



ANIMAL ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS (AAI)

Therapy Dog Implementation Guide

Policies and Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Lawrence County Comfort Canines (LCCC) is a volunteer organization of certified therapy dogs that provide animal-assisted intervention to human service agencies located in Lawrence County, PA. The Lawrence County office of Mental Health and Developmental Services provides some financial support to maintain this specialized program. This program is managed by the Human Services Center, New Castle PA with assistance from Slippery Rock University social work faculty and students.

Dogs are the only therapy animals utilized in this program. All dogs have been evaluated by a national therapy dog organization, maintain required annual vaccinations, and abide by policies within this document as well as that of their certifying national therapy dog organization. All dogs have a designated handler(s) and only those persons may handle the therapy dog. There is no fee or cost to agencies to request and utilize these therapy dog teams.

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Policy Title: Oversight/Management
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will provide and explain all of the different roles of administrators for the LCCC.

Rationale: There are several different roles necessary to manage the program. Each role will consist of different responsibilities to ensure the best fit for the facility, keep up with the appropriate paperwork and documents, and ensure the facilities stays up to date with everything needed to allow the program to run smoothly at all times.

Policy: Oversight/Management

1. Lawrence County
 - a. **Lawrence County Administrator**
 - i. Provide financial support for LCCC.
 - ii. Approve any changes in policies.
 - iii. Manage all certifications and make sure The Human Services Center is up to date with all documents.
2. Human Services Center
 - a. **Director of Community Services**
 - i. Maintain list of active therapy dog teams.
 - ii. Communicate via email to therapy dog teams.
 - iii. Manage requests from agencies wanting therapy dogs.
 - iv. Assure annual vaccinations on file.
 - v. Offer annual community information sessions.
 - vi. Coordinate therapy dog testing for interested new teams (2x per year).
 - vii. Keep up with all annual requirements, documents, and certifications.
 - b. **Director of Clinical Services**
 - i. Host annual training for therapy dog teams.
 - ii. Arrange training for staff/clinicians on use of therapy dogs.
 - c. **CEO**
 - i. Review and take action on any incident reports involving LCCC.
 - ii. Approve any changes in policies.

3. Slippery Rock University

a. Slippery Rock University Social Work Interns

- i. SRU social work interns will help assist in any or all of the tasks provided by Human Services Center (item # 2 on the prior page).

Policy Title: Agency/Facility Requests for LCCC
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy provides procedures for any Lawrence County human service agency to request therapy dog services from LCCC.

Rationale: To ensure agency needs for a therapy dog are met, the request form will include specific information about the facility requesting LCCC so that the therapy dogs can be best matched with the needs of the facility.

Facility Requests for LCCC:

1. Facilities considering the use of therapy dogs should evaluate their needs and ideas for implementation.
2. Facility administrators should request a therapy dog by completing the attached LCCC facility request form.
3. Completed requests should be sent to The HSC Director of Community Services as identified on the bottom of the form.
4. Facilities will be contacted by email within 2 weeks with the contact information for a potential therapy dog team.
5. Facilities should first arrange a meeting with the therapy dog team to ensure goodness of fit with the agency needs/population.
6. If both the facility and the therapy dog team approve, client visits may commence.

Lawrence County Comfort Canines - Facility Request Form

Complete and check all parts of this form that apply to the site or agency where volunteers will visit. This information will assist in recruiting therapy dog teams for your AAI visits.

