2014

Pet Stress Away- Using Dogs to Help Students Cope with Stress

Madison Beck
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Maura Buckley
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Sarah Wakumoto
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters

Recommended Citation

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Problems Seminar at DigitalCommons@WPI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Problems Seminar Posters by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WPI.
Pet Stress Away

Using Dogs to Help Students Cope with Stress

Madison Beck (MGE), Maura Buckley (ME), Sarah Wakumoto (CHE)
Advisors: Professor Joseph Beck and Professor Robert Traver

Problem

College students are under stress. Without healthy coping strategies, stress can lead to undesirable consequences. Colleges offer programs to help, but many are underutilized.

Background

• 85% of college students report feeling stress on a daily basis\(^1\)
• Just petting a dog has been proven to reduce blood pressure and pulse and alleviate stress\(^2\)

Assessment Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Induce Stress</th>
<th>Take Quiz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieve Stress</td>
<td>Sit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students reported stress on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) after each step.

Results and Recommendations

Petting dogs reduced stress levels twice as much as sitting. Colleges should provide access to dogs to enable students to relieve stress in a healthy way.

Cost - Benefit

- Little to no monetary cost
- Fun and healthy way to relieve stress
- Institutionalizes a new program at WPI

References


Long-Term Outcome

The student club PAWS (Promotion of Animal Welfare Society) will use our project to institutionalize a therapy dog program at WPI.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Gregory Snoddy for helping us bring therapy dogs to WPI, to the IRB for their efficient service, and to PAWS for continuing the program.