

Getting Docs & Nurses on Board: Training Health Care Providers About the Human-Animal Bond

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Disclosures, etc.

- No financial disclosures
- My Background:
 - UW Med, Residency in Family Medicine UCSF/Salinas,
 - Staff Physician SeaMar and Group Health
 - Associate Director of Fam Med residency program, Stamford CT
 - Fellowships in Occupational/Environmental Med, General Prev Med, Yale School of Medicine
 - Faculty Yale School of Med (General Internal Medicine)
 - Returned to UW 2013- Clinical Occupational Med Harborview Med Ctr
 - Started UW Center for One Health Research 2014-

Objective

- Describe role of health care professionals in human-animal bond (HAB) issues
- outline of important competencies:
 - interacting with animal care teams,
 - certifying emotional support & service animals,
 - handling other medical aspects of human animal interaction
 - Coordinating with veterinarians

Human-Animal Bond Roles for Human Health Care Providers

- Acknowledger
- Prescriber
- Facilitator
- Certifier
- Manager for animal related human health issues:
 - Allergies
 - Infections
 - Injuries

Background

- Health care professionals receive little or no training about the human animal bond
- A common attitude about animals in health care is “us vs them”:
- One Health provides an alternative paradigm

“Us vs Them” Attitude of Health Care Professionals about Animals:

- Animals can be a threat to health:
 - Allergies, asthma
 - Infections
 - Bites, other Injuries
- Solutions:
 - get rid of pet
 - control rodent pests
 - avoid animal contact

“One Health”: An Alternative Paradigm

- Acknowledge connectedness of the health of humans, animals, and the environment
- Seek win-win solutions for human animal contact
- Make use of the human animal bond while managing risks

Acknowledger

- The first step is for the human health care provider to acknowledge the power and potential of the human animal bond
 - Death of a pet
 - Positive mental health effects
 - Positive physical health effects
 - Impact of the HAB on medical situations: patient hospitalized with pet at home, etc.

Helping with the Acknowledger Role

- Present evidence for beneficial health effects in balanced way
- Educate about definitions: therapy animal vs. service animal etc.
- Acknowledge individual variation and the limits of the current science about the HAB
- Some providers are “animal people” and may be more open to HAB concepts than providers who have had little animal contact.

Prescriber

- Health care provider may actively recommend animal interaction for a patient
 - Exercise prescription involving pets
 - Animal therapy
 - Other animal interaction

Helping with the Prescriber Role

- Present options for therapy animals in health care settings

Facilitator

- As gatekeepers to health care settings, health care providers may be involved in developing policies that facilitate animal assisted therapy or other human animal interactions

Helping with the Facilitator Role

- Provide examples of protocols from health care facilities that allow for the use of animals and animal therapy teams

Certifier

- Health care professional (or mental health provider) may have to provide written certification for the use of a service animal or emotional support animal
- Involves documenting disability of patient and how the animal is necessary to help with the disability

Helping with the Certifier Role

- Provide information about the differences between service animals and emotional support animals (ESAs)
- Provide information about the effect on certain disabilities of Service animals and ESAs.
- Facilitate contact between health care provider and veterinarian regarding health and safety of the animal

Manager for Animal-related Human Health Issues

- Allergies
- Infections
- Injuries

Helping with the Manager Role

- Provide information about the screening and training of therapy animals
 - Zoonotic disease
 - Behavioral screening
 - Etc.
- Facilitate contact between health care provider and veterinarian regarding health and safety of the animal (including animal welfare)

Recap: Human-Animal Bond Roles for Human Health Care Providers

- Acknowledger
- Prescriber
- Facilitator
- Certifier
- Manager for animal related human health issues:
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 - Infections
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Training of Health Care Providers

- Who should provide?
- How and when to provide?

Ideas or Questions?

Thank You!



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