An Annotated Bibliography of Research Relevant to
Prison Dog-Training Programs

The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy

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(All Abstracts and Summaries from Authors or Publishers)

JOURNAL ARTICLES


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.


During the past twenty-five years, the number of prison programs in which inmates train dogs has increased rapidly. There are no comprehensive data on the prevalence of such programs, but they are in existence in at least twenty U.S. states, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Italy. Though extremely popular among both administrators and inmates, we have only anecdotal accounts to assess the effects of dog training by inmates. Such programs appear to have the potential to break down barriers of fear and mistrust between staff and inmates; and there is also some evidence, again anecdotal, that they reduce recidivism and behavioral infractions among inmates. Literally no systematic studies exist, however. This research provides preliminary information from data collected in two Kansas prisons (a men’s and a women’s institution) in which inmates train assistance dogs and dogs made available for adoption by the general public. This paper focuses on the qualitative findings from the interviews conducted at the men’s prison, and examines motivations for entering the program, challenges inmates face in their work, and the benefits they believe come participating.


No abstract available.


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.


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.


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.


If correctional education aims to transform individuals and bring about change, we need to consider the whole person who comes with human needs, emotions and attitudes. In order to expand our approach, alternative programs should be explored. A somewhat unusual but very promising approach to address offenders' human needs is the use of animals in institutions. The majority of these programs have a vocational skills component: Inmates train dogs to become service dogs for the disabled, or they work with horses, either wild mustangs or retired race horses in need of rehabilitation. Although vocational training is certainly a major consideration, these programs are also highly therapeutic and rehabilitative. Suggested outcomes can benefit many: The inmate, the institution, other agencies, and the community. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of selected animal-assisted programs in correctional institutions and their reported benefits.


This quasi-experimental field study evaluated the effects of a forensic human-animal interaction (HAI) program on the criminal behavior of prison inmates. The study assessed the impact of the HAI program using between-subject methods and analyses. A total of 48 male inmates participated in the research by allowing researchers access to their institutional files and completing self-report measures. In general, it was hypothesized the HAI program would result in positive behavioral and psychosocial outcomes for inmates. Dependent measures included the frequency of institutional infractions, inmate treatment level within the
prison's therapeutic community, and social skills. Analyses compared two groups of inmates in a pretest-posttest repeated-measures design, comparing a Treatment group with a Control group. Results indicated that inmates in the Treatment group evidenced statistically significant improvements in these dependent measures in comparison to the Control group.


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.


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 grassroots 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.


George H. Mead ([1934] 1967) contended a person's sense of self develops from language-based interactions with other humans in society. According to contemporary sociologists, a person's sense of self is also influenced by non-verbal interactions with human and non-human animals. The present research extends Sanders (1993) work that examined how dog owners relate to their pets and come to develop a unique social identity for them. Through interviews with participants in prison-based animal programs (PAPs), this research explores whether inmates engaged in a similar process of assigning the animals with which they work a human-like identity. The implications of the relationships that develop in terms of desistance, which Maruna (2001) argued requires a redefinition of a person's self-identity, are discussed.


Although animals appear to be increasingly incorporated into correctional programming, the field has failed to systematically study the phenomenon. The present research is an initial attempt to capture the extent to which these types of programs are being administered in U.S. prisons through a national survey of state correctional systems. The research regarding the potential therapeutic effects of animals and what we know about prison-based animal programs (PAPs) are reviewed. Among the results: The programs in most states, are most commonly of a community service design that uses dogs, are more likely to involve male than female participants, and most were established after 2000. Livestock care/prison farms emerge as a unique type of PAP.

No abstract available.


Training programs may be for guide dogs, hearing dogs, and service dogs. Guide dogs are used to aid the visually impaired, and hearing dogs provide aid to the deaf and hearing impaired. Service dogs provide assistance to individuals who have physical disabilities that restrict or impair movement. In addition, there are prison animal programs that take animals who would otherwise be euthanized and give them to inmates, who train them in basic obedience skills that will increase their appeal for adoption by families. Through these dog training programs, inmates learn responsibility, patience, tolerance, and skills as animal trainers. The dogs also provide a bridge between the inmates and the guards and reduce inmate-staff conflicts. Successful prison dog-training programs have support from both the community and local dog-training schools. Prison administrators have the responsibility of convincing a dog-training school that the prison is prepared for training dogs and that it has facilities necessary to conduct the training. The prison management staff must work with the schools to obtain professionals to teach the inmates how to train the dogs properly. The training schools must also be convinced that the inmates are sincere and responsible in their desire to work with the dogs. The prisons must have a strong base of community volunteers who will care for and keep the dogs for weekend furloughs throughout the training programs. Each successful program profiled in this article has a careful screening process for those inmates who participate in the training program. Aside from an occasional Federal grant, prison puppy programs depend heavily on community assistance and donations. Several of the programs described in this article receive considerable donations of supplies from guide/service dog programs. Inmates also generate income through bake sales or by selling items manufactured in the prison workshops. Both the community and the inmates benefit from these prison dog-training programs.


Based on experience with pets in treating depression among the elderly and in providing therapy to chronically ill children and adults, the JHCC brought two puppies to the mental health unit. It was only after the puppies became an established part of the treatment program that staff observed decreased aggression among the inmates. To confirm this perception, the staff examined security and clinical logs to determine if the empirical evidence showed a significant decline in aggressive incidents after the puppies arrived. There were 68 incidents of aggression in the 4 months before pet therapy, with 12 of them involving physical altercations. In the 4 months after the puppies' arrival, there were 39 incidents of aggression, with 6 involving physical altercations. Controlling for other variables, the study concluded that the pet therapy has had a significant impact on inmate mental states, particularly aggressive tendencies. A plan to expand pet therapy is under consideration.


This study examined outcomes of an ongoing socialization program for shelter dogs conducted at a local prison. Dogs residing at a Humane Society facility were assigned to either a “Control” or “Socialization” treatment. Dogs assigned to both treatments were administered a pretest at the Humane Society consisting of blood withdrawal for hormone analysis, assessment of responses to commands, and observation of behavior in a novel situation. Dogs assigned to the Socialization treatment were then transported to the prison where they lived with, and were trained by, inmate handlers. Dogs in the Control treatment remained at the Humane Society and received no explicit training. Three weeks later, dogs were administered a posttest identical in form to the pretest. Dogs provided the Socialization, but not Control, treatment exhibited
significant improvement from pretest to posttest in compliance with commands. In a novel situation, Socialization dogs showed significantly less jumping on an unfamiliar human and vocalizing, and significantly more yawning, in the posttest relative to the pretest than did Control dogs. Whereas plasma cortisol levels did not vary from pretest to posttest in either group, ACTH levels unexpectedly increased with time in both groups. Moreover, cortisol and ACTH levels were significantly positively correlated with each other at the posttest, but not the pretest. These results provide evidence for positive behavioral outcomes of prison socialization programs for shelter dogs, as well as further support for the notion that shelter housing results in a dysregulation of the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis.


In October 2007, brig personnel were approached by the Carolina Canines for Service, Inc. (CCS) about the feasibility of using the brig and its post-trial inmates in training service dogs for the disabled. A plan of action quickly developed under the CCS’s established dog training curriculum. Over a period of 3 months, the program was developed, approved, and started. The dog training area was created by shifting 1 of the brig’s 24 inmate dormitory areas and reducing the brig’s operational capacity to 264. Written policies and procedures were developed, including procedures for inmate selection to become a dog handler. CCS and senior brig personnel cooperated in developing criteria based largely on willingness to participate in the program and an inmate’s time remaining until release. Five primary and five alternate dog handlers were initially selected. Dogs to be trained were selected primarily from local pounds and the base animal control shelters. CCS personnel conducted health and temperament evaluations for the dogs and made the final selection. CCS assigned a dog to a particular handler in consultation with a Marine correctional specialist responsible for overseeing the program. The program is funded through donations to CCS. Costs include dog procurement, supplies, veterinary care, medications, and all other expenses. The program provides inmates with a productive means of rehabilitation through responsibility for the dog’s care and training, and disabled military veterans are given priority in the placement of the service dogs at no cost to them.


