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North Canton, OH 44720
April 20, 2020

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Dear Mr. Airhart:

We submit the following report, "Stress Dogs for College Students," in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Technical Report Writing. Our report talks about the benefits of stress dogs, or support dogs, for college students. It serves to educate the reader on the emotional benefits students receive from even a small interaction with a support dog.

The analysis conducted determined that exposure to an emotional support dog reduced stress among those college students who participated in the study. The studies, figures, appendix, and conclusions are included. The results from this report should be helpful to both students and faculty who look to find a cost effective way to reduce student anxiety during crucial testing times.

Thank you to all members of the group who have assisted with this paper, and to the researchers who have provided us with this information.

Sincerely,

Group #1

Group #1

Enclosed: Formal Report

STRESS DOGS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

By:
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Technical Report Writing
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ABSTRACT

A man's best friend is man's best friend for a reason. Dogs provide a companionship that is unrivaled by any other creature, and the benefits of that companionship are tangible among those with high levels of stress or anxiety. This is why many universities around the nation are employing emotional support dogs during exam weeks and difficult academic times. These dogs are of little to no cost to the universities and provide students with a positive effect that persists through the day.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Today, students are experiencing increased stress and anxiety from college. It is very overwhelming for students to work, pay for college, do homework, study, and have their own personal life. Stress and anxiety have a negative impact on a student's well-being and their educational performance. If more colleges would allow students to bring a stress dog to school with them, it would have a positive impact on their mental and emotional health. Allowing students to have a stress dog would make learning easier, exams less stressful, and college more enjoyable. Rules and regulations should be put into place, but it is important for a college to take into consideration the student's health. It is also important to consider the dog's needs and care such as feeding, using the bathroom, etc. Along with how those will affect your schedule and class time also, the dog's behavior must be considered as well.

Purpose

By discussing a student's mental health and the importance of a stress dog, this paper will prove that there is a positive impact on students. Steps and procedures on how to maintain a stress dog will be explained. Examples from colleges that allow stress dogs will be given to show the important role stress dogs have for students who experience stress.

Scope

An example will be provided from a student who currently cannot have a stress dog will be given to explain the negative and positive effects. An explanation from a student who currently has a stress dog will be given and will explain negative and positive effects.

STRESS DOGS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Benefits of Support Dogs for Students

With an increased academic workload, and often hefty tuition to worry about, it is no wonder college is a stressful and overall difficult time for most people. As shown in Fig. 1 below, anxiety rates have more than doubled in the last 20 years. Without proper coping skills, individuals often disengage completely or resort to self-destructive coping methods. These coping methods are shown to have negative outcomes and can drastically affect college students (Dyson & Renk, 2006). Animals, more specifically dogs in this discussion, are shown in a multitude of different studies to have positive effects on college students and can help deter someone from engaging in a self-destructive path. Also, said dogs can be used to better facilitate treatment or help for personal issues, such as stress, depression, and anxiety for those who don't feel comfortable going to see a counselor.

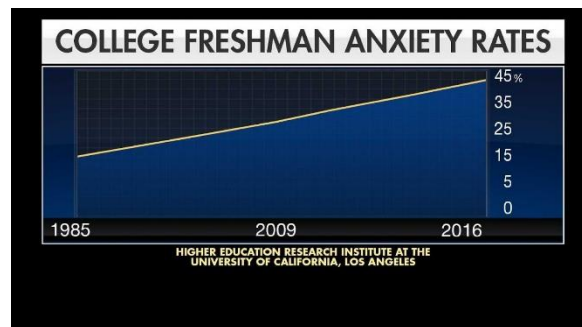


Figure 1 "Rise in Stress Levels"

Source : Kirkland, Talia. "More support animals seen on college campuses despite national debate," Fox News.

Benefits of Support Dogs for Colleges

Dogs not only help with anxiety and depression in individuals, but have been proven effective in groups as well. When groups of college students were questioned after interacting with dogs for only a small period of time, the students reported positive changes to their mental well-being, even for many hours after the interaction (Coren 2018). Creating this window of positive mental energy for students can be perfect for testing weeks and other high demand times in college.

Hiring a dog support group is often of little or no cost to the university as well.

Emotional Support

Students can register their animal as an emotional support animal. An emotional support animal is protected by two federal laws. One being that you cannot be turned away from any type of housing, including on campus because of your animal (Anderson, 2020). Although this does not permit animals in the college it supports the importance of these animals. Twenty percent of American college students came forward with depression, stress, and anxiety due to financial burden, deadlines and exams (Anderson, 2020). All of which can hinder a student's learning, attention and processing of the information being taught. Giving students permission for ESA (emotional support animals) has the potential to remove significant pressure from students. These animals give students a relaxing presence, a sense of safety, a friend, and companionship (CDA, 2016).

