



Canine Potential Unleashed: An Old Dog Teaches New Tricks

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Animal Assisted Activities (AAA)

“No person is too old or ugly or poor or disabled to win the love of a pet-they love us uncritically and without reserve”

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas



Animal Assisted Activities (AAA)

- Help us develop an outward focus
- Acceptance
- Rapport
- Socialization
- Mental stimulation
- Physical contact
- Physiological benefits

Animal Assisted Activities (AAA)

- Animals are non-threatening, non judgmental
- They don't expect anything
- There is no pressure on the person to do or say anything
- The animals are quiet but friendly



Guidelines for AAA

- Health screening of animals (vaccinations, flea treatment, dental...)
- Proper grooming of animal
- Participants instructed on proper handling of animal (petting, brushing, giving treats...)
- Animal not in food preparation areas
- Handler with animal at all times



Guidelines for AAA

- Hand hygiene – supplies available at all times
- Clients have given consent and express interest for working with animal
- Animal removed if changes in behaviour
- Remember –You are working with an animal with natural instincts – be vigilant!



Guidelines for AAA

- Dog should add to session, not distract focus of client
- Handler **must** have knowledge of canine behaviour (body language, behavioural cues) – “Dog Psychology”
- No humanizing of the dog



Contraindications for Implementing AAA

- Allergies
- Fear / phobia of dogs
- Agitated / aggressive clients
- Injured or ill dog or change noted in dog's behaviour



C.O.P.E Service Dogs

- Unique 2 year program for training service dogs
- Dogs matched with at risk high school student
- Reading buddies, math partners
- Therapy dog visits (seniors homes, hospitals)
- Service dog placement program



BIS / C.O.P.E Connection

- 14 yr old girl involved in ABI support groups involved in COPE high school program
- Arranged for COPE demonstration
- Discussion with COPE re: possibility of facility dog
- Home visit, office visit, 2 week training course – matched with dog



A Special Thank You To

Oatley, Vigmond
Personal Injury Lawyers LLP

For generously assisting with the initial
funding of the AAA program at BIS



AAA at BIS with Creemore

C.O.P.E's first facility dog

Chosen for this role:

- Due to ability to work with many different people
- Over learned commands – does easily
- Loves attention – loves to be loved
- Intuitive ability to know when people need *her* attention



AAA at BIS - Creemore's Role

- Communication Skills
- Assertiveness Skills
- Planning / Organization Skills
- Improve attention/concentration
- Facilitates Therapy



Communication Skills

- Participants give the dog commands – practice speech
- Sit Lap
- Go in Visit
- Wait Come
- Shake Down



Communication Skills

- Word finding / problem solving – “what would the command be to get the dog to turn the light on?”

Sit	Down	Get it
Light	Wait	Jump on





Communication Skills

- Memory / Sequencing– “what is the sequence of commands to get the dog to pick up her leash and bring it to you?”

Bring it here

Look

Give

Get your leash



Communication Skills

- Non verbal clients–Creemore learning to read basic command cards
- Body Language – what's the message we are putting out to others?
- Synchronization – mirroring behaviours (calm, excited, aggressive/nervous)
- Aphasia clients reported increased motivation and enjoyment when sessions involved animals (Macauley, 2006)

Assertiveness Skills

- Visual examples of response to passive versus assertive communication
- Give commands – getting others to listen
- When dog tests, gets command allergy, clients feel bad asking her to follow through
- Empowers, gives choices



Planning and Organization

- What do we need to do to groom the dog?
- What do we need to do to walk the dog?
- Schedule a daily routine for the dog (food, walks, water)



Attention/Concentration

- Textures on dog invite touch / fiddling
- Petting soft fur, flopping ears – satisfies need to “fiddle” and creates relaxed, casual atmosphere during sessions
- Calming effect may help clients stay focused and attentive to conversation