Many of these programs work with service-dog training organizations to train assistance dogs for community members with disabilities. Others rehabilitate retired racing greyhounds and dogs from area shelters, teaching them skills and manners that will enable them to be placed with adoptive families. Proponents of these programs cite their “win-win” benefits. Not only do the dogs get attention and training, but participating inmates have the chance to learn important life skills while making useful contributions to their communities. Inmates learn nurturing skills in caring for and training the dogs and enjoy a reciprocal caring relationship in which the dogs accept and respond positively to them without regard for their criminal status. This can bolster inmates’ self-esteem, an important factor in the development of positive behaviors. Service-dog organizations have found that a single trainer can oversee inmates working with dozens of dogs and that the dogs learn reliable skills while spending time in the prison environment. Administrators in facilities that host dog-training programs often report benefits that extend far beyond the small number of inmates who directly participate in the program. These benefits include reduced tension and violence throughout the facility. Nearly all the prisons with dog-training programs have strict behavioral criteria that inmate applicants must meet, such as no discipline tickets for 6 months or a year. Once an inmate is in the program, he/she can ask to leave, although this is rare. Inmates might also be removed from the program if they have a conduct violation.


No abstract available.

We studied a program that permitted a selected number of prisoners to keep pets. We observed the physiological and behavioral effects of this contact and retrospectively examined the effect of pet possession on the frequency and severity of disciplinary offenses. The presence of a pet did not affect the rise in blood pressure associated with talking to the experimenters. However, blood pressure during interaction with the pet was always lower than blood pressure during conversation with the experimenters. Pet ownership had a small effect on the number but not the severity of disciplinary offenses. We concluded that this pet program provided valuable recreation for prisoners but had only small and inconsistent effects on antisocial behavior as defined by the prison staff.


James Harris of the Montclair Veterinary Clinical Hospital in Oakland, California, defines the human-animal bond as "that physical, emotional, intellectual, and philosophical relationship that occurs between a person or family unit and an animal." With few exceptions, animals exude unconditional love for their owners and vice versa. This literature review relies primarily on American sources, since most of the prison programs were initially developed in the United States. The types of animals used and the format of the program vary widely in correctional institutions. Animals used in the various PFT programs include mice, guinea pigs, birds, fish, horses, cats and dogs, farm animals, wild animals, domestic animals, and exotic animals, although dogs are the most common. The literature review suggests that the benefits of PFT do not only affect the inmates, but also the animals, staff, and citizens in the community who receive the trained animals. Inmate behavior and self-esteem improves as a result of being involved in PFT programs. The programs teach discipline, cooperation, and respect for others. Depending on the nature of the program, inmates may also acquire employable skills. Animals benefit from the program, since they are often saved from certain death and given a second chance. Staff benefits from changed inmate behavior that reduces management problems. Citizens in the community benefit when PFT programs involve inmates in training animals to be used in therapeutic programs in the community. Guidelines for implementing a PFT in a correctional institution are provided. Appended overview of PFT programs in correctional institutions and materials for use in PFT programs.


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.


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. In-mates 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.”

Prisoners, private parties, private organizations, correctional officials, and observers have all offered testimonials to the worthwhile effects of PDPs. Dogs have done so too, in their own way. To prove the utility of PDPs as a valuable rehabilitative strategy, Congress should instruct the GAO or the Justice Department to analyze existing PDPs to determine whether they are operating effectively and efficiently.


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 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.


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.


PAL is an organization dedicated to bringing people and pets together - giving both a new lease on life. The program at the District of Columbia Department of Corrections Lorton facility has implemented a unique opportunity for individuals who have committed heinous crimes to perhaps redeem themselves or at least to show a different side of themselves. The opportunity to show love and compassion to an animal may have lasting effects on what was heretofore a hardened criminal. The introduction of animals to this particular institution was a very unusual one since no program of its kind had ever been allowed. Since its inception, the program has given the residents an opportunity to learn a vocational trade while improving their quality of life by showing compassion and understanding to another living being.

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.


No abstract available.


