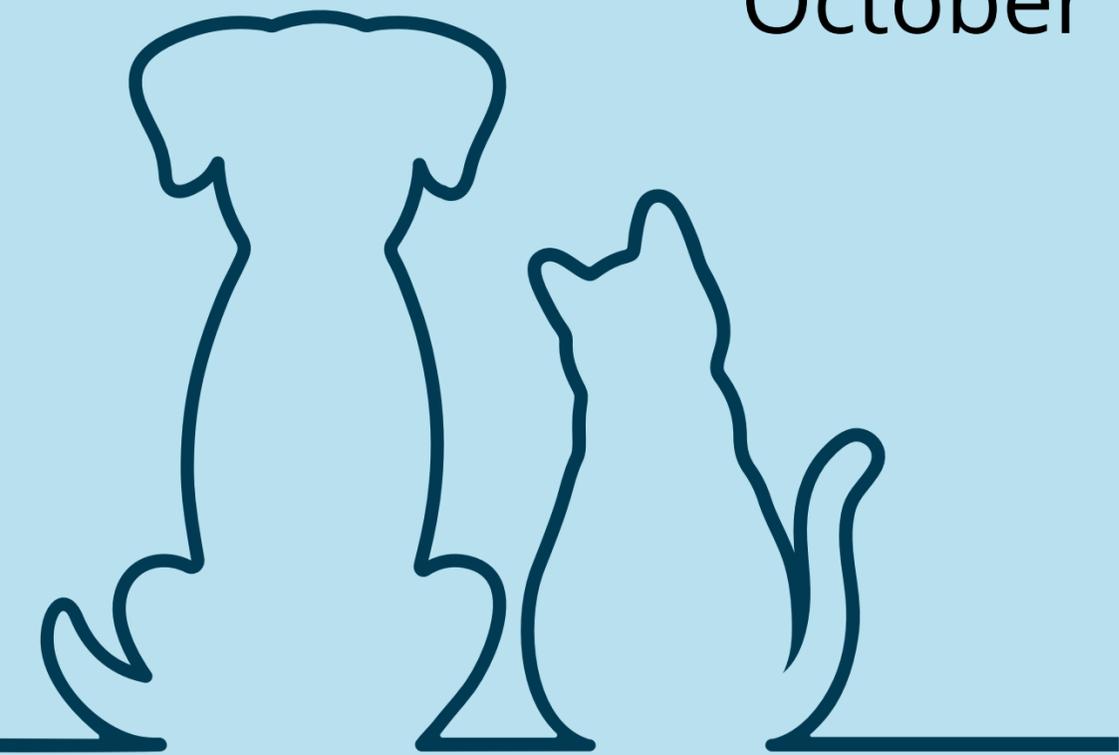


Promoting Therapy Animal Welfare

October 15th APA HAI Section Presentation



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Agenda

01

**Importance
of Handler
Advocacy**

02

**Common
Welfare-
Challenging
Scenarios**

03

**Clients as
Advocates
for Welfare**

04

**When
Sessions
Must be
Ended**

YAYABA

You are your animal's best advocate

Baseline Considerations



Animal's Health

Free from injury, illness, aging infirmities, & degenerative conditions

Environment

Freedom of choice/retreat spaces, temperature, frequency of breaks

Temperament

Affiliative, confident, resilient, and well-trained



**What does
advocacy actually
look like?**

- **Constant observation of the animal's body language**
- **Being the voice of the animal**
- **Proactively directing all interactions**
- **Setting clients up for success**



Scenario 1

Eager young client who is over-excited to interact with your therapy dog for the first time.

Client is jumping up and down and struggling to follow directions.

Dog is avoiding interactions and demonstrating tense body language.

What do you do?



Scenario 2

You're working through trained behaviors with your dog and client.

Your dog is not responding to your client's cues, and the client is becoming frustrated.

What do you do?



Scenario 3

Your client is talking through some emotionally challenging experiences and wants your cat to sit on her lap.

Your cat is keeping to himself in his retreat space.

What do you do?



Scenario 4

It's been a long day of sessions. Though you've provided plenty of breaks and rest, your dog is demonstrating tiredness and keeps going to the door.

You have one more client scheduled for the afternoon.

What do you do?

Clients as Advocates for Welfare

- Client Screening
- Informed
Consent/Participation
Contracts
- Setting realistic expectations
- Modeling important
interpersonal skills

Reasons for Ending AAI



Client has met
treatment goals



Injury, illness,
death, or
retirement of
animal



Volunteer
becomes
unavailable



Client no longer
a good
candidate for
AAI

Preparation is Key



Before: From the start, clients know that animals could become unavailable



During: Advance notice when possible, referrals, and space for processing impact



After: Offer remembrance and celebration

When to Retire a Therapy Animal?



