

DOCUMENT TYPE	Annotated Bibliography
SUBJECT	Prison Dog-Training Programs
DATE(S)	2011-2019
CREATED BY	Erich Yahner
AFFILIATION	The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy

Allison, M., & Ramaswamy, M. (2016). Adapting Animal-Assisted Therapy Trials to Prison-Based Animal Programs. *Public Health Nursing*, 33(5), 472-480. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.12276>

Prison-based animal programs have shown promise when it comes to increased sociability, responsibility, and levels of patience for inmates who participate in these programs. Yet there remains a dearth of scientific research that demonstrates the impact of prison-based animal programs on inmates' physical and mental health. Trials of animal-assisted therapy interventions, a form of human-animal interaction therapy most often used with populations affected by depression/anxiety, mental illness, and trauma, may provide models of how prison-based animal program research can have widespread implementation in jail and prison settings, whose populations have high rates of mental health problems. This paper reviews the components of prison-based animal programs most commonly practiced in prisons today, presents five animal-assisted therapy case studies, evaluates them based on their adaptability to prison-based animal programs, and discusses the institutional constraints that act as barriers for rigorous prison-based animal program research implementation. This paper can serve to inform the development of a research approach to animal-assisted therapy that nurses and other public health researchers can use in working with correctional populations.

Antonio, M. E., Davis, R. G., & Schutt, S. R. (2017). Dog Training Programs in Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections: Perceived Effectiveness for Inmates and Staff. *Society & Animals*, 25(5), 475-489. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685306-12341457>

Regardless of the effectiveness of nonhuman animal programs to reduce recidivism among offenders, such programs are popular and used widely in the United States correctional system. Proponents cite measured improvements in attitudes and behaviors among prisoners, and report benefits from building trust with local and national organizations. The present study compared responses from inmates and staff associated with dog training programs in Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections. Generally, all participants viewed the dog training program positively, agreeing that it reduced recidivism and inmate misconduct, and increased morale and positive social interactions. Inmates perceived the programs to be more effective than staff for reducing recidivism and for improving marketable skills. Female participants and participants from female institutions agreed more that the programs decreased recidivism and non-violent incidents in prison, and brought all inmates together as a community, compared to male participants and those from male institutions, respectively. Policy implications are also discussed.

Aufderheide, C. (2016). *The application and effects of service dog training by inmates to self-perception and self-other overlap as a rehabilitative approach to incarceration*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon. [PDF](#)

Prison Animal Programs that bring inmates and dogs together consistently report improvements to inmates' self-esteem, ability to empathize, and helping behaviors with no understanding of why these improvements occur. With similar improvement documented in relationship closeness literature, this research examines the felt inmate dog connection and self-reported closeness as a possible explanation for the three reported benefits. Introducing relationship closeness scales that substitute a dog for another person, 37 inmate handlers at three correctional facilities completed survey and interview questions measuring self-esteem, self-expansion, and self-other (dog) overlap. Research findings strongly support that inmate-dog connectivity is consistent with documented dyadic human connectivity to close family and friends. The self-reported connectivity between handler and dog is furthermore suggested to strongly influence the three areas of improvement with additional research recommended. Findings also suggest that working with dogs in prison initiates a healing or restorative process for both inmate handlers and the outside community.

Brown, A. S. (2015). *Rehabilitation in Prison: An Examination of Prison Animal Programs*. Youngstown, OH: Youngstown State University. [PDF](#)

This thesis investigates the differences between prisons with and without Prison Animal Programs (PAP). PAPs have shown potential as alternative rehabilitation though there have yet to be systematic examinations of their effectiveness. Based on data from the State of Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC), a total of six prisons were selected two prisons were selected from security levels 2, 3 and 4, one with a PAP and one without a PAP, for comparison over a ten-month period. Three hypotheses were tested using an independent-samples t-test analysis to see if disciplinary problems, staffing levels, and bed capacity differs between prisons with PAPs versus those without PAPs. A fourth hypothesis was tested using Pearson's product moment correlation, to determine if there is a

positive correlation between bed availability and custody staff when controlling for security level. The results of the t-test analysis indicate there is a trend, in regard to the beds and correction officers, between those prisons with PAPs and those without. The Pearson's correlation indicates that there is a correlation when controlling for security level. The information found in this thesis may be useful to help criminal justice professionals seeking data for future PAP programs. The implications of this thesis are that PAP programs have a positive effect on the prisons where they are in use. Future studies should be conducted to track recidivism rates of prisoners where PAP programs are active. Tracking recidivism rates, will provide the data necessary to measure the success of the program, as well as give administrators the ability to determine if a program is ineffective. Future researchers have many opportunities to expand and connect the importance of this alternative type of rehabilitation to the health of society as a whole.