Interaction with companion animals is now known to confer health and social benefits to people of all ages, whether living in the community or living within an institution. Carefully planned Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) programmes can be introduced to enhance the therapeutic milieu and as an adjunct to client care to help address diverse health and social needs. This paper provides an introductory overview of the role of animals in institutions. The author draws on her experience with particular reference to a programme in a prison-based therapeutic community. The introduction of carefully planned AAT programmes would bring many benefits to prisoners, staff and ultimately to society. A multidisciplinary approach is emphasised. A consistent approach to animals in institutions is required and programmes should work to recognised standards. The effects of AAT on offenders requires more research including monitoring of recidivism.


The dog-training program at the Kit Carson Correctional Center in Colorado uses inmate handlers to provide trained canines to community agencies who, in turn, provide the dogs to people with disabilities. The Service Dog Training Program began in March 2002, in cooperation with the Canine Assistance, Rehabilitation, Education and Services (CARES) organization, a local nonprofit agency that supplies trained dogs to the elderly, disabled people, children, and adults to assist them in independent living. The program helps inmates by providing job training and the therapeutic functions of healing hearts and spirits. The program works by providing inmates with a canine that accompanies the inmate everywhere in the correctional facility, including living in the inmates’ cell. The inmate handlers follow a strict schedule that begins at 5:30 a.m. and concludes at 9 p.m. Inmate handlers must take their dogs for scheduled bathroom breaks and exercise breaks; they must train their dogs in certain skills; and must ensure that the dogs learn how to love, trust, and bond with people. The dog-training program not only benefits the community by providing trained canines to those in need, it also has benefits for the inmates who participate in the popular program. The program has been shown to have a positive effect on inmates’ morale and physical health. Inmates with health or discipline problems have shown considerable improvement in health and attitude within a very short time of being paired with a canine. As such, the Service Dog Training Program is considered a successful inmate program.


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.


The authors describe the prison-based animal shelter at the Dixon Correctional Institute in Jackson, Louisiana, as a legacy project of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, and provide suggestions about the management of such programs.


Interest is growing in establishing animal-facilitated programs in prisons. Although food animals have been maintained by prisons for years, few have looked at the benefits inmates derive from working with animals. Recently, prisons have started dog and horse training programs. Preliminary evidence indicates that inmates benefit, learning life-enhancing skills and lowering the recidivism rates. Shelter dogs and wild horses trained by the prisoners help people with physical and emotional needs. State and federal funds are needed to further study the benefits derived for prisoners, animals, and society.


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.


No abstract available.


A Pets as Therapy [PAT] program was initiated in a women’s prison to train companion dogs for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The effect on the trainers was studied using an established depression scale and a self-esteem inventory. Results showed significant group changes in both these areas.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS


Using qualitative data collected during research at a prison located in north-central Ohio, this paper examines the dog program in place at this institution. Specifically, the theoretical contradictions of the disciplinary model of dog training occurring within prison walls. Additionally, this paper will look at discipline models and the idea of humanization, and how (if possible) they can coexist within the institutional setting.

No summary available.


The emerging specialty of green criminology is broadly defined as examining ecological crimes and offenses committed against non-human animals. In considering animal abuse and misuse the issue of animal rights is often discussed. Those in support of animal rights, sometimes referred to as the animal liberation movement, generally adopt a 'no-use' stance toward non-human animals. The development of prison-based animal programs (PAPs), specifically the service animal socialization and community service models, raises unique questions about animal rights and animals’ use in prison programming. In service animal socialization programs prison inmates train puppies who go on to advanced education to identify contraband including explosives and pirated DVDs, as well as training to become so-called working dogs to aid people with disabilities. In community adoption programs, in contrast, prison inmates socialize dogs that would otherwise have been destroyed due to their behavioral issues. The merits of these programs, both for the human and non-human animals, will be discussed according to the green criminology paradigm.


Paper examines the role of inmate-volunteers in a service dog training program at the Women’s Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center in Vandalia, Missouri.


