

What is Animal-Assistive Therapy (AAT)?

The simple and often instant bond between a human and an animal is the cornerstone of Animal-Assisted Therapy. It is a practice that incorporates using animals as part of the therapeutic process. It is about building a bond with an animal through interaction and play. Animals are used because they can help people relax, minimise stress and offer a sense of safety. Animals can also help reach kids, youth and adults who have disengaged and don't want to work with a therapist. AAT is a goal-directed intervention and individualised plans are created based on a person's goals. There are a range of focus areas that can be developed with the use of AAT including, physical, social, emotional and mental health. Detailed reports are provided which can be used at annual reviews.



Types of animals and activities available

We have a wide range of different types of animals including: **dogs; horses; ponies, donkeys; alpacas; miniature cows; sheep; chickens; ducks; rabbits; and guinea pigs.**

Activities offered include:

- Individual therapy with a speech pathologist or occupational therapist and their therapy dogs.
- **Animal-assisted activities** - using a range of animals to provide opportunities for motivation, education, or recreation to improve a person's quality of life. A therapist can facilitate these sessions, or a therapy assistant or mentor, dependent upon goals and complexities.
- **Group experiences** - We offer a range of group experiences. Please see group flyer.
- Individual sessions with our allied health assistants or mentors utilising animals.
- Farm visits or Farmer for the Day programs:
 - Learn how to groom, feed and lead our miniature ponies.
 - Feed and pat our lambs and sheep.
 - Learn about chickens, collect their eggs and take some home for breakfast.
 - Make damper and put on the camp fire.
 - Walk to the dam and meet our miniature cows.
 - Learn about bees and how important they are.
 - Chat with our donkeys and play ball with them.
- **Dog assistive training** - A collaboration between a therapist, a qualified dog trainer, and the participant. These unique sessions are aimed at working on building the capacity of the participant via working with their dog or one of ours. Multiple goals can be reached while engaging with the dog; in some cases the end result may be that the dog reaches the standard to undergo the assessment to become a therapy dog.



How does it work?

AAT is an effective intervention because the animal is used as an adjunct to therapy. The animal acts almost as a bonding agent, helping to place the participants at ease. The therapist utilises the animal as a focal point of the therapy session but the animal acts only as a tool in the therapist's arsenal to help the participant to reach their goals.



Contact Our Team Today:

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