Cooke, B. J., & Farrington, D. P. (2016). The Effectiveness of Dog-Training Programs in Prison: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Literature. *The Prison Journal*, 96(6), 854-876. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885516671919>

To date, there are more than 290 correctional facilities across the United States that have implemented dog-training programs. To better understand the effects of dog-training programs on their human participants, this article conducts a systematic review and two meta-analyses of 10 studies that met the criteria for inclusion. The data from these 10 studies were obtained from 310 program participants and 514 controls. Conducting two meta-analyses on externalizing and internalizing outcomes of dog-training program participation, we found significant mean effect sizes for both sets of outcomes, suggesting that dog-training programs have a desirable effect on offenders.

Cooke, B. J., & Farrington, D. P. (2015). The effects of dog-training programs: Experiences of incarcerated females. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 25(2), 201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2014.909763>

Dog-training programs (DTPs) in prisons have grown increasingly popular throughout the United States, but very little is known about their effects on both prisons and their participants. Furthermore, with increasing rates of female imprisonment, the demand for programs that address the needs of female offenders is high. Using interview data from female offenders, program coordinators, and prison staff (N = 27), this study examined the effect of DTPs on how female offenders experience prison. The present study found that DTP participation alleviated the pains of imprisonment that women offenders face, including problems in psychological and emotional health, motherhood, transferable skills, security, trust, and serving time. An assessment of which female offenders appear to benefit the most is outlined, and the broader implications of these findings are discussed.

Cooke, B.J., & Farrington, D.P. (2014). Perceived effects of dog-training programmes in correctional settings. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 16(3), 171-183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFP-08-2013-0041>

Purpose – Offender-led dog-training programmes (DTPs) are increasingly used throughout US correctional facilities. The rather sparse literature on these programmes is outlined in this manuscript, including the reported benefits of participation. The purpose of this paper is to examine the opinions of programme coordinators and staff from 13 programmes. Design/methodology/approach – The perceived effects were measured using an open-ended questionnaire, with attention paid to those benefits reported in the extant literature. Findings – Respondents noted improvements in several factors including impulsivity, self-efficacy, empathy, social skills, emotional intelligence, and employability. Practical implications – It is argued that DTPs should be implemented in other countries including the UK, and that well-designed, larger scale evaluations are needed. Originality/value – Though potentially limited by sample size and self-selection biases, these findings expand on the existing literature by supporting existing reports as well as expanding the breadth of the DTPs that have been studied.

Davila Centeno, M. (2016). Prison Programs to Reduce Recidivism: What is the Ideal Structure of an Inmate Reentry Program?. Portland, OR: Portland State University. [PDF](#)

In the United States' correctional system, inmate programs within prisons often do not reduce recidivism. Recent surveys have shown that across the country many prisons have a form of a Prison Based Animal Program (PAP). This study examines the effect that Prison based Animal Programs have on reducing recidivism through their therapeutic effects, focusing specifically on identifying the best practices for structuring such programs and measuring outcomes, for which there is little research. The research is based on a review of journal articles, industry reports, and a case study of a PAP. The analysis incorporates the shift in emphasis from retribution to restoration in current views of correctional facilities. This research points to the value of increasing adoption of PAPs because of their effects on reducing recidivism. The literature review starts with the definition of recidivism and the difficulties with measuring it. It then examines the current state of the prison industry and the two philosophies of correctional facilities – punitive and rehabilitative. It moves on to an assessment of PAPs, their types, leading operating practices, associated performance measures, their benefits and risks, as well as the funding challenges they face. Following this literature review and research analysis, recommendations are formulated regarding the use of PAPs across federal and state prisons. These programs typically survive on community volunteers and donations and occasionally grants, and therefore a more stable funding source, such as from federal or state governments, would be merited. Grants designed specifically for PAP programs should be created. Through an analysis of the available literature on the prison industry, on other prison programs aimed at reducing recidivism, and on current PAPs, the ideal structure of a prison-oriented program is developed.

