

FOUNDATIONS OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS

# MODULE ONE

INTRODUCTION TO ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS

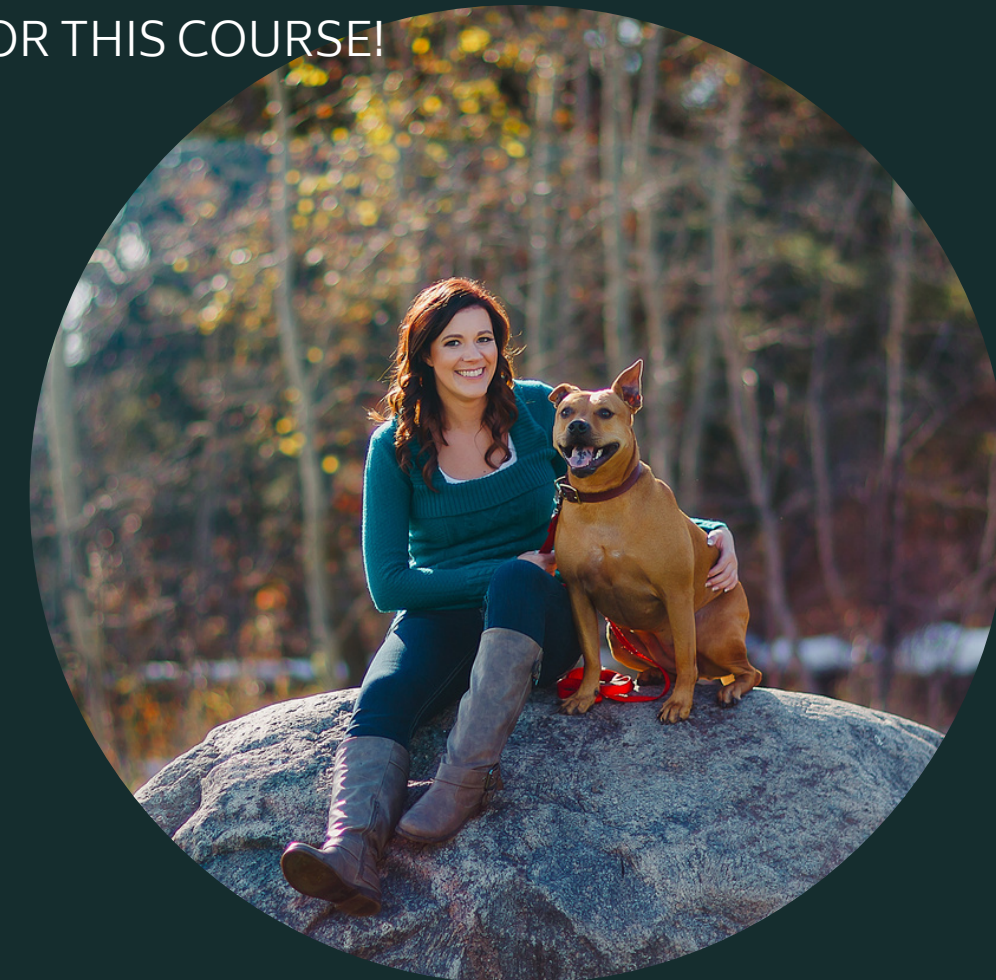


# MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS

PENNY IS A 6-YEAR-OLD PIT MIX THAT WAS ADOPTED FROM A LOCAL RESCUE WHEN SHE WAS 1. PENNY HAD A TOUGH START TO LIFE BUT YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW THAT WHEN YOU SEE HER. SHE LOVES EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING AND TAKES PRIDE IN HER WORK HELPING OTHERS. SHE HAS BEEN A THERAPY ANIMAL FOR THE PAST 5 YEARS AND ABSOLUTELY LOVES WHAT SHE DOES. PENNY IS SO EXCITED TO TEACH YOU ALL SHE KNOWS ABOUT ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS!



