

Display Settings: Abstract

SCI Nurs. 1997 Jun;14(2):52-5.

Animal assisted therapy and the individual with spinal cord injury.

Counsell CM, Abram J, Gilbert M.

Shands Hospital, University of Florida, Gainesville 32610, USA.

Abstract

Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a devastating event that results in significant adjustments during the acute and rehabilitation phase. During this period, it is imperative to maintain the patient's self-esteem, reduce stress levels, encourage the expression of feelings, and provide sensory stimulation. Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) involves the use of animals as a complement to more traditional forms of therapy. The program is based on the knowledge that animals have a positive influence on people who are ill in the healthcare setting. The Animals Heal Hearts Program (TM) has two components, pet visitation and **pet therapy**. Pet visitation consists of allowing a patient to have his/her own personal dog for a visit, provided there are no medical contraindications. **Pet therapy** is a structured program using a dog that has completed behavioral and health screening. Dogs are used in the hospital to reduce patients' stress, increase their self-esteem, and help them express feelings. The dogs provide sensory stimulation as patients view and handle the animals and learn about animals and pets. A carefully planned and evaluated program ensures that it is safe and effective.

PMID: 9295752 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

MeSH Terms

LinkOut - more resources