Contact Name:	Title:
Name of Facility:	Dept:
Address:	City/State/Zip:
Telephone:	Fax:
Website:	Email:

CHECK ALL CATEGORIES THAT MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBE YOUR FACILITY:

TYPE OF FACILITY:

<input type="radio"/> ASSISTED-LIVING/ INTERMEDIATE CARE	<input type="radio"/> PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY
<input type="radio"/> CORRECTIONS	<input type="radio"/> REHABILITATION
<input type="radio"/> DAY TREATMENT	<input type="radio"/> RESIDENTIAL CARE
<input type="radio"/> GROUP RESIDENCE	<input type="radio"/> SCHOOL
<input type="radio"/> HOSPICE	<input type="radio"/> SHELTER
<input type="radio"/> HOSPITAL	<input type="radio"/> OTHER: _____

DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION:

<input type="radio"/> ABUSE SURVIVOR	<input type="radio"/> MEMORY IMPAIRMENTS
<input type="radio"/> DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES	<input type="radio"/> COMA
<input type="radio"/> EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES	<input type="radio"/> HOMELESS
<input type="radio"/> MULTIPLE DISABILITIES	<input type="radio"/> MENTAL ILLNESS
<input type="radio"/> PHYSICAL DISABILITIES	<input type="radio"/> NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS
<input type="radio"/> TERMINAL ILLNESS	<input type="radio"/> OTHER: _____

AGES SERVED: <input type="radio"/> INFANTS & NURSERY AGE <input type="radio"/> SCHOOL AGE <input type="radio"/> ADOLESCENTS <input type="radio"/> YOUNG ADULTS <input type="radio"/> ADULTS <input type="radio"/> SENIORS	GROUP SIZE FOR INTERVENTIONS: <input type="radio"/> ONE-ON-ONE <input type="radio"/> SMALL GROUP (1-5 PEOPLE) <input type="radio"/> MEDIUM GROUP (5-15 PEOPLE) <input type="radio"/> LARGE GROUP (15+ PEOPLE)	SUPERVISION-FACILITY STAFF WILL: <input type="radio"/> PARTICIPATE <input type="radio"/> DIRECT <input type="radio"/> DOCUMENT <input type="radio"/> OBSERVE	FACILITY DYNAMICS: <input type="radio"/> QUIET – low activity, few distractions, routinely predictable interactions <input type="radio"/> AVERAGE – moderate activity, moderate distractions, occasionally unpredictable interactions <input type="radio"/> ACTIVE – high activity. Many distractions, routinely unpredictable interactions
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PARTICIPATION
a) Who will receive visits?
b) Who will not receive visits?
c) How will clients be identified?
d) Where will visits be conducted?
e) Will animals be allowed on beds or furniture?

Any other information you would like us to consider:

Please email completed form to Tammi Gibson at tgibson@humanservicescenter.net

Policy Title: Definitions
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the different types of animal-assisted interventions (AAA, AACR, AAT, AAE) that will be used at Human Services Center.

Rationale: Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) are goal-oriented and structured interventions that incorporate animals in health, education, and human service for the purpose of therapeutic gains and improved health and wellness. Different forms of animal-assisted interventions are animal-assisted activities (AAA), animal-assisted therapy (AAT), animal-assisted crisis response (AACR), and animal-assisted education (AAE).

Policy: Definitions

1. Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) provide opportunities for motivational, educational, and/or recreational benefits to enhance the quality of life. The activities that are provided are delivered by a specifically trained professional, paraprofessional, and/or volunteer, in partnership with an animal that meets the criteria. Animal-assisted activities can include hospital visits, nursing home visits, memory care, and stress reduction at universities, airports or conferences.
 Example: A therapy dog team may provide animal-assisted interventions by providing comfort and support within a residential facility.
2. Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a goal-oriented, planned, structured and documented therapeutic intervention directed by a health or human service provider. Possible professionals could include physicians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, nurses, speech therapists, mental health professionals, or therapeutic recreation specialists. AAT must have goals that are measurable and documented.
 Example: An individual therapist may use animal-assisted therapy by teaching an individual with anxiety breathing exercises with the dog.
3. Animal Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) is a specialized intervention which provides comfort to those who have been affected by natural, human-caused, technological disasters or crises. These teams have advanced training and education.

Example: These teams may provide comfort and support to groups of distraught individuals who experienced a school shooting.