LYNDSAY WRIGHT IS A REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST WHO OWNS A GROUP PRACTICE IN EDMONTON, AB. LYNDSAY BECAME A CERTIFIED ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY PROFESSIONAL (CAATP) IN 2012 AND HAS BEEN ASSISTED BY SEVERAL DIFFERENT ANIMALS TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH IN VARIOUS SETTINGS AND POPULATIONS. LYNDSAY HAS BEEN PRACTICING ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY FOR MANY YEARS AND HAS OBSERVED HOW BENEFICIAL THIS MODALITY CAN BE. SHE IS EXCITED TO BE A CO-INSTRUCTOR FOR THIS COURSE!







# OVERVIEW

## MODULE 1 FOCUS

### LESSON #1

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION DEFINITION &  
TERMS COMMONLY USED

### LESSON #2

BIOPHILIA & THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

### LESSON #3

HISTORY OF AAI



# BEFORE WE GET STARTED...



Take out your workbook  
and favourite pen.



Turn your cellphone on silent  
or vibrate.



If you need support, contact me at  
[info@wrightpsychsolutions.com](mailto:info@wrightpsychsolutions.com)



A close-up photograph of a ginger cat's face, showing its eyes, whiskers, and a paw. The cat is looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

# MODULE ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This module will focus on understanding the term animal-assisted intervention as well as terms associated with this approach. We will also discuss the hypotheses behind AAI and lastly, we will look at the history of animal-assisted intervention.



# WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

## LESSON ONE

What is and is not considered  
AAI.

## LESSON TWO

Biophilia and the Human-Animal  
Bond.

## LESSON THREE

History of AAI.





A collage of various animals including a parrot, a chicken, a horse, a pig, a cat, a dog, and rabbits. The animals are arranged in a horizontal line across the bottom of the slide. A dark green rectangular box is positioned at the top center, containing the title text. The background is white with faint, semi-transparent images of the animals.

FOUNDATIONS OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED  
INTERVENTIONS

# LESSON ONE

WHAT IS AND IS NOT CONSIDERED ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION



# LESSON ONE

## WHAT ARE ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS?

Animal-assisted interventions are the incorporation of an animal to aid in physical, emotional or mental intervention. AAI is normally a complementary addition to a current treatment plan.

As there is still no universal consensus around terminology with animal interventions, we will use the Pet Partner/Delta Society's terms to distinguish between different practices involving animals.





# LESSON ONE

## COMMONLY USED TERMS

- **AAI**

The term Animal-Assisted Intervention is used as an umbrella term to include both animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted activities.

- **AAA**

Animal-Assisted Activity is a term used to describe the addition of animals in a more general sense - no goal-directed intervention. (schools, etc)

- **AAT**

Animal-Assisted Therapy is used when an animal is incorporated to aid in specific interventions, goals, or therapeutic treatment plans. More structured and includes outcome goals.

- **OTHER TERMS**

canine-assisted therapy, equine-assisted therapy, equine-facilitated psychotherapy, equine-assisted psychotherapy, pet therapy, animal-assisted mental health, etc.



# LESSON ONE

WHAT DOES AAI LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

## AAI CAN LOOK LIKE...

In some environments, AAI involves a client(s), a health professional, an animal(s) and a handler. Examples of these are when handlers bring a therapy animal to a hospital for a visit, a dog at a school, or some equine programs. This model is often used by larger agencies or programs, or when the health professional is not qualified to handle the animal chosen, or if the health professional is required to be present in a different aspect of the activity and is not able to divide attention between the animal and the activity. Alternatively, AAI can involve a client(s), a health professional and an animal(s), without the need for a handler.



A close-up photograph of two white goats in a lush green field. The goat in the foreground is looking directly at the camera with large, upright ears. Another goat is visible behind it, also looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus field of tall green grass.

"AN ANIMAL'S EYES HAVE THE POWER TO  
SPEAK A GREAT LANGUAGE."

MARTIN BUBER





# LESSON ONE

## ADDITIONAL TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH AAI

### SERVICE ANIMAL

Service animals are specially trained animals that perform a specific task to assist an individual in need.