Drew, J. D., Dearborn, C., Evans, M., Gagne, A., McBean, D., Saville, F., & Silliman, T. (2013). The power of prison pups: The impact of the NEADS program on inmate dog trainers, MCI/Framingham, and the community. [PDF](#)

No summary available

Fournier, A. K. (2016). Pen Pals: An examination of human–animal interaction as an outlet for healthy masculinity in prison. In C. Blazina and L.R. Kogan (Eds.) *Men and their dogs: A new understanding of man's best friend*, (pp. 175-194)., Springer International Publishing. ISBN: 9783319300955.

No summary available

Furst, G. (2019). Implementing Successful Jail-Based Programming for Women: A Case Study of Planning Parenting, Prison & Pups–Waiting to ‘Let the Dogs In’. *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 5(2),4. [PDF](#)

With 68% of prisoners recidivating within a three-year period, designing and implementing innovative programming within the corrections setting is a necessity. The transient nature of the jail population begets difficulties for its successful implementation and maintenance. Since incarcerated females represent a smaller portion of the population, women, who face different challenges than their male counterparts, often receive less opportunity for programming, especially within the jail setting. Parenting, Prison & Pups (PPP), a program which weaves together an evidence-based parenting curriculum, integrated with the use of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT), serves as a model for how to implement innovative programming within the jail setting at both the federal and county level for female prisoners. This paper outlines strategies to employ and discusses challenges that arise during program creation, implementation, and evaluation, which all require consideration prior to starting a new jail-based program. Despite a multitude of challenges, well-developed strategies can advance program goals and outcomes.

Furst, G. (2016). Helping War Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Incarcerated Individuals' Role in Therapeutic Animal Programs. *Journal of psychosocial nursing and mental health services*, 54(5), 49-57. [PDF](#)

A grassroots movement of nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations is creating programs in which incarcerated individuals train rescued shelter dogs as therapeutic canines for Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Driven in part by reports of Veterans not receiving adequate treatment for PTSD, the programs are the latest iteration of prison-based animal programs and are founded on the principles of animal therapy and healing powers of animals. The far-reaching and deleterious collateral consequences of PTSD create social and economic burdens on the country; providing beneficial interventions for Veterans is a pressing social problem. Without oversight, a patchwork of agencies has developed that provides Veterans with dogs with varying levels of training and differing abilities. To best serve the needs of Veterans, the programs need regulation and standardized methods of training.

Furst, G. (2015). Prisoners, pups, and PTSD: the grass roots response to veterans with PTSD. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 18(4), 449-466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2015.1093688>

As the human–animal bond is increasingly recognized as therapeutic, the role of animals, most frequently canines, grows. A contemporary pairing of animals and humans can be found inside prisons. While the dogs trained by inmates are most frequently adopted out to the community, today dogs are being trained to assist veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as part of a grass roots effort to fulfill the mental health needs of veterans. The growing number of veterans with PTSD and concomitant issues including addiction, unemployment, homelessness, and crime, makes the mental healthcare issues of veterans a social problem. The civilian-led effort to provide veterans with dogs is a continuation of the public's involvement with the proliferation of prison-based animal programs. While this next generation of animal programs has overwhelming community support, it also suffers from similar limitations as its predecessors. With no universal agreement as to the training methods or level of skills needed by the dogs, their efficacy at lessening the symptoms of veterans' PTSD remains largely unknown.

Furst, G. (2011). *Animal programs in prison: A comprehensive assessment*. Boulder, CO: FirstForumPress. ISBN: 9781935049340.

Analyzing a national survey of these programs and presenting in-depth case studies, Furst pinpoints the mechanisms that transform prisoners' lives and reduce the chances of recidivism.

Grommon, E., Carson, D. C., & Kenney, L. (2018). An experimental trial of a dog-training program in a juvenile detention center. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-018-9346-2>

This research examines the effect of a dog-training program among juveniles ordered to a county juvenile detention facility in a large, Midwestern city. A pre-test, post-test experimental design was constructed to examine changes in self-esteem, empathy, optimism, pessimism, compassion, and social competence between juveniles who were randomly assigned to the canine-assisted activity program and to the standard conditions of the detention center without access to the program. Two-way and repeated measures ANOVA models are used to assess the differential effect of the program.

