



Therapy Animals of Utah

Resident Animals and Your Facility Points to Ponder

The Animal

What type of animal is most appropriate for you, your facility, your resources?

Is funding available for the purchase and upkeep of the animal?

What criteria will be utilized to determine an animal's appropriateness?

What ongoing training will the animal require? Who will do it?

What will happen if a specific animal does not work out? Where does the animal go?

Who is responsible for the animal during the day? During the night?

Where will the animal be housed? Kennel/crate/cage?

Where and how will the animal be able to "get away" when they need a break?

Where will the animal urinate/defecate?

If it must be walked to an exercise area, who will take it, and how often?

How does the animal indicate it has to potty at an unscheduled time?

Who is responsible for cleaning the litterbox or exercise area?

Who is responsible for cleaning up accidents indoors, and what is the protocol for doing so?

Will the animal be allowed to wander through a home or facility or will a specified staff handler direct interactions at specific times?

If the animal wanders, how will it be kept from restricted areas (e.g. sterile supplies, fresh laundry, food prep areas, dangerous areas)?

If the animal wanders, how will exits be modified to keep animal from slipping outdoors unsupervised?

How frequently will the animal be bathed? Brushed? Nails trimmed and filed? Ears cleaned? Teeth brushed? Screened for internal parasites? Examined for external parasites? Who will be responsible?

Who is responsible for feeding and watering the animal? How will their feeding be monitored to prevent unhealthy "treats"? Is water available throughout the day?

If the animal steps in urine/vomit/blood/saliva, what protocol needs to be followed? (If animal wanders, how will you know?)

Is it acceptable that the animal may lick a resident, their clothing, or their equipment?

How will animals be encouraged to spend time with all interested people? How will you explain/control development of "favorites"?

The Staff

Are any staff members against having animals? Can their concerns be mitigated?
Will additional staff need to be hired to properly care for/monitor the animal and their interactions?

Will existing staff be required to add animal-related duties?

Do any staff members have health precautions (allergies, asthma, phobias) that would be compromised by working in an environment with an animal?

Will new hires be required to be without health precautions?

If a current employee becomes allergic to the animal, how will you deal with the problem?

How will staff members be educated to animal behavior and appropriate/inappropriate behaviors?

Would your facility benefit from the assistance of an outside animal consultant?

How well you encourage staff members to come forward with animal problems when they may be adverse to “getting the animal in trouble?”

Residents/Clients and their Families

Do current residents/clients have health or behavioral precautions concerning the animal? How will their right to privacy and health be maintained?

If a resident develops health conditions that are compromised by an animal’s presence, what will be done? What if the family disagrees with you?

How will all concerns from family members be addressed? By whom?

How will accusations of scratches, fleas, animal bites, etc. by residents/clients or their family members be addressed?

How will you address the issue of personal pets who exhibit unsafe behaviors in the presence of the resident animals?

Costs

Animal upkeep, additional salaries, vet bills, changes to the facility environment....

Rewards

Creating access to animal companionship

AnimalLink, Sanford, MI, 1998