

## **Animal Assisted Therapy Interventions**

### **Mini-course Syllabus**

University of Michigan School of Social Work

**SW 777-01 Fall term, 2020: Animal Assisted Therapy Interventions**

### **Fully Remote or optional hybrid course**

**Instructor:** Laura Sanders, LMSW, assisted by Ramiro Martinez, Farm Manager

**Phone:** 734-678-4814 Email: [lsanders@umich.edu](mailto:lsanders@umich.edu), [createcoun333@gmail.com](mailto:createcoun333@gmail.com)

### **Course dates and times:**

The face to face synchronous time spent with the class will fall primarily within these pre-arranged times synchronous with your registration dates except for an optional follow up session on Friday evening, July 17 from 6:00-7:30.

The class time will be held over Zoom and will be limited, providing opportunities for asynchronous learning expected during some of these hours and at your convenience over the period of the next week.

9/25/2020 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Zoom

9/26/2020 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Zoom and Lovingway Family Farm

9/27/2020 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Zoom and Lovingway Family Farm

If you opt to come to the farm for your experiential component, you will be asked to print (if you can) and sign consent and health disclosure forms to participate. These forms are on the course canvas site.

### **Requirements:**

Full attendance to the class is a requirement for credit

**Course Assignment:** Due by Saturday, October 10 (this gives you two weeks)  
Please submit assignments through canvas

### **Course Description:**

This course provides an opportunity for students to explore an array of animal assisted therapeutic activities specifically designed to further a wide range of therapeutic goals with children, adolescents, families, and adult clients. Like

play therapy and art therapy, animal assisted interventions, when integrated with evidence-based methods including (but not limited to) CBT and mindfulness, trauma recovery, family systems, cultural-relational and psychodynamic approaches, offer opportunities for people to work through a variety of issues and insecurities related to attachment, trauma, self-esteem and identity concerns, dysregulation, behavioral difficulties, mental illness, developmental disabilities, and family and relational problems. With selected animals as therapy partners, the therapeutic team helps people of all ages and positions foster new alliances, understand more fully existing problems, and build practical life-skills to enhance confidence, effectiveness and joy. Presently, animal assisted therapy is gaining acclaim in the field of mental health intervention and there is a growing body of evidence supporting its efficacy to be explored. This course specifically teaches the theoretical foundations, standards, ethics, evidence, certifications, integration of methods, case examples, evaluation and practical skills involved in partnering with a variety of animals – dogs, cats, goats, pigs, horses and chickens (yes, chickens!)- to provide engaging and effective interventions.

### **Biographical Sketch:**

**Laura Sanders**, LMSW, U of M SSW, LEO instructor since 1996, specializes in trauma- and attachment-informed interventions and provides therapy, consultation, training, supervision and expert witness testimony in the areas of sexual abuse and trauma, attachment and adoption, gender identity and sexuality and work with immigrants and refugees. She utilizes an array of creative interventions in therapy and has recently extended her practice to include animal assisted therapy interventions with clients at her farm-office near Ann Arbor. She is a PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) Center Member, and a PATH- certified Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning, and the practice is an official PATH Center Member. She has engaged in therapy dog training and has practiced animal assisted interventions since 2014.

**Ramiro Martinez** is the Lovingway Family Farm manager and assistant to Laura in their animal assisted work on the farm. Mr. Martinez has received his PATH certification as an Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning. Ramiro will be assisting with the experiential activities involving animals during the course and will reflect on his role as an animal handler in the therapeutic work.

### **Course Objectives:**

Include but are not limited to the following with the competencies in parenthesis:

Students will:

- 1) learn the theoretical foundations, definitions, variety of interventions and standards and associated with animal assisted therapy (engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research)
- 2) explore the ethics and guidelines for safety, and for the selection and matching of animal partners with clients (informed practice and apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice, engage diversity and difference in practice)
- 3) integrate evidence-based methods with animal assisted activities to enhance and effectiveness (engaging in research-informed practice and practice-informed research)
- 4) practice clinical engagement and assessment skills of noticing, reflecting, questioning, commenting, deepening, and interpreting in the context of interactions with animal partners and observations of human-animal relationships (competencies of engagement and assessment and applying critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments)
- 5) develop and carry out structured animal-assisted activities to further specific treatment goals with clients presenting with a variety of issues (Intervention: implement interventions that enhance client capacities)
- 6) learn the use of single subject design to evaluate the effectiveness of animal assisted therapy with clients (critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions)

## **ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION**

### **Accommodations:**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know soon. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements. Also, all preferred name and gender pronoun uses will be honored.