Other terms - assistance animals, animal assistants or helper animals depending on where you live.

### THERAPY ANIMAL

Animals that are incorporated into the therapeutic process.

At present, there is no formal certification process for therapy animals. It is possible to certify therapy dogs as a service dog under the title of 'therapy dog'. But this has not been recognized as a requirement for a dog to become a therapy animal.

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL

ESAs provide comfort to their owner to help reduce symptoms associated with a disorder. ESAs are not trained in a specific role as service animals are. (We discuss letters and registration of ESAs in the advanced course)

### PET

Also called companion animals, pets do not have a specific task or training and are primarily seen as social companions. While pets often provide comfort and can reduce negative physiological, emotional or mental events, that is not their primary purpose.





FOUNDATIONS OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED  
INTERVENTIONS

# LESSON TWO

BIOPHILIA & THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND



# LESSON TWO

## BIOPHILIA & THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

The biophilia hypothesis developed by Dr. Edward O. Wilson is the hypothetical tendency or desire for humans to connect with other life forms in nature. This hypothesis is also used to support nature-assisted therapy.

The human-animal bond is the dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship between humans and animals and is often supported through attachment theory and humans' innate need for social connections.





# LESSON TWO

## BIOPHILIA & THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

- **BIOPHILIA HYPOTHESIS**

A Human's desire for connection with other life forms and nature is rooted in our biology.

- **HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND**

A mutual desire for humans and animals to connect - is beneficial for both.

- **CONNECTION TO NATURE**

Studies have shown that connecting with nature can improve mood, reduce stress, increase physical activity, allow for increased sunlight, increase mindfulness and a sense of balance.

- **ATTACHMENT THEORY**

Some believe AAs are effective as it allows for clients to develop a healthy attachment figure.





"NATURE HOLDS THE KEY TO OUR  
AESTHETIC, INTELLECTUAL, COGNITIVE  
AND EVEN SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION."

E.O. WILSON





# LESSON TWO

## BIOPHILIA & THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

### NATURE-ASSISTED THERAPY

Also known as eco-therapy, argues that connecting with nature can improve our mental, physical and emotional health. Is often used alongside animal-assisted therapy.

### NEED FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Evolutionary psychology argues that humans are genetically wired to connect with others. History has shown that being with a group increased the chance of survival. Social connections of any kind can support this need.

### BENEFITS OF HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

- Increased sense of purpose
- Stress Reduction
- improved mood
- increased physical activity
- increased social bonds

### BENEFITS OF HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

- increased mood
- Increased healing and independence
- Facilitates connections with other humans
- Allows for common interests with others



A photograph of a man and a young child feeding a horse in a field. The man is kneeling and holding a large bundle of green grass, while the child stands next to him, also holding the grass. The horse is brown and has a thick, light-colored mane. In the background, there is a wooden fence and some trees under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is peaceful and shows a close interaction between humans and animals.

FOUNDATIONS OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED  
INTERVENTIONS

# LESSON THREE

HISTORY OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION



# LESSON THREE

## HISTORY OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION

The incorporation of animals to improve health is not a new concept. Evidence shows AAIs were used in ancient Greece, medieval Belgium, England in the 18th century and psychiatric institutions in the late 1700s.

Freud made mention of his therapy dog in his writings. AAIs began to be formally researched in the 1960s with Boris Levinson. Fine's book listed in the resources section of this module is a great resource for information on the history of AAI.





# LESSON THREE

## HISTORY OF AAI

### ● GREECE

Ancient Greeks had horses to help improve the mood of severely ill patients.

### ● YORK RETREAT

The York Retreat in England in the late 1700s incorporated animals in treatment for the mentally ill.

