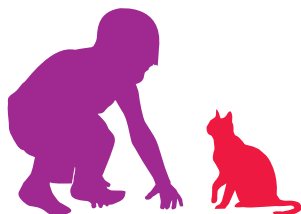


The Power of the Human-Animal Bond

In this time of physical distancing, pets can play an important role in our network of support by helping to relieve loneliness, feelings of isolation and provide companionship. Pets can also help us cope with stress and improve our physical health as we navigate these unprecedented times.

Accumulating evidence from research shows that human-animal interaction (HAI) is linked to overall better health and stress management in people across all stages in life.

Children



Research suggests pets can provide stress relief and **emotional support for children**, with pet dog interactions lowering the stress hormone cortisol.¹

College Students



Interactions with therapy dogs can serve as a **stress management tool** for university students and help boost their attention and memory.²

Adults



- Dog ownership has been associated **with a 24% lower risk of death** over the long term, when compared to non-owners.³
- Adults with pets have **healthier physiologic responses to stress**, including lower baseline heart rate and blood pressure, and less cardiovascular reactivity to, and faster recovery from, mild stressors.⁴
- Due to associated increased physical activity and social support, research suggests that dog owners, especially those in single households, **have better outcomes after suffering a major cardiovascular event**, such as a heart attack or stroke.⁵

Older Adults



- Pet ownership has been shown to **slow the development or progression of hypertension** in older adults.⁶
- The American Heart Association has said that pet ownership, particularly dog ownership, may be associated with **decreased cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk**.⁷
- For older adults, a strong pet-owner bond has been associated with **lower levels of loneliness and social isolation**.⁸

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