



53044 RR #213 Ardrossan, Alberta, T8G 2C4 Ph: (780) 809-1047 Fax: (780) 809-1046
Email: info@dreamcatcherassociation.com Website: <https://www.dreamcatcherassociation.com>

Written by: Eileen Bona
53044 RR #213 Ardrossan, Alberta
T8G 2C4 780-809-1047
eileen@dreamcatcherassociation.com

TERMINOLOGY:

What are AAI, AAT, AAE/L, CR/A, and TR/EFP/ EFC/EEL/EAL/EFW (to name a few)? Working with animals in a healing or therapeutic format has many names and is done in many different ways. As the field is not yet standardized in Canada, it can be confusing trying to understand all the different kinds of animal-related work and where your particular practice, skills, and knowledge might fit.

Other places in North America and the world have been incorporating animals into healing and learning practices for far longer than here in Canada and as a result, there are some commonly agreed upon terms. The following are a few of the ones most used.

Many of the following definitions are taken from The Delta Society (now called Pet Partners), which is an organization in the United States that certifies people and animals to do AAT and provides resources on AAT. The Pet Partners members are considered to be experts in the field and provide a large number of resources for Animal Assisted practitioners in the United States.

Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI)

"(AAI) are therapeutic processes that intentionally include or involve animals as part of the process. Animal-Assisted Therapy, Animal-Assisted Activities, and service animals are some examples of animal assisted interventions." (Fine, 2006)

AAI is an umbrella term for all aspects of involving animals to facilitate or enhance human health and learning. Every other term for working with animals to help people in any capacity falls under the bracket of the term Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI). This does not apply to equines in therapy, however; as they have their own set of terminologies which, for informational purposes, we will cover near the end of this document.

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)

"AAT is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is directed and/or delivered by a health/human service professional with specialized expertise, and within the scope of practice of his/her profession.

AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning (cognitive functioning refers to thinking and intellectual skills). AAT is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. This process is documented and evaluated." (Society, 1996)

The Key Features of AAT:

- There are specified goals and objectives for each individual.
- A qualified professional is involved in the animal interactions for a specific purpose. · Progress is measured.

Animals can be incorporated into a variety of programs.

Examples of AAT:

- A volunteer brings her cat to a rehabilitation center to work with an occupational therapist and a child who has difficulty controlling fine motor skills. To improve the client's fine motor skills, the therapist has the child manipulate buckles, clasps on leashes, collars, and animal carriers. · A youth who is resistant to therapy agrees to attend due to a horse being present. While working with the horse and the mental health worker, the youth begins to talk about the events of his/her life, builds trust and rapport due to their shared interest and care for the horse, and learns safe boundaries and other treatment related goals as a planned result of the interaction.

Goals of AAT Programs:

- Physical Health - Improve fine motor skills, wheelchair skills, standing, balance, and etc.
- Mental Health and Cognitive Ability - Increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety and loneliness, increase attention skills, process traumatic events, aid in long- or short-term memory, emotion regulation, increase healthy communication, and etc.
- Social Skills - Increase verbal interactions between group members; develop leisure/recreation skills, increase vocabulary, and etc.

Animal Assisted Education and/or Learning (AAE/L)

AAE/L is a form of Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) which incorporates animals into the learning environment. The visiting animal in an educational setting is either the subject of the lesson plan which facilitates the learning plan, or a planned addition which enhances the environment for learning to take place. AAE/L can be carried out in an educational setting or utilized as an educational tool outside the classroom. AAE/L is often carried out by qualified teachers or aides but sometimes by knowledgeable volunteers. In most cases, goals are defined and in some cases, outcome measures are recorded.

The Key Features of AAE/L:

- An animal is included to enhance or facilitate the learning process. · Educators, aides or knowledgeable - volunteers facilitate the learning through the animal interactions. · Visit content is planned and can be within or outside the classroom environment.

Examples of AAE/L:

- The Reading Assistance programs where animals are present as motivators to help people who are reading-challenged. The reading-disabled participants read to the animal.

