

A photograph of a person wearing a black vest with "O.C.C.V." printed on the front, sitting on a light-colored tiled floor. A white dog with a red collar is sitting on the person's lap, looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Improving Mental Health through the addition of Animal Assisted Services

Dr. Amy Johnson Binder and Hon. Charles Stephens (wsg Biscuit)
November 21, 2024

INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Amy Johnson Binder

- Licensed Professional Counselor
- 20 years experience with adjudicated youth
- Nationally certified dog trainer
- Board member – American Psychological Association HAI Section 13
- Board member – Camp Oakland Youth Residential Treatment Center
- Researcher, educator, practitioner of AAS (25 years)
- Clinical Assistant Professor at University of North Florida | Coordinator of Animal Assisted Services
- Adjunct professor at Husson University in Animal Assisted Services
- Founder & Director Teacher's Pet: Dogs and Kids Learning Together
 - Shelter dogs working with...
 - Adjudicated youth; adult inmate workers; community mental health youth; urban homeless youth

Hon. Charles Stephens (wsg Biscuit)

Biscuit – AKC Canine Good Citizen Certificate – 2021
Alliance of Therapy Dogs – Pet Therapy Team – 2022
PAWS for Service – Therapy Dog Team – 2023
San Antonio Airport Ambassador –
Pups for Planes – 2024

Charles Stephens
Biscuit's Handler and Trainer – since February 2019
Presiding Judge, Comal County Court at Law #2 (2004-present) and The Eugene E. Hooper Veterans Treatment Court (2016-present)

St. Mary's University School of Law – 1984

University of Texas at Austin – BA – 1981



Agenda

- Introduction / historical background on animal assisted services for improvement in mental health
- Types of programs currently used in the judicial system
- Case studies of visits with therapy dog (Biscuit)
- Case study of programs adding AAS to work with incarcerated youth
- Q&A

History of AAS

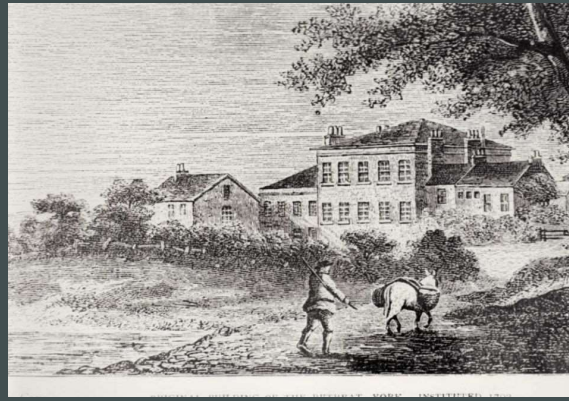


Roots in Mental Health



1760s F. Nightingale

- Yes a nurse....but...
- Notes on Nursing
- Stress reduction



1792 York Retreat (England) (Psych Hospital)

- Changes made after discovering mistreatment of px
- Wm. Tuke's Society of Friends (a Quaker group) incorporated gardening and birds and rabbits into treatment plan



1867 Bethel Center (Germany)

- Center for disadvantaged people (now epilepsy focused)
- Birds, cats, dogs, and horses as well as farm animals and wild game park

PHOTO: GOOGLE IMAGES

https://journals.lww.com/hnpjjournal/Fulltext/2002/10000/Pet_Therapy_Research_A_Historical_Review.6.aspx; Chandler, C. (2024) Routledge, NY

Roots in Mental Health



1919 St. Elizabeth's Hospital (Psych Hospital) (Wash. DC)

- Secretary of Interior Franklin Lane suggested integrating dogs with px



FIGURE 82.—Diversified animal farm, Pawling Convalescent Center, N.Y. This farm was under the supervision of the veterinary officer, Mitchel Field, N.Y., specifically to aid in the recreational training and rehabilitation of hospital patients.

1942 Pawling (NY) Army Air Force Hospital

- Working farm as diversion (veterans) / caring for dogs (*emotional recovery program*)
- “Almost as many dogs as px”
- No data collected

Roots in Mental Health



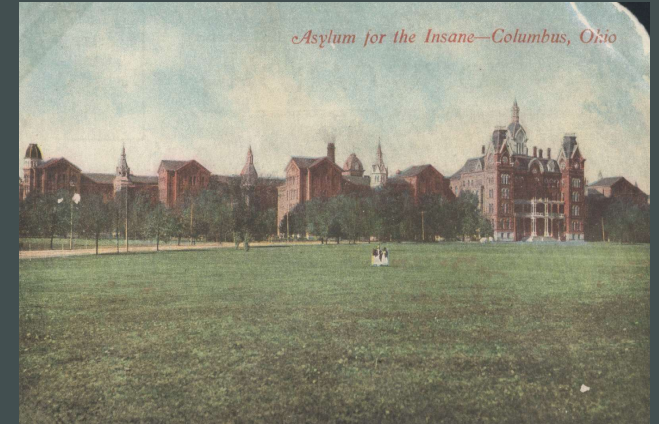
1930s S. Freud

- Jofi (or Yofi) attended all sessions
- Dogs have a special 'sense' regarding human subconscious
- "Jofi doesn't approve of what you're saying" / "Jofi wants to give you another chance"
- Time keeper



1960s B. Levinson

- Known as the father of "pet therapy" (now AAT or AATx)
- Presented at APA-was not supported



1970s Sam & Elizabeth Corson

- Ohio State Psychiatric Hospital
- Improved psychological status through visits / training programs
- Esp helpful for those where traditional forms had failed

