

Pet Therapy Benefits for Dementia Care

At Ozanam Hall we use pet visitation to enhance social interactions of residents and improve overall well being. Pet Visitations generally include a short one-on-one visit from a person accompanied by one of our home's pets and have been shown to provide many benefits to our residents. From balancing mood to reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, discover more about pet therapy and how it may be beneficial to those with dementia and Alzheimer's:



Our community's pets include:

- Dogs –“Kenny” and “Katrina”
- Cats-many!
- Bunny- “Snuggles”
- Birds and Doves
- Large Fish Tank!

What is Pet Therapy?

Pet therapy is a broad term that also includes animal-assisted therapy or animal-assisted activities. This type of therapy uses dogs or other types of animals to help people recover from or cope with various health problems and mental illnesses.

What are the benefits?:

Improving Mood

Improving mood is one of the notable benefits of pet therapy that has been supported by many studies. Interacting with animals has been shown to create a calming effect and reduce feelings of anxiety and sadness in patients with Dementia or Alzheimer's. In addition, pet therapy may also help with reducing overall behavioral problems and irritability.

Increasing Activity Levels

Not only can pet therapy help with mood, but it can also help increase activity levels. Many individuals with dementia have a hard time staying active. Simply petting the animals, throwing a toy, or going on a walk with them can help those with dementia keep active on a regular basis.

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Reducing Feelings of Isolation and Loneliness

Those with dementia may have a hard time communicating or interacting with others which may lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, or frustration. Having a furry companion can help reduce these feelings by giving them unconditional love and support. In addition, they can also serve as a good communication outlet which in return can reduce frustration.

Emotional Support

Having those with dementia participate in a pet therapy program can also be a great emotional support system for them. Pets often form special bonds with humans that can especially be beneficial to those with the condition. Not only do they help with lessening feelings of anxiety and depression, but they help to create a chemical reaction in the brain that reduces stress inducing hormones, and instead produce serotonin, a feel good hormone.

Sense of Purpose

Patients with dementia or Alzheimer's may feel as if they do not have a purpose, which is where a furry companion comes in. Being a pet caregiver can help them feel as if they are wanted or needed, and the care and maintenance associated with owning a pet can help them engage their minds. In addition, being greeted by a wagging tail or a happy feline face during the day can promote feelings of happiness and increase the amount of social interaction they get.



About Ozanam Hall

Ozanam Hall in Bayside, NY is committed to providing holistic care in an atmosphere of Christian understanding and faith. Our services include skilled nursing, short-term rehab, long-term care, dementia care, hospice care, palliative care, and pastoral care, and our community offers food and nutrition services, 24-hour skilled nursing, and creative activities to keep you or a loved one engaged. Ozanam Hall's senior care experts are ready to answer your questions and connect you with the right services at the best time for you.



To learn more or schedule a tour, call (718) 841-0195 or visit: www.ozanamhall.org
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