Animal Assisted Crisis Response (AACR)

"Animal Assisted Crisis Response (AACR) is a discipline closely related to Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), which gives crisis intervention teams, counselors, clergy, and other trained professionals an additional means with which to help people affected by crisis. AACR is a relatively new field, but can be effective when utilized as part of an overall incident response program. AACR teams can be used, for example, to establish rapport, build therapeutic bridges, normalize the experience, and act as a calming agent or as a

catalyst for physical movement. Effective AACR requires a common language between the AACR teams and crisis counsellors." (Greenbaum, 2006)

AACR involves a skilled professional working with an animal to alleviate the stress and anxiety of people in crisis. These professionals work alongside a screened and trained therapy animal and are trained in the proper protocols for helping people in crisis situations. The animals are there to relieve stress and build bridges for first responders.

The Key Features of AACR:

- Specific treatment goals are not planned for each visit.
- The overall intent is to help people at the moment of crisis and to alleviate the side effects of crisis
- AACR professionals are cross trained in crisis protocols

Example of AACR:

- A person is rescued from a burning house and is too traumatized to respond to questions of whether or not there is anyone else in the house. A dog travels with the fire department and is handled by someone practicing AACR. The AACR specialist, with the help of the dog, assists the survivor of the fire to become de-escalated and lucid enough to tell the firefighters if anyone else was in the house

Animal Assisted Activities (AAA)

"AAA provide opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance quality of life. AAA are delivered in a variety of environments by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals, and/or volunteers, in association with animals that meet specific criteria." (Society, 1996)

AAA are basically the casual "meet and greet" activities that involve pets visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with many people, there are no particular or measurable goals and the "visit" does not have to be carried out by a qualified professional. This may also be referred to as "Pet Visitation." Sometimes there are professionals involved but goals are not measured.

The Key Features of AAA:

- Specific treatment goals are not planned for each visit.
- Volunteers and treatment providers are not required to take detailed notes.
- Visit content is spontaneous and visits last as long or as short as needed.

Examples of AAA:

A group of volunteers takes their dogs and cats to a nursing home once a month to "visit." The visit occurs as a large-group activity with some direction and assistance provided by facility staff. The volunteer group facilitator keeps an informal log about who was visited.

Equine facilitated Terminology

When the animal involved in the process of helping people is an equine species, i.e., horse, donkey or mule, there are other equine-assisted terms to be considered, as this work is often specialized. We will next explore some of the equine-assisted terminology. This course does not study equine facilitated methods of helping people per se, but being informed that these assisted methods also have a variety of terminologies may be important in your understanding of and possible entry into these fields.

Therapeutic Riding (TR)

Therapeutic Riding involves helping people with a variety of physical, emotional, cognitive, social and other life issues through the riding of a horse. There are many Therapeutic Riding centers in Canada and this form of rehabilitation has been around longer than any other form of animal-assisted therapy practice in North America. "Therapeutic Riding is diverse and within Canada, some centers may offer physical therapy with the therapist using the horse's movements to influence the body of the rider." (About CanTRA , 2015)

Other centers focus on the mental health benefits of riding (Equine Facilitated Mental Health). The majority of centers focus on therapeutic riding to provide socialization, recreation, interaction of clients and horses, and the care and training of the horse. In addition, many of the centers provide life skills training, rehabilitation and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. At the riding centers, individuals of all ages are exposed to a sense of freedom and achievement. For many students with physical disabilities, riding may be their only experience of this kind of mobility." (Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association, 2016)

There is an equivalent association in the US called the National Association of Riding for the Handicapped (NARHA). CanTRA and NARHA recognize the impact of Therapeutic Riding (TR) upon clients' social, cognitive, and emotional well-being. In TR programs, the main concept is that the participant is riding the horse. TR programs may involve a method referred to as Hippotherapy in which horses assist people with physical disabilities such as multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and etc. The gait of the horse is similar to the gait of a human and helps to strengthen and tone muscles that the person otherwise can't use or exercise in this way. TR also helps people with cognitive disabilities, impaired attention spans, and other types of issues. The important difference between TR and other types of equine facilitated therapeutic modalities is that the participant is riding the horse. In most other forms of therapeutic intervention involving the horse, the work is done on the ground rather than with the participant mounted. (M. Bass, 2009)

