


Alternative Approaches: Canines Helping Persons with PTSD Resources

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2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Canines Helping People with PTSD



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Emotional Support Dogs

- Are used by people who are being treated and are disabled by a mental or psychiatric disorder
- Are NOT individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with Disabilities
- Are NOT provided access rights under the ADA
- Are NOT protected under the ADA
- Are only provided housing rights under HUD and transportation rights under the Air Carrier Act

Therapy Dogs

- Undergo extensive training for access to public places - when approved for entry
- Provide affection to people in confined living situations, help with mental or physical therapy or offer comfort to those in stressful situations
- Are usually formally tested and registered as Therapy Dogs
- Are NOT individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a specific person with Disabilities
- Are NOT provided access rights under the ADA

Service Dogs

- Are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities
 - Disability – a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity
- The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be related to the person's disability



ADA Regulations - Access

Under the ADA, state and local governments, businesses and non-profit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

Some states extend the access to service dogs in training



Public Access

Staff may not ask:

- about the person's disability
- for medical documentation
- for special identification card or training documentation
- that the dog demonstrate it's ability to perform a task

Staff may ask:

- Is the dog a service animal, required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the dog been trained to perform




Comparison	Service Dog	Therapy Dog	Emotional Support
ADA covered: right to bring animal into public establishments	✓		
Needs to tolerate a wide variety of experiences, environments and people	✓	✓	
May live with their disabled owners, even if "no pets" policy is in place	✓		✓
Primary function is to provide emotional support through companionship			✓
Specifically trained to assist just one person	✓		

Attributes of a Service Dog

- Quiet**
 - Invisible
 - Others don't know the dog is there
 - No alert barking, growling or whining in public
- Friendly**
 - Likes people, but does not seek out attention
 - Not overly drawn to animals
 - Does not demonstrate protective tendencies
- Focused**
 - Stays on task
 - Not overly distracted by surroundings
 - Does not try for non-handler interaction
- Calm**
 - Keeps their cool
 - Not fazed by loud noises or new things
 - Not overly concerned about environment
- Confident**
 - Up for anything
 - Does not appear stressed or frantic
 - Willing to do anything asked

Symptoms and Assistive Behavior Examples

Anxiety	Ground Handler Guide Handler to safe place
Difficulty navigating	Lead handler to important location on cue
Sleep disturbance	Alert to intruders Turn on lights
Startle response	Alert to the presence of others Non-aggressively stand between handler and others
Trembling	Tactile stimulation or deep pressure therapy
Symptom Flair Up	Retrieve bag with medications Retrieve emergency phone
Exit	Lead handler to exit



Matchmaking – where the magic comes in

Every organization has a different set of criteria for client selection

Examples include:

- Financial ability to support the costs of a dog
- Support system
- Severity of disability
- Coachability of client
- Other people and animals in the household
- House, apartment, condo etc.
- Client expectations of the dog
- Dedication to use the dog

Dog Assignment

Every organization has a different set of criteria for making the match

Examples include:

- Client preference
- Structure of dog compared to work to be done
- Degree of exercise needed by dog
- Dog handling skill level
- Activity level of client
- Degree of maintenance dog will require
- Skills needed by the client
- Client mannerisms

Sample Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
www.ada.gov/reg2010/service_animal_qa.pdf
www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
www.adata.org/publication/service-animals-booklet

Fair Housing Act (FHA)
https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=servanimals_ntcfheo2013-01.pdf

Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)
https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/AirTravel_with_ServiceAnimals-Trifold.pdf

Service Dog Central
www.servicedogcentral.org

Assistance Dogs International (ADI)
www.assistancedogsinternational.org
www.assistancedogsinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/ADI20062ndprint.pdf

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP)
www.iaadp.org
www.iaadp.org/psd_tasks.html

