

Is there peer-reviewed research on Psychiatric Service Dogs (PSD)?

PSDS will play a critical role in establishing the evidence base for PSD. In the meantime, the articles below will assist your understanding of PSD.

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- Wallwork, R., *Rhodesian Ridgeback to the Rescue! The Rise of the Psychiatric Service Dog* (Jul/Aug 2007) American Kennel Club Family Dog, pp. 44-46.
- Esnayra, J., *Help From Man's Best Friend: Psychiatric Service Dogs Are Helping Consumers Deal With the Symptoms of Mental Illness* (July 2007) Behavioral Healthcare, 27:7, pp.30-31.
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- Smith, M.J., Esnayra, J., Love, C., *Successful Use Of A Psychiatric Service Dog: A Case Study* (2003) J. Psych Services, 54(1):110-111.
- Becker, M., Morton, D., *The Healing Power of Pets* (2002) Hyperion, New York, pp.153-155.
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- Allen, K., Blascovich, J., *The Value Of Service Dogs For People With Severe Ambulatory Disabilities* (1996) JAMA, 275 (13): 1001-1006.

Want More Information?

PSDS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization

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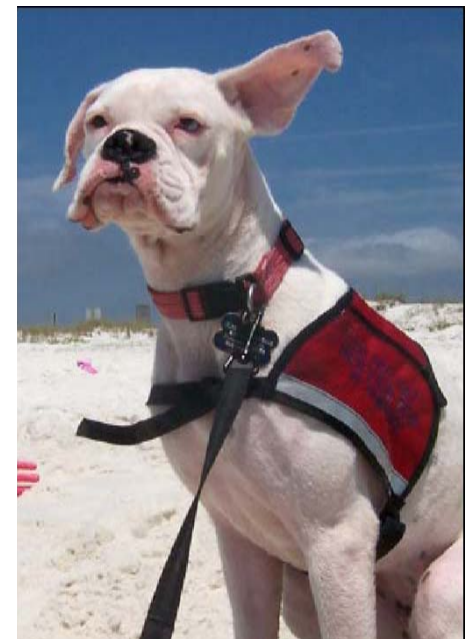
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FOR PROVIDERS

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE DOGS

What is a Psychiatric Service Dog (PSD)?

A dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual disabled by severe mental illness.

What is a disability?

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Having a psychiatric diagnosis does not necessarily mean you are disabled under the law. What matters is that the degree of impairment is 'substantial'. Consequently, it is in your best interest to document your disability. Working with your doctor is a good first step. Ask your doctor to write a letter stating that you are disabled and that he/she supports your use of a PSD. Keep this a letter in your personal files.

What diagnoses may be assisted by a PSD?

All DSM-IV Axis I disorders such as, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Panic Disorder, Agoraphobia, Social Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, PTSD, etc.



What tasks can PSD be trained to perform?

- ◆ Remind handler to take medication on time
- ◆ Turn on lights & search a room for intruders
- ◆ Warm handler's body during a panic attack
- ◆ Interrupt repetitive behaviors
- ◆ Attend to handler during emotional distress
- ◆ Accompany handler outside of the home
- ◆ Alert to mania, panic attacks or dissociation
- ◆ Interrupt dissociative episodes or flashbacks
- ◆ Hallucination discernment
- ◆ Mitigate hyper-vigilance and fear
- ◆ Provide a safe grounding presence
- ◆ Mitigate paranoia w/reality testing

Where are PSD allowed to go?

PSD are allowed to access public spaces including but not limited to: restaurants, hospitals, airplanes, doctor's offices, cabs, zoos, stores, etc.

Where may PSD be lawfully excluded?

PSD may be lawfully excluded from private spaces including but not limited to private homes, country clubs, churches, etc. They may also be excluded from spaces where their presence would constitute a safety risk (e.g., operating rooms, research laboratories, construction sites) or situations in which the animal poses a direct threat to others.

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What about allergic or phobic persons?

If the allergic or phobic condition in question, rises to the legal definition of a disability, then **both** the allergic or phobic person and the client with a PSD must be accommodated at the location. Remember, very few allergic or phobic conditions are disabilities, under the law. However, it is best to err on the side of safety. Welcome the PSD team and ask the allergic or phobic person to sit away from the dog.

How can I support my client's decision to utilize a PSD?

Keep an open mind. Help your client build a support team (e.g., physician, therapist, trainer, peers). Surf the internet to educate yourself about PSD. Ask your client how the dog is being trained to assist her. If your clinical judgment supports you to do so, provide the client with a letter of disability that expresses support for her use of a PSD. Join our free clinicians' listserv.