to be speaking directly to them using a human voice (anthropomorphism).

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration for photo-taking

Closing: Not applicable.

Additional Information:

“My Talking Pet” is a free app for mobile devices and can be downloaded from both the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, or directly from the website at <https://mytalkingpet.app/>.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Exposed to computer screens or cameras
- Exposed to a variety of responses, if this is interactive (squeals, laughter, etc.)
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Puzzle Mission

Contributed by Cherise Basques, MS, OTR/L, [Animal Assisted Intervention International Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Increase motivation to engage in activities
- Address sequencing and following directions
- Improve motor planning
- Improve visual memory
- Improve participation in activities of daily living
- Improve attention and engagement

Materials:

- Peg puzzle
- Small, thin treats
- Paper to write activities on
- Other materials will vary depending on the task the client is doing

Population: All populations across the lifespan

Time Required: 5-15 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

**Methodology:**

1. To set up the peg puzzle, place a piece of paper with a small, thin treat under the puzzle pieces with a written activity for the client to do (i.e., 5 jumping jacks, write your name, put socks on, etc.).
2. The dog removes 1 peg puzzle piece to reveal the activity that the client will complete.
3. Once the client completes that activity, move on to the next puzzle piece until all pieces have been uncovered.

Modifications:

- For the dog, place a small, thin treat under the puzzle piece to encourage the dog to remove the puzzle piece.
- Using a puzzle with fewer pieces can help the dog remove the correct piece.
- To address visual memory, the client may be asked to state the order the dog removed the puzzle pieces.
- Use a shaped peg puzzle and ask the client to identify each specific shape for the dog to uncover.
- To address visual scanning, spread out the puzzle pieces and ask the client to set up the activity by stating which piece to put in each slot.

Potential Risks:

The dog may have difficulty picking up the specified puzzle piece or may try to get all the pieces at once. If so, a smaller puzzle may be used, or a treat may be placed under one puzzle piece at a time.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Ability to grab the specified puzzle piece with his/her mouth

Closing:

The activity ends after the dog has finished lifting all the puzzle pieces and the client has completed the tasks that go with each of the puzzle pieces.

Quarantined Cuties: Emails/Social Media Posts

Contributed by Ann Davidson, [Canine Therapy Corps](#)

Desired Outcomes:

- Put a smile on people's faces first thing in the morning

Materials:

- Photos of therapy animals in their home environment
- Computer/laptop
- Email distribution system
- Social media platform

Population: Across the lifespan

Time Required: 15-30 minutes, depending on your familiarity with email system

Service Delivery: Email or social media post

Methodology:

Send daily or weekly lighthearted emails and social media posts throughout the pandemic with photos of what therapy animals are up to during the quarantine.

Modifications:

Provide some context on what the animals would normally be doing during this time to give some general information about therapy animals, if desired.

Potential Risks:

Get approval before adding emails to your email list.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration for taking photos

Closing:

Optionally, you can close emails with helpful tips or reminders for staying healthy during the pandemic.

Read with Therapy Dogs

Contributed by Colleen Anne Dell, PhD, University of Saskatchewan, Department of Sociology and School of Public Health, [APA HAI Section Member](#)

Desired Outcomes:

- Extend the sense of connection
- Gain comfort and support

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Children's book that has secured copyright access to read aloud online

Population: Children and others who want to connect with a therapy dog

Time Required: This varies based on the length of time required to read the book out loud, plus editing, uploading, and promoting the video. Completed videos average approximately 8 minutes each.

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The overarching goal of www.therapydogs.ca, of which reading with therapy dogs is one component, is to virtually extend the sense of connection to the University of Saskatchewan by enabling students, and all people of Saskatchewan and elsewhere, to visit with the dogs online and gain comfort and support. Comfort and support are the goals of the in-person [St. John Ambulance therapy dog visiting program](#).
2. Contact a book's publisher and request permission to secure copyright access for posting video recordings of handlers reading the book to the public.
3. The handler positions the dog comfortably in front of the camera and records a video of the handler reading a children's story to the dog. They may use either a physical book or an online book.
4. Current therapy dogs, therapy dogs in training, and retired therapy dogs can participate alongside their handlers.

Modifications:

- The participant may read the book out loud to the dog on a Zoom call.
- Using Zoom with an online book allows the handler and therapy dog to be on screen alongside the book.

Potential Risks:

- Ensure that personal identifying information about the reader is not shared with an unknown audience.

- Attention should be given to the background chosen for the video. For example, do not have a house address in the frame.
- Ensure copyright access with the chosen book. Considering copyright, Therapy Dogs linked with Scholastic Canada to be able to read the books out loud online. Therapy Dogs also linked with private authors to obtain written consent through email.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration
- The close relationship or bond between the dog and handler should be obvious in the reading

Closing: Repeat the message of the reading. Link it to the therapy dog and how it applies to their life.

Additional Information:

Our activity (April – August 2020) shared evidence-informed information about pandemic-specific mental health self-care tips from the perspective of the therapy dogs. This will not continue as a focus in September following an evaluation – people simply want to visit with dogs without reference to COVID-19.

On-line book video example https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=BThOmLXlp7E&feature=emb_logo

Physical book video example

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=2JeOBmfjxWU&feature=emb_logo

Scavenger Hunt

Contributed by Carla Mounsey, Dementia Dog Project, [Dogs for Good](#), Animal Assisted Intervention
[International Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Increase social engagement
- Facilitate motivation
- Encourage physical activity
- Enable conversation and positive reminiscing when sharing the items found
- Engagement in daily activities
- Facilitate a daily routine

Materials:

- Container large enough for the dog to comfortably fit its head into (i.e., basket, box, etc.)
- Toilet paper roll (with items to find written on them) or objects of various colors (i.e., balls, beanbags, etc.)
- Reward for the dog (i.e., toy or treats)
- Dog mat or bed

Population: People with early to moderate stage dementia

Time Required: 30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. This activity encourages exercise through gentle movement and walking within the home environment.
2. Group rules are explained prior to engagement to ensure participants know what is expected.
 - a. Participants should only take part if they are able to maneuver safely around their environment.
 - b. The game is not a race. Participants should take their time and go at their own pace.
 - c. Only bring back items that are safe to carry (i.e., not heavy or bulky).

3. The dog will be asked to retrieve a toilet paper roll or colored ball from the container.
4. The handler reads out the item to find or shows the color to participants who will then find something with the same color on it while the dog waits on a mat or bed.
5. Participants will search for the item and bring it back to show the group.
6. Repeat until all articles have been drawn from the box. Typically, 7 or 8 items are enough for a 20 to 30-minute session with this population.

Modifications:

- The items can be altered to make the activity more difficult. For example, with “find something blue in your bathroom,” the participant must walk to a different room to find something that is not immediately obvious.
- The activity could be changed to focus more on education or speech. Examples include, “find 5 books you like” or, “find a favorite ornament and describe it to the dog before you show us.”
- The dog may also pick his own items to show the group.
- Activity can be tailored for one-on-one sessions.

Potential Risks:

- Participants may join the group not being fully aware that they must move around their home to take part. Group leaders may send instructions beforehand detailing that they will be joined by a therapy dog team and that they will be asked to stand up and walk around.
- There is also a risk that participants will race to find their items. Therefore, a reminder is given to take their time and that the game is not competitive.
- A spouse or caregiver should be available to participate with them to improve safety and facilitate success while searching for items.
- Note the dog’s body language and behavior for signs of stress/fatigue.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- An active and enthusiastic retrieve as the dog will be undertaking multiple retrieves of similar items for up to 15-20 minutes, with frequent breaks.
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

The activity comes to a natural end once all items are picked from the box.