### **Trigger Warning:**

This course is somewhat trauma-informed and focused. For any student who has experienced difficulty in childhood, or trauma, it might bring up painful material. Also, the course may bring up painful memories in relation to animals. Students

may experience a range of emotions throughout the course and may feel vulnerable, especially since the course encourages you to use some of your own issues and self-insight to understand the power of relationships with animals. All feelings are acceptable, but students will be expected to be able to manage them. There will not be sufficient follow up for processing painful memories or severe anxiety that might get triggered by the course content. In general, it is important that students who expect to struggle seek support or therapeutic assistance to work through their own recovery during their graduate education to be present and effective in working with hurt clients. Wounded healers who have worked toward resilience make some of the best therapists. See resources for this below.

### **Health and Wellness:**

Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School's Health and Wellness Advocates, Lauren Davis, or Nyshourn Price, at [ssw.wellness@umich.edu](mailto:ssw.wellness@umich.edu). Students may also visit/call the University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers a variety of clinical services, referrals, and workshops. CAPS, Hours: 8am-5pm, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109, [caps.umich.edu](http://caps.umich.edu)

### **Assignment:**

#### **AAT Mini-course remote reflection assignment:**

**Overall description:** (total length – 4-6 pages, double-spaced) Your assignment is series of reflections that let me know you have viewed all the videos associated with the course, have done the two experiential activities, have thought about the reflection questions, and can integrate at least three of the required readings from the course throughout the assignment. Where you integrate those reading is up to you. I have broken the assignment down into three parts largely based on the competencies and skills associated with this course including engagement, observation, assessment, and intervention. These apply to both animal and human partners within the therapeutic team. You have a lot of freedom in this assignment, but I need to know that you have viewed the videos and read some, so be sure that is apparent to me from your reflection. A detailed description of this assignment can be found on canvas under assignments.

## **Required Readings: posted on Canvas**

\*Dietz T.J., Davis D. & Pennings, J. (2012). **Evaluating Animal-Assisted Therapy in Group Treatment for Child Sexual Abuse**. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 21(6): 665-683.

\*Fine, Aubrey H. (2010) **Handbook on Animal Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice**. Third edition. Chapter 3, **Animal-assisted interventions in Mental Health: definitions and theoretical foundations**, Chapter 11, **Application of animal-assisted interventions in counseling settings: an overview of alternatives**. Department of Education, College of Education and Integrative Studies, California State Polytechnic University Pomona, California, USA, Academic Press.

\*Kamioka, H., Okada, S., Tsutani, K. et al. (2014). **Effectiveness of Animal-Assisted Therapy: A Systematic Review of the Randomized Controlled Trials**. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 22(2): 371-390.

Naste, et. al. (2017) **Equine Facilitated Therapy for Complex Trauma (EFT-CT)**, *Journal of Child Adolescent Trauma*, DOI 10.1007/s40653-017-0187-3

\*Parish-Plass N. (2008). **Animal-Assisted Therapy with Children Suffering from Insecure Attachment Due to Abuse and Neglect: A Method to Lower the Risk of Intergenerational Transmission of Abuse?** *Clinical Child Psychology & Psychiatry* 13(1): 7-30.

\*Pedersen I., Ihlebaek C. & Kirkevold M. (2012). **Important Elements in Farm-Animal Assisted Interventions for Persons with Clinical Depression: A Qualitative Interview Study**. *Disability & Rehabilitation* 34(18): 1526-1534.

