Research suggestions for Animal-assisted and Nature-assisted therapy and Individual Psychology

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The use of Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) and nature-assisted therapy (NAT) is growing in counseling, psychotherapy, medicine, and many others areas. A review of the research literature shows a wide range of applications for AAT and NAT.

* Children with language impairment benefited from the utilization of a AAT cat in the therapy process.
* An AAT dog was seen to have a positive effect on reality orientation in Alzheimer’s patients.
* Animal-assisted mindfulness intervention increased mindfulness as well as decreased depressive symptoms in patients. There was also a reduction in typical dropout rates for MBCT.
* AAT dogs perceived by middle school students receiving counseling services as expressing Rodger’s core component.
* Equine-assisted psychotherapy more effective than canine-assisted psychotherapy in treating psychiatric patients at risk of violent behavior.
* AAT was an effective inclusion in treatment for of Autism-spectrum disorder, schizophrenia, depression, psychiatric disorders, behavior problems, medical difficulties, and emotional well-being.
* NAT can have a significant effect on psychological, social, physical, and intellectual therapeutic goals
* Reconnection to the natural world can decrease a variety of psychological symptoms.

While there are many areas of good and needed research, there are none with pointedly Adlerian intentions and outcomes. Future research in AAT and NAT could include their impact on individual psychology constructs such as social interest, community feeling and life tasks, etc..

* **Does AAT and NAT increase a person’s tendency toward social interest?**
* **Can a person broaden their humanity and deepen their connection with the cosmos (5th life task) by utilizing AAT and NAT?**
* **Do AAT and NAT contribute to helping a person master the life tasks of friendship, love and intimacy, and community building by vocation?**
* **Can the life tasks of self-knowledge and meaning in life, added by Dreikurs and Mosak (1967, 2000), be enhanced by AAT and NAT?**
* **Can AAT and NAT help move a person form a felt minus to a felt plus?**
* **Can ATT and NAT boost a person’ s confidence as they strive for superiority?**
* **Can clients find encouragement through ATT and NAT?**

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