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP)

"Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP) is experiential psychotherapy that includes equine(s). It may include, but is not limited to, a number of mutually respectful equine activities such as handling, grooming, lunging, riding, driving, and vaulting. EFP is facilitated by a licensed, credentialed 'Psychotherapist' working with an appropriately credentialed equine professional. EFP may be facilitated by a 'Psychotherapist' who is dually credentialed as an equine professional." (About EAA/T, 2007) <http://www.pathintl.org>

This work is often facilitated by both a cross trained mental health professional and a cross trained horse handler. "Cross trained" refers to each member being educated and trained in the other member's area of expertise. The horse handler has mental health experience and the mental health expert has horse experience. Sometimes however, it can be one individual who has dual credentials. (Nilson, 2004)

Equine Facilitated Counselling (EFC)

EFC is "experiential counselling services, provided by an appropriately qualified and credentialed counsellor or team (credentialed counsellor and professional horse handler), incorporating goal directed and supervised interactions with specially selected and trained horses into the counselling setting and relationship"¹

This type of equine facilitated therapeutic intervention is focused strictly on helping people resolve their

personal and/or clinical issues while working with horses in a counseling (or talk therapy) modality. Ground exercises involving the horse, specifically grooming, leading, lunging, and much

more, are the focus of EFC. EFP and EFC are essentially the same thing, except EFP requires a qualified Psychotherapist and EFC provides a qualified and certified Counsellor.

¹ Equine Facilitated Counselling (EFC) is a form of experiential AAT. <http://www.healinghooves.ca/faq.htm> The contact person is Sue McIntosh, MA, CCC, sue@healinghooves.ca

Equine Assisted or Experiential Learning (EAL or EEL)

“Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) is an experiential learning experience that uses horses, not as tools, but as active participants to help facilitate the learning experience for the human participants. By examining equine behaviour and how the horses may or may not react to us, we can better understand what may be more effective in our own human relationships. EAL combines human and equine training and relationship principles. EAL uses a team approach, bringing together a horse specialist, a trained facilitator, and the horses to assist individuals and groups. Through a collaborative experiential learning process, people use experience, reflection, generalization, and application to facilitate learning. The equine-assisted model helps individuals learn about themselves and others by participating in activities with the horses and then processing feelings, behaviors, and patterns, recognizing how these may relate to the workplace or home. While EAL is related to other experiential programs, equine assisted programs have the added element of horses with as many different personalities, attitudes, and moods as the humans they are working with.”(What Is Equine- Assisted Learning, 2013)

Innovative Horizons EEL has been defined as an approach within the education classification of therapeutic riding which emphasizes the interactive nature of the participant’s emotional, mental social, physical and spiritual well-being. In EEL you learn about yourself through your interactions and relationships with your environment, including the people, animals, natures and situations therein. EEL promotes personal exploration of feelings and behavior. It is often used in team development and the development of leadership skills. The difference between EEL/EAL and EFP is that EFP expands the individual’s learnings in regards to his or her environment into a clinical interpretation facilitated by a credentialed mental health professional. EEL is for the participant to take what s/he gets from the experience as a personal learning. The facilitators of these types of learning are not usually qualified mental health staff.²

Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW)

“Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW) incorporates a range of counselling, experiential learning, education and personal development approaches, which bring humans and equines together. EFW sessions will be facilitated by Certified Equine Facilitated Wellness Professionals in carefully planned interactions with specially selected equines.

The term Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW) is intended to encompass several fields:

² Examples can be found at the following website <http://www.spiritofrelationship.com/equine-facilitated-psychotherapy.htm>

- **Equine Facilitated Mental Health** - Other terms for this field may include Equine Facilitated Counselling and Equine Assisted/Facilitated Psychotherapy. Other human services professions such as Social Work, Child and Youth Care and Addictions Counselling are also included.
- **Equine Facilitated Learning** - Other terms which are currently used in this area of practice may

include, amongst others: Equine Experiential Learning, Equine Assisted Professional Development, Equine Guided Education, Equine Assisted/Facilitated Coaching and Equine Assisted Personal Development.