Self-Regulation

Contributed by Molly DePrekel MA LP, Cairnshealing.com, molly@mwtraumacenter.com, [APA HAI Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Calming
- Self-soothing
- Self-regulation
- Discovering what helps one calm themselves

Materials:

- Equine or other animal who has some experience with TTouch
- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population: Participants 8 years old and above who are working on internal self-regulation

Time Required: 10 minutes or longer, can be completed in multiple sessions

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Tellington TTouch is simple to do and anyone can learn the techniques. Please be mindful of clients who have a history of trauma or have tactile sensitivities. Pay attention to participants' somatic (body) experience and remember, less is more. Teach this carefully and get feedback from clients and animals as to what is working and what they do not like. Stop the TTouch if clients become overwhelmed.
2. The clinician becomes familiar with TTouch Training prior to the session. He/she practices ear slides, hair slides, a heart hug, and other TTouch techniques on themselves before trying it on an

animal or teaching the client how to do this for themselves (see “Additional Information” for instructions).

3. The clinician explains TTouch to the participant and how it is done.
 - a. “The goal of the TTouch bodywork is to activate the life force and function of cells and awaken their intelligence, which creates physical and mental balance.”
 - b. Explanation for children: “TTouch is a way to do some energy healing for yourself and the animals. We use it for calming our nervous system and helping our animals relax. It is easy and there is no wrong way to do it. If you do not want to touch the animal or do it on your own body, you can do it in the air off the animals or your own skin. The animal will still feel it” (DePrekel, M. written communication 2020).
4. The clinician demonstrates some TTouch techniques with an animal. Have the participant watch the animal’s body language and determine what the animal prefers for TTouches.
5. The participant tries some of these same techniques on themselves (i.e., ear slide, hair slide, etc.).
6. Ask the participant to watch some videos on TTouch, then determine which ones work for his/her own self-regulation and soothing (see “Additional Information” for recommended videos).
7. Build on this in the following sessions and have them do TTouch each day for calming.

Modifications:

- If the client has tactile sensitivity or self-touch is too much, have them practice a few inches away from their body.

Potential Risks:

- Tell participants to try these only on themselves. They may try it on their own animals if their animal enjoys physical contact.
- The activity may bring up issues for clients with trauma (i.e., those who have past trauma with touch). Let them know there is not a right way to do TTouch. Each person can determine what works best for them.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Previous experience with TTouch or enjoys physical touch
- Can stand in cross ties or on a lead rope (equines)
- Sit/stand and stay with duration to accept energy work

Closing:

Upon completion of the activity, teach Noah’s March TTouch and demonstrate with the animal to clear their space.

Additional Information:

Ear slide instructions: <http://happypawzwellness.com/how-to-do-ttouch-ear-slides/>

1. Use very light pressure. Start at the base of the ear.
2. Rotate the base in a circular motion one time, then slide your finger(s) and thumb along the ear, following the natural direction of the ear (i.e., up, down, or out).
3. Be sure to include the tip of the ear.

Video recommendations:

- Hair slide for a horse <https://www.wehorse.com/en/video/tellington-ttouch-hair-slides/>
- Ear slides for a dog <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Bk6LZ46-B8>
- Heart hug for humans <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaFkCY9Xbk8>
- TTouch for humans explained https://ttouch.com/Our_Method_for/TTouch-for-You_/Why_TTouch-for-You_/index.html

Shape Walk Video

Contributed by Katrina Winsor, MS ABA, MS Anthrozoology, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, The New Interdisciplinary School, APA HAI Member, International Society for Anthrozoology Member, Association of Professional Dog Trainers Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Provide recipients a connection with therapy animals when face-to-face visits and interactions are not appropriate
- Improve perspective-taking
- Improve receptive and expressive communication
- Naming shapes
- Improve visual perceptual skills

Materials:

- Videos and photos of the animal on a walk
- PowerPoint or other computer program that allows photos to be placed in sequential order and add text directions/descriptors

Population: Children 2-6 years old and individuals who have difficulties with visual perceptual skills

Time Required: 30-45 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Take the animal for a walk around your neighborhood, local park, or (if appropriate) around the facility where therapy typically occurs.
2. Film short video clips of the animal on the walk and take still photos of objects of interest along the walk for later editing.
3. Photos and videos can be uploaded into PowerPoint or another program that allows you to incorporate multimedia into a presentation or video. Photos can be edited to highlight objects of interest.
4. Ask the participants what shapes they see as they view each slide.

Modifications:

- This application can be used for any species of animals if photo permissions are obtained for the use of any photo and permission to visit the designated facility are obtained in advance.
- Increase the difficulty by taking photos with busy backgrounds or asking the participant to identify smaller shapes.

Potential Risks:

- Ensure that photos and videos are taken safely with animals on loose leash.
- Notice signs of fatigue in the participant from staring at the screen and incorporate eye breaks if necessary.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Loose leash walking

Closing:

The session will naturally end once the participant has completed the virtual walk through the PowerPoint.

The Shell Game

Contributed by Ellen Herlache-Pretzer, Ed.D., MA, OTRL, CPDT-KA

Desired Outcomes:

- Trunk control and stability
- Gross and fine motor coordination
- Grasp and release
- Visual tracking
- Crossing the midline

Materials:

Therapist/dog team:

- Whiteboard and marker
- 3 identical opaque (not see-through) cups that will slide well on a smooth surface and are sturdy enough that they will not be crushed when moved
- Treat to hide under a cup (should be yummy and motivating to the dog!)

Client:

- 3 identical opaque cups that will slide well on a smooth surface and are sturdy enough that they will not be crushed when moved
- Something to hide under the cups (i.e., coin, small ball, crumpled up piece of paper, etc.)

Population: Clients with a variety of concerns, such as deficits in trunk control and stability, visual tracking, gross/fine motor skills, grasp and release, visual scanning skills, or crossing midline

Time Required: 1-2 minutes per round

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session



Methodology:

1. Prior to beginning the game, the therapist will instruct the client (or someone who is with the client) about positioning for the activity (i.e., how the client should be positioned and supported, where the cups should be positioned in relation to the patient, etc.).
2. The therapist will position three opaque cups, face down, approximately one foot apart from each other on a smooth surface (i.e., hardwood floor, tile, or a low table) and position the dog so he/she is in a stay, facing away from the cups. The therapist will then put a yummy treat underneath one of the cups. The stronger scented, the better!

3. When the client is ready, the therapist will show him/her under which cup the treat is hidden. Once the client verifies the location of the treat, the therapist will begin sliding the cups around, making sure that the cups stay flat on the surface.
4. After approximately 10-15 seconds, the therapist will stop moving the cups and ask the client to guess under which cup the treat is located.
5. Once the client guesses, the therapist will release the dog and ask the dog to identify under which cup the treat is located by sitting or standing calmly in front of the correct cup. Once the dog has indicated the correct cup, the therapist can release the dog to eat the treat.
6. If the client guessed correctly, he/she gets a point, recorded by the therapist as a tally mark on the whiteboard.
7. The client then takes a turn as the cup mover. He/she will position three opaque cups, face down, on a smooth surface. He/she will then place an item (i.e., coin, small ball, or crumpled up piece of paper) under one of the cups.
8. When the therapist is ready, the client will show him/her under which cup the item is hidden. Once the therapist verifies the location of the item, the client will begin sliding the cups around (using the hand specified by the therapist), making sure that the tops of the cups stay flat on the surface.
9. After approximately 10-15 seconds (may be longer, based upon client's motor abilities and therapeutic goals), the therapist will ask the client to stop moving the cups and the therapist will guess under which cup the item is located (the therapist can "confer" with the dog before making the guess).
10. If the therapist and dog were correct, they get a point, recorded by the therapist as a tally mark on the whiteboard.
11. The game can continue for as many rounds as desired. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins!



