

## **Therapy Dog, Service Dog, & Emotional Support Animal**

There is so much misunderstanding of what these names mean, what training is needed, and what special privileges they have. So I want to start out with the definitions of each.

### **\*What is a Therapy Dog?**

Therapy dogs are dogs who volunteer with their owners/handlers to help Other People in settings such as schools, nursing homes, hospitals, funeral homes, homeless shelters, etc. Doing Therapy Dog work is only Volunteer Work. At this time, insurance will not pay for Therapy Dog Work.

Therapy Dog work for Other People, to lift their spirits and brighten their day.

It is Scientifically proven, when a well behaved Therapy Dog is present, it physically lowers our blood pressure, lowers our heartrate, lowers our stress level, and lessens physical pain.

Mentally the Therapy Dogs lifts our spirits, brightens our day, makes us laugh, makes us less lonely, less depressed, and gives us hope.

Therapy Dogs Motivate Other People to physically move. \*For Example; You might volunteer to help a licened physical therapist (You are only there as the dog's handler). The therapist might have their patient doing arms exercises. The therapist might have their paitent pet/brush your Therapy Dog or throw a ball for your Therapy Dog. The paitent's mind is no longer on the pain moving their arm may cause, but they are happily enjoying petting, brushing, & throwing the ball for your Therapy Dog. The Therapist might have their patient "Walk" your Therapy Dog down the hall with you and the therapist.

Help therapist work on memory exercises for Alzheimer's Patients, using your Therapy Dog to bring toys to the patient. What toys did we start with? What toys did the dog bring back? What toys are still out of sight around the corner?

**\*Therapy Dogs do NOT have Public Access privileges.** This means they can NOT go everywhere with their owners, on planes, in restaurants, etc. just because they are therapy dogs.

### **\*Training a Certified Therapy Dog is a long process, consisting of many training courses.**

- Basic Obedience/Good Manner Group Course (8 weekly classes)
- Advanced Fundamentals Group Course (7 weekly classes)
- Canine Good Citizen Group Course/Public Access Training (7 weekly classes)
- Then you can choose your favorite Therapy Dog Group and schedule your Test.

If you pass your Test, you and your dog will become a Certified Therapy Dog Volunteer Team and a Member of your chosen Therapy Dog Group. Your Therapy Dog Group will cover you under their insurance when you are volunteering, in the case something happens to you, your dog, the facility, or a patient you are visiting.

\*Not all dogs have what it take to become a Therapy Dog.

\*Even if you have that special Social Butterfly of a dog who has what it takes, sometimes the dog may need to repeat a Course or two, until they are ready to go on to their next Level Course of training.

## What is a Service Dog?

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines the term Service Dog as "dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform Skills Tasks for Their Person with Disabilities". Dogs are the most common service animals, having assisted people since at least 1927.

**\*Only Fully Trained Service Dogs have Public Access Privileges.** This means they can go anywhere with their Person with Disabilities, on planes, in restaurants, etc.

\*To prevent Fraudulent Service Dogs, their Person Must Qualify for a Service Dog.

We Specialize in helping People with Disabilities train their own Service Dogs. You will attend weekly group classes with your dog AND you will practice everyday at home and out in public. (Until your dog is Fully Trained Service Dog, the dog is NOT allowed in a public buildings that sells food. But you can normally take them everywhere else. If you are unsure, please ask permission before entering a business.)

I want YOU to be the Only person working with your dog AND YOU will be the Only person taking care of your dog. This will build a very tight bond with your dog. I want your dog to focus on you and no one else. A Service Dog is "On Duty" 24/7. They can NOT be distracted by other people petting or playing with them.

**Training a Service Dog is a long process, consisting of many training courses.**

- Basic Obedience/Good Manner Group Course (8 weekly classes)
- Advanced Fundamentals Group Course (7 weekly classes)
- Canine Good Citizen Group Course/Public Access Training (7 weekly classes)
- Service Dog Skills Tasks Course (7 weekly classes)

\*Not all dogs have what it take to become a Service Dog.

\*Even if you find that special dog who has what it takes, sometimes the dog may need to repeat a Course or two, until they are ready to go on to their next Level Course of training.

## What is an Emotional Support Animals?

An Emotional Support Animal is prescribed by a license medical doctor. For people who might be suffering from loneliness, depression, etc.

An Emotional Support Animal is an animal that provides relief to individuals with "psychiatric disability through companionship." **Emotional Support Animals** may be any type of pet, and **are NOT** recognized as **Service Animals** under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

\*Emotional Support Animal are pets for companionship, no training is required.

**\*Emotional Support Animals do NOT have Public Access privileges.** This means they can NOT go everywhere with their person, in grocery stores, restaurants, etc. just because they are Emotional Support Animals.