

## Article 14

### **Fido and Freud Meet: Integrating Animal-Assisted Interventions With Counseling Theory**

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#### **Abstract**

Current research on animal-assisted interventions (AAI) is expansive and rapidly growing, affirming a host of physical, physiological, and psychological benefits when integrated into the counseling process. This modality harnesses the power of the human-animal bond, providing benefit to the client and the counselor-client relationship. Given the mental health needs of the juvenile justice population, the use of innovative, creative modalities is needed. By integrating counseling theory and AAI, this manuscript grounds the practice of AAI while highlighting examples with adjudicated youth.

*Keywords:* animal-assisted interventions, human-animal bond, counseling theory, adjudicated youth

Animal-assisted intervention (AAI) is an umbrella term for modalities such as animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted activities. AAI is goal-oriented, designed to improve client functioning, and delivered by a practitioner with specialized expertise and training (Animal Assisted Interventions International, 2013). The scholarly literature on AAI is expansive and rapidly growing, supporting positive results with using AAI for persons with emotional or behavior difficulties (Nimer & Lundahl, 2007) and children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders (Prothman, Bienert, & Ettrich, 2006).

When considering how AAI works in counseling, the biophilia hypothesis provides an overarching theoretical basis for AAI. The biophilia hypothesis is the "innate emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" (Wilson, 1993, p. 31).

The natural environment has shaped our cognitive and emotional development and produced a desire to maintain a relationship with animals and nature (Fawcett & Gullone, 2001). Further, contact with animals decreases heart rate and blood pressure (Friedmann, Katcher, Thomas, Lynch, & Messent, 1983) and changes certain chemicals in the body (e.g., cortisol, oxytocin; Odendaal, 2000). Finally, integrating animals into counseling provides an opportunity for attachment and bonding (Geist, 2011; Parish-Plass, 2008).

The benefits of integrating animals into the counseling milieu are clear. For example, animals can make the counselor appear more trusting, thus increasing the client's comfort and the likelihood of sharing personal information (Fine, 2010). Animals can also increase client motivation to attend counseling (Lange, Cox, Bernert, & Jenkins, 2007). Further, animals can meet the needs of clients who need soothing physical contact (Chandler, 2005; Parish-Plass, 2008). Animals can also lower arousal in the client, which is useful for clients with trauma symptoms or with high anxiety about attending counseling (Lefkowitz, Paharia, Prout, Debiak, & Bleiberg, 2005). As animals can exhibit some of the same challenging behaviors found in our clients (Chassman & Kinney, 2011), animals are also useful comparison objects, allowing clients to see their behavior objectively. Finally, animals can regulate the emotional climate in the room (Fine, 2010), reacting to clients in the present moment (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). For example, animals can respond to angry clients by moving away or to crying clients by offering comfort.

Animals are more than simply present in the counseling office (Chassman & Kinney, 2011); animals are viewed as a *partner* in the counseling relationship (Parish-Plass, 2013). AAI is a flexible, atheoretical modality that can be integrated into any counseling theory (Chandler, 2005). AAI is typically seen as an intervention approach (e.g., tell a story about the dog, teach the dog a new trick) to address psychosocial treatment goals, including social skills or ability to trust (Chandler, 2005). While the intervention approach is useful, it lacks a comprehensive framework for understanding how AAI is connected to counseling theory. Working from a theoretical base allows counselors to be intentional (Halbur & Halbur, 2011), which includes identifying how AAI can facilitate change within the client and framing these interventions from a clear theoretical orientation (Piper, 2014).

The aim of this manuscript is to build upon the theoretical framework for AAI (Chandler, Portrie-Bethke, Barrio Minton, Fernando, & O'Callaghan, 2010; Geist, 2011) while specifically focusing on adjudicated youth. On average, more than 60,000 youth are placed in custody each year (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2013). Most of the youth in the juvenile justice system have diagnosable mental health disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (Ford, Hartman, Hawke, & Chapman, 2008), and rates of psychiatric disorders are substantially higher for adjudicated youth than in the general population (Skowrya & Cocozza, 2006; Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002). Benefits of using AAI with adjudicated youth include reduction of anxiety; improved rapport and communication with counselors; improved behavior in the facility, home, and community; as well as a reduction in length and cost of treatment (Kruger, Trachtenberg, & Serpell, 2004). Finding creative ways to work with this population is critical as counselors often view adjudicated youth as a demanding population to counsel and these youth often distrust adults. One example of an innovative program for adjudicated youth is Teacher's Pet (<http://teacherspetmi.org/>).