Han, T. M., Flynn, E., Winchell, J., Gould, E., Gandenberger, J., Barattin, D., ... & Morris, K. N. (2018). Prison-Based Dog Training Programs: Standard Protocol. [PDF](#)

This report identifies common practices of PDPs and incorporates both general and context-specific recommendations that were gathered from interviews with PDP staff, relevant literature, and content experts. In total, 21 interviews with 20 programs were conducted. PDPs were asked about several program features, including policies and procedures, key personnel, funding, materials, physical spaces, supervision and monitoring, safety considerations, animal welfare, handler selection and training, and program benefits.

Hill, L. B. (2016). *Becoming the person your dog thinks you are: An assessment of Florida prison-based Dog Training Programs on prison misconduct, post-release employment and recidivism*. Tallahassee, FL: The Florida State University. [PDF](#)

Dog Training Programs have recently become a popular rehabilitative program within correctional facilities. They are present in all 50 states as well as many other countries. However, the empirical literature on the effectiveness of these popular programs is sparse. Using a cohort of inmates released from Florida prisons between the years of 2004-2011 (n=181,547) this study examines the effectiveness of dog training programs on prison misconduct, post-release employment and recidivism. Findings indicate that participation in a dog training program can lead to reductions in prison misconduct and in the likelihood and timing of re-arrest. Among those who participated in dog training programs, longer duration, recency of participation, continuity of treatment and participation in the program at the time of release emerge as predictors of reductions in prison misconduct, re-arrest, and of increasing the success of obtaining employment upon release. Due to promising findings, policy implications are discussed as well as potential avenues for future research.

Humby, L., & Barclay, E. (2018). Pawsitive Solutions: An Overview of Prison Dog Programs in Australia. *The Prison Journal*, 98(5), 580-603. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518793951>

A survey of animal welfare agencies and corrections departments across Australia was conducted to compile a nationwide profile of prison dog programs, wherein inmates train dogs while learning skills to assist their rehabilitation. Most programs operating in 23 prisons in six Australian states were a community service design administered by animal welfare organizations. Inmates benefit through opportunities to train the dogs, give back to society, gain a sense of responsibility, improve self-confidence and social skills, and acquire vocational qualifications to improve job opportunities post-release. Barriers identified included insufficient funding, limited training opportunities for the dogs, and some staff resistance.

Huss, R. J. (2014). Canines (and cats!) in correctional institutions: Legal and ethical issues relating to companion animal programs. *Nevada Law Journal*, 13-8. [PDF](#)

No abstract available.

Kee, R., Abel, R., & Eckhoff, J. (2017). The Impact of a Dog-training Program on Female Offenders. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71(4 Supplement 1).

This study evaluated the impact of a dog-training program on female prisoners. Few quantitative studies have assessed the influence of such programs on this population. Our findings contribute preliminary evidence supporting the efficacy of these programs and suggest the need for future research.

King, T. (2014). *Paws in prison: A second chance*. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas. [PDF](#)

The documentary film *Paws in Prison: A Second Chance* takes an in-depth look at a program that has been incorporated in seven Arkansas prisons since 2011. Select inmates housed in these prisons are chosen to learn how to become dog trainers during their sentences. They spend 24 hours a day with dogs that were rescued from shelters where they may have been euthanized. This project incorporates interviews with inmates in the Paws in Prison program, wardens at the Maximum-Security Unit and the Tucker Unit, and volunteers who spend time teaching inmates how to train and socialize their dogs. The film includes footage I shot inside two Arkansas prisons. This 23-minute film, submitted as a supplemental file to this paper, tells the story of one inmate, who is new to the program, and the first dog he is assigned to train, and another inmate who is scheduled to be released on parole in August. The documentary explores the impact the Paws in Prison program is having on incarcerated individuals and institutions. It illustrates both positive and potential negatives aspects of programs such as these in the prison system. The goal of this film is to answer questions about how these programs work, how the community perceives the programs and what, if anything, have the inmates learned from being a part of Paws in Prison. The target audience for this film includes anyone interested in the Arkansas penal system and the ways in which prisoners are rehabilitated while incarcerated. I believe viewers who are interested in saving animals would also be included in the target audience.