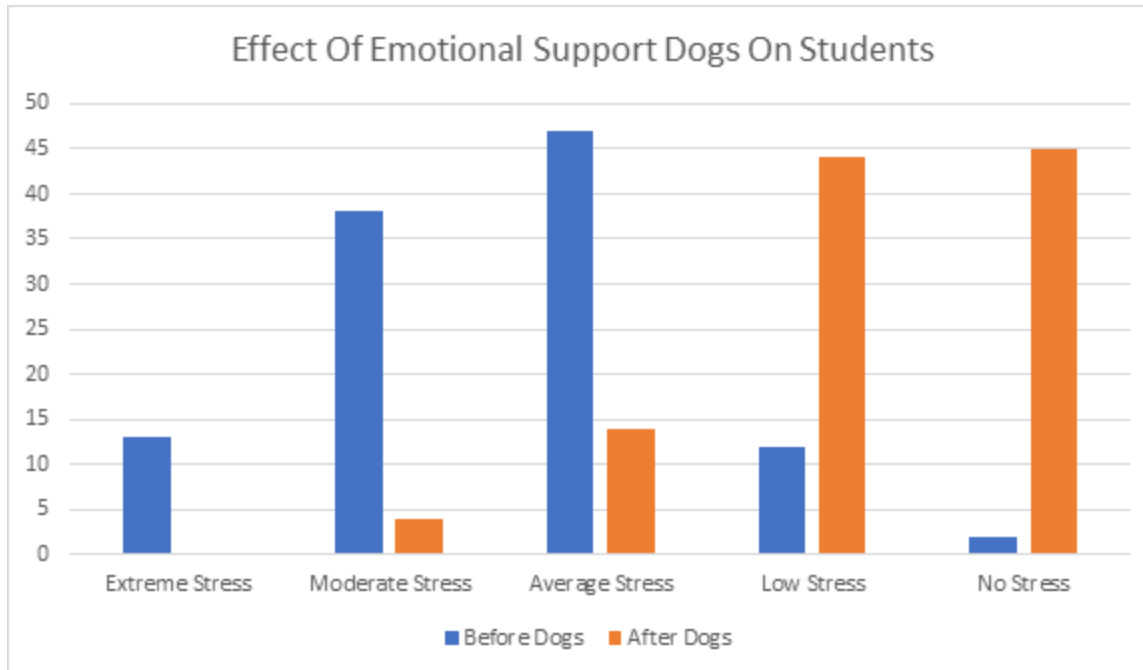


Figure 2 “Effect of Emotional Support Dogs”

Source: Rust, M. “Effect of therapy dogs on student stress.”

College Guidelines

Currently Stark State College does not have its policy for the use of service or emotional support animals available on its website for review. In a recent interview, a student who had to work through the process said, “Stark State College does allow students to bring service and emotional support animals to campus. There is paperwork that must be completed in accordance with the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], but the school is very accommodating and helpful with that process” (Mikayla Simmons, 2020).

While the federal laws in place do not currently force universities and colleges to allow emotional support animals, more and more the court system has sided with students when their institution balks at the emotional support animal. In 2016, Kent State University was forced to pay \$145,000 to a couple, the Fair Housing Authority, and the federal government, after they

refused to allow the couple to keep a service animal in the on campus home (Farkas, 2016). In 2013, Grand Valley State University settled with a student for \$40,000 after denying her request to live with her support animal (Bauer-Wolf, 2019).

While some in academia may worry that students would take advantage of being able to bring an emotional support animal on campus, the data cannot be denied - students with high levels of stress and anxiety perform better when their support animal is with them. What can be extrapolated from this evidence is that during known stressful times on campus - midterms and finals weeks - students across the board would benefit from a space dedicated to support dogs. While not 100% conclusive, interacting with animals has been shown to reduce levels of cortisol and lower blood pressure (National Institutes of Health, February 2018).

Conclusions

Many universities are already employing emotional support dogs on an individual level, and for group therapy. These dogs have been shown to have positive effects on students' mental health. This natural positive change in emotion can be helpful for those coping in difficult academic times, and can even prevent students from engaging in negative coping methods.

Recommendations

Stark State should employ stress dogs during testing weeks to provide a natural coping method for students. In addition, Stark State should always allow individuals to have their emotional support dogs on campus with them.

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Ellensburg, WA: James E. Brooks Library, Central Washington University.

Personal Contributions to this project:

Wrote transmittal document

Wrote abstract

Made cover letter + table of contents

Found figure 1

Found Stanley Coren source

Found Dyson And Renk Source

Wrote Section under “Benefits of Support Dogs for Students”

Wrote Section under “Benefits of Support Dogs for Colleges”

Wrote Conclusion

Wrote Recommendations

Edited personal copy of paper based on feedback (I am sorry about sending different copies than the group doc. On the draft I did it because I felt like I was personally done working on it for the day and wanted to get it submitted, and on this copy it's because my group hasn't contacted me or changed anything on the google doc.)

In summary, I did pages (numbers according to Microsoft word, page 1 being transmittal doc) 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, top of page 7 and the bottom of 9 by myself. I also formatted the doc at the start of the project as the handbook specified with the headers needed.

I also submitted my own personal power point since I appear to be having some sort of group communication issues.