Teacher's Pet is a non-profit organization based in Macomb County, Michigan. The program's mission is to help troubled youth and hard-to-adopt shelter dogs by providing a safe, therapeutic environment for learning together. Youth are paired with shelter dogs for a 10-week program centered on teaching basic manners through reward-based training. In the process, the youth can improve the quality of life for a dog, offering an improved likelihood of adoption. The youth simultaneously benefit from this program, developing insight and learning about themselves. As one youth succinctly stated, "I was able to be my true self with the dogs. There is a gentle, loving, caring person in me." This program reduces barriers when counseling this population and empowers youth in the areas of empathy, patience, impulse-control, perseverance, and hope. Although AAI typically utilizes trained therapy animals, the animals associated with this program are untrained. Utilizing rescued dogs increases the opportunity for bonding as the youth identify and feel a connection to the unwanted and neglected animals.

This manuscript builds upon the current literature by grounding AAI in counseling theory. Doing so helps to demystify the process of AAI, allowing the counselor to utilize AAI with intentionality and providing a foundation for future research on AAI. The remainder of the manuscript summarizes various approaches to counseling (Corey, 2013), presenting how AAI can be integrated into the philosophy and techniques of these approaches. Quotes from anonymous Teacher's Pet participants are presented to further contextualize this discussion.

### **Psychodynamic Approaches**

The psychodynamic approach emphasizes that people are driven by unconscious forces and shaped by early childhood experiences (Halbur & Halbur, 2011). This approach includes psychoanalytic therapy and Adlerian therapy (Corey, 2013). Psychoanalytic therapy posits that people are urged by impulses and people are often unaware of these conflicts. As greater self-awareness leads to better choices, specific interventions foster insight and catharsis. In contrast, Adlerian therapy suggests that people have free choice and are motivated by social urges. Counseling is considered successful if the client develops greater social interest or concern about others. Using interventions such as early recollections helps the counselor to know how a person interprets his or her experiences. Counselors working from this approach gather information about the person's strategy for living, encourage insight, and focus on reorientation.

#### **Psychodynamic Approaches and AAI**

The literature on psychodynamic approaches and AAI is extensive. First, AAI helps facilitate progression through the psychosocial stages of development (Chalquist, 2009; Chandler, 2005; Fine, 2010). For example, children learn responsibility through taking care of an animal, and clients in later stages of development gain social support through animal contact (Fine, 2010).

Developing trust is a major component of the psychodynamic approaches. Many of the adjudicated youth who participate in Teacher's Pet have limited success in trusting others. Their worldview comes from a place of rejection, abandonment, and disappointment, with little investment in new relationships. Integrating animals in

counseling provides an opportunity for attachment (Berget & Braastad, 2008; Parish-Plass, 2008) as clients learn to establish a bond with the animal and then extend the bond to others. In contrast to other therapy animals, dogs are particularly motivated by attachments with humans (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). AAI may be particularly useful for a client who has an insecure or anxious attachment with people; in this relationship, the client can experience the role of a nurturer (Melson & Fine, 2010).

The idea of the unconscious is essential to psychoanalytic therapy. Clients often will project feelings onto the therapy animal (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). For example, the animal may need to rest during the session. A client who feels rejected may project these feelings onto the animal. As transference is best addressed in the here and now, this becomes a useful teaching moment. Clients might also disclose information but have the animal own the experience (e.g., “Fido doesn’t like when my dad smells like beer”). A quote from a youth in Teacher’s Pet highlights both the idea of developing trust as well as projecting onto the animal:

I learned that I am just like the dogs: from a tough background, and don’t really trust people. But I’m getting better with it. I really do love dogs and love to see them become a better dog, just like I’m becoming a better person.