Koda, N., Miyaji, Y., Kuniyoshi, M., Adachi, Y., Watababe, G., Miyaji, C., & Yamada, K. (2015). Effects of a dog-assisted program in a Japanese prison. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 10(3), 193-208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-015-9204-3>

This study investigated the effects of a dog-assisted program for inmates in a prison for the first time in Japan. The program was conducted with groups of inmates with a variety of psychiatric and/or developmental disorders. The program was provided as training for stress management and communication. Male inmates interacted with trained pet dogs and their volunteer handlers in semi-structured group sessions. Questionnaire surveys were conducted regarding the mood states of the inmates and the handlers both before and after each session. The handlers also filled out an evaluation questionnaire about the sessions and inmates. The inmates and the handlers evaluated the sessions positively as a whole. The mood states of both the inmates and handlers generally improved after the sessions. The handlers also reported that the inmates' interaction skills improved over time for the different diagnostic groups. The handlers considered not only the interactions with the inmates but also the welfare of their dogs to be important. The handlers' evaluations about the inmates were positively related to the inmates' moods.

Larkin, P. J. (2018). Prisoners, Dogs, Training, and Rehabilitation. Available at SSRN 3242348. [PDF](#)

Federal and state programs that use convicted offenders to train homeless dogs bring together two groups of creatures whom society has often thrown away and about whom society does not want to concern itself. Yet those creatures seem to be able to help, support, and rehabilitate each other. We should not fail to take advantage of the reformatory potential of prisoners and dogs just because we cannot prove that by working together, they will necessarily improve the prospects for each other in every case. No program run by people should be expected to work 100 percent of the time. That is asking for perfection. The available evidence, however, does justify further consideration of these programs.

Larkin, P.J., (2016). Death row dogs, hard time prisoners, and creative rehabilitation strategies: prisoner-dog training programs. *Catholic University Law Review*, Forthcoming. [PDF](#)

The use of Prisoner-Dog Programs (PDPs) is an innovative rehabilitative strategy that takes advantage of the bond that humans have had with dogs for thousands of years. Numerous state correctional facilities, along with the BOP, have adopted these programs to give prisoners, and sometimes dogs, a second chance. The informal results witnessed to date appear positive for everyone concerned. Inmates benefit because the animal-training instruction they receive, along with the experience they acquire training dogs in their care, provides them with a skill that they can use after their release. More importantly, the relationship that a prisoner builds with his dog teaches him the need to achieve a goal; the importance of discipline and patience, along with disutility of violence, in being successful; the value and sense of self-worth in empathizing and caring for another creature; and, perhaps for the first time, the emotional bond with another living creature that allows him to feel and express love. Dogs benefit because they escape their own death row and find their own "forever" homes. Prisons benefit because the close interaction between prisoners and dogs leads to a reduction in the number of infractions and amount of violence. Members of the community benefit by receiving a dog that can become a service dog or a treasured family member. And society benefits from a reduction in the recidivism rate of participating inmates. That is a "win-times-five."

Leonardi, R., Buchanan-Smith, H., McIvor, G., & Vick, S. J. (2017). "You Think You're Helping Them, But They're Helping You Too": Experiences of Scottish Male Young Offenders Participating in a Dog Training Program. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 14(8), 945. [PDF](#)

Interaction with animals can be beneficial to humans and animal-assisted interventions (AAs) are increasingly popular in a range of contexts. Dog training programs (DTPs) are the most popular form of AA in custodial contexts; prisoners often have multiple needs and DTPs seem to facilitate a diverse range of positive outcomes, including improvements in well-being, behavior, and offending behavior. However, evidence on the efficacy of prison-based DTPs is still limited and these evaluations often lack detail or methodological rigor. We examined the experiences of male young offenders (N = 70) using thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted following completion of a DTP. The themes that emerged indicated a broad range of inter-related experiences and positive outcomes. The most prevalent theme related to their experiences with Dogs (including feelings and attitudes), and there were perceived improvements categorized as: Positive Effects (including mood and well-being), Motivation, Charitable Purpose, Self-Efficacy, Improved Skills, Impulsivity, and Emotional Management. These themes mapped well onto outcomes previously identified in research on DTPs, and to the program's core aims of improving behavior, educational engagement, employability, and well-being. The diversity and nature of these themes indicates that DTPs have considerable potential to engage and benefit those individuals with multiple needs, such as young offenders, and ultimately to achieve positive long-term outcomes with significant social, health, and economic impact.