PHOTOS: GOOGLE IMAGES
Source: Chandler, C. 2024. Routledge, NY

Animal-Assisted Services (AAS)

Animal-Assisted Treatment (AATx)

Animal-Assisted Education (AAE)

Animal-Assisted Support Programs (AASP)

**Note: In all types of AAS, at all times, animal welfare and ethical practice must be maintained
Animal is prepared, evaluated, trained, and/or registered**

Treatment Focus

Occupational Therapy

Psychotherapy

Physical/ Physiotherapy

Psychology

Speech Therapy

Counseling

Clinical Nursing

Social Work

Note: Clinicians must operate within their scope of practice and country's regulations

Distinction:

- Treatment goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
- Provider is a licensed/degreed/ credentialed health or human service provider who might handle the animal or work with a handler

Academic Focus

- Distinction:**
- Academic goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
 - Provider is a licensed/degreed educator who might handle the animal or work with a handler

Distinction:

- Psychoeducational & personal development goals are defined, outcomes are measured & documented
- Provider is a licensed/ degreed educator, mental health provider or a paraprofessional knowledgeable about socio-emotional learning and the facilitation of AAE and animal behavior who might handle the animal or work with a handler

Psycho/Socio-emotional learning focus

Animal-Assisted Psychoeducation

Humane Education

Vocational/Personal/ Organizational development

Therapeutic Riding

Prison-Based Training Programs

Equine-Assisted/ Facilitated Learning

Support Focus: Formerly known as animal assisted activities

Visitation Programs
(eg airport, medical office, hospital, clergy, community visits, dogs on campus, crisis support)

Animal-Assisted Crisis Intervention, Emotional First-Aid Support Focus

Horsemanship services for support needs (rehab, improving physical functioning, eg vaulting)

Reading programs (support focus) Without a licensed/degreed provider

Community Social Work (Support Focus); Coaching (social skills)

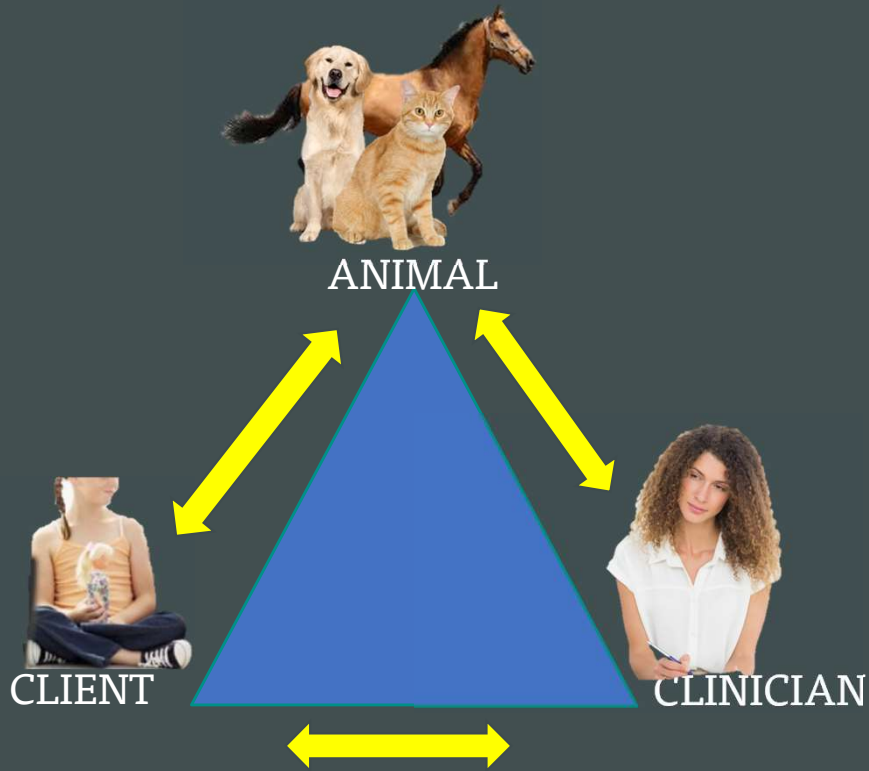
Riding for the Disabled (UK/Australia) Support focus

Courthouse Dogs (Support Focus)

Distinction:

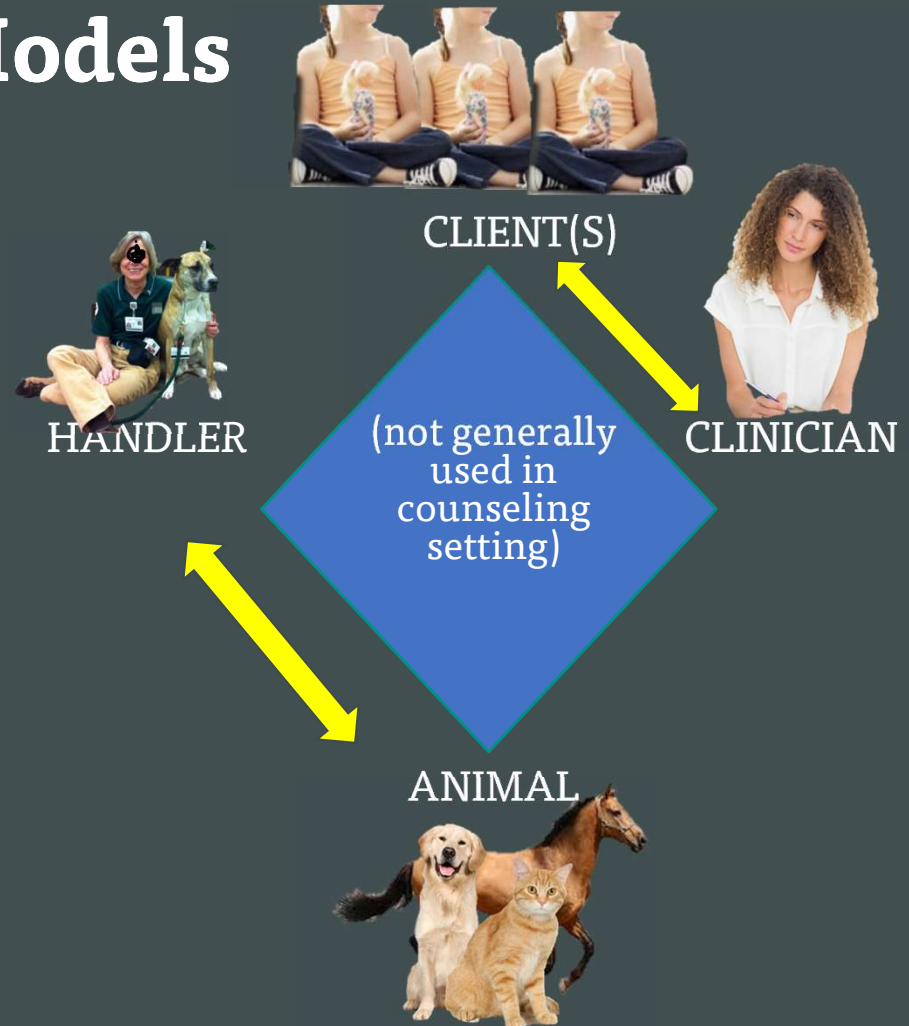
- Benefits are identified but not defined, outcomes are not measured or documented
- Provider is a volunteer or paraprofessional trained in AASP who is typically also the handler

Triangle / Diamond Models



Do no harm

Ethical obligation should extend to the animals with whom we work



Variety of Animals



3 TYPES OF

SUPPORT ANIMALS



| COMPARISON | SERVICE DOGS | THERAPY DOGS | EMOTIONAL SUPPORT |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| ADA covered: Rights to bring animal into public establishments | | | |
| Needs to tolerate a wide variety of experiences, environments, people | | | |
| May live with their Disabled owners, even if "No Pets" policy in place | | | |
| Primary function is to provide emotional support, through companionship | | | |
| Specifically trained to assist just one person | | | |
| Provide emotional support and comfort to many people | | | |

TEXAS LAW

Effective: September 1, 2023

- V.T.C.A., Human Resources Code § 121.006
- § 121.006. Improper Use of Assistance and Service Animals; Offense Currentness
- (a) A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly represents that an animal is an assistance animal or a service animal when the animal is not specially trained or equipped to help a person with a disability. An offense under this subsection is a misdemeanor punishable by:
 - (1) a fine of not more than \$1,000 ; and
 - (2) 30 hours of community service to be performed for a governmental entity or nonprofit organization that primarily serves persons with visual impairments or other disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than one year.
- (b) A person who habitually abuses or neglects to feed or otherwise neglects to properly care for the person's assistance animal or service animal is subject to seizure of the animal under Subchapter B, Chapter 821,1 Health and Safety Code.

Benefits for justice-involved youth

- Mental health & re-entry success
- Novel and experiential way to practice empathy, patience, impulse control, and other pro-social skills in a safe environment that can be generalized to their peers, staff and family
- Opportunities to give back to the community by socializing and enriching dogs' lives to help them become attractive to adopters



A photograph of a person lying on their side on a light-colored floor, with a black dog lying next to them. The person is wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. The dog is wearing a green and white patterned leash. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a therapy room.

How can a canine co-therapist help?

- Rapport building
- Objectively seeing bx
- Perception of friendliness
- Engagement
- Motivation for change
- Motivation to attend
- Meaning making
- Make counselor seem more trusting
- Projection
- Motivation for change
- Skill development
- Physical contact
- Physiological changes
- Regulate emotional climate in the room
- *Here and now* counseling



Types of programs currently used in the judicial system

- Prison based dog training
- Puppy Raising (service dogs)
- Therapy dog visits
- Individual counseling

Examples of Dog Related Programs

Official Website of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Translate

Search



Services Agency Directory Your Government Visit PA News

Agencies > Department of Corrections > Programs > Puppy Programs

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Puppy Programs

Training service dogs to assist people and rescue dogs for adoption.



Department of Corrections

About Us >

Contact Us

Inmate and Parolee Center

Read the latest edition of [All Paws on Deck](#), the official newsletter of the DOC's puppy programs

Dog training programs began in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in 2001 when Canine Partners for Life partnered with SCI Cambridge Springs. Since then they have expanded to nearly each state prison in Pennsylvania.

