



What are Animal-Assisted Activities/Therapy?

Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA)

Animal-Assisted Activities are basically the casual "meet and greet" activities that involve pets visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with many people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition.

Example of AAA:

An individual brings her dog to a children's long-term care facility to "play" with residents. Although the staff is involved in the visits, the staff has not set treatment goals for the interactions. Aside from signing in and out, no records are kept.

Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)

AAT is a goal-directed intervention directed and/or delivered by a health/human service professional with specialized expertise, and within the scope of practice of his/her profession. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning.

Example of AAT:

A woman recovering from a stroke has limited standing and walking tolerance. A physical therapist utilizes the presence of a dog to motivate the client by placing the dog on a raised table and asking the client to stand while stroking or brushing the dog's back and head. To increase the client's ambulation skills, the therapist has the client walk the dog for short distances around the facility grounds. (The handler uses a double lead and walks alongside the dog and client.)

AAA/AAT Comparison

AAA	AAT
Casual "meet and greet" activities that involve pets visiting people	Significant part of treatment for many people who are physically, socially, emotionally or cognitively challenged
No specific treatment goals planned	Stated goals for each session
Same activity can be used with many people	Individual treatment for each patient
Detailed notes unnecessary	Notes on patient progress taken at each session
Visit content is spontaneous	Visit scheduled, usually at set intervals
Visit can be as long or short as desired	Length of visit is pre-determined to best fit needs of patient

**For more detailed information about AAA/T please visit our website:
www.DeltaSociety.org/AnimalAssistedActivitiesTherapy**