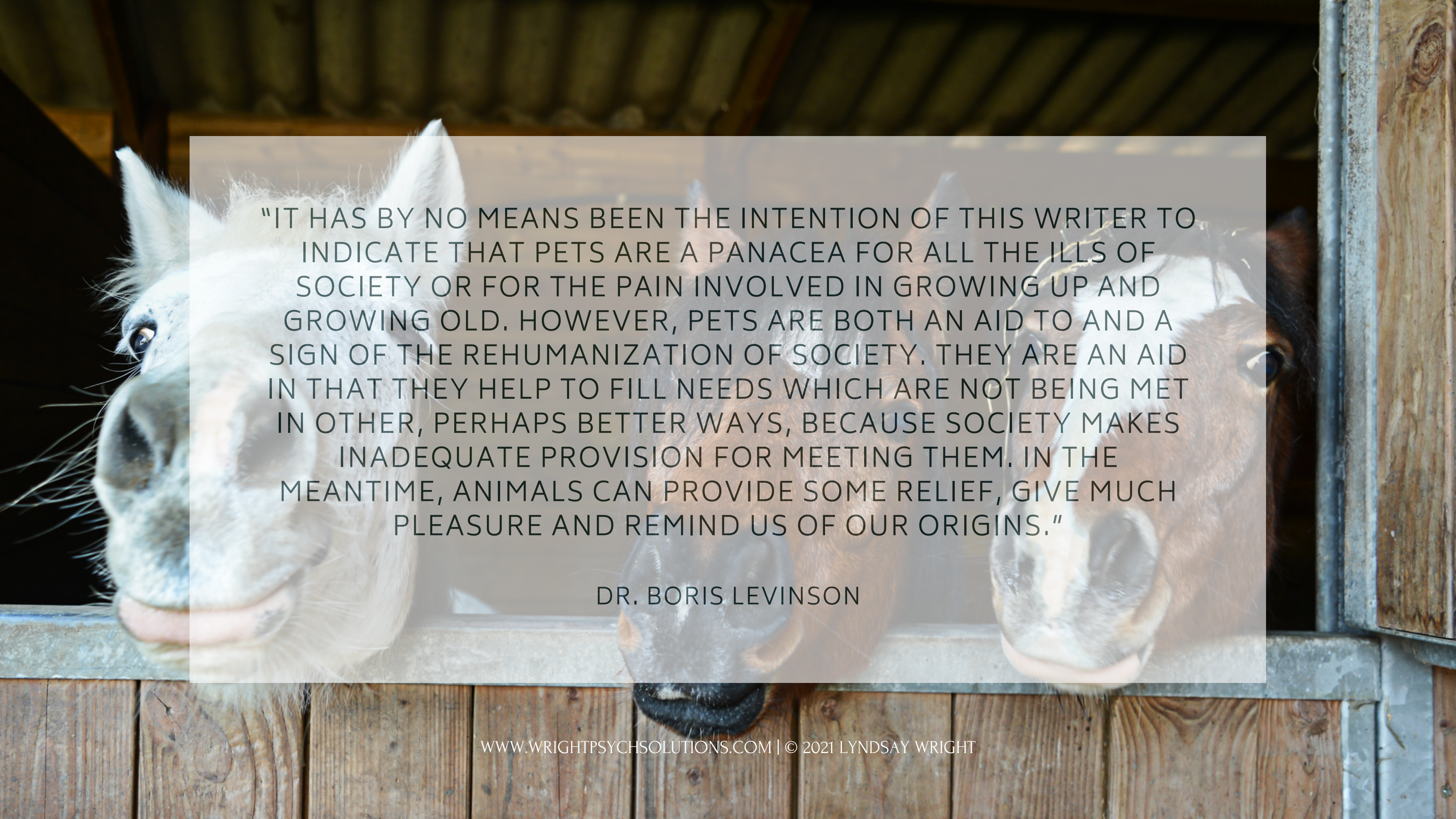
### ● BELGIUM

In medieval Belgium, animals and humans were rehabilitated together in an attempt to help both through a mutually beneficial relationship.

### ● FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Documented her observations that small animals reduced anxiety and improved the mood of mentally ill children and adults.





