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PET CREMATION SERVICES

DIVISION OF PROKO-WALL FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORY

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

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VOL. 18 ISSUE 1

Science Says Your Pet is Good for your Mental Health?

Being a pet in America is a plum gig. Pets are incredibly well loved: according to a 2015 Harris poll, 95% of owners think of their animal as a member of the family. About half buy them birthday presents. And it's a two-way street. People who have pets tend to have lower blood pressure, heart rate and heart-disease risk than those who don't. Those health boons may come from the extra exercise that playing and walking require, and the stress relief of having a steady best friend on hand.

Scientists are now digging up evidence that animals can also help improve mental health, even for people with challenging disorders. Though the studies are small, the benefits are impressive enough that clinical settings are opening their doors to animal-assisted interventions—pet therapy, in other words—used alongside conventional medicine. “It used to be one of the great no-no’s to think of an animal in a hospital,” says Alan Beck, director of the Center for the Human-Animal Bond at Purdue University, citing the fear of causing infection. “Now, I don’t know of any major children’s hospital that doesn’t have at least some kind of animal program.”

The rise of animal therapy is backed by increasingly serious science showing that social support—a proven antidote to anxiety and loneliness—can come on four legs, not just two. Animals of many types can help calm stress, fear and anxiety in young children, the elderly and everyone in between.



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Continued on page 2

More research is needed before scientists know exactly why it works and how much animal interaction is needed for the best results. But published studies show that paws have a place in medicine and in mental well-being. “The data is strong,” Beck says. “If you look at what animals do for people and how we interact with them, it’s not surprising at all.” Here’s a look at some of the cutting-edge science in the field.

Rabbits

In one study, a stressed-out group of adults were told to pet a rabbit, a turtle or their toy forms. The toys had no effect, but stroking a living creature, whether hard-shelled or furry, relieved anxiety. It worked for people regardless of whether they initially said they liked animals.



Crickets

Animals don’t have to be cuddly to help. In a 2016 study published in the journal *Gerontology*, elderly people who were given five crickets in a cage became less depressed after eight weeks than a control group. The act of caring for a living creature seems to make the difference.

Horses

Among the most-studied therapy animals, horses have been involved in medical treatment plans in Europe since the 1860s. Activities like grooming a horse and leading one around a pen have been shown to reduce PTSD symptoms in children and adolescents.

Fish

Animals can focus people’s attention. When people at an Alzheimer’s-disease facility dined in front of aquariums with brightly colored fish, they ate more, got better nutrition and were less prone to pacing. They were also more attentive and less lethargic.

Dogs

Some research suggests that when children who struggle with reading read aloud to a trained dog and handler, they show fewer anxiety symptoms. “Their attitudes change and their skills improve,” says Lisa Freeman, director of the Tufts Institute for Human-Animal Interaction.

Guinea Pigs

Animals make socializing easier for kids who find it stressful, says Maggie O’Haire of Purdue. In her study, when children with autism had a guinea pig in the classroom, they were more social with their peers, smiled and laughed more, and showed fewer signs of stress.

This appeared in the April 17, 2017 issue of TIME.

Pet Bereavement Support:

THE ASSOCIATION FOR PET LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT

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PET LOSS.COM

For pet lovers grieving the death of a pet or an ill pet.
www.petloss.com

THE RAINBOW PASSAGE

Pet Loss Support Center
(262) 376-0340 • douglasc@execpc.com



Pets Get Depressed, Too

By Regina Boyle Wheeler
Medically Reviewed by Jennifer Garcia, DVM

Even the most chipper kittens and playful pups can get the blues. Here's how to spot the signs of pet depression — and how to help your four-legged friend get back to his old self again.

Just like people, healthy pets of all shapes and sizes can get down in the dumps. “Dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, and even iguanas can experience depression,” says Kathleen Dunn, DMV, a veterinarian at the Pet Health Center at North Shore Animal League America in Port Washington, N.Y.

While pet depression isn't extremely common, these warning signs can help pet owners recognize if there is a problem.

- ♥ Your pet is lethargic
- ♥ He experiences a drop in appetite
- ♥ She's just not playing the way she usually does

Dr. Dunn also says to be aware if your active, healthy pet starts moping or your normally calm animal seems agitated. Accidents in the house or outside of the litter box can also signal that you have a depressed dog or cat on your hands, Dunn says.

Diagnosing pet depression is a “diagnosis of exclusion,” meaning your vet will perform tests to eliminate medical reasons that could cause your pet to behave in a depressed way. If medical reasons are ruled out, then your veterinarian will take a look at whether family changes or influences could be at root.