There are two main types of canine programs in PA: service dog training and adoption training. For service dog training, incarcerated handlers work with partner programs to raise puppies to become service dogs for individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities. For adoption training, handlers work with inmates and staff to

- Parole Absconders
- Programs ▼
 - Bureau of Reentry Coordination >
 - Justice Reinvestment Initiative 2
 - Medication Assisted Treatment
 - Pennsylvania Correctional Industries >
 - Puppy Programs
 - Workforce Development
- Report Abuse
- Resources >
- Search
- State Prisons >

the community since

State Program List

Canine Partners for Life (CPL)

| SCI | Year Started | Program Purpose |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Benner Township | 2022 | Service Dogs |
| Greene | 2014 | Service Dogs |
| Laurel Highlands | 2015 | Service Dogs |
| Muncy | 2003 | Service Dogs |
| Somerset | 2015 | Service Dogs |

Animal Friends

| SCI | Year Started | Program Purpose |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|
| Fayette | 2017 | Adoption |

United Disabilities Services (UDS)

| SCI | Year Started | Program Purpose |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Houtzdale | 2015 | Service Dogs |

New Hope Assistance Dogs

| SCI | Year Started | Program Purpose |
|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Pine Grove | 2018 | Service Dogs |



Florida Department of Corrections Inmate Dog Training Programs

Like these programs? Make a donation to support them.

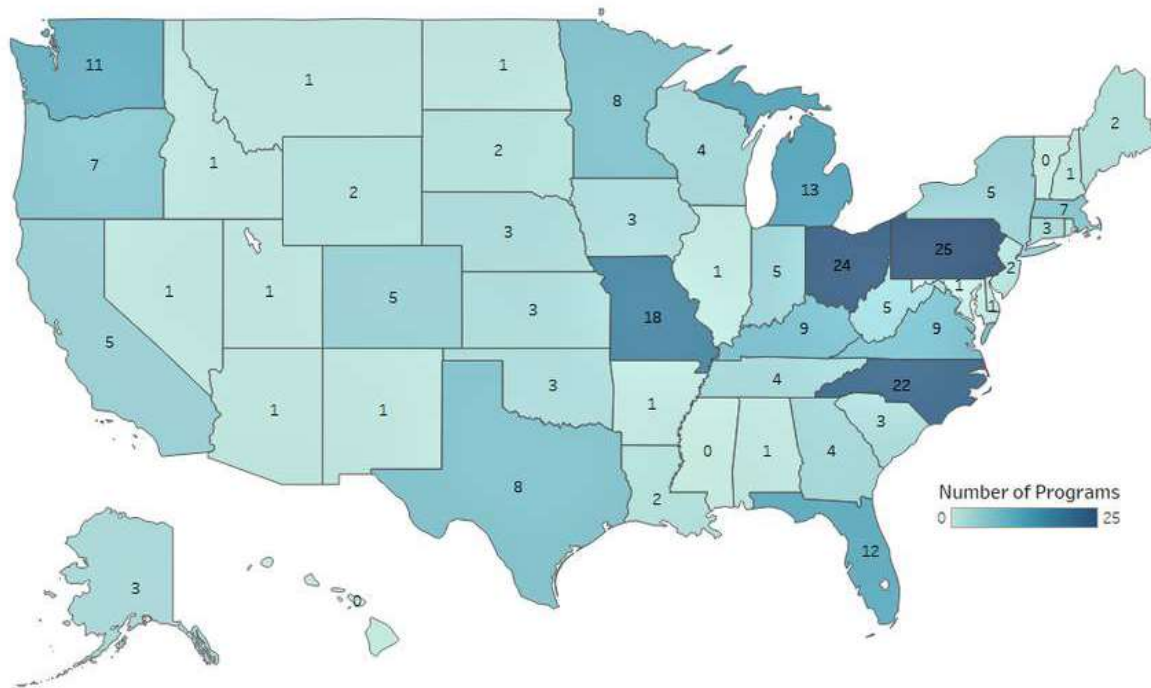
Want to know more about the Florida Department of Corrections' inmate dog training programs?

The Dog Obedience Programs below are partnership programs between the Florida Department of Corrections and various community rescue groups and animal service agencies. These partnerships are intended to increase the adoptability of shelter dogs and provide inmates with job skills beneficial upon release. During the training period, dogs receive socialization and are taught basic obedience commands such as sit, stay, come, and walk by your side without pulling on the leash. All dogs are housebroken and crate-trained and have up-to-date shots. They've been spayed or neutered, and many are microchipped.

Some programs train the dogs to become therapy or service dogs and are trained for up to 18 months. Costs for the dogs vary depending on program type (service dogs, etc.) and length of training. To locate the program closest to you see the county listing below and contact the service provider for information about dogs available for adoption.

FLORIDA COUNTY

NUMBER OF PRISON-BASED DOG TRAINING PROGRAMS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES



This map represents the best knowledge currently available on the number of PDPs across the United States; however, it is not without limitations. Information gathered on the number of programs was restricted to web searches. As a result, programs without an online presence are not reflected in this map. Also, some of the information contained on websites may not be accurate or may no longer be up to date. Still, this is the most comprehensive information on the number of PDPs currently available.

Han, T. M., Flynn, E., Winchell, J., Gould, E., Gandenberger, J., Barattin, D., Tedeschi, P., & Morris, K. N. (2018). Prison-based dog training programs: Standard protocol. Denver: Institute for Human-Animal Connection.

Just a Few US based programs that include rehabilitation, adoption/training, service dog training

Big House Hounds
Canine Cellmates
Canine Companions for Independence
Death Row Dogs
Happy Hounds
Inmate Dog Alliance Project of Idaho
Illinois Department of Corrections
New Leash on Life
New Mexico Corrections Department
Paws in Stripes
Prison Greyhounds
Puppies Behind Bars
Puppies for Parole
Red Dog Project
Refurbished Pets of Southern Michigan
Tender Loving Care
Washington Department of Corrections
Where the Wild Things Are

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There are also counselors who include their dogs and visitation programs with visiting dogs such as Biscuit...

Meet Biscuit



Biscuit's Current Program Involvement

Visits are usually 1 hour

- Morningside Ministries Assisted Living and Memory Care Units – 2X per month
- University Hospital – San Antonio – Visit Patients and Staff – when available
- Christus Santa Rosa Hospital – New Braunfels – Monday afternoons
- Brookhollow Library – San Antonio
- Most recently – Pups for Planes Airport visits
- Conventions - available in the Exhibit Hall – health wise area

Other examples:

Uvalde – School mass shooting

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Available during finals at colleges and other schools as time permits

Events, including 5k runs and other outdoor events as time permits

Office Colleague:

- Office mate
- Continued socialization
- Good for office morale!





Why Do It?

For me, it's a ministry. Something unique I can do to brighten up an individual's day, child or adult.

He picks up when someone looks at him and smiles and heads straight to them... usually with a big "dog hug"!



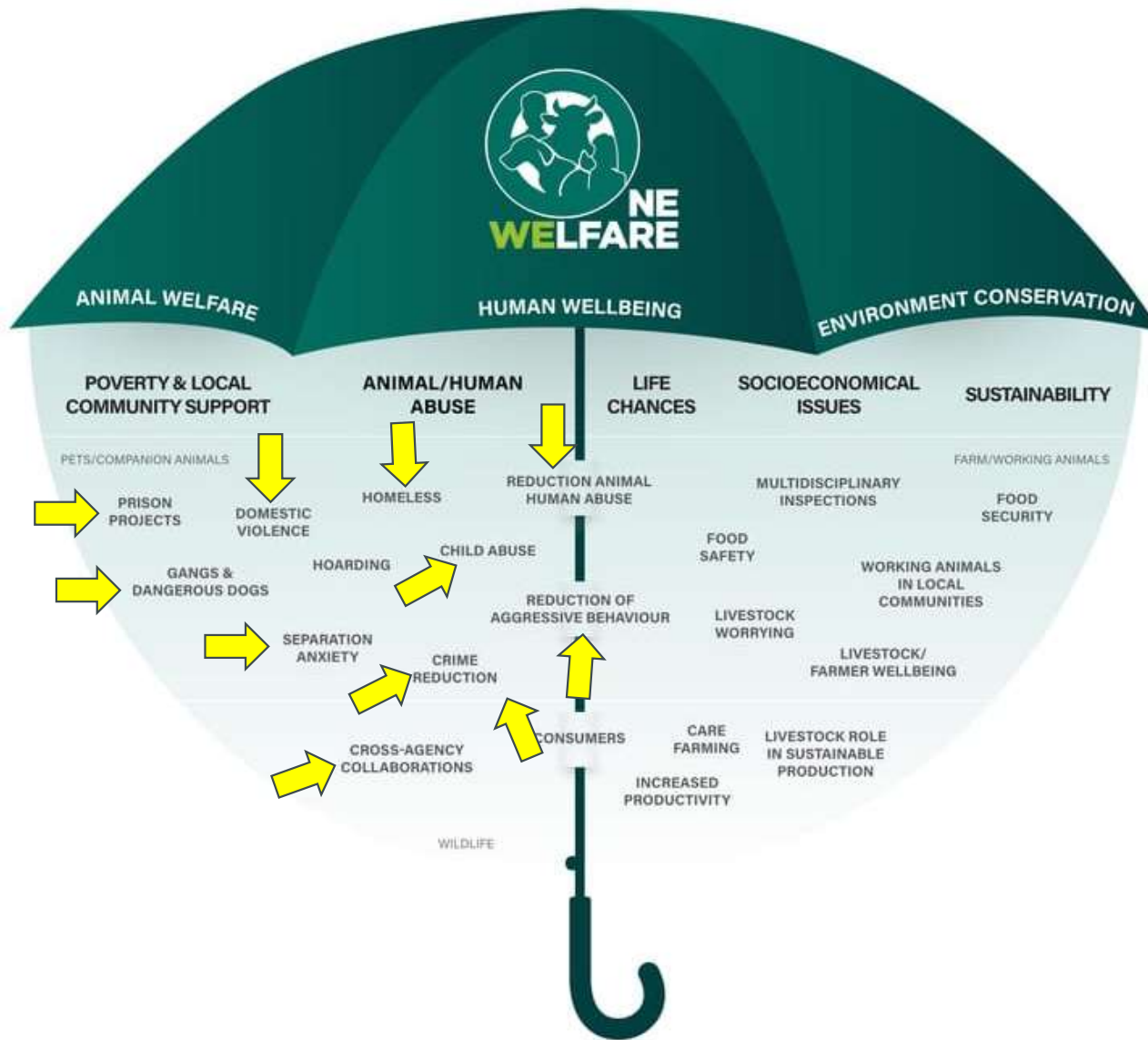
IMPACT

"My mother is having to watch her mom slowly die, and she really would like to see Biscuit, the goldendoodle whom she got to love on yesterday. Please call me as soon as possible, as this would really help her.

