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# The effect of dog interaction through therapy trained animals or Harrisonburg-Rockingham SPCA volunteering on high achieving first year college student adjustment period

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RUNNING HEAD: THERAPY DOGS ON ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

The Effect of Dog Interaction through  
Therapy Trained Animals or  
Harrisonburg-Rockingham SPCA Volunteering on  
High Achieving First Year College Student Adjustment Period

Senior Honors Project Submission  
In Fulfillment of the Honors Interdisciplinary  
Senior Thesis Capstone Project

Kamille Leslie Aiello

Submitted April 11, 2017

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of , James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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HONORS COLLEGE APPROVAL:

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full at the Honors College Symposium on April 21, 2017.

# THERAPY DOGS ON ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

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## **Introduction**

Change is one small word with many huge implications. The world is full of change, yet somehow the thought of it can make even the strongest person weak. Entering college can be the change of a lifetime for some people, and it is these people that either thrive under the differences or struggle because they aren't sure where to turn. Colleges and universities across the nation offer many different schedules of orientation for their incoming first year students. These can include an on campus visit during the spring, an on campus visit during the summer, and/or a multiple day orientation before classes start in the fall semester.

James Madison University does a great job of introducing students to community from their first moments as enrolled students on campus by implementing Orientation Groups, and creating bonds in specific colleges through freshman advisors. There is never a shortage of community on campus. However, sometimes students don't mesh with their community, or they are looking for one that includes a passion they possess. Those who don't find their group often have a harder time adjusting to their new home. These students may find a challenge from a violated expectation about their university in an academic or social context (Pancer, 2000).

Dr. Colleen Conley defines psychosocial adjustment as "greater psychosocial well-being and lower psychosocial distress" in her article talking about how students in a psychosocial wellness seminar are often better adjusted than students who are not (2013). Adjustment is not an experience that happens over a period of a few days. It often takes students well into their first semester of classes to feel that they have adequately adjusted to life away from home. One study even waited until February to give an assessment of adjustment for their first-year students (Pancer, 2000). Most colleges and universities do not offer a continued adjustment technique. The first-year students are left to their own instincts and proactive measures to seek out

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community at their school, but it is in this dilemma where college counseling centers may become available and have the answers for students.

James Madison University's Counseling Center provides many services in individual counseling, group counseling and self-help resources that are available on their website. However, with as many resources as the Counseling Center provides, there is still a stigma surrounding mental health that is prevalent around the college campus as well as in the general population (Eisenberg, 2009). Many people question if mental health is as important as physical health. Even though the two are often interconnected, it is easy to only see that someone's physical health is deteriorating and a little bit more difficult to see someone's mental health spiral. But poor physical health can be a sign that someone's mental health is also poor, and students should be aware of this in their friends and it's one subtle detail faculty and staff can pick up on as well (Penedo, 2005). Adjustment to a new place, a new chapter in life, and a more rigorous academic challenge can be difficult for students, but this doesn't mean that they should have to find resources off campus to encourage and support them.

One common aspect of adjustment families forget to talk to their student about is leaving a pet at home (Sable, 1995). Many students with pets at home find themselves missing this non-human companion more than some of their old friends. Pets provide a world of solace, peace, understanding and comfort for students before they enter college, and some even say their pet is their best friend (McConnell, 2011). These students then come to college and leave their best friend at home. Life changes drastically, and they come "home" to their dorm room without a companion waiting for them; possibly even to a dark room built of concrete blocks. Students look for that companionship, and they don't have their pet from home to comfort them. Animal Assisted Activities are a perfect way to comfort these students who are feeling lonely because

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they are missing their pets. It gives them a recreational way to enjoy animal interaction without feeling that they must go through a therapeutic interaction with a University Counselor or Health Center staff member. This way, there is a level of comfort they feel as the interaction with the animal is something they've been missing, and the interaction with the handler is in a relaxed environment.

The study and program proposal explained here connect the effect of interaction with therapy dogs with the adjustment period in high achieving college freshman. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not interaction with dogs, either therapy dogs or through volunteering, would enhance students' adjustment with regard to anxiety and happiness. An additional outcome of this study is a program proposal encouraging universities to consider using more Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) or Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) throughout the semesters, not only in first year students, for the purpose of addressing adjustment and its related mental health concerns.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Animal-Assisted Interventions**

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is a form of therapy that involves intentional, goal-directed use of an animal in a therapeutic process. An animal with specific training and characteristics and a service provider with skills in clinical applications of human-animal interactions work in tandem to provide a therapeutic interaction for an identified client (Chandler, 2001). Training a therapy dog means becoming the handler in a handler-animal relationship. A handler and an owner are uniquely separate relationships to an animal. The owner is the individual with whom the animal resides. The handler is the individual trained to maintain control of the animal in a therapeutic setting. The owner and the handler are often the same person; and for all therapy dogs in the JMU Counseling Center, they are the same person.

