

# ANIMAL-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY

Theory, Issues, and Practice

Edited by  
NANCY PARISH-PLASS



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New Directions in the Human-Animal Bond *Alan M. Beck, Series Editor*

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## BOOK DESCRIPTION

The integration of animals into the therapy setting by psychotherapists has been a growing trend. Psychological problems treated include emotional and behavioral problems, attachment issues, trauma, and developmental disorders. An influential 1970's survey suggests that over 20 percent of therapists in the psychotherapy division of the American Psychological Association incorporated animals into their treatment in some fashion. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number is much higher today.

Since Yeshiva University psychologist Boris Levinson popularized the involvement of animals in the psychotherapy milieu in the 1960's, Israel has come to be perhaps the most advanced country in the world in the area of animal-assisted psychotherapy (AAP). This is true especially in the area of academic training programs, theory-building, and clinical practice. Great effort has been put into understanding the mechanisms behind AAP, as well as into developing ethical guidelines that take into account the therapist's responsibility toward both client and animal.

This book exposes the world to the theory and practice of AAP as conceived and used in Israel. It emphasizes AAP's evidence-based and clinically sound applications with psychotherapeutic goals, as differentiated from other animal-assisted interventions, such as AAE (animal-assisted education) and AAA (animal-assisted activities), which may have educational or skills-oriented goals. Not just anyone with a dog can call him or herself an animal-assisted therapist. This volume demonstrates not only the promise of animal-assisted psychotherapeutic approaches, but also some of the challenges the field still needs to overcome to gain widespread legitimacy.

## KEY POINTS

- \*Establishes the theoretical and ethical foundation for this growing field.
- \*Explores some of the mechanisms behind AAP's influence on the therapy process.
- \*Demonstrates the strong evidence base for the use of animals in psychotherapy.
- \*Presents practical guidance for psychotherapists interested in incorporating animals into their work.
- \*Serves as a textbook for the coursework and clinical training of graduate-level students in their study of AAP.



**NANCY PARISH-PLOSS** studied psychology at Smith College and at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign before working in early childhood education in Kibbutz children's houses in Israel. Later she studied in an extensive program in AAP at the pioneering Oranim College and advanced studies in psychotherapy at Machon Magid-Hebrew University School of Psychotherapy for experienced therapists in the field of mental health. Parish-Plass is the founding and current chairperson of the Israeli Association for Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy, and she has spearheaded the struggle for legal recognition of the field in the Israeli Knesset.

## ENDORSEMENTS

### ***Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy: Theory, Issues, and Practice***

*This comprehensive volume stands as the state-of-the-art guide to Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy. Mental health professionals practicing Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy will repeatedly turn to his well-organized work for guidance and will find solid bridges linking between theoretical reasoning, empirical research, and psychotherapeutic practice. This volume is grounded in cutting-edge research and Parish-Plass has brought together leading experts in the field of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy.*

--- Mario Mikulincer, Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya

*As the field of Animal Assisted Psychotherapy grows in popularity and use, it is essential that the work is grounded in theory, research, and the highest quality standards of ethical practice. Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy provides a superb resource for clinicians using this promising modality. Editor Nancy Parish-Plass has woven the excellent contributions into a volume that provides a model of AAP practice, clear discussion of the complex issues inherent in AAP, and the unique ethical standards for the protection of both human clients and the animals involved. Program descriptions and case illustrations throughout the book enrich its message. All clinicians using or wishing to use AAP will benefit greatly from reading this wonderful addition to the relatively scant professional literature on AAP.*

— Risë VanFleet, Ph.D., RPT-S, CDBC

Past President and Board Chair of the Association for Play Therapy

Founder and President, Playful Pooch Program and Family Enhancement & Play Therapy Center

*A great deal has happened since I first heard of animal assisted therapy and activities. This volume supports the statement that one does not call himself or herself a therapist unless trained and licensed. The programs bringing people into contact with animals are varied and structured. The book provides different approaches for children and adults. Value is accomplished through anecdotes which provide actual happenings for the reader along with a strong theoretical description of the applied approach. One gains a clear idea of the therapist's approach and of the participation of animals to strengthen the result. What a great book!*

—Sam Ross, Director of Green Chimneys Residential Treatment Center

*[This book] puts together scholarship on many perspectives of how animals fit into the therapeutic milieu. It is very readable and great clinical vignettes are used to illustrate the authors' points.*