\*Risley-Curtiss C., Rogge M.E. & Kawam E. (2013). **Factors Affecting Social Workers' Inclusion of Animals in Practice**. *Social Work* 58(2): 153-16

## **Additional/optional readings: Posted on Canvas:**

Fine, Aubrey H. (2010) **Handbook on Animal Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice**. Third edition. Chapter 7, **Animal selection procedures in animal-assisted interaction programs**. Department of Education, College of Education and Integrative Studies, California State Polytechnic University Pomona, California, USA, Academic Press.

Karol J. (2007). **Applying a Traditional Individual Psychotherapy Model to Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP): Theory and Method.** *Clinical Child Psychology & Psychiatry* 12(1): 77-90.

Klontz, B.T., Bivens A., Leinart D. & Klontz T. (2007). **The Effectiveness of Equine-Assisted Experiential Therapy: Results of an Open Clinical Trial.** *Society and Animals* 15: 257-267.

Moretti, F, De Ronchi D. Bernabel V. et al. (2011). **Pet Therapy in Elderly Patients with Mental Illness.** *Psychogeriatrics* 11: 125-129.

Morrison M.L. (2007). **Health Benefits of Animal-Assisted Interventions.** *Complementary Health Practice Review* 12(1): 51-62.

Pedersen I., Ihlebaek C. & Kirkevold M. (2012). **Important Elements in Farm-Animal Assisted Interventions for Persons with Clinical Depression: A Qualitative Interview Study.** *Disability & Rehabilitation* 34(18): 1526-1534.

Rosetti, J. (2010). **Use of Animal-Assisted Therapy with Psychiatric Patients.** *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing* 48(11): 44-48.

Schultz P.N. & Remick-Barlow G.A (2007). **Equine-assisted Psychotherapy: A Mental Health Promotion/Intervention Modality for Children who have Experienced Intra-Family Violence.** *Health and Social Care in the Community* 15(3): 265-271.

Walsh F. (2009). **Human-Animal Bonds II: The Role of Pets in Family Systems and Family Therapy.** *Family Process* 48(4): 481-499.

White, D.J. (2010). **Raising Arizona's Homeless Children with my Canine Companion.** *Social Work* 55(3): 283-284.

## **The Course Agenda**

This course will be provided over zoom, through watching videos, and engaging in experiential exercises during these times, with breaks.

### **Friday, Sept 25 – 5:00-8:00pm**

This is an afternoon orientation devoted to getting to know each other, introducing the key concepts and definitions of Animal Assisted Therapy, preparing students for the course experience and expectations, and exploring the ethical and safety considerations associated with AAT.

### **Saturday, Sept 26 – 9:00-5:00**

The first full day of the course will be devoted to exploring relationships with animals as therapy partners, increasing awareness and mindfulness in relating to animals and the natural world, and understanding the ethics of animal selection in Animal Assisted Activities. We will focus on the skills of engagement, observation, noticing, questioning, and reflecting on relationships between people and animals and exploring the roles and recommended models of animal assisted interventions.

### **Sunday, Sept 27 – 9:00-5:00**

The second full day of the course will be devoted to continued skill development in engagement, observation, questioning, and therapeutic interpretation and commenting on relationships between animals and people. Discussion of case examples and activities will highlight the Integration of Animal Assisted Therapy with evidence-based and best practices in mental health including trauma-informed principals, attachment theory and Cognitive/Behavioral methods. Cultural considerations, limitations and contraindications for Animal Assisted Activities will be explored through case example and discussion.

### **Accommodations:**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know soon. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements. Also, all preferred name and gender pronoun uses will be honored.

**Trigger Warning:**

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**Health and Wellness:**

Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School's Health and Wellness Advocates, Lauren Davis or Nyshourn Price, at [ssw.wellness@umich.edu](mailto:ssw.wellness@umich.edu). Students may also visit/call the University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers a variety of clinical services, referrals, and workshops. CAPS, Hours: 8am-5pm, 530 S State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109  
[caps.umich.edu](http://caps.umich.edu)

They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*



## **COVID-19 Statement - Required**

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

## **Health-Related Class Absences**

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a Doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

## **Recording Class**

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with an option to opt-out. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.