Research in therapeutic work with animals demonstrates a decrease in stress and negative affect (Barker, 1998; Schneider, 2006). Most studies involve dogs trained in AAT methods, any animal trained in Emotional Support or simply trained in comfort. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a service animal is any dog that is individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability (Brennan, 2014). This definition of a service animal creates a barrier between the restrictions and federal or state laws covering therapy animals or animals considered to be emotional support or comfort animals because it limits service animals to only dogs. It also outlines very specifically where therapy or emotional support animals are allowed to accompany their human companions. (Brennan, 2014). These have previously included horses, monkeys, cats, and others as well. Service trained animals provide an increase in life satisfaction to patients suffering from anxiety producing disorders as well as physical and psychiatric



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disorders (Barker, 1998). They are companions for patients suffering from invisible disabilities, as well as visible ones.

College campuses are only slowly finding that emotional support animals and other therapy or service dogs are useful on campus (Von Bergen, 2015). Not only do most students not have access to dogs or other domesticated animals while away at college, but students also are learning how to live without the dogs and cats they left at home. The emotional regulation a nonhuman companion provides to them is completely taken away, and the students are left not knowing how to cope with the new environment (Folse, 1994). Some college campuses are starting to include AAT in their Counseling Centers and other areas of mental health promotion and prevention (Schneider, 2006). However, there are still many regulations on college campuses that do not include emotional support animals, or any animals that support a student in his/her physical disability (Brennan, 2014). With specific access to James Madison University's policy for Animals on University Property, an assistance animal is "any animal that is specifically designated by a qualified medical provider as affording an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, provided there is a nexus between the individual's disability and the assistance the animal provides" (Office of Equal Opportunity, 2015). These animals are only allowed in the residence of the handler and outdoor spaces. They are prohibited in indoor areas owned by the university (also called controlled spaces).

Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) are activities that provide opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance the quality of life (Therapy Animals, 2015). In AAA, there are no specific treatment goals to be reached, nor are any planned for the duration of the visits that are often short meet and greet activities. The handler of the therapy animal does not provide detailed documentation of the visit and it's often

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through spontaneity that the animal visits the nursing home, long-term care facility, school or other place of interest (Therapy Animals, 2015).

### **Adjustment**

The most recent research suggests that the attention to children's mental health prevention and promotion is much higher than the attention given to college students (Chandler, 2001). College students are often reporting loneliness, homesickness, conflict and distress in their first few months of their collegiate careers (Conley, 2013). The adjustment period is crucial to how students begin their collegiate experiences and friendships. When these students arrive at college, most of them do not experience college level class loads or schedules before they are on campus, and this can throw them into a culture shock of sorts. They are thrown into an environment that consumes every minute of the day and is completely independent of parental supervision. Students are often looking to find a superior start in their collegiate career due to the external and internal pressures they face (Pancer, 2000). This increased pressure and stress correlates highly with decreased academic performance (Conley, 2013).

When students who are normally achieving higher grade point averages and ease in their learning start to face hardship and higher challenge, they find themselves frustrated (Fass, 2002). Especially in a high achieving environment, such as an Honors College on campus, the frustration levels rise to a new height as these students in particular are under additional external pressure to obtain and maintain a certain grade point average. If they do not reach these standards, then it becomes a high stress or even anxiety producing situation to try to stay in the program they have chosen or to keep a scholarship paying for their education (Fass, 2002). Whatever the source of stress, these emotions can induce depressive or anxious symptoms in

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students, and most of them will not seek out mental health help because they don't want to or simply don't know how to find it on their campus (Conley, 2013).

College campuses across the nation are starting to decrease the stigma surrounding mental health and help students find the resources available to them. This, however, doesn't always help students embrace a problem they might be having, especially as a young college student. The fear of stigma or image plays an integral role in how these actions are seen, and students are already trying to make new friends when they get to college (Conley, 2013). First year college students may also be fearful of facing a possible mental health issue due to their feelings of obligation to their parents (Eisenberg, 2009). However, the presence and knowledge of the college counseling center increases the chances that a new student will look for the services to help them cope with what they are feeling (Conley, 2013). Students exposed to this information through different means may also feel comfortable asking about the services that their university is providing. For example, students at James Madison University attend passport events, some of which are sponsored or hosted by the Counseling Center, which makes sharing resources around campus much easier. They also can see the therapy dogs here because they are out and walking around promoting the Counseling Center and its various resources on a consistent basis. Not only do students enjoy the attention they can give a dog, but the opportunities for their handlers to talk about services available in the Counseling Center becomes exponentially increased when the dogs can take their walks around campus.