As AAI fosters a connection to the natural world (Chalquist, 2009), working with animals may help the client to develop social interest, a central tenet of Adlerian therapy. Developing social interest posits that a person is capable of contributing to the welfare of others (Adler, 1938). It is essential for adjudicated youth to develop a sense of connection to the larger community. In fact, those in Teacher’s Pet describe *giving back* as the most rewarding aspect of the program: “The fact that we save dog’s lives is my favorite part of the program,” and “I enjoyed being able to save [the dogs] even though it was extremely sad for me to leave them. I knew it was the right thing to do.”

To further social interest, the counselor can share stories about animals throughout history that have made valuable contributions as well as stories about the therapy animal. These interventions enhance the connection between the client and animal, especially if the animal’s history is one that the client can relate to (Chandler et al., 2010). The youth in Teacher’s Pet often lament on the dogs being locked up without cause. Finally, counselors working from an Adlerian approach want to understand the client’s family of origin, and the presence of an animal brings out a wealth of information about the client’s home life.

### **Experiential and Relationship-Oriented Approaches**

The experiential and relationship-oriented approaches emphasize the counseling relationship. This category includes person-centered therapy, existential therapy, and Gestalt therapy (Corey, 2013). With person-centered therapy, the view of people is positive, believing the client can direct the session and figure out how to resolve issues (Rogers, 1961). Through being congruent, communicating empathy, and having unconditional positive regard for the client, the counselor creates a safe space for the client to become fully functioning and self-aware.

Existential therapy is a philosophical approach that is central to the practice of the counselor, focusing on aspects of the human conditions (e.g., having the choice to determine one’s outcome, striving to become a more authentic self). A counselor using

existential therapy joins the client on his or her journey (Yalom & Josselson, 2011) and relies on here and now experiences for the client to gain self-awareness and become more authentic. Gestalt therapy also stresses awareness by focusing on the immediate environment, developing healthy boundaries, and making new and different choices. Gestalt therapy is a dynamic and experiential approach to counseling that is grounded in the present (Polster & Polster, 1973). A counselor working from this approach uses experiments to help the client gain more self-awareness while emphasizing personal choice and responsibility.

### **Experiential and Relationship-Oriented Approaches and AAI**

The counseling relationship is the foundation to AAI; in particular, the relationship between the client and the animal is the active ingredient. Clients often connect more quickly and deeply with the *animal therapist* than the human therapist. Indeed, counselors could learn much by observing animals in action. Dogs are particularly useful in this rapport building, as described in the following quote:

(Dogs) freely share and give their love without prejudice and question. They don't care if you are old, or young, sick in body, or what you look like. They don't let us feel different. They don't care about our color, our speech or if we are rich or poor, or where we come from. We benefit from their inherent kindness. Our presence is all that matters to a dog. (Therapy Dogs International, 2015)

Counselors who work with animals are also quicker to develop a rapport with clients. A client may think, "If a dog can like her, maybe I can too." Counselors who use AAI are often seen as more empathic and more trustworthy (Chassman & Kinney, 2011; Fawcett & Gullone, 2001). The animal is also perceived as empathic (Lange et al., 2007) as animals are "non-judgmental participants who are outside the complications and expectations of human relationships" (Friesen, 2010, p. 261). Animals give unconditional positive regard and show empathy to the clients (Chassman & Kinney, 2011; Gullone, 2003).

Within this unique relationship, clients learn how to be loved through interactions with a therapy animal. Clients who feel safer in counseling may disclose more and gain further insight and self-acceptance (Chandler et al., 2010). As described by a youth in Teacher's Pet, "We all have struggles, but with the right people helping us, we can make it through anything. No matter what the dogs have been through, they still trust us to make them better." Animals also provide therapeutic touch (Parish-Plass, 2008), which can be helpful for distraught clients or those needing to develop prosocial behaviors.

Striving for relationships with others is a focus area in existential therapy. As AAI is a social intervention, clients learn skills in a session that can improve relationships outside of counseling (Chandler et al., 2010). Sharing stories about the animal and its relationships can help the client explore his or her relationships. As clients also come to counseling searching for meaning, sharing stories about the animal's purpose in helping others may be inspiring to the client. As a youth described, "It helped me find my purpose in life, to help animals." Additionally, through working with the animal (e.g., training, teaching tricks), clients see changes in the animal's behavior. As such, clients may gain a sense of hope that they can change, as described by one of the youths in Teacher's Pet: "I learned that if dogs can change, so can I."