"IT HAS BY NO MEANS BEEN THE INTENTION OF THIS WRITER TO INDICATE THAT PETS ARE A PANACEA FOR ALL THE ILLS OF SOCIETY OR FOR THE PAIN INVOLVED IN GROWING UP AND GROWING OLD. HOWEVER, PETS ARE BOTH AN AID TO AND A SIGN OF THE REHUMANIZATION OF SOCIETY. THEY ARE AN AID IN THAT THEY HELP TO FILL NEEDS WHICH ARE NOT BEING MET IN OTHER, PERHAPS BETTER WAYS, BECAUSE SOCIETY MAKES INADEQUATE PROVISION FOR MEETING THEM. IN THE MEANTIME, ANIMALS CAN PROVIDE SOME RELIEF, GIVE MUCH PLEASURE AND REMIND US OF OUR ORIGINS."

DR. BORIS LEVINSON





# LESSON THREE

## HISTORY OF AAI

### FREUD

Freud incorporated his dog into his therapy practice as he believed the dog was able to judge a person's character. He also observed the calming effect his dog had on children in his practice.

### "THE FATHER OF AAT"

Boris Levinson is known as the 'father of AAT' due to his formal research in this area. His book, Pet-Oriented Child Psychotherapy, increased interest and research in this area.

### PET PARTNERS

Originally called the Delta Society, was established in the 1980s to provide guidance and information on the addition of animals in a therapeutic context. They also offer a certification program for your pet.

