



DC VA Counseling Psychotherapy

200 Little Falls St., #306, Falls Church, VA 22046

info@dvcounseling-psychotherapy.com 703-231-7991

What is Animal Assisted Play Therapy? Animal Assisted Play Therapy (AAPT) is a type of therapy that strategically incorporates the child-animal interaction into the play therapy process. Goal-directed interventions are utilized in the treatment process to coincide with treatment plan goals. The process is guided by Rachel Wills, a Licensed Professional Counselor and Morgan Hayes and Kelley Davis, who have more than a decade in the Animal Welfare field. Their love for animals led them to careers as Animal Control Officers.

Potential Benefits of AAPT:

- Increased Self-Regulation • Increased Problem-Solving Skills
- Reduction of Anxiety and/or Depression
- Ability to Assist in Grief/Loss Issues
- Increased Self-Confidence
- Increased Ability to Recognize Emotions
- Improvement in Communication
- Positive Relationship Development
- Development of Social-Emotional Thinking Skills
- Improvement in Cooperation and Motivation
- Building Rapport and Trust
- Increase in Attention & Impulse Control

Risks Related to AAT: Animals have their own natural defenses. While the therapist handler will do everything possible to prevent any injury, it is possible that someone will get scratched or bitten. Animals often use their mouths in play. Therefore, even when playing, it is possible for light biting to occur.

Rules Related to AAT:

1. The animal has individual rights, just as each client has rights. Therefore, the animal can determine if and when he/she participates with others. While it may be planned to have an animal in session, the animal will never be forced to do so.
2. The animal is always treated gently. He/she should never be hit, have his/her tail or any other parts pulled, carried or treated in any other way that is uncomfortable to him/her.
3. The animal will always need his/her handler present in any therapeutic situation. 5



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4. If an animal becomes irritated, scared, or in any way acts in a negative manner, the handler will put the animal in a safe place. No other person should touch the animal at these times.
5. Risk for an allergic reaction is present when working with animals. Please let me know if you have any allergies to animals or foods.

Consent and Release of Liability: By signing below you are stating your acceptance of these rules and risks and agree to accept full liability in the event that an animal harms you or your child in any way in the course of treatment or you or your child is harmed in any way as a result of being on the property of 1212 Ednor Road. Silver Spring, MD or at any other place while in the presence of Rachel Wills, LPC or the animal.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date