A close-up photograph of a dog's face, likely a terrier mix, with light brown and white fur. The dog has large, expressive brown eyes and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

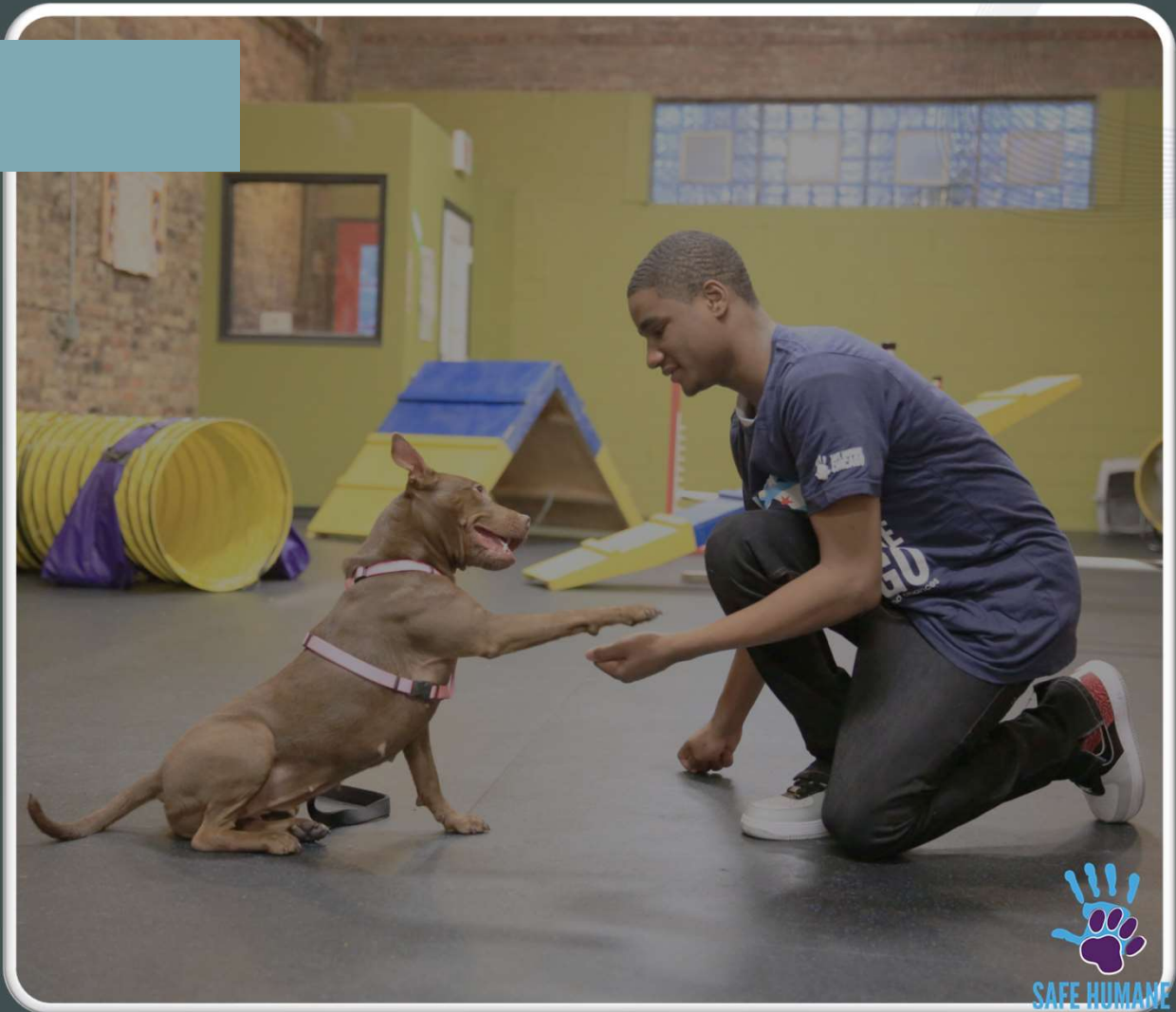
CASE EXAMPLE

Teacher's Pet



The Youth

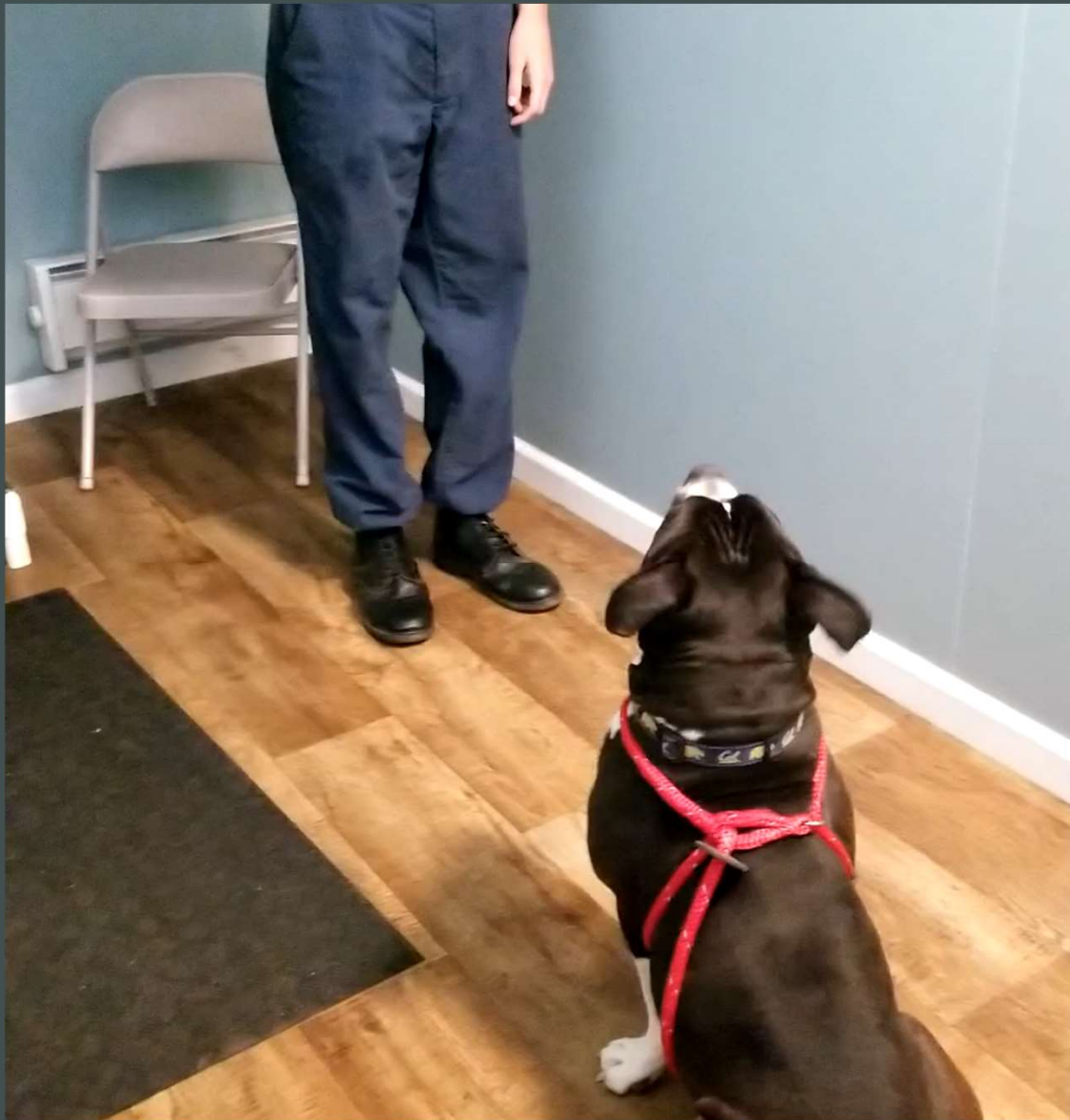
- **Demographics**
- **Types of Trauma**
(including domestic violence and animal abuse)
- **Individual needs**
- **Application process**
- **Partnerships**
 - Detention
 - Community Mental Health
 - Diversion programs
 - Re-entry
 - Alternative High Schools



The Dogs

- Partnerships
 - Public or government-run shelters
 - Private shelters
