

Belmont University

## Belmont Digital Repository

---

OTD Capstone Projects

School Of Occupational Therapy

---

Spring 4-8-2022

### Developing an Educational Foundation for Incorporating Animal Assisted Interventions into Rehabilitation Settings

Chandni Vyas

Belmont University, chandnikvyas@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.belmont.edu/otdcapstoneprojects>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Vyas, Chandni, "Developing an Educational Foundation for Incorporating Animal Assisted Interventions into Rehabilitation Settings" (2022). *OTD Capstone Projects*. 107.

<https://repository.belmont.edu/otdcapstoneprojects/107>

This Scholarly Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School Of Occupational Therapy at Belmont Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTD Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Belmont Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [repository@belmont.edu](mailto:repository@belmont.edu).



# Developing an Educational Foundation for Incorporating Animal Assisted Interventions into Rehabilitation Settings



Chandni Vyas, OTD/S  
Expert Mentor: Dr. Christi Williams, PT, DPT, OCS, Cert. MDT  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christine Manville EdD, OTR/L  
School of Occupational Therapy, Belmont University

This presentation is in partial fulfillment of OTD 6680 for a Doctoral Degree in Occupational Therapy

## Mission

Dr. Christi Williams has been heavily involved in the therapy dog world for many years. Her goal is to educate others of all ages on the benefits of animal-assisted interventions in a wide variety of settings - most notably, healthcare settings. She hopes to help healthcare professions learn how they can incorporate dogs into practice, with special consideration for rehabilitation settings. She also wants to encourage more people to volunteer with their dog, so that together they can continue to bring joy and comfort to those in need.

To educate people of all ages on the benefits of animal-assisted intervention (AAI) in healthcare settings and to inspire individuals to serve their community by participating in and expanding the field of AAI.

**Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI)** are structured, goal-directed interventions that include AAA and AAT.

## Needs

- 1) Lack of standardized training programs for clinicians to incorporate therapy animals into treatment plans.
- 2) Lack of Animal Assisted Intervention resources available to therapists.
- 3) Lack of community between professionals who desire to implement AAI into therapy.

## Project Goals

- 1) Develop an introductory course educating therapy professionals on how to safely incorporate AAI into therapy with clients.
- 2) Research available evidence-based articles that inform current uses of AAI in therapy practice.
- 3) Create a companion workbook in conjunction with the introductory course.
- 4) Submit educational course to Occupational and Physical Therapy state licensure boards for accreditation.
- 5) Submit an opposite the editorial (Op Ed) essay discussing the appropriate use of AAI in a therapy setting.

## Deliverables

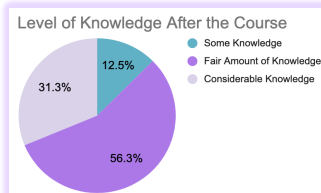
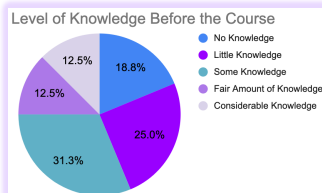


- Introductory course for Therapy Professionals
- Op-Ed supporting the use of AAI in therapy settings.
- Course companion workbook



## Project Outcomes

- Development of an introductory course describing best practice for effectively implementing AAI into therapy for OT and PT professionals and students.
- Creation of an Op Ed piece discussing the appropriateness of AAI in therapy settings.
- Presentation of introductory course to OT and PT practitioners and students interested in learning about AAI.
- Feedback from course participants of level of knowledge regarding incorporating AAI into therapy for OT and PT professionals.



## Piloting the Course

### Feedback

- 87.5% of participants felt their knowledge of AAI had increased after taking the course.
- All participants indicated the appropriateness of incorporating AAI into therapy interventions.

### Recommendations for the Future

- Participants requested further information on:
- AAI in specific settings
  - Best practice safety protocols for incorporating AAI
  - Demonstration of specific interventions
  - Further information on facility dogs and the process of obtaining one

## Future

- Opportunity for education of therapy professionals who strive to implement safe and beneficial AAI into therapy.
- Expanded, in-depth education, regarding the methods and resources for therapy practitioners to provide AAI.
- Development of educational resources for professional who desire to begin or continue learning about incorporating AAI into their practice.
- Formal practitioner network for practitioners to locate colleagues currently providing AAI services.

## Acknowledgements

Dr. Christi Williams, thank you for committing so much time and support. Your guidance during this capstone experience has pushed me to accomplish more than I thought I could.

Dr. Christine Manville, thank you for your continued support and guidance as I dove into a subject area that challenged my occupational therapy skills.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the students in the OTD and DPT programs at Belmont for their participation in the pilot course.

## References Available Upon Request