

Employee Assistance Program

The Power of Pets

Research has shown that having a pet can reduce stress and depression, combat loneliness, and improve heart health. All pets have been shown to help in these areas -- think beyond dogs and cats if you're not ready for that level of commitment. Consider fish or lizards such as bearded dragons which make excellent pets, especially if you have allergies to animals with fur. Birds, guinea pigs, and other exotic pets might be a good option for those with space constraints.



The benefits of having a pet are vast and include:

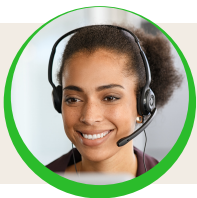
Stress reduction. The act of petting and having physical contact with an animal reduces anxiety and can calm an active mind. Consider an aquarium or even a single beta fish. Watching fish swim has been shown to have a calming effect. For some, the sound of the water bubbling in a fish tank is also relaxing.

Depression reduction. The companionship and connection that pets provide help decrease depression and loneliness. Having a pet to care for and that also provides structure and routine brings meaning and purpose to life. Owning a pet is also a great way to meet other people with similar interests.

Improvements to heart health. Dogs require daily walks which leads to increased activity levels which helps to fight weight gain that can contribute to cardiovascular problems. Being outdoors comes with the added bonus of boosting your mood. Studies have shown that pets lower blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol levels.

Before you run out and get a pet, it's important to do your research around proper care, time commitment involved, space needed, and anticipated expenses. Most rescue groups will provide all of this information upfront. Contact your Employee Assistance Program for help locating local rescue groups or shelters in your area, or if you're struggling with stress, anxiety, or feelings of loneliness.

Robinson, L. and Segal, J. "The Health and Mood-Boosting Benefits of Pets". HelpGuide.org. Accessed January 18, 2024 from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/mood-boosting-power-of-dogs.htm>



Your Employee Assistance Program

Anytime, any day, you have access to mental health professionals available to connect you with free and confidential services and resources to help you be your best. Simply call to get started today.

24/7/365 PHONE:
1.800.833.3031

WEBSITE:
www.EAPHelplink.com
Code: IOWA