—Erika Friedmann, University of Maryland

*Nancy Parish-Plass has edited a volume that will be of strong interest to those providing animal-assisted psychotherapy. The book brings together chapters from numerous authors on critical topics. As a psychologist who has integrated animals in therapy for many years, I believe that it is a valuable resource to clinicians and researchers in the field.*

—Aubrey H. Fine, California Polytechnic State University, Editor of *Handbook on animal assisted therapy: Theoretical foundations and guidelines for practice*

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## CHAPTER ABSTRACTS

### **The Integration of Animals into the Therapy Process and Its Implications as a Unique Medium in Psychotherapy**

*Dror Oren and Nancy Parish-Plass*

The therapeutic experience is created from three different generating agents: theory, technique and medium, all of which are valuable agents of change in the therapeutic experience. The term medium is referred to in a variety of ways; as material, as a matrix, as communication. This chapter starts with a general discussion of the term medium in the context of psychotherapy including its definition and an explanation of the use of a medium, in terms of the therapist, the client, and what exists and develops between them. Understanding the place of a medium in psychotherapy focusing on various forms of communication, sensitivity to the concept of medium may facilitate the transformation of a medium for expression into a medium for healing. The use of a medium in psychotherapy, together with its intricacies, implications, and advantages, is also discussed. Next, the chapter focuses on the concept of the presence of an animal (or animals) in the psychotherapy setting as a medium, with all that this entails, as a powerful generator of content from the client's inner world and a channel of communication of that content to the therapist and to the client him- or herself. The various unique qualities of the animals and their surrounding environments, their effect on therapist and the client, and what they may contribute to the therapy process, are discussed. Finally, the need was discussed for the professionalization of the field in order to provide full understanding of how to combine principles of psychotherapy with the understanding of the nature of the medium of animals, and how to use this medium for the benefit of the client.

### **The Animal as a Relational Medium: An Object Relations Approach to the Triangle in Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy**

*Nancy Parish-Plass and Dror Oren*

Object relations theory suggests that we all base our current interactions with others on our experiences in interpersonal relationships from the past. That is, we carry within us internalized *objects*, or images of significant figures from our past, and transfer them to others in the present and then reenact past situations in our current lives. Psychotherapy takes advantage of these reenactments when they occur between therapist and client by working on problematic relationships in the *here and now*. The presence of animals in psychotherapy serves as a medium for the expression of the client's inner world by providing additional targets for relationships as well as for projections and transferences of objects from the past. As a result, the AAP therapy setting, providing the opportunity for numerous potential interpersonal relationships (therapist-client, client-animal(s), therapist-animal(s), animal-animal), may serve as a rich laboratory for working through reenactments of situations and problematic interpersonal interactions from the past in the presence of the therapist, leading to insight and change. Together with a brief explanation of object relations theory, this chapter explores some implications of the therapy triangle (client-therapist-animal) for the psychotherapy process based on an object relations approach in the context of the establishment of the therapeutic alliance, attachment theory, and inter-subjectivity. The expansion of the *intersubjective analytic third* through the presence of animals in the therapy setting is presented as an important mechanism underlying AAP, explaining one of the most significant functions of the AAP therapy triangle in the therapy process.

## **Projection and Projective Object in Child Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy**

*Rachel Ben David*

A common phenomenon which usually takes place during a 'free floating' (Nairne, 2009) game with animals during therapeutic sessions is projection of the child's inner world upon the animals. Within this 'area of illusion' inside the 'potential space' (Winnicott, 1971) the child spontaneously interprets the present animal's feelings and thoughts, not necessarily according to a zoological interpretation of the animal's reality. These projected interpretations by the child may be useful for psychological assessment, and therapeutic processes. Understanding the (therapist-patient-animal) triangle is the key path to understanding how to make use of these psychological projections in AAP. Psychological projections usually take place on the patient-animal side of the triangle. The animals' unique characteristics and behavior may serve as a trigger for encountering the child's internalized figures. It is the therapist's awareness to both the animal's behavior and the child projected interpretations which enables the therapist to understand the child's feelings and intentions and mirror them. According to Melanie Klein's theoretical frame, the animals' small size and vague identity is an advantage in being a projective object.