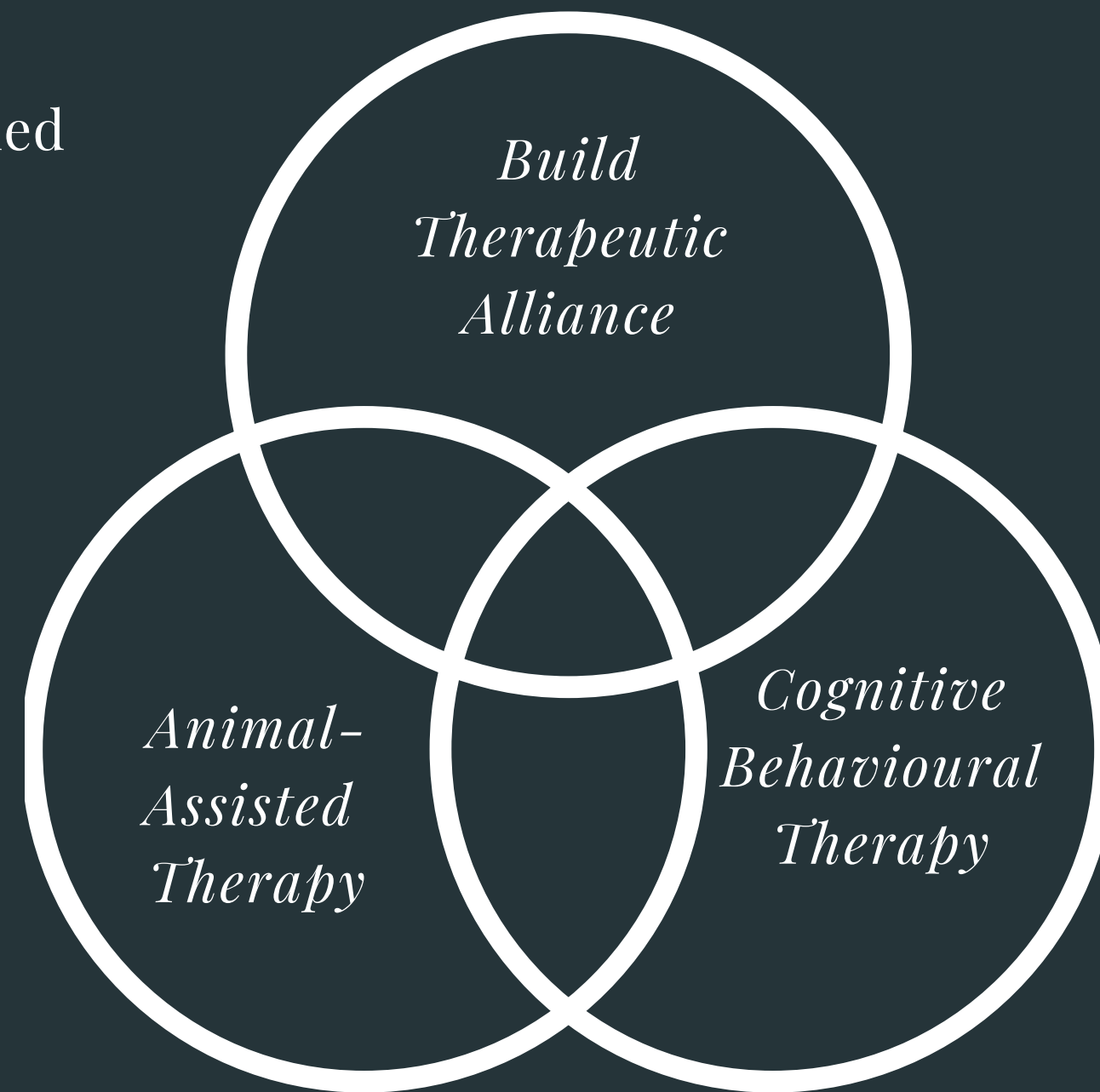
### A. FINE

Dr. Aubrey Fine is well known for his writings on AAI. The Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy will be listed as a resource in each module as this book is a great learning tool for those interested in AAT.



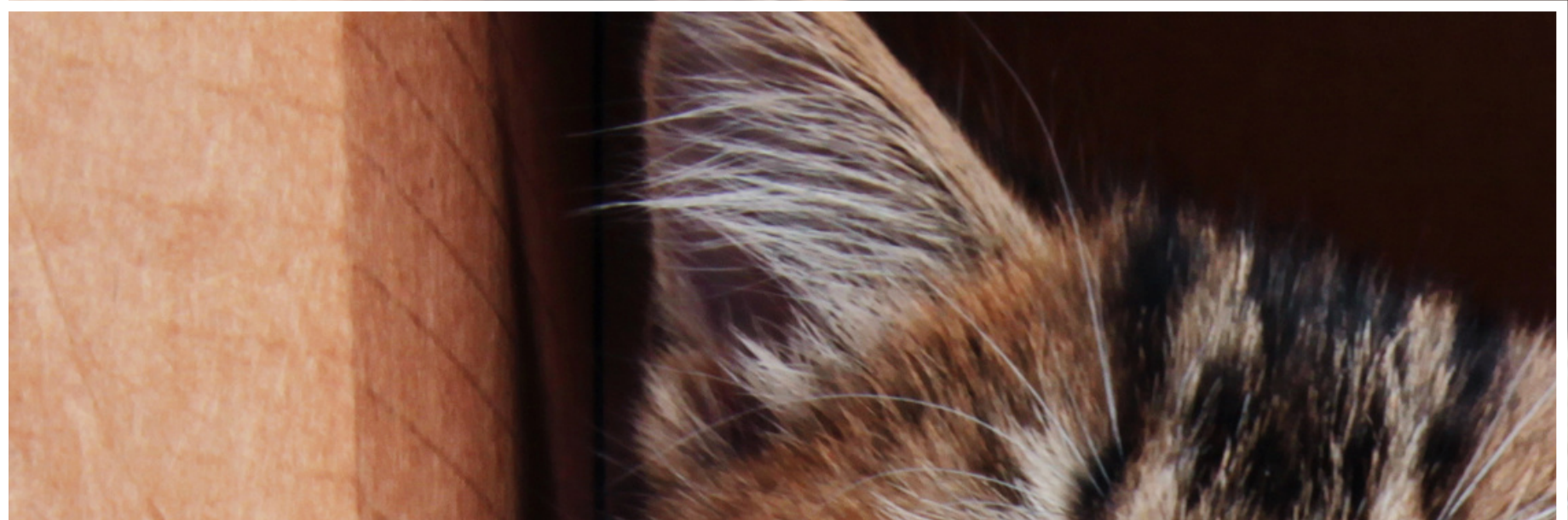
# Animal-Assisted Intervention in Practice

AAT is considered a complementary treatment approach. Meaning it is intended as an addition to a current treatment plan. Here is an example:



AAAs are less structured and can be used as a stand-alone program. Examples of this are reading to a dog in a classroom, bringing animals to universities during an exam period or having animals visit nursing homes or hospitals for social visits.