Modifications:

For the dog (when therapist is moving cups):

- Put small air holes in the top of the cup so that it is easier for the dog to get the scent of the treat
- Modify type of treat used (consider using stronger-smelling treats)

For the client (when client is moving cups):

- Modify size, shape, texture, weight, etc. of cup and item hidden under cup
- Modify type and/or height of surface (smoothness) on which cups are positioned
- Modify positioning of cups in relation to midline
- Modify how far apart the cups are positioned from one another and the client
- Modify position of client during activity (sitting or standing)

Potential Risks:

For the client, consider loss of balance/fall risk (if not positioned/supported appropriately).

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Dog should have a solid sit/down and stay around distractions (i.e., treats and moving items)
- Dog needs to know how to play the shell game (i.e., identify under which cup a treat is located and sit or stand calmly next to it to indicate where the treat is)
- It may also be fun if the dog can “whisper” an answer into the therapist’s ear (i.e., put his/her muzzle to the therapist’s ear on cue)

Closing:

When the therapist is ready to conclude the activity, he/she will inform the client that they will complete one final round (they will each take one last turn hiding/guessing). Once the final round is completed, the therapist or client counts tally marks and calculates final scores. Whoever has the most points wins!

Additional Information:

The therapist should be in contact with the client prior to initiating the activity to be sure he/she has access to all required materials (i.e., cups, item to go under cup, etc.) and work surfaces are set up in an appropriate manner to assist in achievement of therapeutic goals for the activity. The client may need an assistant present to help with positioning, cuing, etc. during the activity. Discuss this with the client in advance.

Somatic Animal for All Species

Contributed by Patti Anderson, M.Ed., [APA HAI Member](#), [Pet Partners Evaluator](#)

Desired Outcomes:

- Identifying feelings
- Learning how emotions can physically affect someone
- Identifying where in our bodies we may be holding stress
- Utilizing relaxation strategies

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- 1 document with outline of the species the client will be working with that the practitioner creates
- 1 document with outline of a person that the practitioner creates
(See Additional Information for instructions on how to create the documents)
- Printer
- Crayons or colored markers

Population: Youth between the ages of 5-17 years old

Time Required: 20-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Virtual Platforms

Methodology:

1. The “Somatic Animal” outlines, that the practitioner creates, are sent to the client ahead of time. The client is asked to print them out prior to their session.
2. During the session, the client observes the animal’s body language as the practitioner interacts with his/her animal by petting or playing with them, and/or feeding them treats.
3. If the animal knows hand signals, the practitioner can demonstrate and have the client observe.
4. Ask the client, “If animals can’t talk like humans, then how do you think they can communicate their feelings?” Discuss if the animal can read our body language and if we can read theirs too in order to understand what they may be feeling.
5. The practitioner asks questions that apply to the species they are partnering with (i.e., What was the animal’s tail doing? What did their head do when the practitioner leaned/reached over them? Did they come closer to the practitioner or back away with the activities? Did their breathing get faster? When? Did they vocalize at all? What was their favorite activity? How could the client tell?, etc.).
6. A color code on the “Somatic Animal” outline corresponds to different emotions. Ask the client to color in where they think the animal might feel each one of the emotions indicated in its body.
7. Ask the client to discuss why they colored in the various areas as they did for the animal. Make sure to stress that there is no right or wrong answer with this activity, just individual observations.

8. Ask the client to color in the drawing for their own bodies on the human outline of where they might feel the four emotions listed and discuss.

Modifications:

- Have the client virtually play with the therapy animal! Have them involved in the process of playing by picking out a toy from several choices. The practitioner plays with the animal using the toy the client has selected and the client makes observations.
- If the client takes a long time to color, have them draw an X with the color that corresponds to the feeling instead of coloring in an area, letting them know they can complete it later if they wish to.
- To expand the list of the types of feelings indicated on the “Somatic Animal” drawing, ask the client to name some other possible feelings they might also have. Ask them to pick one and dedicate a new color to represent it. The practitioner asks the client to color in where they might feel this additional emotion and then discusses it with them.
- Teens may prefer to just talk about their observations of the animal’s body movements instead of coloring. If teens do want to color, the clinician may add a coloring key with more complex emotions, such as irritated instead of mad, or concerned instead of sad, etc.

Potential Risks:

The animal may be tired/not interested in engaging. The practitioner should note when their animal usually takes naps or is the least active during the day, especially when working with senior animals. The sessions should be scheduled when the animal would most likely want to play and engage in activities. For example, rabbits and guinea pigs are generally more active in the morning and early evening and may be more interested in interaction during those times.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

Response to hand signals (as appropriate for that species) for an emphasis on how animals can communicate with humans through body language.

Closing:

Close this activity with a relaxation breathing exercise for the client. The practitioner may need to teach the exercise, which may extend the time for this lesson. It is important for the practitioner to ask their client to thank the animal for joining them in this session!

Additional Information:

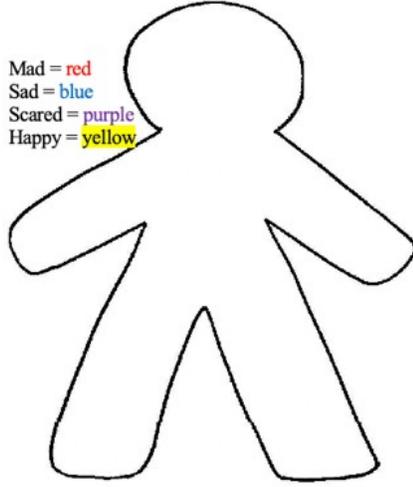
Instructions for making the “Somatic Animal” document - Type “Outline of (species of animal)” into the search engine of your computer to find the species outline you are looking for. There will be many choices available. Add the color code to the document. See samples below.

Example #1



Mad = red
Sad = blue
Scared = purple
Happy = yellow

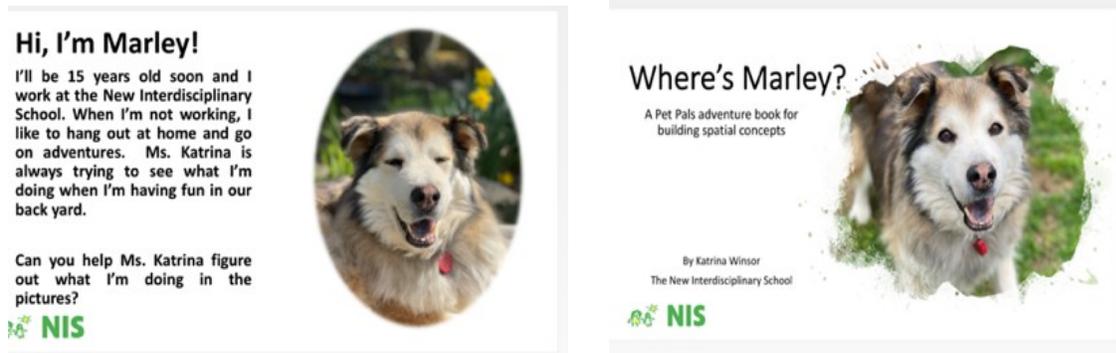
Example #2



Mad = red
Sad = blue
Scared = purple
Happy = yellow

Spatial Concepts Photo Book

Contributed by Katrina Winsor, MS ABA, MS Anthrozoology, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, [The New Interdisciplinary School](#), [APA HAI Member](#), [International Society for Anthrozoology Member](#), [Association of Professional Dog Trainers Member](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Provide recipients a connection with therapy animals when face-to-face visits and interactions are not appropriate
- Improve receptive and expressive communication
- Learn spatial concepts

Materials:

- Photos of animals engaged in activities to put into a book that demonstrates spatial concepts (i.e., up, down, in, out, under, behind, etc.)
- PowerPoint or other computer program that allows photos to be placed in sequential order and add text directions/descriptors

Population: Individuals who have difficulty with spatial concepts

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Take the animal on a walk around your neighborhood, local park, or (if appropriate) around the facility where therapy typically occurs.
2. Film short video clips of the animal on the walk and take still photos of objects of interest along the walk for later editing.
3. Photos and videos can be uploaded into PowerPoint or another program on a computer/tablet that allows you to incorporate multimedia into a presentation or video. Photos can be edited to highlight objects of interest.
4. Show the participant each slide and ask him/her to identify how the animal is spatially oriented (i.e., What is behind the animal? What is under the bench?).