## **The Contribution of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy to the Potential Space in Play Therapy**

*Nancy Parish-Plass*

Children communicate their inner world, their experience and emotions, through play. Joining in the child's play allows the therapist and client to be in the same story, the same emotional place. Situated in the here and now, play therapy provides an opportunity for role-playing, projection, transference, and reenactment of experiences from the past, thus enabling emotional content, such as aggression, sexual issues, sickness, anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, and rejection, to come to the surface and be worked through. The basis for play therapy leans heavily upon Winnicott's concept of *potential space*, the complex connection between the child's inner and outer worlds, the meeting place between the world of reality with which the child interacts and the content of his or her inner world. This intermediate area of experiencing, to which both inner reality and external life, both fantasy and reality, contribute, is the place in which occur the child's thoughts, emotions, perceptions, understandings, and imagination. However, this potential space will collapse if reality becomes too invasive or dangerous. For this reason, there are children, due to their past or present experiences of trauma, find play to be difficult or even impossible for lack of potential space. AAP allows for dealing with difficult and threatening content from a safe psychological distance, thus preventing the collapse of the potential space. After providing a general explanation of the potential space in play therapy, this chapter discusses the contribution of the integration of animals into the play therapy setting to the creation and expansion of the potential space in non-directive psychodynamic play therapy, including clinical example illustrating various principles of AAP as used in play therapy. Special consideration is given to clinical practice with children with impaired ability to play within the therapy setting, including a discussion of the implications for work with parentified children.

## **Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy from an Attachment Perspective**

*Sigal Zilcha-Mano*

John Bowlby's (1973, 1980, 1982) attachment theory is one of the most influential theories of human development and has implications for both adjustment and psychopathology across the life span. Attachment theory also provides a useful foundation for defining the target of change in psychotherapy, understanding the processes by which change occurs, and conceptualizing the case and planning treatment (Daniel, 2006; Wallin, 2007). In the present chapter, we put forward a model for Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy (AAP) guided by attachment theory and based on the unique characteristics of the human–pet relationship. Our model takes into account patients' unmet attachment needs and attachment insecurities, while enhancing coping and responsiveness to therapy and supporting the development of more adaptive patterns of attachment and healthier models of relationships. This model is based upon a series of research studies (carried out by the authors and which will also be presented in this chapter) which found that an animal may serve as an attachment figure within a number of settings, including the therapy setting, as well as fulfilling interpersonal needs for humans, as does a human attachment figure.

## **Elements of Group Psychotherapy Found in Individual Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy**

*Hadas Ish-Lev and Roni Amit*

This presentation delineates a new point of view of AAP (animal-assisted psychotherapy) which will further the understanding of the therapy processes that exist in the framework of AAP. Many principles of AAP are reminiscent of advantages afforded by group psychotherapy. This presentation will develop and clarify the ideas which are the basis for this view. Some of the various characteristics of group psychotherapy will be discussed. The triangle of client-therapist-animal, which is basic to AAP, will be observed as a group with unique characteristics. We will explore how elements from group psychotherapy theories may be used in order to understand the mechanisms behind AAP. Each element will be followed by examples from AAP sessions. This group which is formed in AAP is unique due to the fact that the client is a member of the group and at the same time still the focus of that group. This structure of AAP enables movement in the session between the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. From that point of view we claim that AAP exists in an intermediate area between individual and group therapy. We believe that exploring elements of group psychotherapy as they relate to AAP will assist therapists in gaining a broader understanding of the therapeutic process which occurs in AAP and in dealing with the dilemmas arising from AAP.

## **The Therapy Zoo as a Mirror to the Psyche**

*Efrat Maayan*

Animal-assisted psychotherapy may be implemented in the setting of small therapy zoos, containing a variety of animals, in which the client may encounter a variety of behaviors, life styles and developmental processes, which are reminiscent of those of humans. The client is invited to observe in the setting a variety of behaviors between parents and offspring or between mates, power struggles and cooperation, life processes, death, injury, etc. providing encounters with emotional content that is meaningful in the life of the client. Within this setting, the clients identify with the animals and attribute to them characteristics, desires, and emotions from within their own inner world, leading to the situation in which various animals who participate in the therapy are able to represent for the client parental images and/or parts of self. Thus is created a situation in which the "outer zoo" of occurrences among the animals, or between the animals and the client, reflect the "inner zoo" of images and relationships inside his psyche. This is possible when the zoo becomes a "potential space" – an intermediate space between inner and outer reality. Beyond the general symbolism of the animal world, each animal has its own unique and rich symbolism which is connected to its shape, size, way of life, habitat and of course to the cultural context of one's attitude towards the animal, as well as to personal experiences with the animal, etc. By looking at this rich symbolic level, we may find an additional, fascinating dimension in our understanding of why a certain client chose one animal or another, at a given stage of therapy. This understanding allows therapists to deepen their acquaintance with their clients, and invites a connection to the archetypal level deep in his psyche, to the sources of growth and healing which exist in the depths of the subconscious.