# MODULE ONE

NEXT STEPS





## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- COURSE WORKBOOK
- PEN
- A WAY TO READ THE WRITTEN RESOURCES LISTED NEXT (INTERNET ACCESS, ETC)





# MODULE ONE

## HOMEWORK



### REVIEW

Review the resource list on the following slides.



### READ

Explore the resources listed that are relevant to you for the self-study section.



### REFLECT

Take some time for self-exploration.





# MODULE 1 READINGS

Use the resources below to further explore the topic of AAI. The underlined titles are linked to Amazon or directly to the article.

- [Biophilia by Edward O. Wilson](#)
- [The Human-Animal Bond Research Institute](#)
- [Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy - A.H. Fine](#)
- [Pet Partners](#)
- [Pet-Oriented Child Psychotherapy - Boris Levinson](#)





# TOPICS FOR SELF-STUDY

Explore the resources provided here and in the previous slide to complete the self-study portion of this Module.

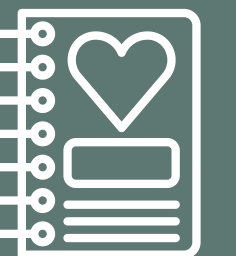
- [Animal Assisted Therapy – A Brief History.](#)
- Current challenges to research on animal-assisted interventions - James Serpell et al. (2017).
- Animal presence modulates frontal brain activity of patients in a minimally conscious state: A pilot Study - Wanda Amskotter et al. (2021)
- [Animal-Assisted Therapy: An Exploration of Its History, Healing Benefits, and How Skilled Nursing Facilities Can Set Up Programs](#)





# SELF-EXPLORATION

Once you have completed the Module 1 video lecture and the self-study section, spend some time exploring your own feelings and thoughts about what you have learned. Find the Module 1 self-exploration section in the workbook and answer the question prompts.








## MODULE ONE RECAP

This module guided you through the first steps of learning about AAI. We reviewed common terms, the ideas behind why AAI can be an effective health intervention and lastly we explored the origins of AAI.





"ANIMALS ARE BORN WHO THEY ARE,  
ACCEPT IT, AND THAT IS THAT. THEY LIVE  
WITH GREATER PEACE THAN PEOPLE  
DO."

GREGORY MAGUIRE

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# WHAT'S INSIDE MODULE 2?



## LESSON ONE

### COMMON AAI ANIMALS

We will explore common animals and how specific animals can aid in different ways.



## LESSON TWO

### THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

For the safety of the animals and participants, it is imperative that you are knowledgeable about animal behaviour.



## LESSON THREE

### YOU'VE CHOSEN AN ANIMAL, NOW WHAT?

We will discuss important steps required before incorporating an animal into your program or practice.



# HAVE QUESTIONS?

## EMAIL ADDRESS

[info@wrightpsychsolutions.com](mailto:info@wrightpsychsolutions.com)

## WEBSITE

[www.wrightpsychsolutions.com](http://www.wrightpsychsolutions.com)







[CLICK HERE FOR A LIST OF ALL SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THIS COURSE](#)







## APPLICATIONS OF AAT

Once you have completed the Foundations of AAI course, continue on your learning journey with our advanced training course. This course explores how to apply AAT to your practice or program and offers live consultation hours.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

Connect with other health professionals through our Facebook group. Learn from others, ask questions and connect with colleagues. The link below will take you to our group: [AAT For Health Professionals](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)