Modifications:

- This can be used for any species of animals if photo permissions are obtained for the use of any photo.

Potential Risks:

- Photos must be taken safely with animal welfare in mind. Ensure that the animal is displaying comfortable and relaxed body language.
- Minimal potential risks to participants aside from the risks associated with handling papers or viewing images on a computer screen.

**Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:**

- Any appropriate photo permissions should be obtained.

Closing:

The session will naturally end once the participant has completed the virtual walk through the PowerPoint.

Story Creation

Contributed by Laura Hey, Health Healers Inc. Founder, BS in Occupational Therapy, Certified Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist, Pet Professionals Guild Member, Force Free Trainers of Wisconsin Member, APA HAI Member

Storytelling Prompt Cards

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Will they go alone or with someone? | What will they wear? |
| What do they do after they arrive? | Who will they meet? |
| How are they feeling? <small>(excited, happy, surprised?)</small> | |

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Storytelling Prompt Cards

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Who is this dog? <small>(name, breed, color, size?)</small> | Where are they going? |
| What will they pack? | Why are they going? |
| When does this happen? <small>(what year, season, time of day, far into the future?)</small> | How will they get there? |

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Desired Outcomes:

- Participate in meaningful activity
- Increase compliance
- Increase attention to task
- Improve self-esteem and pride
- Brighter affect
- Expression of humor
- Decrease loneliness

Materials:

- Computer
- Paper/Pencil
- Storytelling Prompt Cards

Population: Adults with developmental delays, cognitive disabilities, etc.

Time Required: 30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The handler asks the participant to create an adventure story about the therapy animal while the animal is positioned to be visible on the computer monitor.
2. The handler reads the Storytelling Prompt Cards aloud one at a time and records the participant's responses.
3. The handler reads the adventure story back to the participant once it is completed, which often results in many laughs.

Modifications:

- The Storytelling Prompt Cards may be held on the screen for the participant to read.
- The participant can read the completed story out loud to the animal-handler team.
- Steps may need to be broken down to meet the participant's capabilities.
- The amount of assistance may need to be modified to meet the participant's capabilities.

Potential Risks:

- Note the animal's body language and behavior for signs of stress, discomfort, or fatigue.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration
- The animal should be able to meaningfully interact with the computer and video conferencing platform.
- Training with the handler behind the screen is often easier for the animals, especially in the beginning.

Closing:

Upon completion of the activity or as each prompt card is answered, the animal is given a treat or searches for one hidden within view of the monitor. Many participants enjoy playing part in the 'Find It' game.

Story Time

Contributed by Lynn Belkin & Kristen Priven, Boston Children's Hospital; Janet Weisberg, MS OTR/L HPCS, Hold Your Horses



Photo credit: Hold Your Horses

Desired Outcomes:

- Attention
- Visual attention
- Listening skills
- Reading skills
- Self-regulation and co-regulation
- Improve confidence and motivation with reading

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Developmentally appropriate book(s)

Population: Children 3-10 years old

Time Required: Variable

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. Identify books relevant to the participant or practice setting. Identify the age and/or developmental level of the participant to determine who will be reading to whom.
2. Choose an environment to read where the animal is visible in the background and able to step into camera view safely.
3. Engage the participant in selecting a book by providing at least 2 book choices.
4. Read the story aloud and/or offer to take turns reading to the animal on the screen.
5. Time may be provided either before or after the reading for the participant to ask questions, get to know the animal, etc.

Modifications:

- If the participant is too dysregulated to sit still for reading, engage in movement prior to reading to facilitate calmness.
- The participant can also sit in bed, on a chair, on a ball or bolster, if available.

Potential Risks:

- The participant may become frustrated and/or upset that they cannot physically interact with the animal.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:*Interactions with horses:*

- Horses must be comfortable with a human seated in their paddock or stall area.
- Comfortable around electronic devices

Interactions with dogs:

- Basic cues and skills
- Comfortable around electronic devices

Closing:

Ask the participant to select a book for the next session and allow for time to connect with the animal regarding the book selection. Depending on the program, the participant may be offered a delivered copy of the book and/or a copy of the animal's business card.

Story Writing About Dogs

Contributed by Shira Smilovici, Psy.D, L.P.C., [ClipaAat](#) Founder



Desired Outcomes:

- Trauma elaboration
- Opportunity to put words to difficult situations that are hard to name
- Projection on paper to elaborate a potential crisis
- An aide to help manage anxiety, depression, or other emotional challenges

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensil
- Electronic equipment for video meeting (iPad, computer or suitable electronic device with camera)

Population: Children between the ages of 6-17 years old

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The clinician positions the animal within view of the participant and asks him/her to create a story about the animal.
2. The participant uses their computer or pencil and paper to write a story about what the dog is thinking and doing.
3. Once the story is completed, the participant (or the clinician) reads the story aloud.

4. Discuss the story point by point and notice how the dog's story resembles the participant's life story.
5. Find the statements with emotional charge and help the participant make sense of what they mean by putting them into words.
6. For the story to have therapeutic and emotional value, it must be deconstructed piece by piece. The clinician is looking for triggers that may open a dialogue between the participant and the therapist. The more emotional aspects that are found, the deeper the conversation can go.
7. While interpreting the story, use straightforward language and words the participant is familiar with and according to the life/developmental stage he/she is passing through. Normally, the story will have a challenge that the main character will go through and barriers the protagonist must overcome. Therefore, the story helps create the necessary internal tools to deal with difficult situations/emotions.

Modifications:

- If the child is having difficulty with beginning the story, the clinician can help by verbally prompting him/her to start creating the story from the dog's point of view and encourage the child to continue building the story. The clinician can use different aspects of the child's life that he/she is aware of to help make it as close as possible to the circumstances that the child faces day-to-day.
- If the participant is too young to write, he/she can verbally tell the story to the clinician who will write it out.
- If the participant cannot relate to the story, find the resolutions for the dog. The clinician is helping the participant develop the ability to read emotional cues and provide him/her with helpful tools to resolve their internal issues.

Potential Risks: This activity should only be performed by those who have been trained in mental health.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

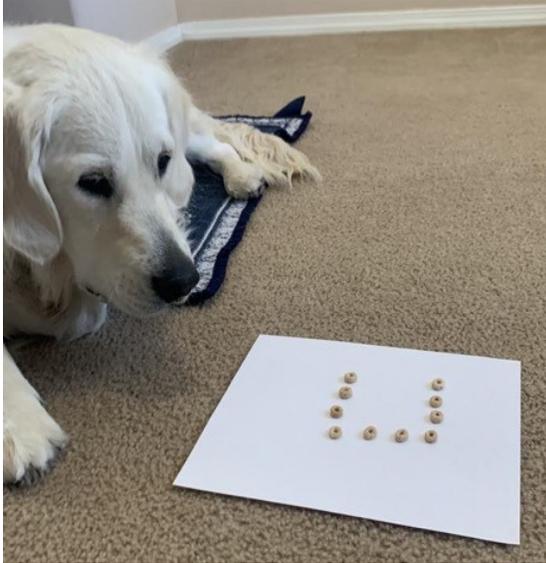
- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Elaborate on the story with the participant to prevent any loose strings that may affect the participant's functions during the day. For the activity to have therapeutic effect, the clinician must ensure that every section of the story is addressed. Notice how the participant is projecting their life story and emotions in the story. This is generally addressed by using the story to remind them of when they went through something similar. Reflect on how they resolved the problem and discuss different solutions that could have happened. Encourage the child to talk about his/her feelings before the end of the session. Upon completion of the activity, the dog is given a treat.