4. Animal Assisted Education (AAE) is a goal-oriented, planned, and structured intervention directed by a general education or special education professional. The focus of AAE is on academic goals, prosocial skills, and cognitive functioning with the student progress being both measured and documented. Animal-assisted education would include programs within a reading/literacy program and humane education.
 - a. A therapy dog team may provide animal-assisted education to psychoeducational groups to focus on achieving goals, improving social skills and cognitive functioning.

Policy Title: Animal Selection
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the animal selection that will be used at the Human Services Center. Only those animals with proper disposition and training will be utilized.

Rationale: Selected animals must be properly trained in the connection and support of a human-animal relationship. Animals that have the necessary talents or be able to develop the necessary talents related to the expected outcomes, based on their biographies are preferred. Animals will be appropriately selected based on the knowledge and goals set by the facility.

Policy: Animal Selection

1. All dogs eligible for the program will be certified through a National Therapy Dog organization.
 - a. Pet Partners
 - i. See Animal Specifications Policy; section 1.
 - b. Alliance of Therapy Dogs
 - i. See Animal Specifications Policy; section 2.
2. HSC will have direct decision making in selecting dogs appropriate for the program.
3. Dogs will be the only animal used in the program.
4. All dogs must be properly certified through Pet Partners or Alliance of Therapy Dogs.
5. All vaccinations must be up to date.
6. HSC, at their own discretion, has the right to terminate the dog due to any negative experiences that may occur.
7. HSC, upon receiving request forms, will be assigning which dogs are best fit for the facility.
 - a. HSC must determine suitability of the dog for the facility

Policy Title: Animal Suitability
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain how to properly determine the fit of the dog for therapy work within the facility.

Rationale: The suitability of the selected animal(s) will depend heavily on the behavior and temperament of the animal. For example, the selected animal must have the ability to work within partnerships and/or relationships with professionals, volunteers, and clients. Selected animals must be suitable to engage in relationships with particular clientele. For example; grief, trauma, anxiety, depression, etc. Selected animals must be social and be comfortable interacting with individuals (humans) in a positive manner. Selected animals must be comfortable in being touched or petted appropriately.

Policy: Animal Suitability

1. HSC will determine the dog’s appropriateness for the facility.
2. The size of the dog must be taken into consideration. The determination of size by the facility is important.
 - a. For example, a larger dog may intimidate some clientele, but may be better for those who may be bed bound.
3. The proper determination of the activity levels of the dog is important.
 - a. For example, if the dog is more active, that dog may be better suited for room-to-room activities verses if the dog is more relaxed, then that dog may be better suited for a group setting that takes place in one room.
4. Possible questions about the dog(s) to determine if they are a good fit for the facility.
 - a. What type of clientele has the dog worked with in the past?
 - b. Has the dog previously worked in a group setting?
 - c. Does the dog prefer to play and be active or does the dog prefer to sit or lay down?
 - d. Is the dog good with children or do they prefer adults?
5. Facility staff should meet the dog(s) and the handler at the facility to observe behavior and skills.
6. Ensure that the dog does not demonstrate any shyness, crying, fear of walking, or any aggressive behaviors.
7. Ensure that the dog does not void during any group sessions and/or in the facility.
8. Ensure that the dog has a happy, eager demeanor.

- a. For example, look to see if the dog is wagging his/her tail and pay attention to the dog's posture (they eagerly approach people versus pulling away).
9. Ensure that there is minimal barking or vocalization from the dog while in the facility.
10. Ensure that the dog is well-trained and knows his/her basic commands such as:
 - a. Sit
 - b. Stay
 - c. Come
 - d. Lay down
11. Ensure that the dog is responsive to the owner or handlers' directions at all times.

Policy Title: Testing/Training
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will provide information on the testing process a dog will go through to become certified to be a therapy dog, along with the training required for therapy dog organizations.

Rationale: In order for an animal to become a therapy animal and to begin visiting, the handler and animal must become registered with an organization that tests animals. Two therapy animal organizations that test animals are Pet Partners and Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Both Pet Partners and Alliance of Therapy Dog Teams will be welcome into LCCC.