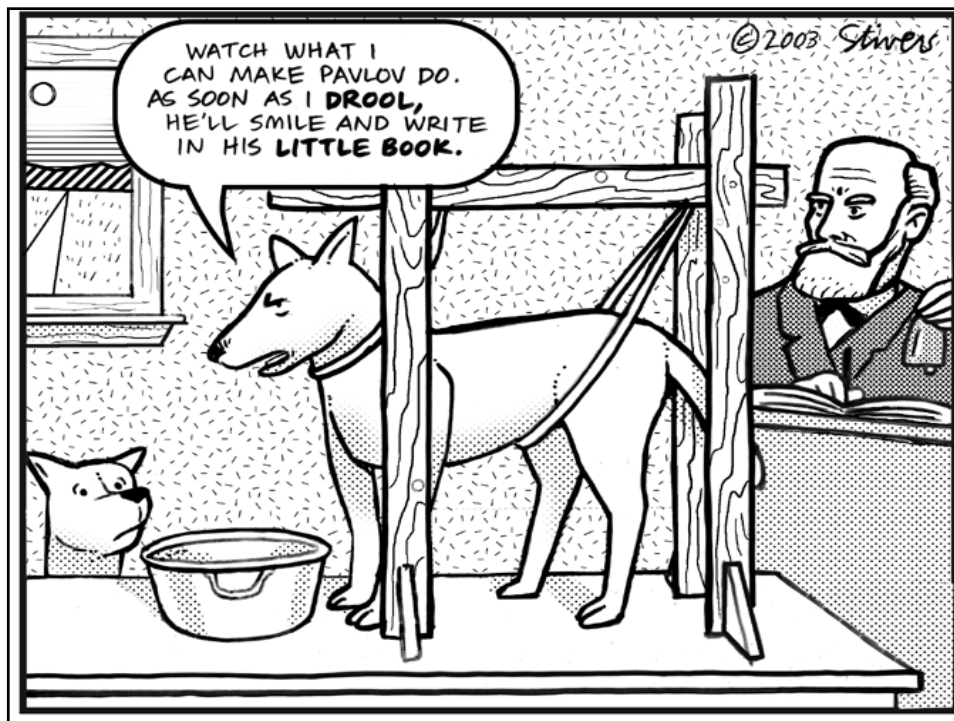


Behaviour Education

Using an Old Dog to Teach New Tricks

NOT comparing dog to people, but can be used to illustrate

- Reinforcement (rewards, praise / self talk)
- Patterning, chaining – building on skills, breaking tasks down
- Impulse control
- *Does not always generalize*



Canine Charisma Human Whisperer



Need for Contact

- Often inappropriate for therapist to freely offer physical affection to clients
- Therapy dog knows no such limits
- Dog genuinely shows recognition and interest in people – some participants may not have experienced this in a long time
- Dogs don't fake enthusiasm – what you see is what you get



Physical Exercises

Specific tasks related to physical goals



Feedback from Clients

- Good listener
- Warm hug
- Fun to work with
- Quiet comfort
- Doesn't judge
- Knows when she is needed – great shoulder to cry on



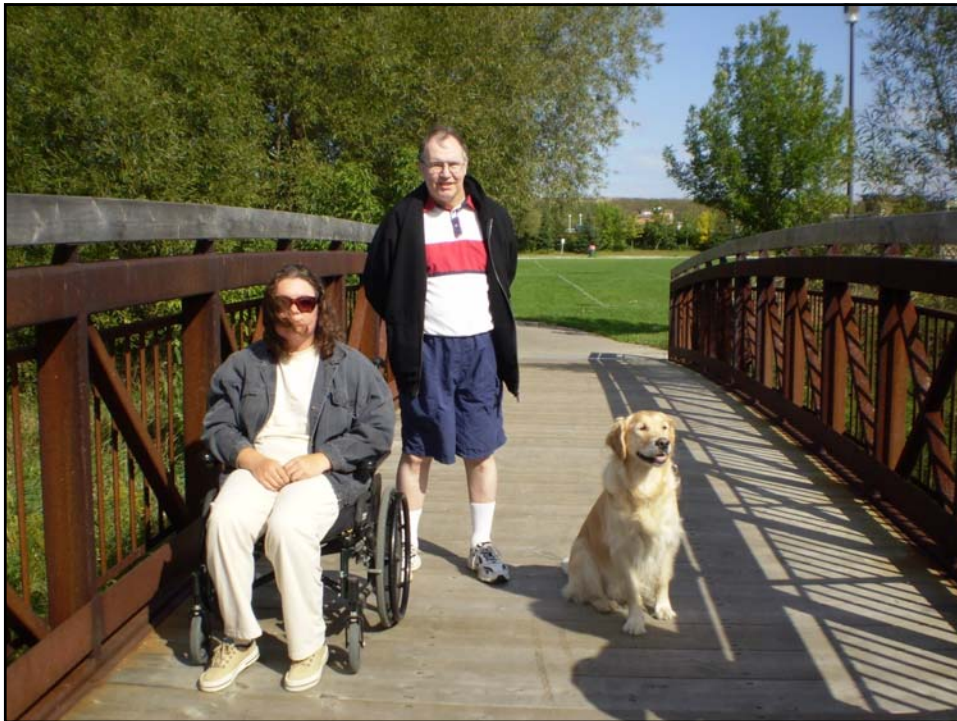
Feedback from BIS Staff

- Helps de-stress
- Picks up the mood and energy in the office
- Helps staff pace and refocus
- Provides comic relief
- Water cooler conversation



Unexpected Benefits

- Increased interaction with participants not on caseload
- Helped keep unsafe participant from leaving program
- Motivation for child with mobility challenges
- Great facilitator for networking
- Helped participant re- connect with own dog





Questions?



Resources

- Macauley, B. Animal Assisted Therapy for Persons with Aphasia: A Pilot Study. 2006 Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development Vol 43 No3 pgs 367-366
- Pichot, T and Coulter, M. Animal Assisted Brief Therapy A Solution Focused Approach. 2006 Routledge Taylor and Francis group. New York
- www.chimoproject.ca
- www.deltasociety.org
- www.copedogs.org



Thank You!



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