



Risk Assessment of the Delta Paws the Pressure™ Program

Activity

Paws the Pressure™ (PTP) is a program designed to be a stress reliever for University students and businesses. For students the program is aimed at offering a “break” during semester and in particular during stressful periods, i.e. exams. Within the workplace our therapy dogs can help boost staff morale and reduce stress levels.

The PTP teams are sourced from our existing Delta Therapy Dog Program which is a heartwarming program that brings the joys of animal companionship to those who need it most. Delta’s amazing and devoted volunteer Therapy Dog Teams brighten the lives of an estimated 20,000 Australians in hospitals and care facilities every week.

Our world class program is the largest of its kind in Australia with over 1,200+ volunteers and their special dogs making regular visits to health care facilities to offer the wonderful benefits of pet therapy, spend time with patients and offer a chat, a floppy ear to listen and a paw to shake.

Overview of Hazards

Infection Control (e.g. hygiene, disease, infection)		
• Hand Hygiene	• Transfer of Disease	• Allergies
Dog Interactions		
• Fear of dogs	• Dog Bites	• Scratch
• Cleanliness	• Injury to dog – stress signs	
Volunteer		
• Unsuitability	• Behaviour	• Experience in performing the role
• Accident whilst traveling to and from visits	• Injury whilst visiting	
Environment/Venue		
• Temperature (heat, cold)		
Manual Tasks/Ergonomics		
• Manual tasks (repetitive, heavy)	• Restricted space	
People		
• Attendees	• Psychological/Stress	

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
Infection Control (e.g. hygiene, disease, infection)						
<i>Hand Hygiene</i>	Low	Attendees are encouraged to wash their hands after interacting with the dog.	Organisers to reinforce good hygiene protocols. Organisation to provide access to areas to wash hands or non-water based products for cleaning of hands.	Yes	Ongoing.	Organisation
<i>Transfer of Disease</i>	Low	All dogs in the program are fully vaccinated (C5).	Volunteer to provide evidence that their dog has been fully vaccinated.	Yes	Annually/2 yearly/on request.	Volunteer/Delta
		A health check is performed on the dog at assessment and reassessment.	Volunteer to provide evidence that their dog has undertaken a full health check with their vet (health screening protocols of Delta).	Yes	Annually/2 yearly.	Volunteer/Delta
		All dogs are required to be on flea/tick and heartworm preventative medications.	Volunteer to provide evidence that their dog is on a flea/tick and heartworm preventative regime.	Yes	Annually/2 yearly/on request.	Volunteer/Delta
<i>Allergies</i>	Low	Attendees who have an allergy to dogs need to be identified before the visit occurs.	Organiser of visit to identify if any attendees have allergies and advise them not to participate.	Yes	Preferably communication has occurred before the visit has been organised to let attendees know that	Organiser

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
					dogs will be present on the day.	
Dog interactions						
<i>Fear of dogs</i>	Low	Attendees with a fear of dogs need to be identified before the visit occurs.	If it is identified that an attendee is fearful of dogs than they should be notified of the visit and encouraged to not attend.	Yes	Preferably communication has occurred before the visit has been organised to let attendees know that dogs will be present on the day.	Organiser
<i>Dog Bites</i>	Low	All dogs have been temperament tested to ensure their suitability for the program.	Dogs are temperament tested using a strict set of protocols to ensure they are suitable for the program.	Yes	Temperament testing protocols are reviewed every 2 years. New protocols to be implemented 1 st January 2018.	Delta
			Dog bites are covered under Delta's public risk insurance of \$20M.	Yes	March – annually.	Delta
<i>Scratch</i>	Low	The volunteer provides advice to the attendees on how their dog likes to be approached and interacted with.	Dogs are temperament tested using a strict set of protocols to ensure they are suitable for the program.		Temperament testing protocols are reviewed every 2 years. New protocols to be implemented 1 st January 2018.	Delta
			The volunteer is provided with tips via the training and volunteer handbook to avoid their dog scratching.	Yes	Provided at training. Updates and refresher topics communicated via co-ordinator, social media, website, newsletter or email.	Volunteer

