Purpose

The purpose of the Certified Animal Assisted Play Therapy Supervisor (CAAPT-S) program is to designate highly skilled supervisors who provide guidance and case consultation for professionals wishing to become certified in AAPT as therapists. Individuals are qualified to provide supervision individually and in small groups to empower professionals-in-training and to help them develop their confidence and competence in conducting AAPT with their clients. The supervisor credential indicates specialized skill in supervising anyone interested in AAT. It is advisable for supervisees to first acquire at least 35 hours of training, 18 hours of which have a hands-on focus.

The CAAPT-S certification is based upon demonstrated competencies in the same array of areas as required for the Certified Animal Assisted Play Therapist credential as well as the added areas of conducting supervision of complex therapy sessions, recognizing and assisting with issues related to animal behavior and welfare, empowering supervisees, and conducting groups in-person or online.

There are prerequisites for beginning the process of becoming an AAPT Supervisor, as well as requirements designed to enhance skills and prepare the candidate for this level of work. It is essential that CAAPT-Ss demonstrate strong fidelity to the AAPT model and are well-versed in all of the skills they help develop in supervisees pursuing their own certifications in AAPT as therapists.

Supervisors play an exceptionally important role in helping the individuals with whom they work as well as in advancing the AAPT field as a whole. The rest of this document describes the steps one takes to become a supervisor.
The International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy® (IIAAPT) was created to advance the development of Animal Assisted Play Therapy™ (AAPT) through training, supervision, standards, and credentialing. The mission is to ensure the highest quality of professional practice of this approach at all levels, as well as fidelity to model.

The IIAAPT supports the use of theoretically grounded and empirically supported methods. The welfare of human clients as well as nonhuman animal assistants is of critical importance, and the certification program described herein is designed to ensure that all participants benefit from involvement in this approach.

The supervisor certification program is rigorous and requires substantial work and dedication on the part of professional practitioners. The IIAAPT believes that stringent credentialing based on demonstrated competence is more meaningful as a statement of the professional's commitment and achievement in the highest quality practice of AAPT with clients while preserving the humane treatment of the animals involved.

If you have any questions about this certification, please contact us:

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Requirements

In general, people who are already certified by IIAAPT as therapists and have shown themselves to be highly skilled in the many aspects of AAPT will be invited to start the Supervisor track, although those who are interested can certainly make their interest in this known.

Prerequisites

The following are prerequisites to begin any part of the AAPT Supervisor training process. Candidates must have:

- An active professional license in good standing in a relevant mental health field.
- A supervision credential in their primary field (at the state or provincial level, or equivalent).
- A Certified Animal Assisted Play Therapy credential for at least 1 year, or 100 hours of documented post-certification AAPT-specific experience (i.e., post CAAPT or CPP-AAPT).
- A Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (or equivalent) credential (in the future this requirement will likely broaden, although play therapy requirements will still be in place)

Requirements

The following requirements are part of the process for becoming an AAPT Supervisor. They are listed in the usual order in which they occur, although some variation is possible. Candidates must:

- Take the online course, Supervisory Case Consultation in AAPT, offered by the International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy™ (IIAAPT).
- Take the online course, AAPT Ethics and Animal Welfare, offered by the IIAAPT.
- Participate in the AAPT Supervision Mentorship Practical Experience. This entails joining a supervision group led by Risë VanFleet or Tracie Faa-Thompson, or another supervisor they designate. [The candidate remains involved for the life of the group, typically 18 hours completed in 12 or so 1.5-hour meetings. The candidate initially observes the process and adds comments and ideas when invited to do so. Over time, the primary supervisor (mentor) invites the candidate to take more of a lead on some cases. These experiences are discussed later by the mentor and the candidate. The candidate is not paid for this experience, and the costs for being part of it are included in the total fees for the Supervisory Case Consultation in AAPT online course.]
Other Considerations

The Certified AAPT Supervisor credential is based on demonstrated competence in all the areas needed to provide high quality supervision in AAPT.

Certified AAPT Supervisors will conduct supervision only for those species for which they are well-versed.

In some cases, a Certified AAPT Supervisor will be paired with a properly credentialed animal professional. This depends on the scope of practice the supervisor has with regard to specific species, animal behavior, body language, training, and so on. In these cases, the supervisor will be responsible for the supervisory session but will invite the animal professional to observe and comment upon animal behaviors, stress signals, and interpretations during that session. They will serve as an interdisciplinary team working within each of their boundaries of practice/designated competencies.

Questions that arise in supervision should be directed to AAPT leadership (VanFleet & Faa-Thompson). As the field expands, this process will be detailed further, but at present, these are the two individuals to whom a supervisor turns for confirmation, suggestions, review.

Supervisors will immediately inform the AAPT leadership of unresolved problems that arise in supervision, such as ethical concerns, conflict, resistance to supervisory input, and the like.
As with all aspects of AAPT training, supervision, and professional development, questions and challenges are to be handled in an empathic, empowering manner while ensuring that supervisees adhere to AAPT principles and ethics of practice, as outlined in the AAPT book as well as online courses developed and provided by IIAAPT.

Questions of any kind about this process should be directed to Dr. Risë VanFleet or Tracie Faa-Thompson, co-founders of IIAAPT. Their contact information follows.

*Murrie congratulates Certified Animal Assisted Play Therapy™ Supervisors.*
For More Information

Information about training programs, online courses, and this certification process can be found on the following websites:

www.iiapt.org

www.risevanfleet.com offers a gateway to all the various sites pertaining to this certification.

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