Chandler and colleagues (2010) also noted that interactions between a client and animal are often spontaneous. While counselors plan talk therapy interventions, animals operate in the present moment (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). These spontaneous moments provide an opportunity to explore issues in the here and now; Yalom (2002) noted everyday events of the counseling hour are rich with data to better understand clients and to bring issues to the surface.

Similarly, as AAI is facilitated in the moment, AAI blends well with Gestalt therapy. The youth in Teacher's Pet assess how the animal is behaving, identify emotions associated with the behavior, and see their behaviors reflected in the animal. This type of experiential learning is powerful to the client (Meinersmann, Bradberry, & Roberts, 2008). As described by one youth in Teacher's Pet, "I learned that dogs really pull emotions out of you, and when you're depressed or angry, they cheer you up." Gestalt therapy also helps to explore personal boundaries. Interacting with animals provides the counselor with immediate information about the client's contact style and an opportunity for corrective feedback and rehearsal. Further, animals enhance non-verbal communication and petting an animal helps clients become aware of bodily sensations (Chandler et al., 2010).

Finally, unfinished business in Gestalt therapy refers to unresolved feelings, such as resentment, guilt, and abandonment. Experiments such as the empty chair provide the client with an opportunity to work through the unfinished business, externalizing and integrating conflicting dimensions with the animal. The client may feel safer sharing this information with the animal (Chandler et al., 2010) as opposed to the human therapist.

### **Cognitive Behavioral Approaches**

These approaches emphasize action and highlight the role that cognitions have in our total behavior and include behavior therapy, cognitive-behavior therapy, and reality therapy (Corey, 2013). Behavior therapy posits that people are both the producer and the product of their environment. From this approach, a counselor is viewed as a teacher and models specific behaviors. Behavior therapy focuses on goals, which are collaboratively determined and continually evaluated.

Cognitive-behavior therapy postulates that people tend to engage in faulty thinking patterns. These beliefs can cause emotional and behavioral problems (Beck & Weishaar, 2011). A cognitive-behavioral counselor teaches clients how to gain control over faulty thinking patterns, often incorporating behavioral exercises. Reality therapy, the last of these approaches, posits the idea that problems develop when we attempt to control others or when we resist the control by others and that quality relationships produce wellness (Glasser, 2001). A counselor working from this approach encourages clients to critically examine current behavior to determine if they are getting what they want.

### **Cognitive Behavioral Approaches and AAI**

As a goal-oriented, purposeful modality, AAI blends well with cognitive behavioral approaches. The specific goals are mutually determined by the counselor and client and evaluated on a regular basis. This monitoring is especially important for

counselors utilizing AAI who need to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of AAI for both the client and animal.

Specific ideas that are key to behavior therapy (e.g., reinforcement, shaping) are central to the practice of AAI; for example, a common AAI is to teach the animal a new trick. This AAI helps the client learn skills, such as frustration tolerance, goal setting, and planning (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). As rewarded behavior is repeated behavior, both the animal and the client benefit from this intervention. Additionally, clients can practice new behaviors such as assertiveness skills (Chandler et al., 2010).

Interacting with an animal can be fun and rewarding (Chandler et al., 2011). Thus, AAI is an incentive to counseling and increases motivation to attend counseling (Lange et al., 2007). AAI can also be helpful in managing anxiety (Kruger & Serpell, 2010) or using exposure therapy (Lefkowitz et al., 2005) as being in the presence of an animal is relaxing and calming. As described by one youth in Teacher's Pet, "I learned that dogs help calm me down and I'm less anxious when I'm with them."

A counselor using cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) relies on many of the same principles in behavior therapy. CBT targets core beliefs that influence many problem behaviors. For example, through integrating AAI with CBT, clients gain an increased sense of self-efficacy (Missel, 2001). AAI also helps to reconstruct faulty thinking. A youth in the program described, "I used to think I was this horrible kid, but training my dog helped me realize I am not." Integrating AAI with CBT allows the client to experience real life situations at a safe distance (Parish-Plass, 2008) and to perceive these experiences and self in new, different ways (Berget & Braastad, 2008). As one youth further stated, "I learned that I can be a positive person when I leave here and that I can have fun doing stuff to help others."