Treat Designs

Contributed by Macy Porter, MOTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Section Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Visual perceptual skills (spatial relations and visual discrimination)
- Sequencing
- Concept formation (i.e. organizing a variety of information to form thoughts and ideas)
- Spatial operations (i.e. mentally manipulating the position of objects in various relationships)
- Attention to task
- Fine motor skills

Materials:

- Dog mat
- Approximately 20 small treats (i.e., cheerios, Zukes, kibble, etc.) per round
- Solid-colored paper or surface to create the designs on

Population: Pediatrics, clients with cognitive deficits and/or visual perceptual deficits

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The therapist creates a design by stacking, lining up, etc. 5-10 treats on the solid-colored surface and the client attempts to copy the design with their treats.
2. Once the client has successfully duplicated the original design, the dog gets to eat the treats.

3. The roles are then switched, and the client creates their own design and the therapist duplicates the design.

Modifications:

- If the client is working on goals related to food aversions, the designs can be made from non-preferred, dog safe foods (i.e., cucumbers, carrots, broccoli, etc.).
- To address visual memory, the original design can be covered after the client has 5 seconds to look at it.
- To address figure ground, the treats can be placed in a bowl with a variety of other treats and the clients must pick out 1 type of treat to create the design.
- To address form constancy, the designs can be made with treats that are similar in size, color, etc.
- To address fine motor skills, designs can be made using various tools (i.e., tweezers, chopsticks, spoon, etc.)
- The background color of the paper or mat can be changed to increase/decrease contrast for visual discrimination.
- To address receptive and expressive communication, one person may verbally explain how to create the design. For example, the first treat is in the middle of the paper, the next treat is placed on top, the next treat is to the left, etc.

Potential Risks:

- If the design is being created too close to the dog, they may have difficulty waiting for the treats and try to eat them before the design is completed.
- Ensure all treats used are dog safe.
- If the client has difficulty with impulse control, they may attempt to eat the treats. It may be beneficial to utilize dog safe human food, such as cheerios, Kix, peas, etc.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- “Leave it”
- Sit/down and stay with duration on a mat/bed

Closing:

Once the client and the therapist have had a turn to create a design, they can either repeat the activity or end it.

Treat with Air Shooter Using Social Distancing

Contributed by Lori Lambert, COTA/L & 'Winston'



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve bilateral coordination
- Increase range of motion
- Improve eye-hand coordination
- Gradation of force (knowing how hard to push, pull, or hold items)
- Hand strengthening
- Problem solving skills

Materials:

- Flat surface, preferably a rectangular table
- Small water shooter with a plunger (sold at the dollar store), no water used
- Sugar free ball shaped cereal that sounds like 'mix' or other puffed/lightweight dog treats

Population: Pediatrics and adults

Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Service Delivery: In-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Position the client at the long end of the table or have them lay prone on the floor at least 3 feet away from the dog.
2. If the dog is tall enough, have the dog go to the opposite end of the table and "stay." Otherwise, have the dog sit on a chair. If the client is on the floor, dogs can go to a designated spot and "stay."

3. Have the client place a piece of cereal onto the table/floor approximately an arm's length away. Place the nozzle of the toy directly behind the cereal with the plunger arm extended.
4. The client should push the plunger arm in with one hand while stabilizing the toy with the other. Air will blow from the nozzle and move the treat towards the dog. Keep the air shooter parallel to the surface for maximum effect.
5. Repeat, using your clinical judgement, as to how many repetitions the client can complete or until they lose interest.

Modifications:

- To make it easier, the therapist may need to stabilize the shooter so that the client can concentrate on pushing the plunger.
- Assistance may be needed for treat placement to maximize the client's success.
- Once the client has mastered the technique of propelling the treat to the dog in a single attempt, start a contest on consecutive successes.
- Line up the treats in front of the client about 2 inches apart to send the treats in rapid fire fashion.

Potential Risks:

- The dog may not maintain a "stay," which could disrupt the activity and not adhere to the social distancing aspect of the task.
- If the dog gets too close, the client could fall or trip over the dog, which could hurt either party or both.
- Ensure that the client does not blow air at the dog's face.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration
- Have the patience to "leave it" until the treat is near
- For smaller breed dogs, be able to sit in a chair or raised surface
- Make sure dog is pre-trained for the unusual noise and motion of this activity

Closing:

The length of this activity is largely dependent on the attention span of the client. Give a verbal prompt such as, "let's do 3 more" before transitioning to another task.

Virtual Cues for Those with a Speech Impairment

Contributed by Shannan Anderson, CTRS, Recreation Therapist and Therapy Dog Volunteer Coordinator for Rehabilitation Program, [APA HAI Member](#)

Desired Outcomes:

- Increase expressive communication by giving cues to dogs
- Increase self-confidence when the dog responds to the individual's cues

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population:

- Individuals with a speech impairment due to stroke or other medical condition
- Individuals participating in a physical rehabilitation program

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The participant gives cues to the dog (i.e., sit, lay, roll over, etc.) while the handler offers rewards to the dog for following the given cue.
2. Encourage the participant to give the dog verbal praise (i.e., good dog, thank you, etc.).

Modifications:

- The participant may need to use a speech amplifier to increase his/her speech volume.
- The handler may provide written cues on index cards for the participant to read from.
- The participant may need a demonstration from the handler first.
- The participant may benefit from repetition.
- The participant may use hand gestures/signals instead of verbal cues.

Potential Risks:

- The dog may not respond to cues from the participant.
- Note the dog's body language and behavior for signs of stress, discomfort, or fatigue.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic dog skills and cues
- Comfortable around computer screens
- Responds to and meaningfully interacts with the computer or iPad
- Responds to hand gestures (optional)

Closing:

- The handler and the participant may have a closing discussion to process what went well, if objectives were met and what they enjoyed best.
- Review progress made within the session and potential goals for the next visit.
- Assess the individual's mood, motivation and pain levels by asking directly how they are feeling after the session.

Virtual Hospital Visits

Contributed by Lynn Belkin & Kristen Priven, [Boston Children's Hospital](#); Ann Davidson, [Canine Therapy Corps](#); Whitney Romaine, [Akron Children's Hospital](#)



Photo Credit: Akron Children's Hospital, T Stevens

Desired Outcomes:

- Promote relaxation, reduce stress and elevate mood
- Provide comfort and reduce pain perception
- Normalcy, respite and/or distraction from the hospital setting
- Improve patient rapport and receptivity with hospital environment and staff
- Improve social skills, communication, and promote social engagement
- Improve motivation to participate in standard of care activities
- Enhance AAT during restricted visitation due to isolation/quarantine

Materials:

- Treats, puzzle toys, and toys
- Electronic equipment for video meeting (tablet, computer, etc.)
- HIPAA and other safety-approved video conferencing platforms (Zoom, Doxy.me, Vido, etc.)
- Hospital approval
- PDI Screen Wipes to sanitize device in-between uses (if facilitated by hospital staff)
- Sanitizer wipes for non-technology related supplies or carts (if facilitated by hospital staff)
- Tablet stand (optional)

Population: Hospital-based patients of various ages

Time Required: Varies, typically 5-20 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The participants either request to see the team or the medical staff identify those that could most benefit from this interaction.
2. Schedule clients prior to sessions. Coordinate the schedule with nurses/medical staff as the team visits patients.
3. A facility-approved volunteer/staff may facilitate the video sessions. The facilitator should check in at the nurse's station upon arrival to each floor and double check each patient's room for exclusion events (i.e., contact precautions, isolation, sleeping, provider in room, visit declination or "no visitors" signage).
4. Depending on an organization's information security policies, the participant may access the link on their own device, or the facilitator walks from room to room with the device open to a video call with a visiting animal-handler team.
5. The facilitator will use hand sanitizer prior to entering and exiting each participant's room. Staff will sanitize the device and ask the participant to sanitize his/her hands. The device will be given to the patient to engage in the visit.
6. The handler will introduce the animal and facilitate activities to engage the patient. Patients can interact with the animals by giving cues, discussing the animal, reading to the animal or dictating how many treats the handler puts into a treat puzzle.
7. The facilitator thanks the patient for participating and retrieves the tablet at the end of the session. The facilitator will exit the room, sanitize the device and perform hand hygiene. The volunteer/staff repeats this process when visiting subsequent rooms.
8. Hospital staff reserves the right to prohibit or terminate in-progress virtual visits for any reason. Volunteer teams may also terminate their visit at any point as needed, such as a medical emergency, stress, prolonged human/canine disengagement or bathroom break.