Policy: Testing/Training

1. Pet Partners

- a. Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program is a Volunteer-Based Program in which pet owners donate their time to share their animals in the community.
- b. Pet Partners only requires 2 hours of volunteer work outside of working hours.
- c. Pet Partners therapy animals must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Are at least one year old at the time of evaluation.
 - ii. Have lived in the owner’s home for at least six months.
 - iii. Must be reliably house trained.
 - iv. Be currently vaccinated against rabies.
 - v. May not be fed a raw meat diet.
 - vi. Have no history of aggression or seriously injuring either people or other animals.
 - vii. Demonstrate good basic obedience skills. Animals walking with a lead should walk on loose leash and respond reliably to common commands such as “sit,” “down,” “stay,” “come,” and “leave it.”
 - viii. Welcome, not merely tolerate interactions with strangers.
 - ix. Be comfortable wearing Pet Partners equipment, which includes:
 - 1. Harnesses: front clip, back clip, step in, vest or slip harness.
 - 2. Buckle, snap, or quick-release collars in leather, fabric, or breathable synthetic metal links.
 - 3. Halters/head collars
 - 4. Leashes or leads made of leather, fabric or synthetic material, with only one connection point.

5. Metal hardware, such as buckles, slip rings, and d-rings are acceptable as part of any of the above equipment.
2. Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD)
 - a. National Organization that certifies both professional and volunteer teams.
 - b. Requires teams to volunteer at least every 3 months.
 - c. Offers liability insurance through their agency.
 - d. Test includes tester/observer monitoring handler and dog three times at a facility that includes two visits to a medical facility.
 - e. Alliance of Therapy Dogs must meet the following criteria:
 - i. The dog must be at least one-year-old (any breed of dog except wolf or coyote mixes)
 - ii. The dog must have a calm and gentle disposition
 - iii. The dog must be attentive to its handler
 - iv. The dog must be current on all vaccines required by local laws and have a negative fecal test every 12 months
 - v. The dog must be clean and well groomed for each visit
 - vi. The therapy dog handler must complete a background check before testing
 3. HSC
 - a. HSC will offer testing approximately twice per year with ATD Tester/Observers.
 - b. Both ATD and Pet Partner teams will complete the required (3) facility observations.
 - c. LCCC will provide additional training on occasion which is open to all teams.
 - d. Human Services Center has the right to remove any therapy dog teams that do not abide by the policies and procedures that are set in place.

Policy Title: Annual Health Requirements
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the requirements therapy dog teams will need to complete annually in order to serve under LCCC.

Rationale: In order for a dog to become a therapy dog, the dog must have all the proper annual requirements including any certifications, trainings, vaccinations, veterinarian documents, etc. The dogs must be deemed healthy annually in order to hold their title of a therapy dog.

Policy: Annual Requirements

1. All animals must keep up with all of their certifications and/or training throughout their working life, updated each year if necessary.
2. All animals must be properly examined annually by a veterinarian and the handler must obtain all proper documents.
3. All vaccinations must be up to date yearly including rabies, distemper, and parvovirus.
4. Copies of vaccination and therapy dog paperwork must be provided to LCCC annually.
5. Dogs must have an annual negative fecal exam and handlers must provide evidence of this test to LCCC annually.
6. No visits are permitted if required, current vaccine/testing paperwork is not on file.

Policy Title: Visit Preparations
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will outline expectations for the therapy dog teams prior to visiting a facility.

Rationale: In order for a therapy dog to visit a facility, their physical appearance, hygiene, and diet must be properly maintained. Strict guidelines are in place to ensure the dog is properly taken care of upon visiting the facility. The dog must be deemed appropriate before entering the facility.

