

CREATURE COMFORT EVALUATION TO QUALIFY FOR PET THERAPY CERTIFICATION

This evaluation takes the team – both the animal AND the human – into consideration when evaluating for appropriate behavior and aptitude for pet therapy visits.

Traits we're looking for in our therapy teams:

Humans:

Friendly personality
Interested in people
Advocate for the pet
Able to control pet
Relaxed and confident
Good working relationship with pet

Pets:

Friendly and gentle behavior
Interested in people
Reliably well-behaved
Predictable reactions appropriate to situation
Relaxed and confident
Has attentive relationship with owner

Regulations and Requirements:

- All teams must be re-evaluated every three years
- Pet handlers between 12 and 18 can test with the pet, but must have supervised visitation with adult.
- Workshop must be taken before the evaluation, however evaluation can be scheduled up to three months after workshop.
- For their own safety, cats and rabbits must be transported in a carrier to and from the facility. They must be restrained at all times during visits using a collar or harness attached to a leash.

The following are NOT acceptable/allowed during testing:

- Training aids
- Prong or choke collars
- Jerking or pulling on leash
- Harsh words/tone or rough treatment
- Treats

The following behaviors will immediately stop the test: urination or defecation in testing room; any sign of aggressive behavior.

Owner's Name _____ Animal's Name/Age _____
Date of Test _____ Animal's Breed _____

Accepting a Friendly Stranger

Evaluator and team walk towards each other, meet in the middle while team carries cat/rabbit. Evaluator introduces himself and shakes hands with handler. He then walks around team, asks pet's name and asks to pet the animal. Evaluator pets the animal and then walks away.

2 pts - Animal remains calm while approached and then pet by the evaluator

1 pt - Animal stays put in handler's arms, but appears wary of evaluator

0 pts - Animal visibly backs away from evaluator or reacts in aggressive manner

Evaluator Note _____

Pet Temperament

(Any pet that receives a 0 in this category will not move on to next part of evaluation) Handler can be next to pet and speak encouragingly to them during this exercise. Evaluator is assessing the pet's comfort in being handled by a stranger.

Evaluator will brush pet (either with brush brought by handler or a general one). Evaluator will then proceed to inspect the pet including looking in ears, checking teeth and breath and touching all over the body including feet.

3 pts - Animal shows no sign of fear or aggression and allows the evaluator to do all of the above

2 pts - Animal must be verbally encouraged by handler to allow evaluator to brush and inspect.

1 pt - Animal allows brushing only.

0 pts - Animal allows zero of the above

Evaluator Note _____

Simulating Visiting

Exposure to Medical Equipment

Evaluator will be assessing both how the animal reacts to an unfamiliar object such as a wheelchair or IV pole and also assessing if the animal is eager to meet the person. Evaluator will also be assessing the handler for appropriate visiting behavior.

The team and a person sitting in a wheelchair will approach each other from opposite sides of the room. Handler will introduce themselves and ask if it is ok to place the animal in the person's lap.

A person using a walker or IV pole will approach the team and meet the animal.

2 pts - No piece of medical equipment seems to phase the animal and approach is friendly.

1 pts - Animal is wary of some equipment but recovers quickly.

0 pts - Animal is not interested in visiting.

Negotiating Noisy Crowd (small dogs and pets may be carried)

Evaluator is assessing if animal is comfortable in a crowded noisy room.

The team will walk towards a group of 3-4 people who are talking loudly. After they pass each other, one of the group will drop something loudly.

1 pt - Animal may be startled but remains calm and friendly during exercise

0 pts - Animal cowers from the loud crowd – appears stressed.

Enthusiastic Group Petting

A group of 3-4 people will gather around the animal – either seated or in chairs. The handler will pass the animal to several people to pet.

2 pts - Animal is content and enjoys the attention.

1 pt - Animal is compliant, but appears to be putting up with the petting rather than loving it.

0 pts - Animal visibly wants to leave the lap.

Evaluator Note _____

Meeting a Neutral Dog

The team will approach another handler/dog team from a distance of about 15 feet. Handler will be instructed to carry their animal to within an arm's length of the evaluator. Once both animals are quiet, handler and evaluator will greet and shake hands and turn and walk away together.

2 pts – Animal notices but doesn't react to other dog.

1 pt – Animal becomes stressed and wants to get away from dog.

Maximum Points on Evaluation - 12

Total Score Needed to Pass – 9 (75%)

Total Score _____

Evaluator _____

Comments:
