HISTORY OF ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPIES
Welcome

History of Animal-Assisted Therapies
- Definitions
- Historical Overview
- Group Activity
- Research
- Demonstration
- Discussion/Questions/Comments
WHAT ARE ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS?

Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) include:

“Any intervention that intentionally includes or incorporates animals as a part of the therapeutic or ameliorative process or milieu” (Kruger & Serpell, 2006)

Not just “Hanging out with pets”

Planned program where the individual participates with animals in focused and purposeful way
“Animal Assisted Education (AAE) is a goal oriented, planned & structured intervention directed &/or delivered by educational & related service professional.

AAE is conducted by qualified (with degree) general & special education teacher.

Regular education teachers who conduct AAE must have knowledge of the animals involved. An example of AAE delivered by a regular education teacher is an educational visit that promotes responsible pet ownership.

AAE, when done by special (remedial) education teachers is also considered therapeutic & a goal oriented intervention. The focus of the activities is on academic goals, pro-social skills and cognitive functioning. The student’s progress is measured & documented.

An example is an Animal Assisted Reading Program delivered by a special education teacher.” (IAHAIO, 2014)
Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) are primarily social visits, which involve goal directed activities designed to improve patient’s quality of life through the use of the human-animal bond.\textsuperscript{1,2}

- AAA provides opportunities for motivation, recreation, education to enhance quality of life\textsuperscript{3}
- Less formalized; service provided by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals and/or volunteers with animals
- Animals must meet specific criteria (Pet Partners, etc.)
- No treatment goals
- Providers not required to take detailed notes
- Visit content is spontaneous\textsuperscript{1,2}
Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) utilizes the human-animal bond in *goal-directed interventions* as an integral part of the treatment process.¹,²

- Always involves a credential therapist, working within their scope of practice;
- Therapist sets therapeutic goals; est. guidelines for interactions between clients & animals; evaluates progress
- Animals & handlers must be trained, screened & meet specific criteria ¹,²
- As an adjunct to traditional therapies¹
Human-Animal (HA) Bond vs. Human-Animal Interaction
- HA Bond: on-going relationship; bi-directional-benefits both; central/important relationship to each; represents a deeper attachment
- HA Interaction: Shorter term, situational & sporadic; formed rapidly & easily terminated; not as enduring as that of the animal handler/pet owner
- Clients benefit from the existing bond between the therapist and/or animal handler and the animal

Influence of HA Bond & Interaction
- HA Bond demonstrates trust & nurturance between therapist & the animal; can assist client in trusting them both & stimulate the social connection, reinforcing the therapeutic alliance
- Therapists who conduct sessions in the presence of a therapy animal may seem less threatening & more human, which may assist the client in revealing more of himself
- Friendly animals convey a sense of safety & have a calming effect
- Animals may function as transitional objects, helping clients bridge to a higher level of functioning
Physical responses between humans & animals

- Spending time with friendly animal can increase the endorphin levels released into body and decreases cortisol levels (hormone that controls stress/arousal)\textsuperscript{1}
- Domestic animals respond to human behavior & emotions, reflecting/mirroring back both positive and negative actions\textsuperscript{2,3}
- Concentrations of β-endorphin, oxytocin, prolactin, β-phenylethylamine & dopamine increase in both species (humans & dogs) following positive interactions\textsuperscript{4}
EQUINE-FACILITATED PSYCHOTHERAPY

Treatment approach that offers client opportunities to improve self-awareness and re-pattern maladaptive behaviors, feelings and attitudes.

- Effective for individuals with mental health needs related to: Cognition, perception, communication, social skills, anxiety, judgement, mood, behavior.
- Individuals manifesting behavior due to: ADHD, Autism, PTSD, Depression, Schizophrenia, Language disorders
- Major life changes due to grief, divorce, abuse, environmental trauma

(PATH International, 2012)
Historical perspectives of therapeutic interventions with animals

- Ancient Greeks document horse-assisted therapy to 600 BC to raise the spirits of the incurably ill.\(^1\)
- 17\(^{th}\) Century medical texts note riding horseback as beneficial for gout, neurological and emotional problems\(^2\)
- York Retreat, England founded by Quakers in 1796 as a “quiet haven” for 30 residents, who were taught behavioral management through care & interaction with smaller creatures (rabbits, poultry)\(^3\)
1796-PRESENT
1860 Florence Nightingale recommended small companion animals (birds) as an adjunct to healing, especially for the chronically ill.

1867 Bethel in Bielefeld, Germany animals (birds, cats, dogs & horses) integrated into a community for those with disabilities.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Late 1800’s – Research into horse’s ability to support physical recovery of humans$^1$
- Human-animal interaction (companionship w/dogs) first used in the US at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital (formerly Government Hospital for the Insane), Washington, DC in 1919; for soldiers with MH problems$^2$
- Pawling Convalescent Hospital, NY 1944 began a comprehensive rehabilitation program for wounded & disabled veterans*, working with farm animals & caring for dogs, 1$^{st}$ of 12 centers opened during WWII$^3$, $^4$
- Important predecessors but involved no formal research
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

An early case of horses aiding in the healing process was that of Liz Hartel.

