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## Animal assisted acceptance and commitment therapy in a school based clinic

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The use of animal assisted therapy (AAT) with the acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) promotes comfort, accelerates rapport building, encourages trust, elevates mood, reinforces activities of daily living (ADLs), increases interpersonal contact, encourages communication and encourages self-care through the use of a dog as a modeling companion. In conjunction with acceptance and commitment therapy, AAT enhances socialization, creates comfort, reduces anxiety, improves physiological health, encourages clients to open up in session, reduces resistance in treatment, builds trust, explores self-soothing techniques, increases interpersonal effectiveness, increases self-esteem, increases emotional regulation skills, increases distress tolerance, problem solving, anger management, and increases motivation. Bruce Randolph is a Middle and High School in Denver, Colorado that has been practicing AAT in their school based clinic. The author provides mental health and substance abuse co-occurring treatment to 35 students. The use of a therapy dog has increased sobriety, decreased symptoms of mental illness and increased participation. Outcomes on this research study will be shared during this presentation.

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