Effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy on the Frequency of Physical Restraints: A Pilot Study

Pamela Slane LCPC, BC-DMT, GL-CMA, AAT
To explore the impact of animal-assisted therapy, utilizing the intervention of touch, on the frequency of physical restraints in a residential treatment facility.
Definitions

**Physical Restraint:** Application of physical force by one or more individuals that reduces, restricts, or immobilizes the ability of an individual to move his/her arms, legs or head fully. (Children’s Health Act, 2013)

**Animal-Assisted Therapy:** A goal-directed intervention facilitated by a licensed health professional in which an animal is an integral part of the treatment process and is utilized to facilitate and promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning. (Delta Society, 2013)
Differences Between AAA and AAT

**AAA:**
Goal-directed activities that improve the client’s quality of life through the use of the human-animal bond.

*(Gammonley et. Al., 1997)*

*Not guided by a credential clinician*

**AAT:**
Goal-directed interventions that are an integral part of the treatment process that utilize the human-animal bond and that can be measured and evaluated to determine client’s growth.

*(Chandler, 2012)*

*Facilitated by a credentialed clinician*

*AAT is considered an adjunct to existing therapy*
Benefits of AAT

- *Multisensory Experience*
- *Accelerates Clinician & Client Rapport in the therapeutic relationship*
- *Acceptance & Trust within the therapeutic environment*
- *Accessing Emotional States and sharing experiences*
- *Sense of Mastery and Accomplishment*
- *Self-Esteem Enhancement*
- *Tactile Interventions/Therapeutic Touch*
- *Boundaries*
- *Hygiene Awareness*
- *Sense of Responsibility that is achievable*
- *Teaching Opportunities*
- *Socialization/Relationship Skills*
- *Termination Challenges*

(Chandler, 2012)
AAT in Counseling Theories

- Person Center Counseling
- Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling
- Reality Counseling
- Solution-Focused Counseling
- Existential Counseling
- Psychoanalytic Counseling
- Behavioral Counseling
- Adlerian Counseling
- Gestalt Counseling
Person-Centered Counseling
Psychodynamics of AAT
Solution-Focused Counseling
Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling
Adlerian Counseling
Paws-II-Hands
Established in 2008
A Pilot Study

In 2012, Paws-II-Hands was utilized as a pilot study to explore the impact of animal-assisted therapy, utilizing the intervention of touch, on the frequency of physical restraints in a residential treatment facility.
Sample $N=45$
Randomly Assigned

**Experimental Group: $N=25$**
- 8-18 years old ($M=10.88$)
- 12 Females 13 Males
- 40% Caucasian 60% African-American
- Do not participate in any external Animal-Assisted Therapy/Activities

**Control Group: $N=20$**
- 8-18 years old ($M=12$)
- 5 Females 15 Males
- 20% Caucasian 80% African-American
- Do not participate in any Animal-Assisted Therapy/Activities

Both Groups were wards of the state, challenged by past traumas, including physical, sexual, or mental abuse, and had been diagnosed with more than one mental illness.
Procedure

Conducted weekly individual animal-assisted therapy sessions for 3 Months.
Animal-Assisted Therapy Sessions
Animal-Assisted Therapy Sessions
Animal-Assisted Therapy Sessions
Procedure

Collected the records of physical restraints for the experimental group ($N=25$) and the control group ($N=20$) during the pre-intervention period (August), the mid-intervention period (September to November) and the post-intervention period (December).
Results

August
September
October
November
December

Experimental
Control
Procedure

Data was organized in a repeated measures analysis of variance used to assess the relationship between the number of animal-assisted therapy sessions and the frequency of physical restraints.
## Results

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Experimental Group was significantly greater than the Control Group in pre-intervention, at mid intervention, the groups were not significantly different, and in post-intervention, the Experimental Group was significantly less than the Control Group.
Limitations

The Specific Intervention
*Chief, touch, imagination, play therapy techniques, AAT techniques and DMT techniques.

Numerous Variables
*Change in staff, change in families, change in roommates, variety of abuse, residential culture changing, change in treatment phases.

Confusion of Roles
*Researcher also the facilitator, also an administrator, also oversees the transition ,also supervisor, also a group clinician.
Further Research

* Paws-II-Hands became a trainable 10 Week Program in 2014
* Implemented into 3 residential facilities
* Sample size of 150 clients
* 5 weeks of AAT & 5 weeks of DMT
* Records and Data of Physical Restraints & Aggressive Outbursts gathered pre-program, during program and post program to study further results and correlations