Loe, A. M. (2015). Prison-based animal programs: a descriptive analysis. Greeley, CO: University of Northern Colorado. [PDF](#)

There are many types of programs used in prisons. One such type is known as prison-based animal programs (PAPs). Prison-based animal programs bring animals into facilities in order to help offenders with emotional and behavioral problems. However promising these programs are, there is little empirical research. If these programs are to be continued, more research is needed. There has only

been one national study looking at PAPs (Furst 2006). This current study will help fill the gap on PAP research. A national study was conducted using 302 randomly selected correctional facilities. Characteristics of PAPs were gathered using a questionnaire. The results of this study showed similarities with the 2006 study. The most common types of prison-based animal programs in use are community service programs, service animal socialization programs, and those two combined as multimodal design programs. The majority of programs pair animals with inmates 24 hours a day. The most common animal used was dogs. An overwhelming number of respondents would recommend the program to another facility because of the number of benefits. There were very few negative aspects associated with PAPs. Overall, it seems that prison-based animal programs are a very promising technique, which not only benefits the participants, but also the animals, the institution, and the community.

Mercer, J., Gibson, K., & Clayton, D. (2015). The therapeutic potential of a prison-based animal programme in the UK. *Journal of Forensic Practice*, 17(1), 43-54. [PDF](#)

Purpose – Much evidence suggests that animals can serve as therapeutic tools for those working with vulnerable individuals. This exploratory study analysed the accounts of staff and offenders involved in a UK prison-based animal programme. The purpose of this paper was to explore the perceived impact of such a programme with male offenders. Design/methodology/approach – Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three service users and five staff members. Participants were drawn from a special unit in a category B prison which housed an animal centre. Findings – A thematic analysis identified four salient themes: a sense of responsibility, building trust, enhanced communication, and impact on mood and behaviour. Findings revealed that offenders seemed to gain particular benefit from interacting with the two Labrador dogs which were present on the wing. Practical implications – The study highlights the therapeutic potential of the presence of animals in prisons. Their implications of this for forensic practice are discussed. Originality/value – This paper offers an important contribution to the sparse literature about prison-based animal programmes in the UK.

Minton, C. A., Perez, P. R., & Miller, K. (2015). Voices from behind prison walls. *Society & Animals*, 23(5), 484-501. [PDF](#)

This study investigated the effects that training service dogs had on women in a multi-level security prison in California. Through semi-structured interviews, the inmates discussed the challenges and benefits of involvement in this program. The findings suggested that participation in training service dogs had positive effects on the women in the areas of emotional and or physical health, self-concept, goal-directed behaviors, empathy and self-control; and it resulted in an increase in positive interactions with other inmates and officers. The greatest challenge for the women was interacting with inmates and officers who were not supportive of the program.

Morrow, E. (2018). *Perception of Efficacy of Dog Programs as Rehabilitation for Inmates* (Doctoral dissertation, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology).

This study was an examination of the perception of efficacy of dog-based rehabilitation programs among students at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. It is well-known that recidivism rates within the criminal justice system are high and these programs could be useful in decreasing them. The programs set up dog shelters in prisons and selected inmates are given a dog to take care of for a predetermined amount of time. These programs are beneficial to the inmates because they help the inmates learn skills such as responsibility, communication, and emotion control that they can use when they are released into the community. An ANOVA was used to measure if there was a significant difference of perception of efficacy between program types at The Chicago School and to measure if there was a significant difference between ethnicity groups at The Chicago School; an independent samples t-test was used to measure if there was a significant difference of perception of efficacy between participants at The Chicago School who currently own or have previously owned pets. None of the analyses yielded significant results.

Mulcahy, C., & McLaughlin, D. (2013). Is the tail wagging the dog? A review of the evidence for prison animal programs. *Australian Psychologist*, 48(5), 370-378. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12021>

In the last 10 years, Prison Animal Programs (PAPs) have been implemented in many Australian correctional centres. Like our international counterparts, these programs receive glowing endorsements from key stakeholders and accolades in the media. The evidence supporting these programs however has not kept pace with public opinion. This article provides a review of the literature surrounding PAPs. Findings highlight that PAPs vary markedly in design, and few have been subjected to research or evaluation. Of these few, only one study was conducted in Australia. Additionally, the research strategies used within international studies are varied, providing little foundation from which to identify consistent outcomes or develop evidence-based practices. It is concluded that more extensive research is needed to identify the program features that most commonly benefit prisoners, particularly prisoners with mental health needs. A greater evidence base is also needed to guide the introduction of new programs, according to the program objectives at each site.