## **Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy: The Gap Between Practice and Knowledge**

*Keren Bachi*

EFP is widely used and developing in terms of how it is used. However, existing knowledge about this field is insufficient, and the research that does exist has methodological problems that compromise its rigor. This review will explore research of background fields of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAP) as well as Equine-Assisted Activities/Therapies (EAA/T) related to physical elements. Existing knowledge of mental, emotional, and social applications of EAA/T is presented. Evaluation studies in the sub-field show that people benefit from interventions with horses. However, the quality of these studies has fundamental problems such as small sample size and lack of control groups. Studies that explore theoretical aspects highlight the fundamental role human-horse relations play in EAA/T. Nevertheless, these studies also have methodological problems and point out the deficiency in theory development in these fields. Suggestions for future research are discussed.

**Dilemmas, Questions and Issues**  
**Concerning the Integration of Animals into the Psychotherapy Setting**

*Nancy Parish-Plass and Dror Oren*

An animal is a broad, rich, and powerful potential medium. Animals are natural objects of projection and transference from the client's inner world, and the client unconsciously uses them to reenact situations from the past and to express present conflicts, either at the level of thinking patterns or at the level of behavior. This process, and the fact that a living organism that is not therapist and not a client is brought into the situation, brings up many related issues, questions, and dilemmas. Some of the questions are related to ethical issues concerning the physical and/or psychological wellbeing of the client and of the animal. Other questions are related to choices of possible directions the therapist may choose that have important implications for the therapy process. The issues discussed in this chapter include the therapist's role when the client's perceptions of the animal collide with reality, if and when the good of the client clashes with the good of the animal, limits on touch between client and animal, transference and countertransference, dilemmas inherent in various AAP settings, and complications arising out of the potential dominance of the animal as a medium.

**The Unique Ethical Stance of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy**

*Rachel Ben David*

AAP involves ethical concerns for the emotional and physical safety and welfare of clients as well as animals. There are four exclusive aspects which designate ethical issues of AAP in relation to other human uses of animals mentioned above: The unique benefit of AAP to humans within Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs; within the animal's vertex of the patient-animal-therapist triangle, the kind and extent of intervention in the animal's life within AAP; the negation of the process of objectification of animals in AAP; and AAP's intrinsic aim to protect the animals' well-being during and in between therapeutic sessions, which places AAP at an exclusive ethical stance in relation to other uses of animals. These aspects designate AAP in relation to other kind of psychotherapies as well. All these aspects will be discussed in this chapter, adding to the ongoing discussion of the exploitative aspect of AAP.

## **Why Israel? A Unique Direction in the Development of the Definition and Practice of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy**

*Nancy Parish-Plass and Sari Bar-On*

The development of animal-assisted psychotherapy in Israel has been meteoric and impressive in terms of theory development, the high level of professional training required, the character of the practice in the field, AAP's place in the world of psychotherapy in general, and its high standards. In order to understand the reasons for and basis of the current state of the field of AAP in Israel today, it helps to review the history and course of the development of the field. One of the major influences on this development seems to originate from the widespread existence of children's petting zoos within the kibbutzim (communal settlements) from times predating the establishment of Israel. Many of these children grew to be educators who continued to consider the integration of animals into the lives of children as an importance influence on their psychological development. In addition, the small size of the country allows much opportunity for social and professional encounters between members of the human-animal bond community, which lead to an intense discourse, cooperation and activity resulting in rapid development of the profession of AAP. This chapter explores these roots, as well as the development of training programs, the establishment of professional standards through the establishment of a professional association, continuing discourse and professional development in AAP, and the search for legal recognition in order to ensure high standards among clinicians. Difficulties on the path of the development of the profession of AAP are also discussed.