The presence of a therapy animal creates the warm and challenging environment needed for reality therapy as the animal fulfills a need for love, belonging, and affection (Missel, 2001). As described by one youth, "My dogs were my motivation every morning, night, and week. They kept me going." Many of the challenges clients have with an animal (e.g., overly controlling, having little patience), may be seen in relationships outside of therapy (Chandler et al., 2010), providing an opportunity to objectively evaluate these behaviors (i.e., "Is what you are doing bringing those you need closer to you?")

Reality therapy also emphasizes personal responsibility. Clients, like the youth in Teacher's Pet, learn responsibility by taking care of an animal (Missel, 2001). As one youth described, "Being with the dogs made me feel better and made me a happy person. Helping a dog that was neglected, left behind or abused makes me feel like a better person." Furthermore, a counselor could apply the WDEP system (Wubbolding, 2000) to the specific intervention of teaching a dog a trick (Minatrea & Wesley, 2008). For example, while a client is attempting to teach a dog a trick, the counselor might ask a "W" question, "What do you want the dog to do?" The counselor would follow up with a "D" question, "What are you doing to get you what you want?" Well-timed feedback provides an opportunity for clients to evaluate their actions (Minatrea & Wesley, 2008).

## **Postmodern and Systems Approaches**

The final approach focuses on the different systems in which we live, including solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), family systems approaches, and feminist therapy (Corey, 2013). SFBT is a present-focused, strength-based approach that emphasizes meaning making through the co-creation of solutions (Walter & Peller, 1992). The SFBT counselor views the client as an expert and uses specific questions to increase client awareness about strengths and personal resources.

Family systems theories posit that people are connected to a much larger system. A slight change in one part of the system will result in a change within the system. Counseling focuses on improving communication patterns and teaching new ways of interacting within the family relationships (Bevcars & Bevcars, 2009). Finally, in feminist therapy, the focus is also on a system; as described by Corey (2013), “this is a systems approach that recognizes the cultural, social, and political factors that contribute to an individual’s problem” (p. 456). A feminist therapy counselor pays special attention to creating an egalitarian counseling relationship and increasing client’s sense of empowerment (Evans, Kincade, & Seem, 2011).

### **Postmodern and Systems Approaches and AAI**

Simply having an animal in session challenges the notion of counseling (Pichot & Coulter, 2007). If counseling hasn’t been effective for a client, introducing AAI can be fun and a refreshing change (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). A common misconception of AAI is that the animal is simply present in the room. However, with AAI, the integration of the animal is purposeful and intentional and the animal is a distinct partner in the process (Pichot & Coulter, 2007).

SFBT rests on the idea that small changes lead to big changes. If a depressed client can laugh and interact with an animal, it can have a powerful effect on the client, especially when the client notices this interaction (Pichot & Coulter, 2007). For example, as one youth described, “I love being able to work with the dogs and see them improve. Every time I saw them, it brightened my day, and no matter what they did, I always had a smile on my face.” When clients notice strengths, they can pay attention to these out of session and apply them to different scenarios. A counselor uses these moments as opportunities for clients to rewrite personal stories. Through this co-creation of new meaning, the clients alter their perception of self. As one youth described, “I learned that I don’t have to be tense and mad all the time.”

In regards to family systems theories, pets serve an important role in the family. Talking about animals can help to gain information about family structure, dynamics, and functioning, including family violence (Walsh, 2009). For example, an adolescent client might comment how well behaved the animal is in session. The counselor could then discover that the family dog misbehaves because no one in the family pays attention to the animal. Spontaneous discussions about the animal can lead to revealing information about the family system. Many adjudicated youth come from difficult homes, and the presence of an animal can be a gentle way to explore family dynamics often recreated in residential centers. As one youth described, “It was like I was staff and the dogs were the children in the treatment program. I felt in control for once.”



The presence of an animal hastens the therapeutic process as animals can gauge the mood in a room (Chassman & Kinney, 2011). Fine (2010) referred to this as the animal's ability to regulate the emotional climate. When family members are yelling in session, for example, the animal may walk away or reach out to comfort one of the members. This behavior signals that a new way of interacting may be more productive. Also, therapy animals are often rescued or adopted animals. When working with clients who come from foster homes or who have been adopted, sharing the story of how the animal came to be adopted can be useful. Counselors can create a photo album of the animal to share with clients; this creative technique enhances these discussions and the potential connection to the animal.