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### **Methodology of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not interaction with dogs, either therapy dogs or through volunteering, would enhance high achieving first year students' adjustment with regard to anxiety and happiness. The study used seventeen First-Year Honors College Students. There were fifteen females and two males in the study, and all were between the ages of 18 and 19 in their first semester of college study at James Madison University. The preliminary screening for the study required that the participants were to have no allergies to animals or phobias of dogs, specifically. The participants were divided into three groups, one control group and two treatment groups, with the treatment groups formed through solicitation of volunteers. All three groups completed a pre-test and two post-test surveys that included the following measures:

1. The Beck Anxiety Inventory
2. The Oxford Happiness Inventory

Both inventories have been psychologically proven as valid and reliable measures (Fydrich, 1992; Francis, 1998). The instruments, along with demographic questions, were compiled in a Qualtrics survey (see Appendix A for survey).

The control group was used to determine if time in school, without a study intervention, was a significant piece of increased happiness and decreased anxiety towards a college atmosphere during the adjustment period. This group was comprised of 9 students.

The first treatment group was exposed to the presence of James Madison University's Counseling Center's (CC) trained Therapy Dogs once a week for one hour over the course of six weeks. These visits occurred in the Student Success Center. The first treatment group was comprised of 5 students.

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The second treatment group was involved with the Honors College program that volunteers at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham SPCA. They participated in the same training and paperwork that other volunteers go through and then participated in visits to the SPCA once a week for six weeks. The second treatment group was made up of 3 students.

The study lasted for a total of eight weeks. The first week included the pre-test, the next six weeks were the experimental period where the two treatment groups were exposed to dogs, and the last week was the post-test. Upon completion of the program and the final administration of the assessment, the data was inputted into SPSS for analysis of within and between group differences.

There were three hypotheses tested during the study. The first hypothesis was: *Students who experience a regular once a week interaction with therapy dogs associated with the JMU Counseling Center will have a decrease in anxiety and an increase in happiness during their adjustment period to college life.* The second hypothesis was: *Students will experience an increase in happiness and a decrease in anxiety in their adjustment period if their interaction with dogs is through a volunteer program with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham SPCA.* The third hypothesis was: *Students who interact weekly with therapy dogs will have more decreased anxiety and more increased happiness than the students who interact with the volunteer program with the Harrisonburg-Rockingham SPCA.*

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### **Results**

Due to the small sample size of the experimental groups, the quantitative survey data collected was inconclusive. The process of labeling the results inconclusive came from the small sample sizes of the treatment and control groups, the inconsistency of participant completion of surveys, and the problem of participant dropout early in the study. The only data usable to the researcher was demographic data.

During the period of time of the study, the researcher secured a field placement with the university's counseling center and was assigned to assist with the therapy dog program. This provided an opportunity to apply the anecdotal, qualitative, and process data from the study in a real world setting. With the support of a field placement, the second phase of this study involved development of Animal Assisted Activities to support first year student adjustment as well as students who are not in their first year of study. Further details of the program proposal will follow the discussion on implications.

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### **Implications**

The study discussed above was designed specifically for a three semester Senior Honors Project capstone in the field of Psychology. The study was limited to first year students in the Honors College due to the interests of the researcher and the students deemed most available and applicable to the study. Even though this would be a limitation in the current study, future studies could use any first-year student attending the university or even students in their later years of study. This perspective would also reduce the risk of finding inconclusive data due to small sample sizes similar to what the researcher encountered in this study only using first year students from the Honors College.

Another limitation the researcher accepted for this study is the use of the therapy dogs only associated with James Madison University. These three dogs work in the Counseling Center on campus and are trained in the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen program. All three dogs have passed this program, but not all three dogs have sat for and passed the official therapy dog tests. However, the university only requires therapy dogs to have passed the Canine Good Citizen Test (see Appendix B for test requirements). The study included the dogs most available to students at the university, and not dogs from the community trained in therapy work through Therapy Dog International. This organization works with the university to provide services for exam weeks, and university affiliates may solicit their help if the Counseling Center therapy dogs are unavailable for any reason. Future studies may wish to work with Therapy Dog International or another organization in order to produce therapy dogs who are trained specifically in other therapy certifications outside of the American Kennel Club.

