



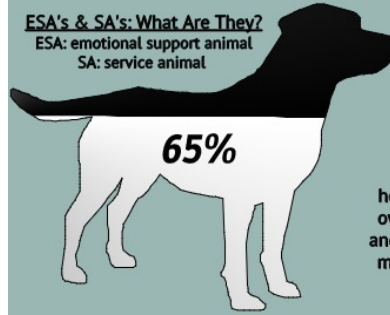
# From Dog House to Dorm: Emotional Support Animals on Campus



**161,014**

College Students seeking mental health treatment as of 2017, according to the Center for Collegiate Mental Health at Penn State University Annual Report <sup>1</sup>

ESA's & SA's: What Are They?  
ESA: emotional support animal  
SA: service animal



"An ESA is not an SA but rather, provides companionship, relieves loneliness, and sometimes helps with anxiety, depression, or certain phobias."<sup>4</sup>

As of 2015, 65% of American households, or 79.7 million families, owned pets which allows for mental and physical health benefits for family members as they are subconsciously being affected by pet therapy. <sup>2</sup>

"Coping with homesickness and/or loneliness can be a real challenge for college students, especially when trying to juggle classroom and extracurricular responsibilities. But animal therapy can help alleviate those feelings."<sup>3</sup>



"Although ESAs aren't recognized as service animals by the Americans with Disabilities Act, an emotionally or physically disabled persons has the right to live with their support animal in residential university spaces. Like licensed service animals, ESAs must perform duties or aid (even if only their comforting presence) related to the disabled person's disability to qualify for the title of "assistance animal." "<sup>5</sup>

## Benefits of Animal Therapy.



Mental

- ⚡ reduced anxiety
- ⚡ reduced despair
- ⚡ reduced depression
- ⚡ reduced stress levels
- ⚡ a sense of calm, safety & protection



Physical

- ⚡ lower blood pressure
- ⚡ lower heart rate
- ⚡ calming effect
- ⚡ improved cardiopulmonary health
- ⚡ reduced pain levels
- ⚡ improved respiratory rates

There were 925 US colleges and universities as of 2014 who had programs involving animal therapy in order to improve student mental health. <sup>2</sup>

**925**



## Animal Therapy & College Students: Why Does It Work?



"While mindfulness techniques such as breathing, meditating, or taking a mental break have been shown to relieve student stress, offering AAI (Animal-Assisted Interactions) to student clients may be a way to entice students to take a beneficial, short break, which they might not otherwise allow themselves to do."<sup>3</sup>

## References

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