 - Related non-profit groups
- Types of Dogs
- Types of Trauma
- Assessment of Dogs
- Training philosophy
- Typical shelter dog behaviors
- All dogs are individuals:
individual needs







31



31

Source: Teacher's Pet

Timing

10 weeks

Once or twice / week

2 hours / day

1 hr class, 1 hr training

Format

Theme/question of day

Variety of topics

Check in

Graduation

Staff participation

Dog trainer

2 different dogs, 2

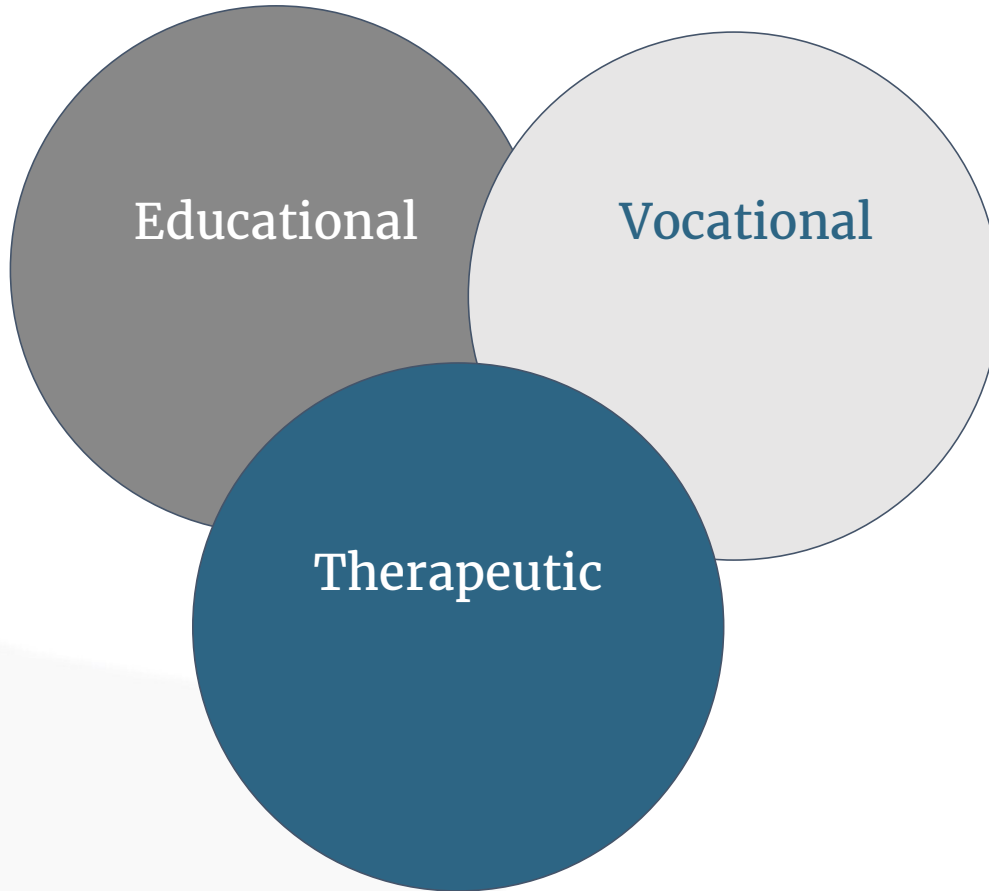
facilitators

Minimum 2 volunteers

Facility staff



Socio-Emotional Learning



CASEL FRAMEWORK

- Self awareness
- Self management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