## **Life Cycle Analysis of the Field of Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy**

*Keren Bachi*

This chapter provides an overview of the EFP field, including background and definitions, state of practice, empirical knowledge, and the past and current organizational state. As part of my exploration into the current state of the EFP field, I chose to use approximated precedence and look at the emergence and development of art therapy into a recognized profession that is part of mainstream mental health services. Since art therapy is an experiential therapy which began as an innovative venue in the psychotherapeutic fields, perhaps it would be possible to extrapolate trends or patterns of development and apply them to the emergence of EFP. Britain was the first country to recognize art therapy as a profession in the state health service, and the British example (from 1940 till 1982) continues to serve as a model for other countries wishing to develop on similar lines (Waller, 1991). Therefore, this model will be used as a basis of comparison to the development of the EFP field. The product life cycle model identifies the distinct stages affecting sales of a product, from the product's inception until its retirement. This model has been applied to the analysis of industry maturity stages (e.g., Maisonneuve & Ojasoo, 1999). Several variations of the industry life cycle model have been developed to address the evolution of the product, market, and/or industry. Although they differ as to the number and names of the stages, the models are quite similar (Fox, et al., 2010). In this chapter, I will apply a model that includes four stages (introduction, growth, maturity, and decline) to the analysis of the EFP field. This will be done by extrapolating from the developmental life cycle stages that art therapy went through since it emerged up to the point that it was mainstreamed as part of mental health services.

## **Is Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy a Profession?**

### **The Consolidation of the Professional Identity of the Animal-Assisted Psychotherapist in Israel**

*Sari Bar-On, Anna Shapiro, and Anat Gendelman*

Professions are often defined by the official and public recognition, backed up by institutional constraints, such as licensure, certification and legal specifications. The profession of animal-assisted psychotherapy lacks these formal parameters. However, the profession's meteoric development attests to its social need and to the grassroots recognition of the field by the public. As in other semi-professional occupations that lack formal licensure, the consolidation of a differentiated professional identity serves as a valuable asset in portraying the characteristics and boundaries of the profession. The professional identity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is built and maintained in the course of the therapists' interaction with society. Three dimensions structure the professional identity and affect it over time: a structural dimension (its uniqueness among other professions, public recognition, common methodologies, academic training, representative organization), a social dimension (the professional self-perception, common norms, ethics and values, existence of a professional community and discourse), and an individual-psychological dimension (the significance of the profession as part of the individual's identity). The existence of the three dimensions enables the establishment of a distinguished professional identity. In this chapter the description of two pioneering studies, using interviews, documents and questionnaire, throw light on the following questions: Does AAP have distinguished professional traits? How do AAP therapists in Israel define themselves? Do they have common characteristics, values, and norms? How do AAP professionals perceive themselves as separate from established professions? The achievements and hindrances on the path of AAP to becoming a profession in the full sense of the word are also discussed.

## **The Relationship between the Animalistic and the Artistic:**

### **A Therapeutic Model Integrating Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy with Art Therapy**

*Efrat Ma'ayan and Elana Lakh*

AAP and art therapy have much in common. Both therapies appeal to the non-verbal levels, especially concerning the sensory world of visual images, touch, sensations and smells. Thus, both therapy modalities enable direct contact with the unconscious and with the patient's primary experiences, remembered in the body – even if they are out of consciousness's reach. Likewise, the two domains stress the great importance of the symbolic dimension, and both are based upon understanding of the symbolism of any given animal or artwork. Yet they also complement each other in the differing ways in which they reach the unconscious and express it. In the model that we have developed, within a zoo setting, the patient encounters many chance experiences with a variety of animals. Through the client's various identifications with and projections onto the different animals, AAP enables a growing acquaintance with a variety of inner voices, which express different aspects of internalized parental figures and different aspects of the self. Later on, our patients are invited to make art using a large variety of displayed art materials. The artwork is created out of the encounter between the client's direct experiences in the zoo and his inner world. In this way, the unconscious psyche directs the creative ego to the materials and to the form which contains the experience and the unconscious content that it awakens. Each patient is a whole unique world and has various ways of expression. The integration between animals and art allows for a greater amount of flexibility, as well as a wider repertoire of therapeutic interventions. This chapter presents theory on which this model is based, together with clinical examples.