Modifications:

- If available, agility equipment could be incorporated.
- The participant can access Zoom while lying still in their bed, sitting up in a chair or while walking around. If the participant is unable to hold the tablet, a caregiver/staff can hold the tablet so the participant may see the animal.
- Videos of the animal may be shared if the animal needs a break.
- The time of the visit may be increased or decreased to meet participant/animal needs.
- Utilize the closed captioning feature for patients who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- If patients cannot speak loud enough, the handler may stand out of frame and provide a hand signal.

Potential Risks:

- The animal may need additional feedback from the handler to stay "connected" to the device.
- The handler will need to monitor animal signs of exhaustion, stress, or anxiety.
- Possible cross-contamination involving tablet device if not properly sanitized between visits.
- Possible HIPAA/privacy breach

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Basic cues and skills
- Target training (optional)
- Exposed to computer screens and able to interact with the camera in a meaningful way
- The animal should have extensive exposure to medical monitor sounds and visual monitor displays from the hospital setting.

Closing: At the end of the session, close with something positive for the animal and the patient. Give the animal a treat or toy to close the session or once they have completed the desired skills.

Additional Information:*Visits with Program Based Volunteers:*

If or when the visit continues for a longer period, it is often due to engaged conversation between all involved. The dog may be actively sharing tricks for short bursts of time but resting or wandering outside the camera view for the duration. Virtual visits tend to consider the well-being of the dog in this way.

Partnering with External Organizations:

This is an opportunity for creativity! Partner with your local zoo, animal sanctuary or other AAI facility. Work with organizations you are familiar with, who will follow your organization's policies and who have animal handling training. *Always* do a test call prior to patient visits. This allows you to identify connectivity, video, or audio issues before working with participants.

Virtual Obstacle Course Construction

Contributed by Melissa Winkle OTR/L, FAOTA, CPDT-KA^{1,2,3,4}, and Phoebe Yam OTD, OTR/L^{1,2,3},
¹ Dogwood Therapy Services, ² Animal Assisted Intervention International members, ³ HAI Section
members, ⁴ Center for Human-Animal Interventions, Oakland University (Michigan)



Desired Outcomes:

- Improve cognitive processing
- Improve psychosocial functioning
- Increase physical strength
- Improve gross motor coordination and motor planning
- Improve body awareness
- Improve balance

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Dog treats
- A place for the dog to rest
- Something for the dog to do while it waits for the course to be built, either on camera or off (i.e., a bone or toy, or even just a nap)
- Selected items in the handler/dog environment that can be used for an agility or obstacle course (i.e., pillow, blanket, pool noodles, etc.)

Population: Clients of any age or ability who are participating in AAA, AAT or AAE with any provider from any discipline. Examples include children with gross motor delays and sensory processing difficulties.

Time Required: 15-45 minutes for the entire session; dog actively works for only 5-10 minutes at a time

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. The service provider should be familiar with what the participant has in his/her environment to work with (i.e., living room furniture, blankets, pillows, small tables/stools, hula hoop, step stool, etc.).
2. The camera should be set up so the client can see the service provider and the entire room he/she is working in. It is recommended that a caregiver be present if the participant is setting up an obstacle course in his/her home.
3. The service provider explains that they will be building a fun obstacle course for the dog to go through. The participant and service provider agree on the number of obstacles (i.e., a 6-item obstacle course). The service provider also explains that if the participant sees something that could be scary or unsafe for the dog, he/she will say so, and they can revise the plan. Initially, the participant and service provider can take turns adding something to the course.
4. The service provider and participant discuss the items in the room that they can use to build an obstacle course for the dog. The dog is placed somewhere out of the way with something to do while the client 'builds the obstacle course.'
5. Each person takes a turn to describe an item, how it will be used, and where it should be placed. The service provider is responsible for placing items in a manner that is safe and within the dog's capabilities (i.e., the dog will start by sitting on this rug, go under the table that has been draped with a blanket, and hop from one couch cushion to the next. At the end, the dog is rewarded with a treat or toy).
6. The participant and service provider may set up similar obstacle courses within their homes. For example, pillows may be used as a stepping stone, a folded-up blanket is used as a balance beam, and the pool noodles become an agility jump. The participant completes the sequence of steps on the obstacle course, then "tags" the therapist so the dog can go through the obstacle course.

Modifications:

- For pediatrics, the service provider can ask the participant to build an obstacle course for the dog, and the service provider tells the client what to build in their own homes with the items in their room, so that the client also goes through an obstacle course, too.
- This activity can be modified by increasing/decreasing the number of obstacles and exchanging the pillows for wiggle cushions or balance boards.
- Instead of asking the dog to go through the obstacle course, the service provider can go through the obstacle course and give the treat to the dog waiting at the end.

Potential Risks:

- The client could injure themselves while completing an obstacle course in their home. A caregiver should be present to help facilitate.
- The service provider must ensure that the client has stand-by assistance from a caregiver if they have difficulties with balance.
- The obstacle course may be too difficult for the dog. It is the responsibility of the handler to advocate for the dog and suggest modifications, so the dog feels safe and has fun.
- For video sessions, if the client wishes to include their own dog in the room, the dog must be able to stay in place such that the client does not bump into or trip over the dog.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Experience and enjoyment of virtual visits and agility/obstacle courses
- Able to wait while the course is being built
- Comfortable with people moving on dynamic balance equipment
- No physical issues or illnesses that physical activity would contraindicate

Closing: At the end of the session, close with something positive for the canine and the participant. Once the client has finished giving a set number of treats to the dog, the therapist and client will participate in activity cleanup.

Additional Information: This can easily be modified working with other species. It is critical to ensure, however, that animals have been introduced to Zoom/computers, and a variety of sounds while provided with positive reinforcement (i.e., treats, feeding in front of a screen, etc.).

Virtual “Tricks” for All Species

Contributed by Patti Anderson, M.Ed., APA HAI Section Member, Pet Partners Evaluator

Desired Outcomes:

- Goal setting
- Strengthening executive functions
- Learning how to evaluate a plan for efficacy and safety
- Practicing teamwork

Note: This lesson has multiple application opportunities that can be customized by the practitioner for each individual they work with, depending on their treatment goals.

