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What animal-assisted therapy is

Therapists can use different ways to keep you involved in your therapy.

In animal-assisted therapy, an animal may be used by the therapist to help you meet specific goals through evidence-based treatment. The animal is used to help you participate in the therapy session.

The therapy is planned around your goals. It must be provided by a trained and qualified health professional.

An animal is just another tool the therapist can use as part of your treatment.

For example, a psychologist or counsellor may use an animal in therapy sessions to help you to stay calm or focused during counselling. Or an occupational therapist may use an animal during therapy sessions to build your physical skills or abilities.

> **Tip: The therapist usually owns and trains the animal they use.**
>
> Animals involved in animal-assisted therapy usually belong to the therapist or therapy organisation. You'll usually only see the animal during your animal-assisted therapy.
>
> The animal won't go home with you, like an assistance animal would.

What animal-assisted therapy is like

Animal-assisted therapy can be an NDIS support

We only fund animal-assisted therapy if it's considered reasonable and necessary.

You may be able to use your therapeutic support funding to pay for animal-assisted therapy if you have it.

To use NDIS funding for animal-assisted therapy, it must be:

- related to your disability

- in line with your NDIS plan
- value for money
- less than the maximum hourly rate for this support.

Animal therapy is not an NDIS support

Some activities with an animal might be called an animal therapy because they help people have a positive experience. These activities could include:

- engaging with puppies
- riding a horse
- recreational, sporting and social activities involving animals.

These activities aren't animal-assisted therapy because they aren't:

- goal-centred
- part of an evidence-based therapeutic treatment plan.

They aren't NDIS supports and you can't use your funding to pay for these types of activities.

You may be able to use NDIS funding if you need extra help to do recreational, sporting or social activities involving animals.

This extra help could be a support worker or assistive products that help you do the activity when it is happening. However, you can't use NDIS funding to pay for the general costs of their sporting, social or recreational activities.

Related information

What are assistance animals

What is reasonable and necessary

What are NDIS supports

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