What Causes Pet Depression?

The reasons for pet depression can vary widely, but they usually have to do with loss or change. Common causes of depressed dogs or depressed cats include:

- ♥ Death of a beloved person or animal companion
- ♥ Stress in the household
- ♥ A move

An otherwise healthy pet can become depressed if left alone for many hours. This is especially true of dogs, since they are pack animals and like company. It's also possible your pet is mirroring what he sees in you. “Pets are sensitive to their owners' moods and know when their owners are upset,” Dunn says.

How to Treat Pet Depression

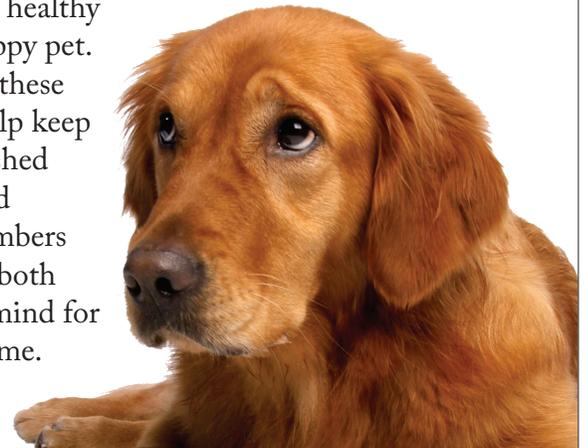
How can you help your depressed cat or dog snap out of his funk? Dunn says to first try to minimize stress in your home. Plenty of exercise and playtime is also a good way to stimulate his mind to focus on other things. Bringing your depressed dog to a local dog park is a great way to help him play and mingle with other animals. When your pet is depressed because of the loss of another pet, bringing another animal into the family can help.

If you've moved to a new home with your pets, make the transition easier by confining them to one area. After a while, slowly introduce them to other parts of the house to reduce their stress levels. Dunn says cats are more apt to become stressed or depressed because of a move and may refuse food. If your depressed cat stops eating, call a vet. “A cat that doesn't eat for 48 to 72 hours can have serious medical issues,” she says.

Rarely, medication is needed to get your depressed dog or cat out of his blue mood. “Sometimes appetite stimulation is required, and sometimes pets are put on specific anti-depression or anti-anxiety medications, just like people,” Dunn says. And, as with people, results don't happen overnight. Dunn notes that it can take several months for the medicine to work its best.

You might not be able to prevent pet depression, but involving your furry friend in family activities and being aware of how changes will affect them can help. Keep your regular veterinary appointments too —

generally a healthy pet is a happy pet. Following these tips can help keep your cherished four-legged family members healthy in both body and mind for years to come.





Donn Foote DIVISIONAL MANAGER



Donn joined Forever Friends team in October of 2014. Prior, he was with a local landscape company for 12 years as a product supervisor. Donn brings to Forever Friends a professional customer service relationship background.

Born and raised in De Pere, Donn still resides there with his wife Sara, two sons and dog, Belle.

Donn is a member of Resurrection Catholic Church, a member of the Knights of Columbus and serves on the advisory committee for the Bellevue Dog Park. He enjoys being with his family and going camping, golfing and playing softball in his free time.

Referral Partners

FOR AREA VETERINARIES, CLINICS & HOSPITALS:

4 Legged Friends Veterinary Clinic
www.4leggedfriendsanimalhospital.com

Allouez Animal Hospital
www.greenbayallouezanimalhospital.com

Animal Hospital of Ashwaubenon
ash-vet.com

Animal Hospital De Pere
www.animalhospitalofdepere.com

Animal Hospital of Howard
www.animalhospitalofhoward.com

Animal House Pet Clinic
www.animalhousegreenbay.com

Bay Area Humane Society
www.bayareahumanesociety.com

Bay East Animal Hospital
www.bayeast.com

Gentle Vet Animal Hospital
www.thegentlevets.com

Northwoods Veterinary Clinic
www.northwoodsvetcenter.com

Oak View Veterinary Hospital
www.oakviewvet.com

Riverside Animal Hospital
www.riversideanimal.vetstreet.com

Veterinary House Calls
920-822-8575

Wrightstown Veterinary Clinic
www.wrightstownvet.com

Events

WBAY PET EXPO

Shopko Hall
Friday, April 13, 3-8 pm
Saturday, April 14, 10 am-6 pm
Sunday, April 15, 10 am-4 pm

2018 K-9 KARNIVAL

Josten Park, Bellevue Dog Park
2280 Town Hall Road
Saturday, May 12, 10 am-2 pm



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