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or applicable electronic device with camera capabilities)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)
- Treats for the animal (have their absolute favorite treats that can be quickly and easily consumed)
- Several of the animal’s toys

Population: All populations

Time Required: 15-20 minutes

Service Delivery: Virtual session

Methodology:

1. The practitioner introduces their animal to the participant, letting them know a little bit about that species. Together, they create a list of simple “tricks” that the animal might enjoy learning. An easy way to teach a “trick” is to shape an animal’s natural behavior. The participant chooses one of the “tricks” and can brainstorm with the practitioner some ideas about how they could teach it to that animal.
2. The practitioner reviews each idea with the participant by having them evaluate each one. It is important to emphasize that it takes time to learn a new skill so it might take more time than is in one session for the animal to learn it. If the participant and practitioner meet on a regular basis, they can help the animal practice the trick until they know it, for a few minutes each session. The practitioner and the participant evaluate the list of “trick” ideas together. There are three important questions that should be asked for each idea: Would the animal enjoy doing this behavior? Would it be difficult to teach them? Do you think it is safe for them to do this “trick”?
3. The practitioner leads the discussion with the participant to determine which positive rewards might reinforce the animal’s behaviors involved with training this “trick.” Some animals may respond better to praise and/or petting instead of food/toy rewards. The practitioner lets the participant make their own observations to determine what might work for them.

- a. The participant selects several toys they think the animal might like best from the selection the practitioner has displayed on the screen. The participant observes the animal's interaction with each toy as the practitioner plays with the animal. The participant gives feedback on which toy (if any) seems to be a positive motivator for the animal.
- b. The practitioner pets the animal and the participant observes the animal's reaction by noting their body language or any vocalizing. The participant gives feedback on whether the animal enjoyed the petting and where their favorite spot to be pet was, based on their impressions.
- c. The participant observes the practitioner praising their animal, such as after the animal complies with a cue, command or just offered them a behavior they wanted to reinforce. The participant gives feedback on the animal's response and if they seemed to enjoy it. The practitioner has several types of small, yummy treats available for their animal. The participant selects one treat for the practitioner to give at a time and gives feedback on the one that the animal seems to prefer.

Note: The participant decides from the above activities which reinforcer is the most positive for the animal.

Modifications:

- The practitioner may want to demonstrate the tricks that the animal can already do as a transitional activity or just for fun!
- A variety of videos can be located on YouTube showing animals of different species doing a variety of tricks. The practitioner could locate a video of that animal doing several tricks to help give the participant some ideas on what they would like to teach them.
- The practitioner might ask the participant questions such as, "What motivates you? What is rewarding to you, praise, prizes, self-satisfaction, etc.? If you had a marker word, what would it be? What new skill would you like to learn? What are ways you could learn a new skill?"

Potential Risks:

- The animal may be tired/not interested in engaging in activities. For example, rabbits and guinea pigs are generally more active in the morning and early evening.
- If the animal is new to virtual visits, practice in the setting they will be in and note their preferences.

Closing: It is important to have the participant thank the animal for joining them in their session!

Additional Information:

Examples of "tricks" or shaping natural behaviors with small non-canine species:

- Rabbits: Many rabbits enjoy jumping up on a box or may want to "sit up" and look around.
- Cats: A simple trick for most cats is teaching them how to sit. Lure them into the sit, mark it, and treat. Cats also love touching things with their paw, so teaching a "high five" can be a fun "trick"

Note: Did you know that you can clicker train almost every species, even aquarium fish? Check out Karen Pryor (national expert on clicker training) at: www.clickertraining.com or just Google: "Clicker Train a _____ (supply the species of animal in the blank).

Training Tip:

To reinforce a behavior, the participant can mark it by clicking their tongue at the exact moment the animal does a behavior they want (called shaping). Instead they may want to come up with their own marker word.

To use a marker word instead, the participant selects a one syllable word and says it in a higher pitched and with a short, clipped sound. It is said *exactly* when the animal does a behavior that they want. Some common marker words are: "yes," "tip," "yip," or "good".

For example: When teaching a cat to shake a paw, click or use a marker word at the exact moment their paw is in the air, not when it is back on the ground. It is like taking a picture on your cell phone. If you "click" too late, the people have already looked away. Take a "picture" at the exact time of the behavior you want and mark that behavior with a click or a word, followed immediately by a small, easily eaten treat, short play time with a toy, a pet, or praise, depending on the animal. It is best to just utilize only one reinforcer (use their favorite one!) when they are learning a new behavior. Once they have learned the "trick" then adding a combination of praise/petting, etc. after the animal does a "trick" works well for most species.

Virtual Walks

Contributed by Carla Mounsey, Dementia Dog Project, [Dogs for Good](#), [Animal Assisted Intervention International](#) Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Increase confidence to go outside
- Improve social engagement
- Elicit motivation
- Increase physical activities
- Replace lost daily activities
- Build a daily routine

Materials:

- Electronic equipment (iPad, smart phone, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Dog leash
- Treats
- Face mask (if used/needed)
- Hand sanitizer (if used/needed)

Population: People with early to moderate stage dementia and their family members/caregivers

Time Required: 45 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

1. The initial meeting is completed via video chat from the participant's home to put names to faces, ask and answer any questions, and talk through the process of the first walk.

2. Carry out a risk assessment and profile, including relevant medical history, of the person with the diagnosis, to ensure that attendees can take part safely and within their physical, emotional, and cognitive boundaries. Consider any underlying health issues, mobility restrictions, or cognitive impairment that would affect their suitability to take part safely in the sessions. Attendees must be able to take part without undue or unnecessary risk to themselves or others and must always be accompanied on the walk by a family member/caregiver. Discuss what the participant may need to take with them, such as a mask and hand sanitizer (if used/needed) if they are walking to a public place.
3. Meet on the video call with the participant and his/her family/caregiver. Introduce the dog and discuss where the handler and dog will walk. Discuss where the participant and family member/caregiver are going to walk.
4. The participant and caregiver can begin their walk while the handler and dog do the same. Using the front and rear facing camera on the phone, the handler or participant can flip the view to show each other interesting things on their walks and prompt discussion points and conversation.
5. The participant can take responsibility for the dog by asking him to sit before crossing the street, stay, or recall, if appropriate. This can either be a natural response from the prompt given by the participant or the dog can be signaled by the handler from behind the camera to give the impression of a direct response to the cue.
6. In a similar way, the participant can take responsibility for where the dog and handler go on the walk by either picking from a choice of locations (i.e., park, shops, etc.) or utilizing left or right navigation cues.
7. After completing the walk, the participant is given the opportunity to say goodbye to the dog and handler before the call is ended.
8. The handler sends the participant and family/caregiver an email with feedback, suggestions of adaptations for the next walk, or ideas of how the family can encourage the person to continue the activity with the sessions. They can confirm the time and place for the next walk and gain any feedback from the participant.

Modifications:

- To make the activity easier, the participant can watch the dog and handler go for a walk from the comfort of their own home or garden to allow building of confidence over a longer period.
- To make this activity harder, the handler can be a more passive member of the chat, allowing the participant to take on more responsibility. The choice of location could be a busier and built-up environment.

Potential Risks:

- The participant may not be accompanied by a family member/caregiver and be out on their own.
- The participant could slip, trip, or fall.
- Technical issues could result in lack of connection via the video link.
- Inclement weather or hot weather

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Walk comfortably and loosely on lead
- Respond to verbal cues or hand signals (i.e., sit, down, stay, come, fetch, etc.)

- Able to respond to people talking from the phone
- Look at the camera when cued

Closing:

The activity comes to a natural end once the welfare time limit for the dog is reached. The participant is given a chance to say goodbye.

Additional Information: example shown here

<https://www.facebook.com/dementiadogproject/videos/255804248830185/>

What's in Your Dog's House?

