

<b>ChooseKindness.com Career Description</b>	
<b>Career</b>	Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) Practitioner
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<b>What training is needed to work in this field?</b>	To provide therapy (including AAT) in the U.S., a clinician must be licensed in a field that provides therapy (e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, mental health/counseling, etc.). Clinicians who incorporate therapy animals into their practice are strongly encouraged to become equally familiar with and proficient in animal-related issues and skills (e.g., animal behavior, humane animal husbandry, humane animal handling, humane animal training, etc.)
<b>What is a typical week like or what do you spend most of your time doing in your job?</b>	I assess clients for appropriateness to receive AAT, then I develop a treatment plan for each client. I provide treatment and document the session. To maintain my skills, I read books and articles about developments in the fields of AAT, animals, and clients. I network with other providers. I train and exercise my animals. I market my business and meet with potential clients (both individuals and organizations).
<b>What is the job outlook for this field?</b>	Currently there are only a handful of job positions in the U.S. that are written specifically for AAT. Most AAT providers get a job first, and incorporate animals later – or they start their own business. As more patients learn about and request AAT, and as more research is done which proves the effectiveness of AAT, more facilities will include AAT in their job descriptions.
<b>What are the benefits of working in this field?</b>	Getting to help both people and animals – what a treat!
<b>What advice or other information do you want to share with someone considering this field?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Because this is a developing field, and because it is emotionally appealing to put people and animals together, some people may be tempted to dismiss standards as unnecessary. Such rejection would sound the death knell for the field. If you want to do this work, it is worthwhile to do it right: learn standards of practice and follow them.</li> <li>2) If you are a credentialed human provider, learn an equal amount about animals. The animals depend on us to protect them.</li> </ol> <p>If you are an animal professional and want to do AAT, get credentialed as a human provider. Otherwise, learn more</p>

	about the human side of the equation and provide animal-assisted <i>activities</i> (AAA) instead of AAT. (A license in a human healthcare field is not required of AAA providers.)
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