Policy: Visit Preparations

1. The dog’s physical health, hygiene, and diet must be properly taken care of upon visiting the facility.
 - a. The therapy dog must be bathed and groomed no more than 24 hours before the visit.
 - b. The therapy dogs nails must be trimmed prior to visit.
 - c. The therapy dogs teeth must be cleaned prior to visit.
 - d. The therapy dog must be free of illness and/or infection.
 - e. The therapy dog must not have consumed “pork hide” or “pig ear” treats within at least 30 days of visitation.
 - f. The therapy dog must be free of any wounds or sores and have a healthy coat and skin.
 - g. The therapy dog must NOT wear flea collars.
 - h. The therapy dog may not be treated with flea medication within 24 hours of the visit.
 - i. Female dogs may not visit while in estrus.
 - j. If the therapy dog is on any medications, a note from their veterinarian is required.
 - k. The therapy dog’s comfort and behavior will be assessed during the three observations required to continue to work as a therapy dog.

Policy Title: Visit Expectations
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date: 8/24/23
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will address the expectations for therapy dogs and handlers when visiting a facility and how the dog should interact with individuals within the facility.

Rationale: It is important to be aware of the dog’s boundaries at all times while also respecting the rules of the facility during a visit. Not only is it important for the dog to be on its best behavior at all times while on the facility property, but it is important to also be respectful of the boundaries of all parties involved.

Policy: Visit Expectations/Interactions

1. It is important to remain calm and respect the animal’s boundaries in order to ensure to strengthen the relationship with the animal.
2. Please be advised that the visit begins as soon as the animal enters the property, such as the parking lot.
3. It is important to remember to have all proper certifications, licenses, documents (such as vaccine records), and identifications for the animal present at all times (and for each visit).
4. Leash requirements (4 ft)
5. The animal must remain under control at all times (attached with required leash) on the property of the facility. The behavior of the animal should be handled appropriately if necessary. For example:
 - a. If the dog is not well behaved or not under the handler’s control, visitation privileges will be revoked.
 - b. Handler must be aware of the dog’s stress and comfort level and will not visit if the handler feels the dog will not enjoy the visit.
 - c. If disruptive, dogs must be promptly removed from the unit.
6. Always ask before allowing any human or animal interaction. Please refrain from having the animal interact without permission to any humans on the property of the facility. It is important to make sure everyone is aware of the animal and comfortable being present with the animal. The animal must never be left alone without the handler.
7. Handlers and dogs must strictly adhere to all rules and guidelines of the facility at all times.
 - a. Handler and dog must schedule visits and sign in and out of the facility upon arrival and departure.

- b. Handler must obtain permission from facility staff on whether or not the dog is allowed on furniture.
 - i. If dogs are allowed on furniture, a sheet or a towel will be placed on the furniture.
 - ii. A new sheet or towel must be used for each patient and/or furniture.
- c. Strict hand washing by staff, clients, and handler will be enforced during all visits. Hand washing will take place before and after contact with the dog with sanitizer approved by the facility.
- d. Handler will be required to take the dog out for a break when indicated.
- e. Handler is responsible for properly bagging and discarding any solid waste.
 - i. If an accident occurs in the hospital, it is the handler's responsibility to:
 - 1. Clean the area
 - 2. Bag the waste
 - 3. Ask a staff member to disinfect the area immediately
- f. Length of visit: **maximum of two hours.**

Policy Title: Animal Welfare
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date: 8/24/23
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will address animal welfare, which refers to the state of the dog that is working within animal-assisted interventions programs.

Rationale: Animal Welfare refers to the state of the animal working in AAI programs. Protecting an animal’s welfare means providing for its physical and mental needs. Specific criteria have been established to ensure animals' needs are addressed and met during AAI.

Policy: Animal Welfare

1. Therapy animal handlers should have knowledge and education within animal well-being. This includes acknowledging stress signs and discomfort within their animal.
2. Therapy animal handlers are responsible for the well-being of the animal during intervention. This includes making sure the animal is well rested, comfortable, and cared for during the sessions (e.g. providing fresh water, work floors are safe and suitable.) Animals should not be overworked; sessions should be time limited **2 hours max**).
3. Therapy animal handlers should be an advocate for their dog. An important standard for therapy dog handlers is YAYABA, which stands for You Are Your Animal’s Best Advocate (set in place from Pet Partners). YAYABA is the most important responsibility as a handler because this will protect the animals welfare. Practicing YAYABA will allow the animal to have breaks throughout visits, de-stress, drink water, talk a walk, have playtime, adhere to the maximum visit length, and instruct clients how to appropriately pet their animal.
4. Therapy animals should never be involved in activities that would jeopardize their own safety and comfort. Therapy animal handlers should have an understanding of animal specific boundaries that are normal and respectful to the animal. Such as, when and where the animal is being pet, how rough the animal is being pet, etc.
5. Therapy animal handlers should have knowledge in animal behavior. If the therapy animal is revealing any signs of fatigue, tiredness or lack of motivation, the therapy animal handler should remove the animal from the AAI-related activity.
6. Veterinary care should be regular for the animal participating in AAI. The frequency of the checks will be different for each animal and should be decided by the veterinarian.
7. All professionals and residents within the facility that are working with the visiting animals need to be aware of all policies and procedures (e.g. school, district, state). All professionals and individuals within the facilities should advocate for the policies and

procedures that are developed to ensure that proper care is in place for animals assisting within the AAI programs.

Policy Title: Crisis Response Requirements
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date: 8/24/23
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will provide information about animal-assisted crisis response and the requirements for a dog to be certified in crisis response.

Rationale: Animal Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) is a form of animal-assisted activities which provides comfort to those who have been affected by natural, human-caused, or technological disasters and involves much more intense situations, emotions, environments and thus require specialized evaluation and training.

Policy: Crisis Response Requirements

1. In order for a therapy dog to respond to a crisis situation, such as responding to an incident with 50 or more impacted individuals who have experienced the crisis of a mass shooting, disaster, or other traumatic event, the therapy dog team must be certified with HOPE AACR.
2. LCCC will offer annual information about HOPE AACR for interested teams.

Policy Title: Handler Responsibilities
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date: 8/24/23
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the responsibilities expected of the therapy dog handlers.

Rationale: It is important that therapy dog handlers know their responsibilities before coming into a facility. Guidelines for handler responsibilities are put into place in order to ensure the animal coming into the facility is most appropriate for the animal-assisted intervention being provided.

Policy: Handler Responsibilities

1. Animal handlers must have appropriate identification visible at all times during visit.
2. Animal handlers are responsible for ensuring the animal coming into the facility is bathed and groomed well enough to remove excess hair and dander, as well as reduce skin and saliva allergens. Animal’s teeth should also be brushed in advance of visit. This should be done 24 hours in advance of the visit.
3. Animal handlers are responsible for caring for the animal (e.g. feeding, watering, and cleaning up waste) and ensuring the animal’s appropriate behavior within the facility. All animals must be under the control of the handler at all times.
4. Dogs must be on a leash not more than 4 feet in length and handlers may never let go of the leash or permit anyone other than the registered handler to handle to the dog.
5. Dogs working together must maintain at least a 2-foot distance at all times.
6. Handlers must make sure that the animal has the chance to relieve themselves before entering the facility. The handler must pick up any waste in a plastic bag and deposit it in the trash (as designated by the facility) followed by appropriate hand hygiene.
7. Animal Handlers must ensure animal nails are trimmed with no rough edges. Animal Handlers should avoid clients giving dog treats or shaking paw to limit risk of paw to hand contact.
8. Handlers should ask each client if they wish to visit the therapy dog, obtaining their verbal consent prior to approaching.
9. Handlers should scan the environment for any items that may put the therapy dog at risk, such as discarded food on the floor or medications.
10. Handlers should end visits in the event of a situation occurring that may affect the animal's welfare.