Changes in animal's willingness to come to work



Changes in health status and/or energy level



Animal's behavior during interactions

Easing into Retirement

Avoiding sudden changes in animal's lifestyle when possible

Provide new stimulation and enrichment

Consider the impact this will have on you!



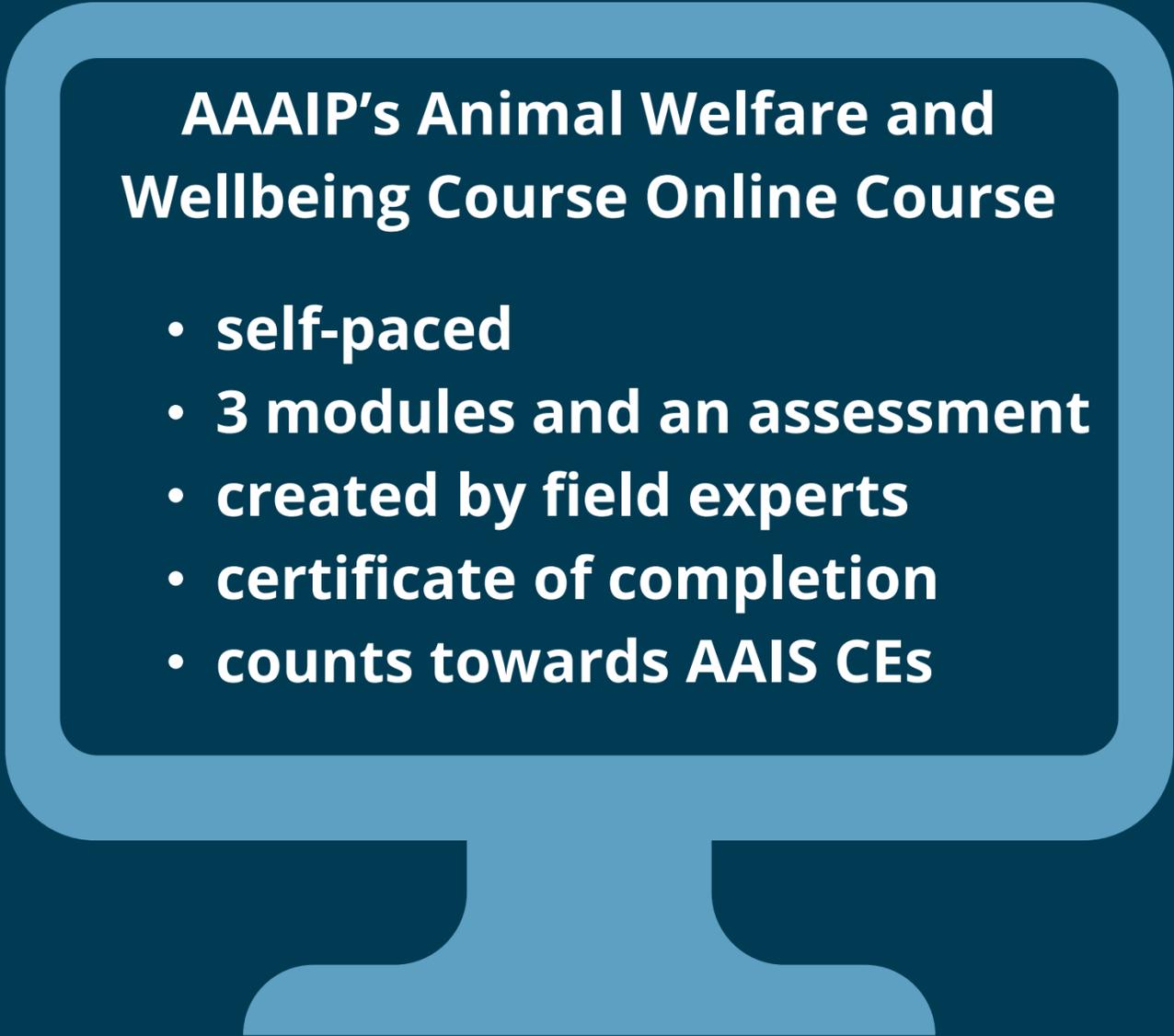
Join us!

- Competencies for Ethical Inclusion of Therapy/Facility Animals
- Self-paced online education
- Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist Certification Exam
- Monthly events



AAAAIP

**Association of Animal-Assisted
Intervention Professionals**



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Questions? Discussion?

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