Prison-based animal training programs have long been believed to confer benefits on the inmates who train the animals, as well as benefits for the animals themselves. Most evaluations of these programs, however, have relied on surveys of prison administrators and of inmates themselves to demonstrate the benefits for inmates. This paper will explore the theoretical basis for hypothesizing that prison-based animal training programs result in benefits for the inmates (i.e., rehabilitation). Articulating the theory is a prerequisite to designing a program evaluation. Since animal training programs are found at both men's and women's prisons, an interesting criminological question to be considered is whether the benefits predicted are the same for both genders.


Paper examines women's accounts of their motivations for and successes in a prison service dog training program at the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center in Vandalia, Missouri.


No summary available.

BOOK CHAPTERS


**BOOKS**


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


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.


This report presents results of an evaluation of the Pawsitive Directions Canine Program at Nova institution for Women. It is a canine-handler training program that introduces women inmates to the basics of dog husbandry and training, and relies on the principles of pet-facilitated therapy. It also specializes in the placement of dogs with adoptive families in need of a well-trained pet or assistance dog. The Pawsitive Directions Canine Program is exclusive to Nova Institution and has been accredited with local, provincial, national and international media exposure.

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.


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 regards 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.


During the past twenty-five years, the number of prison programs in which inmates train dogs has increased rapidly. A lack of systematic studies to address the effects of these programs on staff and inmates has led to limited, anecdotal accounts of the impact of these programs on correctional institutions and their occupants. In addition, an analysis of differences in these effects for men and women is missing. This paper proposes to bridge this gap through qualitative research conducted in two Kansas prisons (a men's and a women's institution) in which inmates train assistance dogs and dogs made available for adoption by the general public. Drawing primarily on the works of Erving Goffman, Michel Foucault, and Jill McCorkel, I focus on the mechanisms of social control and resistance within these programs and their effect on the inmates participating in the program, utilizing a gendered analysis throughout. Using the experiences of the men and women in these programs, as well as those of correctional staff and community members, I propose that these programs provide an important outlet for resistance for the participants.
The number of animal training programs in correctional facilities has increased in the past 25 years. Anecdotal accounts have informally assessed the efficacy of prison training programs; however, only limited systemic studies have been conducted (Britton & Button, 2005; Furst, 2006). Preliminary information from anecdotal accounts and narratives indicates the potential these programs have to impact inmate behavior, self-esteem, staff and inmate morale, and community perceptions of offenders (Cushing & Williams, 1995; Harkrader, Burke, & Owen, 2004). There is also an indication inmate trainers learn responsibility, patience, coping skills, and vocational skills (Britton & Button, 2005; Merriam-Arduini, 2000; Turner, 2007). This qualitative study presents preliminary findings from the following five participant perspectives on the perceived outcomes of a canine training program in a correctional facility where inmates train assistance, therapy, rescue, and medical alert canines: (a) inmate trainers, (b) former inmate trainers, (c) non-trainer inmates who are not involved in the training program, (d) staff, and (e) the researcher. Once trained, the canines are adopted as assistance dogs for individuals in need. Data collected from in-depth interviews with current inmate trainers, former inmate trainers, non-trainer inmates, and staff, and audio and video recordings, researcher observations, and a researcher developed scale indicated the following themes which emerged from the study: there are positive emotional outcomes and positive practical outcomes for inmate trainers who work with dogs in the training program. Positive emotional outcomes for inmate trainers include the following: (a) providing social support, (b) gaining a sense of pride, (c) serving as a feeling of giving back to society, (d) increasing personal patience, (e) humanizing the inmate trainers, and (f) improving self-esteem. Positive practical outcomes for inmate trainers emerged in the following areas: (a) improving responsibility, (b) having a positive impact on the prison environment, (c) providing opportunities to help others, (d) using goal setting, (e) gaining employability skills, and (e) having a positive effect on behavior. Results from this study will add to existing literature and research in the field of animal-assisted interventions and rehabilitation programs with human beings, specifically those in correctional facilities. In addition, results from this study will assist correctional administration in the design, implementation, and evaluation of dog training programs in prisons.


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.

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.
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.


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.


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 through the use of 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.


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.


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 participants noted an increase in self-esteem and confidence levels of inmate trainers following participation in the New Leash on Life PAP.


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 fittingly 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.