

Use of Animal Therapy for PTSD Treatment Set to Increase According to Igor Purlantov

Pets Are Expected to Help More Soldiers Returning Home from Combat

New York, NY (prHWY.com) February 6, 2012 - With an increased number of military personnel returning home from deployment overseas, there has been an increased focus on ways to treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through animal therapy according to animal rights advocate Igor Purlantov. The need for an effective treatment of PTSD is crucial given that an estimated one in five Iraq war veterans has some degree of PTSD or combat related stress but only one third of those screened receives any treatment.

Although animal therapy has long been used to treat physical disabilities, it is now being used more frequently to treat psychological complications such as PTSD and other combat related stress. According to Igor Purlantov the use of animal therapy to treat PTSD has shown some very promising results with more than 80% of patients reporting reduced symptoms of PTSD thanks to animal therapy. This is much needed relief for war veterans that suffer from the effects of PTSD which includes depression, anxiety, flashbacks, and sleeplessness that can unfortunately also lead to suicide.

More veterans are now being written prescriptions for companion animals to treat PTSD as doctors are realizing that pets can help alleviate anxiety, stress, panic disorder and depression says Igor Purlantov. Studies have also shown that having a pet such as a cat can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels and feelings of loneliness. At the same time, having a pet such as a dog can increase the likelihood of engaging in exercise, outdoor activities and socializing with others. Also, when animal therapy patients find themselves caring for a pet it encourages them to be responsible and follow a daily schedule which is helpful in the treatment of PTSD.

One successful program that is helping treat veterans through pet therapy is Pets for Vets (www.pets-for-vets.com). Pets for Vets was founded in 2008 by animal behaviorist and trainer, Clarissa Black who was looking for ways to help veterans suffering from PTSD and other related combat stress. Pets for Vets finds companion dogs from local rescue groups and gives them the necessary training before partnering them with a veteran that adopts the dog into their home forever. Wonderful programs such as Pets for Vets have been shown to help veterans reclaim normalcy in their lives and ease the often painful transition back to civilian life according to Igor Purlantov.

As for the animals, with an estimated eight million dogs and cats abandoned at shelters across the United States, it allows for them to have a second chance at life as well. With five out of ten shelter dogs and seven out of ten shelter cats euthanized each year, these animal therapy programs can reduce euthanasia rates by giving these shelter animals the chance to be an excellent companion for a war veteran. At the end of the day, these animal therapy programs are a real win-win situation in that shelter animals are giving a second chance at life and war veterans are given a second chance at health and happiness says Igor Purlantov.

Igor Purlantov is an animal rights advocate that follows and writes about animal news and trends to help raise awareness of animal rights and protection. You can read and learn about his work on www.igorpurlantov.net or follow him on twitter @igorpurlantov

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