Contributed by Phoebe Yam, OTD, OTR/L, Dogwood Therapy Services, AAII Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Bilateral coordination
- Fine motor skills
- Motor planning
- Tool use (i.e., scissors and writing utensils)
- Attention to task
- Following directions
- Learning about animal welfare

Materials:

- 2 paper plates
- Construction paper or white paper
- Colored pencils, pens, markers, or crayons
- Tape or glue
- Stapler (optional)

Population: Pediatrics

Time Required: 15-60 minutes

Service Delivery: Video session and/or in-person distance session

Methodology:

1. Draw a doghouse on the back of one paper plate. The participant can design and decorate this doghouse as he/she wishes. Make sure the entrance of the doghouse is large enough for the participant to see through.
2. Carefully cut out the doghouse entrance. If the participant has difficulty with motor planning, he/she may ask a caregiver to help. Place this paper plate aside once it is decorated.
3. Draw a dog and cut it out to place onto the second plate or draw the dog directly onto the center of the second plate. Decorate the front of the second paper plate with the handler's/participant's dog inside with all his/her favorite items (i.e., squeaky toys, Kongs, balls, etc.).
4. Discuss with the participant what a dog needs to feel happy, healthy and well (i.e., food, water, shelter, bed, grooming supplies, etc.). Add those items into the doghouse as well.
5. Once the participant has completed decorating the second plate, place the first plate on top with the doghouse facing outside and tape, glue, or staple the two plates together.

Modifications:

- This activity can be modified for different species of animals.
- If a participant has difficulty with scissor use, he/she can ask a caregiver to cut items out for them to paste onto the paper plate.
- The participant can draw objects onto construction paper, cut them out and glue them onto the plate or draw directly onto the plate.
- Work on letter formation by writing out the word of each object the participant drew.
- For participants addressing body awareness and/or respecting boundaries with dogs, they may be asked to draw a picture of themselves. Discuss with the participant the importance of the dog having its own space, toys, and alone time. Therefore, his/her picture must stay outside of the doghouse.

Potential Risks:

If the participant has poor safety awareness, they may cut themselves with the scissors. Ensure that the participant can be safe with scissors or ask a caregiver to facilitate/supervise.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required: None identified.

Closing:

Once the participant has completed the activity, the handler and participant participate in activity cleanup.

Window Visits

Contributed by Kathy Janes, Paws & Think Volunteer Coordinator and Animal-Assisted Interactions Advisor and Laura Hey, Health Healers Inc. Founder, BS in Occupational Therapy, Certified Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist, Pet Professionals Guild Member, Force Free Trainers of Wisconsin Member, APA HAI Member



Desired Outcomes:

- Attention to and conversation about the dog
- Increase social interaction
- Positive emotional response
- Decrease anxiety
- Decrease focus on illness or condition

Materials:

- Leash
- Dog bowl and water
- Chairs for the handler outside the window (optional)
- Signs – “Fido says Hi” or “Hello, this is Fido, a Great Pyrenees,” etc.

Population: Residents in assisted living facilities, long-term care facilities, or hospice care

Time Required: 5-60 minutes

Service Delivery: In-person distance session

Methodology:

1. With prior approval from the facility, the team organizes a list of rooms/windows of participants interested in a visit.
2. Staff is notified of the team’s ETA so they can move the participants’ bed or chair closer to the window, open the window (optional), and mask the patient.
3. The team approaches the window, holds up a ‘welcome’ sign, and introduces themselves. The participant visits with the dog while the handler facilitates the conversations and interactions. If windows cannot be opened, the handler may have the dog demonstrate a few tricks for the participants.

4. At the end of the session, the handler may ask, “do you want me to give [dog’s name] a hug from you?” If the participant says, “yes,” the handler gives a hug/pets to the therapy dog for the participant. Some dogs prefer not to be hugged, but most can learn to wave goodbye to the participant.

Modifications:

- If residents are outside, this can be carried out in the handler’s car while driving past and even stopping to let the therapy dog put his head out the window (while leashed or seat-belted).
- Since the team is not going inside the facility and there is no face-to-face contact with staff, it may be beneficial to mail any therapy animal trading cards ahead of time so that staff can give the visiting animal’s card to participants after the visit.
- Participants may give the dog cues (i.e., sit, down, back up, spin, etc.) either verbally, if windows are open and have screens, or with hand signals if windows are going to remain closed.
- For car visits, the dogs can wave or “say prayers” with his paws on the windowsill of the car.

Potential Risks:

- Monitor the temperature outside to ensure that the weather is appropriate for the animal and closely monitor for signs of heat exhaustion. Visits should be arranged according to the weather (i.e., early morning during summer months).
- Ensure the dog is not standing on a hot outdoor surface (i.e., concrete, rocks, etc.) that could potentially burn their paws.
- It may be potentially frustrating for the participant and therapy dog to focus/engage with one another due to distance, decreased visibility, and masks. The potential for increased participant confusion/agitation exists, so selection of participants is important.
- Conversation can be hampered due to masks and the potential for elders to be hard of hearing.
- Some participants may not have the level of alertness, energy, or cognitive capacity needed to participate in distance visiting.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit and stay with duration
- Able to interact through a barrier without frustration or over arousal
- LAT (Look at that) to encourage the dog to look through the window and maintain visual attention towards the participant
- Wave (optional)
- Enjoy hugs

Closing:

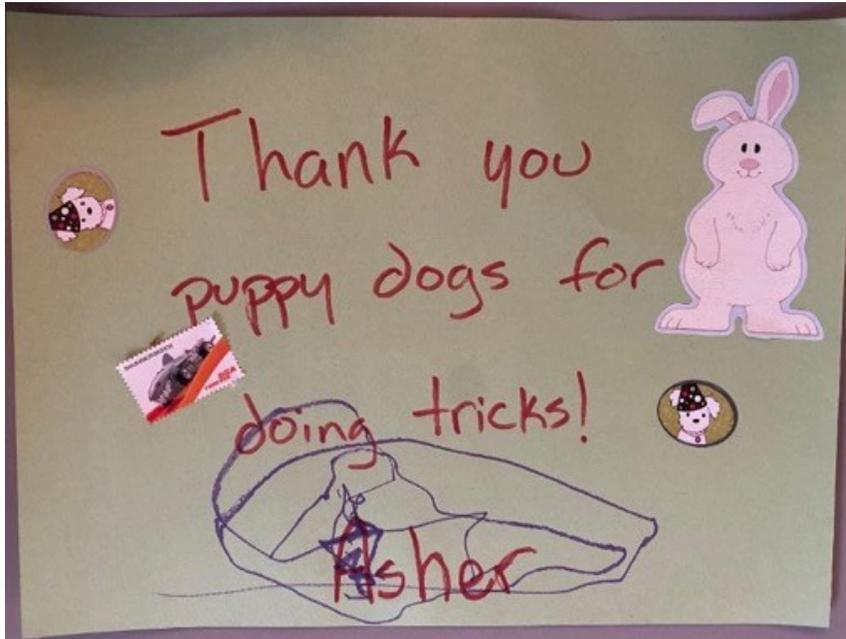
The handler phones the facility staff when leaving and staff may provide the participants with trading cards from the visiting therapy animal. Upon completion of the activity, the dog is given a treat.

Additional Information:

Generally, participants really enjoy the visits, but they are shorter than face-to-face sessions. [Click here](#) for other ideas.

Writing Lessons for Younger Children

Contributed by Ann Davidson, [Canine Therapy Corps](#)



Desired Outcomes:

- Communication
- Writing

Materials:

- Writing utensil
- Paper
- Electronic equipment (iPad, computer, or suitable electronic device with camera)
- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Doxy.me, etc.)

Population: Students aged 5-12 who are homeschooled

Time Required: 15-30 minutes, depending on age and attention span of the child

Service Delivery: Video session

Methodology:

Instruct the child to write out the dog's name, breed and other facts about the dog to work on handwriting and sentence construction.

Modifications:

- Focus on written or spoken words, depending on the age and skill gaps.
- Provide a visual example by writing out the letters with the child.

Potential Risks:

The child may become distracted if an adult is not facilitating the session.

Prerequisites for the Animal and/or Training Required:

- Sit/down and stay with duration

Closing:

Give the dog a treat for each sentence or word written/spoken (depending on child's skill level).