



Practice Locations in Coeur d'Alene, ID and Williamsburg, VA
Phone: (757) 645-7722, Fax: (757) 645-2808
www.safeharborcounselingcenter.com

ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY WAIVER

Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a form of creative therapy that utilizes licensed and credentialed therapy animals or therapy animals in training and handlers (people who manage the animals) to provide goal-directed interventions to individuals of all ages. AAT can be used with various types of psychological, emotional, developmental, or cognitive impairments. The purpose of this form is to review the policies, procedures, and risks of working with specifically canine therapy animals, as well as request your consent for treatment utilizing AAT provided by Lisa Frazier, LPC, LMFT at Safe Harbor Counseling Center, LLC.

Although working with animals, specifically canines, in a therapeutic setting has many benefits, there are risks associated with the intervention. Because AAT utilizes a live animal, it is important to note in advance the policies and procedures needed to maximize the intervention and ensure a safe work environment, both for the therapy dog(s) and the patient. By signing this form, I am consenting to the following policies, procedures, and risks for participation in the therapy dog program.

1. Participation in AAT is not guaranteed and will be based on Lisa Frazier's assessment. If the assessment determines the patient is not a good fit, other treatment options will be discussed and appropriate referrals may be made.
 - a. If a history or indication of animal abuse or other risk factors are present, Lisa Frazier will determine whether participation in AAT is indicated.
 - b. Should a patient become aggressive (hits, kicks, bites, pulls, pinches, etc.) towards the therapy dog(s) or threaten physical harm to the therapy dog(s), Lisa Frazier will determine if it is appropriate to continue treatment or make the appropriate referrals.
2. Anyone wishing to participate in AAT should be screened for allergies before working with the therapy dog(s) in person. All allergies must be reported before beginning treatment so the proper precautionary measures can be taken. Should documentation from a medical professional indicate that allergies, skin or respiratory sensitivities, or other medical conditions exist, Lisa Frazier will determine if it is appropriate to continue treatment or make the appropriate referrals. Neither Lisa Frazier, nor Safe Harbor Counseling Center, LLC can be held liable for allergic or other physiological reactions to the therapy dog(s).
3. Any fear of dogs must be reported before treatment commences so the proper precautionary measures can be taken and goodness of fit determined, whether for in-person or telehealth sessions.
4. If sick or injured, the therapy dog(s) will not be able to provide services until the illness or injury subsides or upon veterinary approval, as sickness or injury could negatively impact the animal's behavior.
5. Although the therapy dog(s) will remain current on his/her vaccinations and health screenings, there is always a slight risk of zoonotic disease transmission (i.e., the sharing of diseases between animals and humans) when working with an animal in person. Every effort will be made by Lisa Frazier to reduce the risk of zoonosis.
6. Direct contact with the animal's urine, stool, and/or blood should be avoided. Every effort will be made by Lisa Frazier to educate/model for the patient and/or guardian appropriate ways to physically engage with the therapy dog(s).
7. All patients must either wash their hands, use hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes before and after touching the therapy dog(s), specifically in reference to in-person sessions only.
8. The therapy dog(s) will be well groomed before every therapy session. Although every effort will be made to cut and file the therapy dog's nails, scratching may occur while physically interacting with the dog(s) in an in-person setting. Neither Lisa Frazier, nor Safe Harbor Counseling Center, LLC can be held liable for injuries incurred by the therapy dog's nails.
9. Dogs play or show affection by licking or nibbling, which may result in oral contact from the dog during in-person sessions only. Although every effort will be made by Lisa Frazier to monitor this, there is a risk for light biting or zoonotic disease transmission to occur when a dog makes oral contact with a person. The therapy dog(s) will be allowed to lick the patient upon obtaining the patient's and/or guardian's verbal permission. Neither Lisa Frazier, nor Safe Harbor Counseling Center, LLC can be held liable for injury or zoonotic disease transmission as a result of oral contact from the therapy dog(s).

10. Dogs use their body to communicate and may brush against or lean into a person. Other body language such as tail wagging or body wiggling may also occur. Such behaviors create a risk for loss of balance, falling, or light bruising, specifically in reference to in-person sessions only. Neither Lisa Frazier, nor Safe Harbor Counseling Center, LLC can be held liable for injury incurred by physically engaging with the therapy dog(s).
11. The patient and/or guardian will promptly report all accidents and/or injuries to Lisa Frazier. Should injury occur, Lisa Frazier will respond accordingly and take proper action to help the patient get the appropriate medical care
12. The therapy(s) dog cannot be used in therapy without Lisa Frazier present and patients are never to be left alone with the therapy dog(s).
13. If at any time, the therapy dog(s) shows signs of distress, irritation, fear, or in any way acts in a negative manner, he/she will be allowed to take a break. No one, except Lisa Frazier, should touch or interact with the therapy dog(s) during these times. Lisa Frazier will assess and determine whether it is safe for the therapy dog(s) to return to the session.
14. Animals, like people, have their own moods that determine their level of desire to interact with others. It is therefore understood that the therapy dog(s) is allowed to determine if and when to participate in therapy/interact with others and will never be forced to interact should he/she indicate signs of distress and/or resistance.
15. Due to the nature of the office setting, the therapy dog(s) will often work off leash, though the patient and/or guardian or other individuals present may request for him/her to be placed on a leash in their presence if uncomfortable.
16. If participating in virtual sessions via telehealth, therapy dog(s) or therapy dog(s) in training may be present if desired and appropriate. Although no physical contact with the animals is available in virtual sessions, you may see and hear the therapy dog(s) at any time and upon request. Virtual AAT may also provide similar emotional and therapeutic benefits as in-person visits. If you have concerns or wish to opt out of virtual AAT at any time please communicate your wishes directly with Lisa Frazier and accommodations can be made.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS POLICY:

This consent and policies were updated and went into effect on January 1, 2024.

BY SIGNING BELOW, I AM AGREEING THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO THE ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

I/We understand and agree to the policies, procedures, and risks associated with the use of Animal-Assisted therapy in psychological treatment. Thus, I hereby consent to receive therapeutic services utilizing the registered therapy dog(s) or therapy dog(s) in training, from Lisa Frazier, LPC, LMFT and accept full liability in the event that the therapy dog(s) causes injury to me/us in any way throughout the course of treatment. Furthermore, I/we are not aware of any fear, allergy, skin or respiratory sensitivity, or other medical condition I/we have that would render physical interaction (i.e., touching, handling) with or close proximity to a therapy dog(s) potentially harmful to my/our health.

Client or Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

**Practice Locations: 206 Ironwood Dr. #1012, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
1320 Richmond Rd. #1053, Williamsburg, VA 23185**