

Standards of Practice in Animal-Assisted Interventions

Executive Summary

- There is peer reviewed, empirical evidence to support both the benefits of therapy animals and the standards to which they should aspire.
- The standards of practice represent the minimum qualifications for therapy animals and handlers. Additional competencies might be necessary for specific client populations, interventions, or facilities.
- Standards of practice in animal-assisted interventions promote safety and minimize risk for both the people and animals involved.
- Although the appropriateness of the therapy animal is indisputable, the handler must also possess the knowledge, skills, and aptitude to ensure effective and safe interactions.
- A thorough and recurring skills assessment of the animal-handler team does not replace experience or documented training.
- Animal welfare is directly related to client safety. When steps are taken to ensure a humane environment for the therapy animal, we further reduce the risk of accidents that could negatively impact all involved.

Access a free copy of the full Standards of Practice in Animal-Assisted Interventions at
www.therapyanimalstandards.org