Complementary Healing and Rehabilitation Programs: Assistance Dogs

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Objectives:

• Participants will be able to:
  – List three different types of assistance dogs
  – Identify tasks completed by different types of assistance dogs
  – State the Federal ADA regulations concerning assistance dogs
  – Cite the results of two research studies that investigated assistance dogs

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ADA Assistance Animal Definition

• “Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability.”
Other Assistance Animals

- **Guide Horses***: Miniature horses trained to lead persons with visual impairments

- **Service Monkeys**: trained to help people with limited hand use

*ADA amended to cover miniature guide horses*
Man’s Best Friend
Why dogs?

• According to DNA dating, the domestication of dogs began possibly as early as 40,000 to 100,000 or more years ago.

• Dogs were valued for their hunting skills, security, transport (pack animals), warmth, and as goods for trade. Also, they were probably well domesticated to have not run off into the wilderness during long migrations.
Recently, scientists discovered that due to living so closely with humans for so long, dogs have evolved a genetic predisposition for understanding human cues better than any other animal.
Human-Animal Bond

Benefits are derived from the human-animal bond:

• Friedmann (1980) studied 92 acute MI patients for one year; 3 of 53 patients (6%) who had pets and 11 of the 39 patients (28%) who did not have pets had died at one year, regardless of pet type.

• Siegel (1990) determined that Medicare recipients who were pet owners, regardless of pet type, had lower rates of physician visits during stressful life events compared to non-owners.
Human-Animal Bond

- Poresky & Hendrix (1990) and Van Houtte & Jarvis (1995) found that children with pets had higher scores in self-esteem, self-concept, and empathy than children who did not have pets.

- Katcher and Friedmann (1980): nine healthful factors pets help to develop including: companionship and pleasurable activity, facilitating exercise, play and laughter, being something to care for and a source of consistency, allowing feelings of security, being a comfort to touch and pleasurable to watch.
Types of Assistance Dogs

• Guide/Leader Dogs
• Hearing Dogs
• Balance Dogs
• Medical Alert Dogs
  – Diabetes
  – Seizures
• Autism Dogs
• Psychological Therapy Dogs
• Service Dogs
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hearing Dogs
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hearing Dogs
- Balance Dogs/ Parkinson’s Dogs
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hearing Dogs
- Balance Dogs / Parkinson’s Dogs
- Seizure Dogs
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hearing Dogs
- Balance Dogs /
  Parkinson’s Dogs
- Seizure Dogs
- Autism Dogs
Assistance Dogs

- Leader Dogs or Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hearing Dogs
- Balance Dogs/Parkinson’s Dogs
- Seizure Dogs
- Autism Dogs
- Psychological Support Dogs

Service Dogs

- Trained specifically to help individuals who use wheelchairs
  - Can pull manual wheelchairs
  - Get help
  - Alert 911 for seizure
  - Retrieve dropped items
  - Open doors
  - Help with laundry and bed making
Why Service Dogs are important

• In the U.S., currently 2.9 million Americans use wheelchairs for their mobility
  – (less than 1% of the total population of the U.S.)

• These individuals have the highest levels of activity and functional impairments.
Why Service Dogs are Important

• The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 and signed into legislation in 1992

• Buildings constructed prior to 1992 not required to complete major renovations to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities
Service Dogs:

- Fairman and Heubner (2001) surveyed 202 service dog partners from 40 U.S. states and Canada. They identified 28 functional tasks with which service dogs were trained to assist their partners, as well as additional benefits such as helping their partners to feel safer, increase their social interactions with others, and reduce physical assistance needed from caregivers.
Service Dogs as Interfaces

Service dogs help to overcome this problem by:

– Being able to serve as an interface between the person and an environment that is not accessible
How do Service Dogs interface?

- By opening doors
- Picking up dropped items like car keys
- Pulling manual wheelchairs
- Turning lights on and off
- Pushing door plates
- Paying cashiers
- Taking attention away from the wheelchair
• Use of Service Dogs are Protected by Federal Law
Where Service Dogs are allowed:

- Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit 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. For example, in a hospital it would be inappropriate to exclude a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinics, cafeterias, or examination rooms.
ADA Guidelines:

- Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person’s disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
ADA Guidelines

• Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, for example, in a school classroom or at a homeless shelter, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.
International Assistance Dog Week
August 5-11, 2012
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