11. Handlers may never take the dog into any public facility unless invited as they are NOT service dogs.
12. Teams may not represent LCCC at any event or presentation that was not authorized and approved by HSC.
13. No other non-LCCC person or dog may attend any LCCC sanctioned event.

Policy Title: Confidentiality
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date: 8/24/23
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the importance of protecting the privacy of clients served through LCCC.

Rationale: It is important for the handler to understand that any information obtained during an LCCC visit must remain confidential at all times. The handler must respect the privacy of the clients at all times on and off of the facility grounds.

Policy: Confidentiality

1. Handler must understand that all staff information is confidential.
 - a. Confidential staff information includes employee phone numbers and addresses, or other personal (non-professional) information, such as their personal life circumstances.
2. Handler must understand that all client information is confidential.
 - a. Handlers must not repeat any information that they hear inside of the facility.
 - b. Handler must respect and maintain the confidentiality of all discussions, deliberations, patient care records and any other information generated in connection with patient/client care.
 - c. Handlers will never share details of cases, clients, diagnosis', or difficulties with anyone from inside of the facility. Confidential Patient Information includes:
 - i. Physical, medical, and psychiatric records including paper, photo, video, diagnostic and therapeutic reports, or any laboratory and pathology samples.
 - ii. Patient insurance and billing records.
 - iii. Computerized patient data.
 - iv. Visual observation of patients receiving medical care, accessing services, or any group therapy and/or psychoeducational groups.
 - v. Verbal information provided by or about a client/patient.
3. It is the handlers ethical responsibility to protect the privacy, confidentiality and security of all medical records and other confidential information relating to the facilities patients/clients, administration, employees, health care providers, and volunteers.
4. All handlers **may** sign a confidentiality agreement upon entering the facility or program.
 - a. HSC will provide a confidentiality agreement for all handlers to sign upon entering the facility. The agreement will contain, but not be limited to:

- i. Respecting the confidentiality of information obtained from consumers in the course of their work as a handler at HSC.
 - ii. Understanding that disclosure of confidential information will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from the program.
5. The handler will represent the program in a professional manner at all times; for example, handler must observe all rules of privacy and confidentiality of the program.
6. In the event of an accident or particular occurrence, the handler understands that the program facility will take all necessary steps and that all information will be treated sensitively and with complete confidentiality.
7. The handler must be aware that a breach of confidentiality will immediately result in visits and activities being put on hold during investigation until a course of action is determined or possible termination in LCCC if violations are serious enough.
8. Handlers must understand that even if their time at the facility ends, any confidential information they may have obtained must continue to remain private and not be shared with anyone.

Policy Title: Incidents
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will provide the protocol for the therapy dog handler if an incident were to occur within a facility.

Rationale: In order to assure safety for clients receiving AAI, any concerns should be documented, investigated and addressed. Therapy dog handlers will have a set protocol if an incident occurs within the facility where they are volunteering.

Policy: Incidents

1. Animal to client incident
 - a. If an incident occurs from the animal to the client, the handler must take the correct measures in removing the animal from the situation.
 - b. Example: If an animal were to bite or scratch the client, the handler must remove the animal from the situation immediately to ensure safety for the client.
2. Client to animal
 - a. If an incident occurs from the client to the animal, the handler must take the correct measures in removing the animal from the situation or redirect the client to ensure safety for the animal.
 - b. Example: If a child were to pet the dog in a rough manner, the handler will need to redirect the client on the correct ways to pet the animal. If the problem continues, the handler must remove the animal from the situation immediately to ensure safety for the animal.
3. Report to supervisor
 - a. If an incident occurs, the therapy dog handler must report the incident to the designated facility supervisor.
4. Documentation
 - a. The *Incident Report Form* will need to be completed and returned to the Executive Director.

Incident Report Form

To be completed by staff immediately after the incident occurs

Contact Information

Reported By: _____ Phone Number: _____

Staff Member at Facility Reported to: _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Incident Information

Please state the facts of Who, What, Where, When, Why and How the incident occurred.