**"What Does the Turtle Have Inside Its House?":  
Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy with Foster Children**  
*Shira Hellmann*

Children residing in foster homes often suffer from problems in attachment and experience feelings of uncertainty and instability, resulting in problems in development and identity consolidation of the child. These children need to work through past traumas, the negative experiences they accumulated within their family of origin, and their feelings of abandonment. Yet these children are often characterized by an inability to share thoughts and feelings, as well as a tendency to hide content related to their experiences and emotions, making the dialogue needed for the therapeutic process difficult to achieve. The process of hiding this content involves denial, repression, forgetfulness, and aggressive behavior. The need for a "third thing" in child therapy, uniting therapist and client while at the same time preserving the separation between them, arises in the course of therapy. This need maybe fulfilled through various therapeutic means. This chapter discusses AAP as a means to respond to this need through the integration of animals into the therapy process. With the help of the animal within the AAP process, a metaphorical discussion develops, enabling clients to share with the therapist significant content from their world. Bringing an animal to therapy helps therapists to create a safe intermediate area that gives the child, especially a foster child, a safe place in which to deal with harsh emotions and thoughts with projections and metaphors from the animal world. The choice of specific animals and their associated characteristics was derived from the questions and interests of the children themselves. In my work, I mainly take advantage of the projective nature of the animals and do not attempt to present the child with zoological facts.

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**“Take Me Under Your Wing” - Love in Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy: A Clinical Perspective on the Unique Therapeutic Bond between Animals and Humans**

*Sarit Lev-Bendov and Inbar Barel*

David’s childhood was spent in boarding schools after being removed from his home as a result of severe parental neglect. He reenacts this cycle of rejection in all his interpersonal relationships. At the beginning of therapy, the therapist felt it difficult to accept him, to contain his repulsive sides, and to love him. The bonds which David developed with the therapy dog and cat enabled him and also the therapist to connect with feelings of empathy and acceptance, trust and closeness, and finally — love. Fifteen-year-old Maya is unable to love or to be loved. As a result of a narcissistic injury she endures— due to her problematic relationship with her mother—she is incapable of allowing herself or the therapist to express feelings of love and closeness. The beginning of a change occurs through the help of a therapy dog, who shows his affection clearly and demands love from the therapist. Animal-assisted psychotherapy introduces love into the therapeutic setting. It is almost a professional axiom to many of those who specialize in this field. But what is it that characterizes this kind of love? What role does it play? What does it enable? Does it make a substantial difference in the therapeutic setting and the treatment process as compared with classic psychotherapy? In this chapter we aim to review the general concept of love in psychotherapy. We will relate to the love that is shared between people and animals, and will focus in particular on the type of love that emerges in animal assisted psychotherapy. This chapter will include theoretical conceptualizations from diverse standpoints, and will integrate case studies from our own clinical work.

**Animal-Assisted Group Psychotherapy for Children**

*Orit Harel*

The aim of the chapter is to further develop the field of animal-assisted group psychotherapy (AAGP) for children. While this field is rapidly expanding in public services institutions (schools, boarding schools, institutions for at-risk children, psychiatric hospitals, etc.), it remains strikingly absent from the research literature. To date, a theoretical conceptualization of the integration of animals into children group therapy has not been directly addressed. In this chapter, the value of treating children in groups is examined, as well as how the incorporation of animals into group therapy can enhance the efficacy of the treatment process. The optimal and minimal conditions for AAGT will be explored, while considering some of the problems and challenges that arise in this unique therapy method. Finally, the current literature is surveyed, the need for further research is reemphasized, and future directions are suggested.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### **Roni Amit** M.A. Clinical Psychology

Roni has been a licensed child clinical psychologist for the last 17 years. She first practiced AAP in a residential treatment center, where she was one of the pioneers in the field of AAP in Israel. Roni lectures on the subject of AAP at Levinsky College and serves as a clinical supervisor for AAP students and therapists. She currently owns and directs an interdisciplinary therapy center which also houses a therapy zoo. Roni has published several articles in an Israeli journal, and has presented at conventions in the field of AAP.

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### **Tamar Axelrad-Levy** B.S.W.; M.Sc. Natural Sciences

Tamar has been an animal-assisted therapist for 12 years and for the last 10 years has been working at the Yehuda - Abarbanel Psychiatric Hospital (affiliated with the Tel-Aviv Univ.), department of adolescent psychiatry, in the closed youth ward. Tamar is a co-founder of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy and past chairperson of the association's ethics committee, as well as the chairperson of the committee that formulated the association's ethics code. She lectures at the David Yellin Academic College of Education in the AAP program, as well as in the training program for supervisors for AAP therapists. Currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Hebrew University, Paul Baerwald school of Social Work and Social Welfare, Tamar is researching the principles and processes of AAP with children.