Feminist therapy focuses on the client's sense of power. Meinersmann and colleagues (2008) explored how equine-facilitated psychotherapy benefited adult female survivors of abuse and discovered the theme 'I can have power.' By effectively working with these large animals, the women developed a sense of control. This experiential learning was translated into their lives; they "realized they did not need to feel powerless anymore" (Meinersmann et al., 2008, p. 39). The women learned how to respect the animal's boundaries as well as set personal boundaries with the animal. Working with animals helps to increase self-efficacy and self-worth.

A main benefit of AAI is for clients to experience a less threatening counseling relationship (Fine, 2010). At the heart of feminist therapy is a safe relationship between the counselor and the client. Feminist counselors rely on self-disclosure to build connection, and animals can help with this process by allowing clients to disclose freely. Animals also communicate powerful messages (e.g., lying at client's feet, running to greet client). These behaviors communicate a sense of affection and concern for the client.

Finally, as feminist therapy examines all forms of oppression and encourages both individual and societal change, it is useful to explore animal rights with a client. While clients might have difficulty with self-advocacy, they could begin with advocating for animal rights. After learning advocacy skills, clients can later apply these skills to their personal life. As a youth described, "I learned that I can help dogs and save their life with the help that I am giving. I also learned that I can do so many things to help out dogs in good ways."

### **Implications**

AAI is a unique modality that harnesses the power of the human-animal bond in the counseling process. Although this article focuses on the benefits of AAI with adjudicated youth working with shelter dogs, AAI is beneficial for a variety of client populations and settings. Furthermore, animals provide emotional support for the counselor (Oren & Parish-Plass, 2013), decreasing the potential for burnout and stress. This manuscript highlights the versatility of AAI as the modality works across major counseling approaches. AAI may be particularly useful for integrative counselors, who utilize a variety of approaches to meet the needs of each unique client. The foundation of AAI, however, may be explained by key elements, including building upon the client's self-actualizing potential, connecting with another being, and developing empathy and compassion for others through an increased understanding of self.

Specifically, the active ingredient of AAI is the relationship between the client and animal. Through this relationship, the client can develop empathy for another being, better understand his or her potential for growth, and construct new meanings for self and the world. The impact of integrating an animal in counseling is difficult to describe. For some, the relationship with an animal is simpler than with humans as it is easier to give love to an animal (Lev-Bendov & Barel, 2013). This relationship is related to the biophilia hypothesis, or our instinctive, primal bond with other living systems. The following story further describes the healing power of animals:

When Sean began to tell his story of childhood sexual abuse he started to sob. My therapy dog, Jake, came over and nuzzled his snout into his face. Sean hugged Jake tightly and continued to tell his story while I sat watching my co-therapist Jake do his work. After Sean finished his story, I praised him for his strength and courage in going to such a personal and painful place in sharing his story with me. Sean looked up and said, "I didn't tell my story to you; I told it to Jake. (Walsh, 2009, p. 495)

This story also emphasizes that when using AAI, we find ourselves on the periphery of healing (Johnson, 2011). Animals take center stage in the counseling session, and a counselor needs to be comfortable being the co-therapist, trusting the animal's lead and intuition. Also, other cautions are noteworthy. Therapy animals need to be carefully evaluated for temperament and obedience and counselors must ensure the safety of both the client and animal. Further, not all animals or clients are appropriate for AAI (Chandler et al., 2010). Traditionally, AAI includes an animal that has been evaluated by a national organization such as Pet Partners (<https://petpartners.org/>) or Therapy Dogs International (<http://www.tdi-dog.org/>). In addition, there is a critical need for professional competencies in AAI in counseling (Stewart, Chang, & Rice, 2013) and to conduct further research on AAI, given the need for evidenced-based practices.

The authors hope this article has increased the reader's interest in integrating AAI within the counseling setting. Counselors who wish to learn more about AAI should consult Fine (2010), Parish-Plass (2013), Piper (2014), Chandler (2005), and therapy animal registration programs such as Pet Partners (2015), as well as consider joining Animal Assisted Therapy in Mental Health, an interest network of the American Counseling Association (2015).

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