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
<i>Cleanliness</i>	Low	Attendees are encouraged to pat the dog in a low risk environment.	Dogs are required to be washed before every visit. In the case of weather conditions (rain) the volunteer will ensure that their dog is free from odour, matted coat and dry.	Yes	Weekly or fortnightly depending on visiting schedule.	Volunteer
		Volunteers are required to toilet their dogs before a visit.	All volunteers are required to toilet their dogs before a visit in a designated area. The volunteer carries poo bags to clean up after their dog.	No	It is standard practice for volunteers to carry poo bags on their visits. Delta promotes responsible pet ownership whilst visiting.	Volunteer
<i>Injury to the Dog – stress signs</i>	Low	The dog's wellbeing is paramount to the program.	All volunteers are trained to identify stress as well as how to avoid injuries whilst visiting. Volunteers, if they identify stress in the dogs, will stop the visit immediately and remove their dog from the building.	Yes	Provided at training. Updates and refresher topics communicated via co-ordinator, social media, website, newsletter or email.	Delta/Volunteer
Volunteer						
<i>Unsuitability</i>	Low	Volunteers are screened to determine their eligibility to join the program.	All volunteers are police checked to allow them to visit with attendees and some may have additional	Yes	Three yearly. A copy of the police check is available on request.	Delta

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
			checks like Working with Children's checks depending on the facility they visit.			
<i>Behaviour</i>	Low	Volunteer's behaviour around attendees and their ability to communicate appropriately is determined.	All volunteers in the program are provided with a 1 day training which identifies areas of importance such as WH&S, communication, appropriate behaviour around children, management of their dog as well as how children learn to read.	Yes	Provided at training. Updates and refresher topics communicated via co-ordinator, social media, website, newsletter or email.	Delta
			All volunteers sign a volunteer agreement that outlines both the volunteer and Delta's commitment to the program. All volunteers are aware that they can be discharged from the program for inappropriate behaviour.	Yes	On attending the training. Evaluated regularly via feedback from the facility.	Delta
<i>Accident whilst traveling to and from visits</i>	Low	Volunteers must have a mode of transport to get to and from the visits.	Volunteers are required to have a reliable form of transport and appropriate insurance for their vehicle.	No		Volunteer

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
<i>Injury whilst visiting</i>	Low	Volunteers avoid the likelihood of an accident whilst visiting.	The volunteer is provided with training to identify any risks that they may encounter in a visit.	Yes	Training is provided on induction and reviewed in line with temperament testing protocols. Updates and refresher topics communicated via co-ordinator, social media, website, newsletter or email.	Delta
			Volunteer is covered under Delta Society's Volunteer accident insurance.	Yes	March – annually.	Delta
Environment/Venue						
<i>Temperature (heat, cold)</i>	Low	Volunteer and their dogs undertake visits dependant on weather conditions.	Volunteers are advised that visiting on days where the temperature is 38° or over is not recommended.	Yes	Regular and one off visits.	Volunteer
Manual tasks/Ergonomics						
<i>Manual tasks (repetitive, heavy)</i>	Low	Dogs are required to be lifted.	Volunteers are advised not to lift a dog over 20kg and are provided with training on how to lift their dog if it is under this weight.	Yes	With changes to WH&S regulations.	Delta/Volunteer
<i>Restricted space</i>	Medium	Volunteers and dog may be required to visit areas that are	Volunteers in the program must be healthy and fit and have the ability to	Yes	Each visit. A rule of thumb is a minimum of 3	Volunteer

Risk	Level	Risk	How do we minimise risk	Review		Responsibility
				Yes/No	How often	
		restrictive in space.	<p>sit/stand where needed without any deterrent to their health.</p> <p>On most occasions there will be more than one team the so volunteers will determine a suitable amount of distance between each of the dogs.</p>		metres between each team.	

People						
<i>Attendees</i>	Low	<p>Refer the above areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infection control • Dog Interactions • Manual tasks/Ergonomics 				
<i>Psychological/Stress</i>	Low	Volunteer undergoes undue stress whilst involved in the program.	Volunteers are provided with a designated co-ordinator for their area who they can talk to and seek help in dealing with any issues.	Yes	As part of initial training and on an ongoing basis where required.	Volunteer/Delta

Assessed Risk Level		Description of Risk Level	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	If an incident were to occur, there would be little likelihood that an injury would result.	Undertake the activity with the existing controls in place.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	If an incident were to occur, there would be some chance that First Aid treatment would result.	Additional controls may be needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	High	If an incident were to occur, it would be likely that an injury requiring medical treatment would result.	Controls will need to be in place before the activity is undertaken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extreme	If an incident were to occur, it would be likely that a permanent, debilitating injury or death would result.	Consider alternatives to doing the activity. Significant control measures will need to be implemented to ensure safety.