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Keren is a Practice-Based Researcher, with 14 years of clinical experience treating at-risk adolescents and substance abusers, and a clinical supervisor. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at The Graduate Center of CUNY and The Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, New York. Keren's current research is on an equine-facilitated prison-based program and human-horse relations. Keren is widely published in the area of Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP) in a number of peer-reviewed journals and serves as a reviewer for the journals *Attachment and Human Development*; *Society and Animals*; *Mifgash* (Hebrew); *Animals and Society* (Hebrew). Keren is head of the division of Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy EFP in the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy.

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### **Inbar Barel** M.A. Psychology of the Human-Animal Bond; Certificate in Family and Couples Therapy

Inbar works as a psychologist and animal-assisted psychotherapist at the Telem Clinic, has a private practice, and gives clinical supervision to AAP therapists. Her interest in AAP having grown out of her experience as an expert dog trainer, Inbar specializes in Canine-Assisted Psychotherapy, although she is also accompanied by a variety of animals. Inbar is a director of the AAP program at Oranim College, Israel, and lectures there and has also presented on the subject of AAP in several conferences. Inbar is a co-founder of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy.

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Sari integrates the fields of AAP and speech therapy in her clinical work with children with emotionally-based speech problems. She is a co-founder of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy, a member of its Governing Board, and a member of its Ethics Committee. Sari serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Israeli journal *Animals and Society*, published by Tel-Aviv University. She served as the director of the AAP program at Levinsky College in Israel for eight years and continues there as lecturer. Sari has presented on the subject of AAP at conventions both in Israel and abroad. Sari is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the school of Culture Studies at Tel Aviv University (Israel), focusing her research on the subject of the development of the professional identity of the animal-assisted psychotherapist.

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**Rachel Ben David** B.S. Biology; M.A. Anthropology; Certificates in AAP, Child and Youth Psychotherapy, Family Therapy, and AAP Clinical Supervision

Rachel had been an animal-assisted psychotherapist for more than 12 years and is currently a lecturer on the subject of AAP, specializing in the area of ethics in AAP. She chairs the Ethics Committee of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy. Rachel serves as the Senior Editor of the *Animals and Society*, the Israeli journal of the human-animal bond. Rachel has presented at conventions in the field of AAP and Anthropology of human – non-human interactions and is involved in research in the Human-Animal Bond.

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**Anat Gendelman** B.A. Psychology & Sociology; M.A. Sociology; Certificate in AAP

Anat has established and manages a petting zoo at school for children with special needs and works as an AAP therapist with autistic children and with children and teenagers suffering from mental retardation. She also works in private therapy center with children who suffer from emotional difficulties. Anat has published in an Israel's journal.

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**Orit Harel** B.A. Psychology and Biology; M.A. Educational Psychology

Orit is employed by the Jerusalem Municipality as an educational psychologist working in therapy zoos. She has studied the subject of the human-animal bond and also the connection between AAP and art therapy. Orit is currently a Ph.D. student researching the subject of Animal-Assisted Group Psychology in the School of Education at the Bar Ilan University.

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**Shira Hellmann** M.A. Special Education; Certificates in AAP, EMDR, and Family Psychotherapy.

Shira has a private practice specializing in AAP with at-risk children and youth. She also works as an AAP therapist at the Zoharim Youth Village and worked at other youth villages in the past. Shira lectures at Herzog and Washington Colleges of Education in the area of animal-assisted interventions in special education and has published in an Israeli journal.

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**Hadas Ish-lev** B.A. Psychology; B.Ed. Child and Youth Care; Certificate in AAP Clinical Supervision

Hadas has been an Animal-Assisted Psychotherapist over 10 years. Specializing in work in therapy zoos, Hadas had worked with clients of all ages, both individually and in groups, with both special-needs children and at-risk children. At present, Hadas is employed at Beit Shabtai Levi, an emergency shelter for children ages 0-6 who have been removed from their home due to abuse and neglect and also has a private clinic. Hadas has published in an Israeli journal and has presented at conventions in the field of AAP.

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**Elana Lakh** M.A. Art Therapy; ATR (Registered Art Therapist); Certificate in Jungian Psychotherapy

Elana teaches art therapy at Lesley University and has a private practice in art therapy and Jungian psychotherapy in Jerusalem. She is the director of the art therapy staff in a residential treatment center for children with emotional problems, specializing in treatment of survivors of childhood sexual abuse, and has worked in various psychiatric facilities. Elana is currently a Ph.D. student in the Psychoanalysis and Hermeneutics Department of Bar Ilan University, studying the roots of evil in the human psyche through a Jungian reading of creation myths.

