

Animal-Assisted Stress/Anxiety Group with Incarcerated Males

Dr. Yvonne Eaton-Stull
Dr. Cynthia Wright
Maura Vulakovich &
Cassandra Spirnock

Special Guests:
HOPE AACR Team


Ardis Walsh and Murphy



Types of Working Dogs

- Emotional Support Animals
- Service Animals
- Therapy Animals

Definitions



```
graph TD; A[Animal-Assisted Intervention] --> B[Animal-Assisted Therapy]; A --> C[Animal-Assisted Activity]; A --> D[Animal-Assisted Education];
```

Physical Benefits

- Improve mobility
- Decrease BP
- Decrease heart rate
- Pain management
- Illness and recovery
- Increases in serotonin and oxytocin
- Decrease cortisol

Cognitive Benefits


- Increased attention span
- Recall and retention
- Decision making
- Memory
- Motivation and learning
- Orientation to reality

<h3>Emotional Benefits</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unconditional acceptance• Increase self-esteem• Decrease depression• Decrease anxiety• Empathy• Decrease loneliness• Comfort and rapport building• Affect expression• Sense of purpose• Laughter• Tactile reassurance
-----------------------------	---

<h3>Behavioral Benefits</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreased violence and agitation• Increased affection• Cooperation• Group cohesion• Stress reduction
------------------------------	--

<h3>SCI Mercer</h3> <p>Mission: reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.</p>	<p><u>State Prison:</u> Facility operated by state government housing criminals who have committed felonies, typically serving no less than one-year sentences</p> 
--	--


Stress/Anxiety Group



Murphy

- Three 10-week groups (2 of 3 completed)
- Goal:
 - Educate participants about stress/anxiety
 - Identify negative effects
 - Enhance coping strategies
- Participant selection


Assessment Measures



Ginger

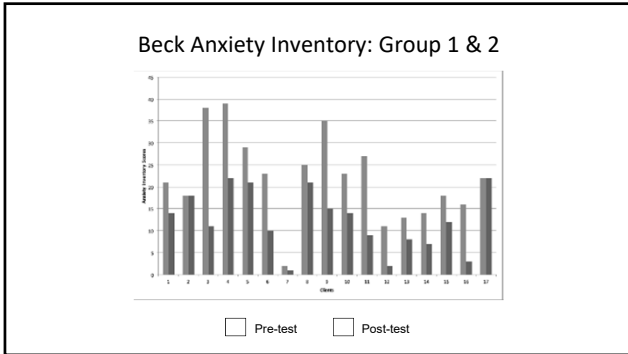
- Beck Anxiety Inventory
 - Measures severity of common anxiety symptoms
- Coping Response Inventory
 - Evaluates and identifies cognitive and behavioral responses and coping methods
- Pet Bonding Scale
 - Measures attachment and overall feelings about the dog's presence

Intervention



Danny

- 10 weeks
- 8 educational topics
 - What is stress?
 - Indicators of stress
 - Stress producing language
 - Stress producing actions
 - Effects of stress
 - Coping strategies
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Social supports



Coping Response Inventory

Problems with jobs

Lack of family support

Lack of control

Worries for family while in incarcerated

Lack of communication

Fear of unknown

Family struggles


Coping with "my" crime

Death of family members

- Avoidance coping
- Approach coping skills increased
 - Logical analysis
 - Positive reappraisal
 - Seek guidance and support
 - Problem solving
- Increase in seeking alternate rewards
- Increase in cognitive coping strategies

Pet Bonding Scale

- 28 item questionnaire
- 7 items were rated 4 or 5 (100%)
- "I look forward to getting up in the morning on days when I will see the dog visitor."
- "I will remember the dog visitor after my program."
- "The dog visits make me feel better."
- "The dog visits take my mind off of my troubles."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "The dogs brought brought feelings of happiness."• "Group really helped me open up and be around people."• "The laughter and joy we shared was genuine."• "I believe dogs have very high value in therapy."• "This program was amazing and helped me so much."• "I loved interacting with the dogs."
<p>Participants' Quotes</p>	

<p>Questions?</p>	<p>CONTACT INFO: Yvonne Eaton-Stull yvonne.eaton-stull@sru.edu 724-738-2619</p>
-------------------	--