Hartel became ill with polio.

Effectively rehabilitated herself by working with a horse.

So successful that she was awarded the Silver Medal for dressage at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952.
1962 Dr. Boris Levinson observes benefits of human-animal interaction in his therapy practice.\(^1\)

North American Riding for the Handicapped Association-(NARHA) founded 1969 & became Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) in 2011.\(^2\)

Delta Society founded in 1990, became Pet Partners in 2012.\(^3\)

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

- Break into small groups of 4-5
- Briefly discuss question within small group
- Collaborate on an answer & report back to the class
OF COURSE, NOT ALL ANIMALS ARE SUITABLE!

Very Popular
Military
Satire/Comedy
“News” Website

Tests ‘Service Shark Therapy’ With Mixed Results
EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

Areas of study within Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy
Children:
ADHD, Anger, At-risk, Autism, Behavioral/Emotional disorders, Disabilities, Self-esteem/concept, Substance abuse, Trauma

Adults:
Cancer, Depression/Commitment to Treatment, Distress/Psychological well being, Eating Disorders, Grief, Intellectual Disabilities, Anxiety, Depression Schizophrenia/Schizoaffective Disorders, Stroke, Trauma
Klontz, et al. (2007) examined the effects of Equine Assisted Experiential Therapy (EAET) program on distress & psychological well-being in 31 adults. Activities included both mounted (walking, trotting) & un-mounted work (selecting a horse, brushing, & games such as role playing, role reversal). Treatment groups rec’d 28 hours of EAET during a 4.5 day, residential program. Participants evaluated pre/post-treatment & at 6 mo. with significant & stable reductions in distress & enhancement in well-being.
Trotter, et al. (2008) demonstrated the efficacy of Equine Assisted Counseling (EAC) with 164 elementary & middle school children identified as high risk for academic or social failure. Study compared EAC with another respected program. Participants received 12 weekly counseling sessions. Using BASC* for externalizing, internalizing maladaptive behaviors the EAP group made statistically significant improvements in 17 behavioral areas:
EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

- BASC self-report: Emotional symptom index; Clinical maladjustment composite; Atypical behaviors; inadequacy; relations with parents
- BASC parental report: Behavioral symptom index; Internalizing/Externalizing problems composites; Adaptive skills composite; Hyperactivity; Aggression; Conduct problems; Anxiety; Depression; Somatization; Adaptability; Social skills
- Authors concluded that **EAC is very effective** in reducing emotional & behavioral problems in children
Gabriel, et al. (2011) conducted a pilot study Examined the effects of 10 weekly 1-hour sessions
42 participants, ages 6-16, with ASD (DSMIV)
Compared to waitlist control group of 16
Base-line compared to post-treatment
Significant improvements in self-regulation behaviors
Parental comments from the study exit interview:

“The day of riding my child was quiet, calm & peaceful.”

“The day of the riding we see very different behaviors. Very calm. This morning he struggled getting into the building but once he saw the horse, he was fine.”

“....more conversational....sharing & compromising more....”

“Fewer meltdowns” & “Decreased negativity”
EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

Overview of Study Methodologies/Designs

- Observational
- Case Studies
- Quasi-experimental
- Pilot
- Qualitative
- Few Quantitative/RCT studies
- Few Longitudinal
- Small number of subjects
AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

- Additional studies to verify efficacy of findings

- Research utilizing an equine-placebo:
  - Considering horse-back riding w/no adjunct treatment intervention to determine the influence of the novelty of the environment

- Examining the effects of therapeutic alliance & attrition rates
AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

- Longitudinal studies to determine the sustainability of improvements

- Research using additional experimental controls
  - Random selection
  - Random assignment
  - Use of a control or comparison groups
DEMONSTRATION
GUINEA PIGS

Similar to horses

- Herd animals-prefer to be in groups
- Prey animal
- Emotionally sensitive to the environment, as a means to protect themselves
- Startle easily
GUINEA PIG

Pet Partners Registered Animal-Handler Team

- Volunteer Visits
- 8-Hour Handler Class
- 30 minute Animal-Handler team evaluation
- Must be presented in a harness & on a leash
- May be carried in a basket while visiting
- Must be bathed & groomed prior to visits
Discussion

What other organizations are involved with AAI?

Questions?

Comments

Concerns

Please see additional resources

Thank you for attending!!!


REFERENCES


International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations, 2014. The IAHAIO definitions for animal assisted intervention and animal assisted activity and guidelines for wellness of animals involved. White paper.

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