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**Sarit Lev-Bendov** Psy. D.

Sarit has a private practice as a licensed psychologist and animal-assisted psychotherapist and also gives clinical supervision to AAP therapists. She is a director of the AAP program at Oranim College, Israel, and lectures there. Sarit has published a children's book and several articles in an Israeli journal. She has presented on the subject of AAP at conventions both in Israel and abroad. Sarit is a co-founder of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy and also of the first Israeli association for AAT, Nefesh Chai (Living Soul).

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**Efrat Maayan** M.A. Clinical Psychology; Certificate in Jungian Psychotherapy

Efrat is one of the pioneers of the field of AAP in Israel, specializes in the small zoo as a therapy setting, and has published several articles on her work in the therapy zoo in an Israeli journal. She is a lecturer at the AAP programs at David Yellin College and at Oranim College, both in Israel, and has given lectures and chaired sessions at several conferences. Efrat works as an animal-assisted psychologist and psychotherapist at her private clinic and therapy zoo, as well as at a drug rehabilitation center. She clinically supervises therapists and also gives workshops and courses which integrate animals, nature, and art and creative materials.

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**Michal Motro** Ph.D. Animal Behavior and Sociobiology.

Michal is one of the founders and current director of the Institute of Animal-Assisted Therapy and Education of the David Yellin Academic College of Education (Israel). She has published in an Israeli journal and also presented at local and international conferences on the subject of the human-animal bond.

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**Dror Oren** Ph.D. Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology

Dror, a certified senior clinical and educational psychologist specializing in psychodynamic therapy, lectures in a number of Schools of Psychotherapy (continuing education programs for experienced clinicians), and supervises psychologists and psychotherapists from other mental health professions, including AAP. He also teaches courses and workshops for therapy teams throughout Israel in various subjects in psychotherapy, and is especially involved with the development of the area of therapeutic work with parents, both lecturing and publishing on the subject. He is former director of the Counseling and Psychotherapy Institute at the Haifa University Interdisciplinary Clinical Center and currently has a private clinic in the city of Karmiel in the north of Israel. Dror is on the Board of Directors, as well as the Ethics Committee, of the Israeli Association for Psychotherapy. Dror publishes articles, thoughts and joint work with colleagues on his website: <http://www.drororen.com>

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**Nancy Parish-Plass** B.A. Psychology; Certificates in AAP and in Integrative Psychotherapy

Nancy specializes in the area of AAP with at-risk children, has published and presented in conferences in Israel and abroad on this subject. She is a senior psychotherapist and case manager at the Ahava Emergency Shelter for At-Risk Children. Nancy is co-founder and chairperson of the IAAAP – The Israel Association of Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy. She serves on the Editorial Board of HABRI Central (an online platform for open research and collaboration on the subject of the Human-Animal Bond), focusing on the development of clear and standardized definitions of various fields of animal-assisted interventions. She serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Israeli journal *Animals and Society*. Nancy is currently an M.S.W. candidate at University of Haifa (Israel), focusing her research on the effects of the integration of animals in psychotherapy on the therapeutic alliance with at-risk children.

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**Anna Shapiro** B.A. Psychology; Certificate in AAP

Anna is currently an M.A. candidate in the Interdisciplinary Expressive Arts program at Tel Aviv University, focusing her research on the subject of the nature of the therapeutic alliance established in AAP with at-risk children. Anna works as animal-assisted psychotherapist in education, welfare and rehabilitation services, with at-risk children, special-needs children, and with mentally ill adults. Anna specializes in work both in small therapy zoo and in clinic settings, both individually and in groups. Anna has published in an Israeli journal.

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**Sigal Zilcha-Mano** Ph.D. Clinical Psychology

Dr. Zilcha-Mano is a clinical psychologist, supervisor, lecturer and researcher. Her doctoral research focused on the human-animal bond from an attachment perspective. She has published a number of ground-breaking studies in the area of attachment to pets. The questionnaires she developed on attachment to pets have been translated to five different languages and are used by researchers around the world. She has completed her first post-doctoral research at Harvard University on factors that impact mental health and as a Fulbright scholar, she conducted research in the area of psychotherapy at Adelphi University. She has been an adjunct professor in the School of Psychology at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center (Israel) since 2007.

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