



10. AAI & AAT sessions

- The project manager:
 - plans the sessions with the dogs outside the patients' meal times;
 - makes an inventory of which patients may show aggressive behaviour towards dogs (Ophorst et al., 2014);
 - makes an inventory of which patients are allergic to or have a fear/phobia of dogs (Ophorst et al., 2014);
 - creates a register in which the AAI sessions and any possible comments can be recorded (Khan & Farrag, 2000);
 - discusses with the handlers if it is desirable to have multiple dogs, that are familiar with each other, present during the session. This way the attention of the patient(s) can be spread out among the dogs, making it less stressful for each individual dog.

- The handler:
 - determines together with the care facility or the responsible therapist which dog is most suitable for the target group (Ophorst et al., 2014);
 - evaluates the dog's health before visiting the facility (Khan & Farrag, 2000);
 - enquires when other animals are visiting the care facility (Kohler, 2011) in order to prevent, for example, visitors' dogs interfering with AAI sessions;
 - ensures the dog has relieved himself or herself outdoors before starting the session and, if necessary, during and after the session (Disalvo et al., 2006);
 - goes directly to the visitors' area with the dog and avoids interactions with other patients as much as possible (Disalvo et al., 2006);
 - uses the lift instead of the stairs for less stress on the dog's joints;
 - asks permission from those already in the lift before entering with the dog (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
 - never uses muzzles, choke chains or metal chains (with or without prongs that prick in the neck) (Delta Society Evaluation Procedure);
 - keeps the dog on the leash in the care facility at all times, except during visiting sessions (Kohler, 2011; Glenk et al., 2013), or if the dog is part of daily life at the care facility (e.g. in the case of semi-residential dogs);
 - brings the dog to a safe, quiet place when there is no one to watch the dog (Disalvo et al., 2006);
 - remains present during the AAI sessions. The handler also remains with the dog during AAT sessions. The dog handler and the therapist may sometimes be the same person;
 - never leaves the dog alone with the patient (Khan & Farrag, 2000);
 - informs the patients during the session about:
 - the dog's behaviour;
 - how to prevent and recognise stress in the dog. This way the patient can understand the dog better and respond appropriately.



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- steers the patient's behaviour towards the dog during the AAI session if necessary. Sessions with children younger than 12 years old can be particularly stressful for the dog (Marinelli et al., 2009).
- does not feed the dog during the visit. This includes limiting dog treats. Treats should preferably only be given by the handler. In consultation with the handler, patients may also give the dog a treat, but then preferably under the following conditions:
 - the dog has been trained to take treats carefully (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
 - the handler determines which treats the dog is allowed to have; Avoid dehydrated, non-sterilised chew treats of animal origin such as pigs' ears, some bones and "rawhide" (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
 - the patient washes his or her hands before and after giving treats (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
 - the patient gives the dog treats in an open hand (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
- ensures the dog can relax during the breaks and rewards him or her by, e.g. letting him or her play with his or her favourite toys (Fine et al., 2015 chapter 11).
- The dog:
 - must be able to control the situation (e.g. always have the possibility to relieve himself or herself, drink, leave the situation, isolate himself or herself, etc.) (Hall & al., 2008);
 - wears a soft collar or harness. The lead is approximately 1.5 metres long (Delta Society Evaluation Procedure) (flexi-leads provide less control over the dog).
- The patient:
 - may participate in AAI sessions with the dog if:
 - he or she has given consent or a family member (if a minor) has given consent;
 - permission from the attending doctor and, if applicable, also the treating therapist (Disalvo et al., 2006).
- Duration and number of AAI sessions per day:
 - An AAI session lasts 45 minutes to maximum one hour.
 - A therapy dog works approximately twice a week for a maximum of three sessions per day (this of course depends greatly on what each individual dog is able to cope with).

Additional guidelines for AAT

- Therapist:
 - AAT can only be started with permission from the treating therapist (Disalvo et al., 2006).
 - Before AAT commences with a patient, the patient's treatment needs are evaluated by a therapist to ensure the AAT is in line with the patient's needs (Disalvo et al., 2006).
 - Selecting the right AAT dog is very important to the success of the therapy (Ophorst et al., 2014). The therapist should have sufficient knowledge to know which dog can be used with which patient. There are different possibilities:



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- The treating therapist is (also) an AAT therapist and works together with a dog-handler team. In this case, consultation between therapist and handler is essential.
 - The treating therapist is (also) an AAT therapist and works with his or her own dog.
 - The treating therapist gives a referral to an AAT therapist. The dog-patient match then occurs in consultation between both therapists or the AAT therapist is given access to the patient's medical file.
- Dog:
 - The dog preferably wears a vest or other type of identification making it clear that he or she is a therapy animal. This makes it easier for the handler to explain to others that the dog is working and that cuddling and petting are not allowed at that time.

Additional guidelines for patients' own dogs visiting the hospital

- The project manager:
 - enquires if the person bringing the dog knows the dog well (Lefebvre et al., 2008);
 - ensures that the arrival times of pet dogs are spread out such that not all the dogs arrive at the same time so that confrontations between dogs can be avoided;
 - plans visits of 45 minutes to maximum 1 hour with dogs and their respective owners;
 - informs the patient or the person responsible for the dog of the general guidelines for dog hygiene, health and behaviour, which also apply to pet dogs visiting (Khan & Farrag, 2000).
- The dog handler:
 - has the dog preferably wait in the car instead of the entrance hall;
 - if possible, avoids contact with other animals such as cats or rabbits; Some dogs have a high hunting instinct;
 - does not leave the dog alone with the patient;
 - respects the care facility regulations.