Pittman, J. S. (2011). *Saved by the dogs: The story of the dog men*. Reno, Nevada: Light Point Publishing, LLC. ISBN: 9780615476421.

After four years of pleading, an Oklahoma prison inmate was at last granted his wish to start a dog rescue and training rehabilitation program. He would have to develop and operate the program without a penny of taxpayer or corporate prison money. With the help

of a few remarkable volunteers, his very successful program soon proved that angry, lost men can be reintroduced to compassion, kindness, skill and self-esteem with assistance from a few canine therapists. This is the Pen Pals story--their struggles and triumphs.

Rice, S. (2016). Educational experiences in prison: Greyhounds and humans teaching and learning together. In *The Educational Significance of Human and Non-Human Animal Interactions* (pp. 87-99). Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137505255_6

There are now dozens of greyhound adoption groups in the United States that partner with prisons. These groups have developed programs in which inmates are taught how to prepare dogs for adoption and, beyond that, for life outside the racing industry. Drawing on Jane Roland Martin's theory of education as encounter and John Dewey's theory of experience, in this chapter I consider the sense in which, under particular circumstances, such programs enable inmates to have educative experiences (Dewey, 1938/1997; Martin, 2011). Some of these educative experiences are a result mainly of the inmates' interactions with volunteers who teach basic dog-training skills. Other educative experiences are a result of the inmates' interactions with the dogs. I argue further that, under a broadened conception of education developed by Martin, such programs enable dogs to have educative experiences as well (Martin, 2011, pp. 56–60).

Seivert, N. P., Cano, A., Casey, R. J., Johnson, A., & May, D. K. (2018). Animal assisted therapy for incarcerated youth: A randomized controlled trial. *Applied Developmental Science*, 1-15. [PDF](#)

Teacher's Pet, an animal assisted therapy (AAT) was assessed in a randomized controlled trial with incarcerated youth from two Midwestern United States detention facilities. The AAT was expected to increase empathy and reduce behavior problems. Participants trained dogs for one hour, twice weekly for ten weeks. A control group walked but did not train dogs for the same duration. Both groups attended one hour, twice weekly animal didactics. Of 138 participants, 117 provided complete data, and 21 had some missing data imputed. Contrary to expectation, both groups increased slightly in self-reported empathy, and staff and youth rated internalizing problems. The time youth spent with dogs plus animal didactics may have increased empathy. Increased internalizing problems could be attributed to youth gaining greater emotional awareness. Alternately, this brief intervention may not have any immediate effects, given the small changes observed. Additional follow-up of these youth and other comparison groups are needed.

Smith, J. & Unti, B. (2016). Second chances: Pen Pals, Inc., the Dixon Correctional Institute and Louisiana's post-Katrina animal rescue legacy. *Corrections Today*, January/February, 40-44.

No abstract available.

Swyers, K. N. (2014). *Prison-based animal programs (PAPs) and mental health outcome measures*. Portland, OR: Portland State University. [PDF](#)

The following text will detail the pervasiveness of mental health issues in prisons as a nationwide problem. This provides an important context and poses the urgent research questions of (1) how prisons can realistically attempt to lower the impact of mental health issues that are plaguing more incarcerated individuals than not in the United States, (2) why prisons should be concerned with measuring a program's impact on mental health, and (3) what outcome measures of mental health can be realistically and conveniently implemented to begin collecting data. Prison-based animal programs (PAPs) are presented as one such way that this can be accomplished. While a program of this nature cannot cure mental illness per se and should not be considered an all-encompassing solution, it most certainly can serve as a buffer in conjunction with any necessary mental health services. To adequately review the relevant literature, this paper will describe the origins of animal-facilitated interventions for historical context, followed by an overview of literature on animal-assisted therapy¹ (AAT) and animal-assisted activities² (AAA) with individuals with mental illness. The literature on PAPs, specifically, will be covered, noting gaps in the literature and implications for the field. The paper will conclude with direct implications for prison administration regarding the need for outcome measures—specifically for measuring impact on mental health—and the proposal of three distinct outcome measures of mental health that can be used to assess and compare levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Thomas, R., & Matusitz, J. (2015). Pet therapy in correctional institutions: A perspective from relational-cultural theory. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23761407.2015.1029840>

In this article the authors apply Relational-Cultural Theory to pet therapy in correctional institutions. An important premise is that when pet therapy is used in prisons a symbiotic relationship develops between pets and prison inmates which, at the same time, improve their relationships with people themselves. Relational-Cultural Theory posits that relationships with individuals are not just a means to an end. Rather, good relationships promote growth and healthy development; they also cultivate reciprocal empathy. Hence, a major reason of suffering for most people is their experience of isolation; healing can occur in growth-fostering relationships.

