

Animal Assisted Therapy as An Element of Green Care

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Green Care Therapy Definition

- Green care therapy is a nature-based approach to promoting and maintaining health
 - Care farming
 - Animal assisted therapies
 - Therapeutic horticulture
 - Facilitated exercise in an outdoor setting



History of Green Care

- Traditional hospital gardens
- Monastery courtyard
- Healing spaces



Geel in Flanders

- Established in 13th century
 - Village for “mentally distressed pilgrims”
 - Worship at the shrine of St. Dymphna
 - Residents care for pilgrims
 - First example of therapeutic community
 - Documented cases of recovery
- *Modern day Geel, is located 37m north-east of Brussels, Belgium*

(Bloor,1988)



Other Historic Examples

- Victorian mental asylums
- Tuberculosis sanatoriums
- 1940s Therapeutic communities in the UK



Disconnect from Nature

- Urbanization of the society
- Growth of suburban areas
- Loss of connection with the natural world
- Disconnect from the ways how food produced



Reestablishing the Connection with The Nature

- Reduction of pre-existing stress levels
- Mood enhancement
- Creating “restorative environment”
- Physical exercise
- Social interaction
- Connection between accessible “acreage” of green space and population’s psychological wellbeing

(Takano et al, 2002; De Vries et al, 2003; Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003).





Animals in Green Care

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Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)

- Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)
- Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA)
- Service animals
- Companion animals



(Sargsyan, 2021)



Physiological benefits of AAI

- Changes in CV function
- Changes in neurotransmitter
- Animal ownership increases one year survival rate after acute MI
 - Mortality of 28% for non- owners vs. 5.7% for pet owners
- AAA for patients with schizophrenia resulted in improved social and conversational skills

(Friedmann and Thomas, 1995; Barak et al, 2001)



What Causes AAI Benefits?

- Social support theory
 - Person is cared for, loved, esteemed
 - Belonging to a network of mutual obligations
 - Buffer against stress responses or illness

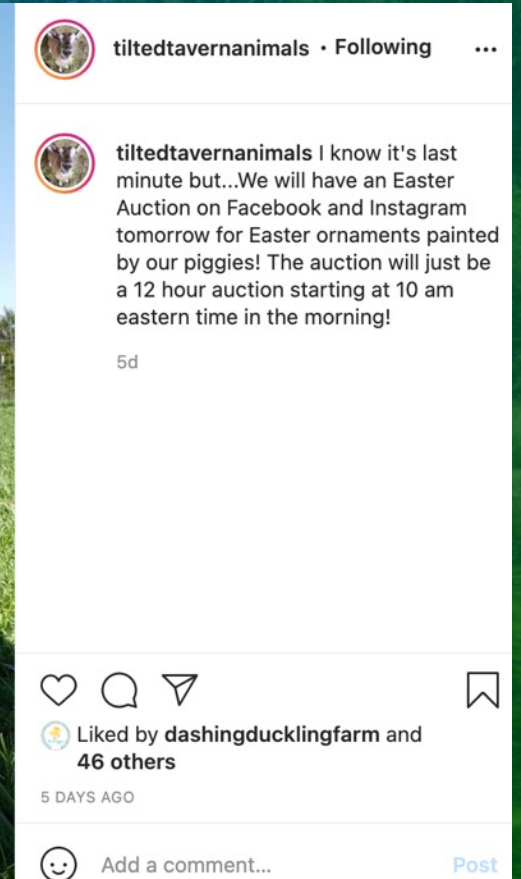
- Human-animal relationship may also contribute to social support
 - Replacement for human social support
 - Enhance reorganization after an illness
 - Reestablish routines



(Cassel, 1974; McNicholas and Collis, 2006)

AAT with Farm Animals

- Patients with physical or psychiatric illness
- Ride/entertainment
 - Horses, donkeys
- Work/care
 - Cows
 - Sheep
 - Pigs
 - Rabbits
 - Chicken



Call Ducks as providers of Green Care Therapies

- Memphis Peabody Hotel
- Highly trainable
- Docile
- Calming presence
- Miniature size



Peacebunny Island, Inc Experience

- Caleb Smith
- Rabbit Sanctuary
- Private Island on Mississippi River
- AAT training
- COVID 19 and Bunnies



(Gillette, 2021)



Possible Research Questions

- *Are green care based cardiac rehabilitation programs as effective as traditional cardiac rehabilitation center based programs in regards to patients' engagement and participation?*
- *What are the personal experiences of the patients in a green care based cardiac rehabilitation program?*

I Just love
Research



Questions?



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