Goals for Youth

- Empathy
- Perspective taking
- Self esteem
- Self efficacy
- Attachment
- Sense of purpose
- Patience
- Socialization
- Problem solving
- Expression of feeling
- Communication
- Reduce feelings of isolation / loneliness
- Youth become helpful members of society

Using psychoeducation and experiential learning to achieve our goals

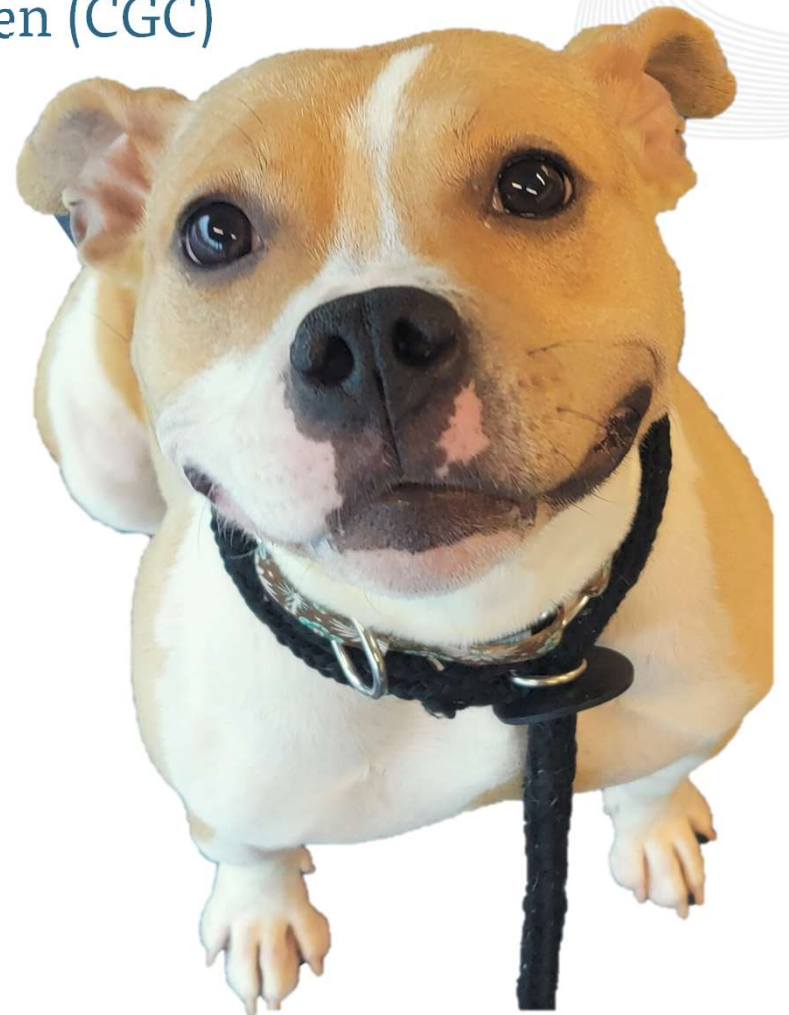
This includes writing, journaling, group discussion

Creating a safe, warm, caring and fun environment

Goals for Dogs

Behaviors to make dogs more attractive to adopters and possibly earn certificate as Canine Good Citizen (CGC)

- socialization
- sit
- stay
- down
- wait
- leave it
- loose-leash walking
- no jumping
- focus
- place / go to mat or crate



Risk Management

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Dogs | Bites, scratches; strength / knocked down | Include dog trainer assessment for suitability; have a certified dog trainer on site at all times; keep dogs 6'-10' apart; at least 2 volunteers; attend all class sessions to learn appropriate interactions |
| | Damaging property | Staff and volunteers to monitor dogs; keep items on hand dogs can have (toys, etc.) |
| Youth | Fights, behavior issues | Experienced facilitator; consistent staff in the room; selection process / criteria |
| Insurance | Liability coverage | Internal or external insurance; dog training; general liability; workman's comp |
| | | |



Challenges and Successes

Challenges:

- Staff shortages
- Inconsistency
- Insufficient resources
- Inadequate facilities for programming
- Misunderstanding of program's purpose/value

All speak to the ways in which these youth and the dogs are “throwaways” (to quote one of our participants)

Successes:

- Life and job skills for both species
- “See” for yourself

Keon: we have a lot in common with the dogs. They were neglected, abused and so are we.

I did not know how to care for a dog. I did not even think about it. But now I know how to approach a dog, how to make sure he is not afraid

Swoth....had a residential dog at another facility. Liked that. It was nice to live with a dog. A lot of work-responsible for everything. Feeding, walking, cleaning. It kept us calm though. We had to be calm to be around the dog and the dog helped us be calm. It was like therapy.

*The dogs are in jail just like us
After we have a session, we are happy. It calms us. We behave better outside the program because we feel good.*

*Messer: it's good that you are taking this to NY but this program should really be all over the United States.
It's fun. We get to have fun.*

Like this program too. Maybe the same. It helps me forget I'm locked up. (More than one kid said this). I learned how to care for a dog, how to train. Things I can use on the outside. How to approach a dog so he's not scared.

Medina--i am a dog person. I just like dogs. I always did. I did not know how to take care of them before. When I get out I want to buy a small _____ and teach him all the things I learned here.



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Thank
you

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QUESTIONS?

What questions or comments do you have?