Van Wormer, J., Kigerl, A., & Hamilton, Z. (2017). Digging deeper: exploring the value of prison-based dog handler programs. *The Prison Journal*, 97(4), 520-538. [PDF](#)

As U.S. correctional systems continue to rollout evidence-based programs, the utility of “complimentary” programs that do not address recidivism reduction remains in question. Many U.S. prisons have a variety of prison-based animal programs, yet the outcomes are largely unexplored. This research addresses a literature gap by evaluating the intermediate outcomes associated with a statewide prison-based dog handler program. Using propensity score matching, we compared 1,001 inmates in a pretest, post-entry design, aimed at measuring change across four outcomes. Results indicate that dog handler program inmates experienced significant improvement in three of four areas. Implications and further research needs are explored.

Weaver, S. D. (2015). *Prison animal training programs: attachment theory as an explanation for changes in inmate behavior*. Prescott Valley, AZ: Northcentral University.

The prison overcrowding problem in the U.S. is profound, partly due to high recidivism rates. Addressing recidivism issues through evidence-based programming could result in significant monetary savings. The emphasis of current prison programming is on the symptoms inmates are exhibiting such as problems with anger management, rather than the underlying cause of those problems, such as attachment. Addressing inmate attachment issues through a restorative perspective could be an important factor in reducing inmate infractions, recidivism, and subsequent costs to the prison and community. Evaluation of Prison Animal Programs (PAP) is essentially non-existent and best practices not established. The methodology for this study employed a multiple case study method. The sample for this study is three formerly incarcerated inmates who participated in PAPs in North Carolina and three PAP staff. First, ex post facto surveys were conducted with three former North Carolina Department of Public Safety inmates who participated in the PAP. Surveys included the Social Skills Inventory and the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale. The statistical measurement for these surveys was a rank-sum test used as descriptive data due to sample size. Qualitative data were then obtained through intensive interviewing of three former PAP participants and three PAP staff using a descriptive case study method. Qualitative data were analyzed using a concurrent data analysis triangulation design model wherein data were transformed using theme development and frequency counts to examine the interrelationship of themes for the qualitative data. The research yielded some unexpected results, specifically, with regard to significantly lowered recidivism rates. Social skills were greatly improved for former trainer study participants and levels of attachment were high. Finally, all six PREVIEW iv participants noted an increase in self-esteem and confidence levels of inmate trainers following participation in the New Leash on Life PAP.

Yaglom, H. (2014, November). Prison inmate—animal bond: Outcomes of offenders training shelter dogs. In *142nd APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition (November 15-November 19, 2014)*. APHA.

No summary available.

Zimmer, R. M. (2013). *Partnering shelter dogs with prison inmates: An alternative strategy to reduce recidivism and teach social therapy*. Charles Town, WV: American Public University. [PDF](#)

This paper assesses the main factors contributing to a high rate of criminal recidivism in the United States. Based on the findings which support a theory of insufficient social therapy programs offered during incarceration, an alternative approach is offered. Animals have long been used as a form of rehabilitation for people suffering from a myriad of physical and mental challenges. Because data suggests that individuals with criminal behavior who re-offend lack a certain level of social competence, the use of animal therapy should be considered as an option. Certain demographics of the prison population, namely those with social and psychological disorders, will be emphasized. And while most companion animals offer the therapeutic qualities necessary to teach compassion, particular attention is paid to homeless dogs. The pairing of homeless dogs with prison inmates poses a unique relationship: both entities have traditionally been rejected by society and are unfittingly misunderstood. Thus, there exists great potential for repeat offenders to reach out to their animal counterpart and seek self-improvement through social and emotional rehabilitation as a preventive measure for re-offense. Theories are developed through collecting existing scientific data, examining current therapy programs, and hypothesizing the best available strategies. Because of the limited available research on this unique partnership, recommendations will be outlined for further scientific research to be performed. The paper concludes with suggested best practices for maintaining existing programs and establishing new partnerships to achieve the greatest level of success.