- **Equine Facilitated Wellness Coaching** - In this area an Equine Professional brings the learning and understanding of EFW to people who ride and enjoy equine in a recreational or competitive way and want to improve the relationship with their equines through greater understanding of themselves.

In each area, Equine Facilitated Wellness Professionals³ will work within their scope of practice to ensure the health and safety of all involved.” (Wellness-Canada, 2015)

BRIEF RESEARCH IN AAT

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)

The healing power of animals can be particularly effective for individuals facing challenge or trauma, and those with special needs, including mental health concerns. Recognizing the effectiveness of animal interactions with people in need, many professionals, including mental health professionals, are introducing animals into their professions and practices to enhance growth and healing. This practice is referred to as Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), and has been used successfully with many groups including the elderly, hospitalized and institutionalized psychiatric patients, individuals with physical disabilities, and youth at risk (Reichert, 1998) to name a few. While awareness of AAT has flourished over the last two to three decades, these benefits were recognized as far back as 1792 when Quakers in England involved the care of animals in therapy at a psychiatric institution, and similarly in 1867 at the Bethel treatment facility in Germany (Reichert, 1998).

The Delta Society, an organization committed to exploring and enhancing human-animal interactions, describes this type of therapy as “goal directed intervention in which an animal ... is an integral part of the treatment process...designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning” (Society, 1996). Voelker notes that animals “can help patients achieve or make documentable progress towards therapeutic goals” (Voelker, 1995). A study by D. E. Nathanson and S. de Faria in 1994 demonstrated significant improvements in the hierarchical cognitive responses of children with serious disabilities when dolphins were used as reinforcement. (D.E. Nathanson and S. de Faria, 1993)

Reichert discusses the benefits of animals as a part of the therapy approach with sexually abused children. These benefits include the child projecting feelings onto the animal, the animal serving as a bridge or as a transitional object, the animal putting the child at ease, and the therapist facilitating disclosure and the expression of feelings through the animal interactions. (Reichert, 1998) Animals tend to be more accepting than humans, and this acceptance can help a child to start a relationship with an animal through which the child can start to open up and become engaged while becoming less defensive and depressed (Kale, 1992)

³ If interested access more information at <http://www.equinefacilitatedwellness.org>.

There are a number of ways in which clinicians find that animals can be therapeutically beneficial:

- The social lubricant concept already discussed can apply to the therapeutic relationship, i.e., the presence of an animal in the therapy session can help establish rapport between the client and the therapist. A survey of 190 members of the American Psychologist’s Association’s (APA’s) Division of Psychotherapy indicated that many psychotherapists utilize animals (either actual animals or

conceptually) to build rapport and relationships with clients (Rice, Brown, & Caldwell, 1973).

- Levinson, a pioneer in the area of AAT, indicated that incorporating an animal into psychotherapy helped reduce the client's anxiety. (Levinson, 1965)
- Animals can provide a catalyst for the expression of emotions, such as the expression of joy through laughter while playing with an animal or watching it behave in its natural environment.
- The safety of physical touch with an animal can allow clients to experience safe touch and to seek physical comfort and reassurance (Fine A. , 2000).
- As an adjunct to the clinician, animals can act as a catalyst for discussion and disclosure (Mallon, 1992) For example, while talking about the abuse suffered by a rescued animal, an individual may express or disclose feelings of their own abuse (Hoelscher & Garfat, 1993).
- Clinicians can utilize animals as role models for their clients. For example, the loving relationship between the clinician and the animal and the exercising of boundaries with the animals can be explored by client and clinician as both a learning tool and an opportunity to compare to other relationships (Fine A. , 2000).

Eileen Bona is a Registered Psychologist and the Owner/Founder of Dreamcatcher Nature-Assisted Therapy, a private practice that partners with animals and nature to help children, youth and adults who have neurodevelopmental disabilities or mental health diagnoses. For more information, visit online: www.dreamcatcherassociation.com or call: (780) 809-1047

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