Who was involved?

Therapy Dog Team

Volunteer

Facility Staff

Other: _____

Client/Patient

Name of person(s) and/or dog(s) involved in incident: _____

Complete the following section *only* if an injury occurred:

Was first aid given? Yes ___ No ___ UK___ If yes, who administered first aid? _____

Did the person/animal resume their activities following the incident? Yes ___ No ___ UK___

Was further medical treatment required? Yes ___ No ___ UK___

Did the person need to consult with a doctor? Yes ___ No ___ UK___

Witness Information

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Comments:

This form should be sent within 8 hours to Michelle Kelly-Thompson at mkthompson@humanservicescenter.net

Policy Title: Facility Responsibilities
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain the general responsibilities of the facility staff implementing AAI.

Rationale: Within each facility implementing AAI, staff members must fulfill certain responsibilities to ensure safety of facility clients.

Policy: Facility Responsibilities

Within each facility, staff members will need to do the following:

1. Identify location for AAI
2. Create schedule for AAI visit (max of one monthly)
3. Determine proper protocol for disposal of waste
4. Meet LCCC team ahead of first visit to provide orientation and approve of team
5. Identify clients who are able to participate (see policy on client selection)
6. Supervise AAI when LCCC teams are on site
7. Alert HSC staff of any concerns of therapy dog team

Policy Title: Client Selection
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy is to ensure that all clients receiving AAI will be a good fit for the animal-assisted intervention program within the facility.

Rationale: To ensure the health and safety of clients, staff and therapy dogs, it is important to acknowledge any concerns clients or staff may have about the client's participation in the program. All potential clients should be screened by facility staff prior to involvement with AAI. Staff shall ensure that clients are appropriate for AAI visits and that AAI does not pose unnecessary risks.

Policy: Client Selection

1. Facility staff should obtain information about the client’s previous or current pet ownership to ensure that the client does not have any past animal abuse. This protects the welfare of the animal.
2. Clients who are allergic or who have a compromised immune system should not participate in AAI. Clients with any contact precautions or open wounds should be excluded from AAI.
3. Clients who are fearful should not participate in AAI.
4. Clients with unpredictable and impulsive behavior should be carefully reviewed by facility staff prior to their inclusion in AAI.
5. Children under age of 14 must have parental permission unless the facility is the legal guardian. *(It may be valuable for facilities to create a permission form upon intake which outlines the use of AAI).*
6. Clients shall determine their own level of interaction with therapy dogs.

Policy Title: Infection control/safety
Origination Date: June 1st, 2020 Review Date: 8/24/23 Revision Date:
Approval:

Purpose: This policy will explain infection control and safety for the therapy dog team and facility by addressing personal hygiene, prohibited areas, etc.

Rationale: Infection control and safety are an important part of any program in order to keep individuals healthy and safe. Standard precautions are put in place to protect all individuals participating in the AAI program.

Policy: Infection control/safety

1. Certain areas are prohibited to animals in AAA or AAT programs. Such areas include:
 - a. Operating rooms and surgical suites;
 - b. Areas where invasive procedures are being performed;
 - c. Acute inpatient hospital settings when the presence of the AAA/AAT animal is not part of a documented treatment plan;
 - d. Decontamination, sterile processing, and sterile storage areas;
 - e. Food preparation areas (not including public food service areas);
 - f. Any areas where personal protective equipment/clothing must be worn, or barrier protective measures must be taken.
2. Anyone who comes in physical contact with an animal must observe appropriate hand hygiene. All involved shall use hand sanitizers or handwashing before and after AAI visits.
3. Contact with saliva must be minimized. Any wounds must be covered to prevent animals from licking to come into direct contact.
4. All persons conducting, managing, or participating in AAI programs should avoid contact with animal urine and feces. Animal waste cleaning guidelines must be established for any animal elimination that occurs inside and outside of the facility.

