



Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA)

Animal-Assisted Activities are casual "meet and greet" activities that involve pets visiting people. Although therapeutic in nature, these visits are free-for-service, and for socialization and safe activity (petting / brushing). This activity can be repeated with many people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a specific person, medical condition or goal.

Example of AAA:

Individual brings her dog to a children's long-term care facility to "play" with residents - or to a care facility, school or library (children read to dogs). Although staff and AAA team collaborate, they have not set treatment goals for the interactions. Aside from signing in and out, no records are required of the AAA team.

Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)

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

Example of AAT:

A stroke has limited standing and walking tolerance and/or range of mobility. An AAT Team, in collaboration with a health care professional, may place a dog on a table, asking the client to reach, stand, stroke and brush. To increase the client's ambulation skills, the AAT team has the client walk the dog team for a short distance. The team and staff specialist will be engaging with the client / patient. The handler uses a double lead, walking alongside the dog and client.

AAA/AAT Comparison in Brief

AAA – also recognized as Pet Assisted Activities	AAT – also recognized as Pet Assisted Therapy
Casual “meet / greet” activities that involve pets visiting people	Significant part of treatment for people who are physically, socially, emotionally or cognitively challenged
No specific treatment goals planned	Stated goals for each session / individual treatment plan
Same activity can be used with many people	Documentation is required for progression of client
Detailed note taking / documenting not required	Visit scheduled, set at intervals
Visit content is planned – but spontaneous	AAT may be fee-for-service and/or contractual

All visits are carefully observed for stress of patients. You re your pet’s advocate.