The researcher would like to note that all participants in the treatment groups were not afraid of dogs or had allergies to them. Most of the draw to the study would have been from

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students who are already comfortable with dogs and likely enjoy the company of dogs. The opportunity to participate in an Animal Assisted Activity program where they could have an hour a week with three dogs in a room without stress, or an hour a week volunteering with dogs at the SPCA would appeal to these students. People who are not excited by the idea of spending time with dogs would not be the students volunteering for this study. It is here that the researcher identifies another limitation of the study. If a random sample of students would be a sample option to consider for future studies. It would be interesting to see data from a group of first year students who do not share that same interest in or comfort with dogs and if the time spent with the therapy dogs would contribute to their overall adjustment period.



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### **Program Proposal**

The second part of this project involved using a “lessons learned” approach from the participants and process in the study and applying it to the actual use of therapy dogs in the campus counseling center. This program proposal assumes funding and resources for the program to operate to all students.

The program, named Hanging with the Hounds, would be an adjustment period group for first year students to take during their first semester on campus. It would be classified as an Animal Assisted Activity, not Animal Assisted Therapy because it is built on a small group model rather than one-on-one counseling settings. Participants would enroll as a supplement to one of their classes (e.g. Honors College students who take HON 100 could supplement that class with this group). Then, in communication with the Counseling Center and the Harrisonburg chapter of Therapy Dog International, the curriculum would entail one day a week with therapy dogs (either from the Counseling Center or from Therapy Dog International) and one day a week of coping strategies for anxiety, depression, loneliness and adjustment. In addition to the therapy dog experience, the students would gain knowledge as to the support services the Counseling Center has to offer and this would help reduce the stigma of seeking help for mental health concerns.

Hanging with the Hounds would be specific to students who are comfortable with dogs, and who do not have known allergies to dogs. Screening for these two factors would be the first step to enrolling in the program. Students who are screened out of the Hanging with the Hounds program would be directed to seek a different supplemental class.

Given the focus on first year adjustment, this program would run the entirety of the fall semester, but it would look a little bit different from the first eight weeks to the second eight

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weeks. The first eight weeks would include twice a week meetings, and the second eight weeks would drop to once a week with interaction from the therapy dogs. This way the students are not completely losing their interaction with the dogs, but are now able to apply what they learned during the sessions on coping strategies and psychoeducation. Participants in the therapy dog group indicated a desire for the program to continue beyond the first eight weeks as they felt their adjustment continued beyond that point. The program would then be offered every semester. Students will become aware of the ongoing ways to find the therapy dogs or expand to volunteering at the SPCA to keep in touch with the companionship they felt with the dogs the first semester. The curriculum for the first eight weeks can be found in Appendix C.

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### **Reflections**

Reflection is not simply looking back on what happened throughout the course of the research, but also encouraging oneself to look forward beyond what is currently happening to what could happen. It was risky for me to use first year students as they are not acclimated to what the college lifestyle is and are still navigating adjustments to college life beyond the scope of this study. In spite of the inconsistency in participant responses to the Qualtrics surveys, spending time with the two treatment groups and listening to their experiences painted a rich picture of their thoughts, experience, and the meaning of the participation to each of them. This face to face interaction with the participants made it more of a learning experience than originally intended.

My story is different. It's a story of uncertainty, a little bit of panic, and a lot of growth. I've known I wanted to complete a project that worked with Animal Assisted Activities or Animal Assisted Therapy since my freshman year at JMU. I had been tasked to give speeches on a topic I was passionate about, and out came Animal Assisted Therapy. I had met Francis around campus a few times before, and I jumped at the idea of bringing him into my last speech for this General Education class. When my professor jumped on board, I knew this simple class would turn into something that I looked back on for inspiration. As I thought about my Senior Honors Thesis, I remembered this wonderful opportunity, and I knew I could take with me as the first big thing I accomplished.

After I submitted my proposal to the Institutional Review Board at JMU and was approved for the research study with humans, I started thinking about how to recruit my participants. I recruited from HON 100 classes, which is the required class for first year Honors College students. There I came up with my sample sizes for each group, and although smaller than I had originally hoped, I was assured it would all work out okay. I would continue to meet

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with my two treatment groups for the next six weeks of the semester. Even as I had trouble starting up the group that went to the SPCA every week, I had two dedicated students who came with me and a few more who were on and off. I was saddened at the end when I saw that only two members of that group had finished all the surveys.

The group I felt like I impacted the most with my study was the group that saw Francis, Wicket and Winston every week. I felt like they truly had an experience they will remember, and they also seemed to get to know each other pretty well in those six weeks. I can only hope they will at least be friendly if they see each other on campus for the next three years of their time at JMU. At the end of the semester with all of the surveys I sent out, I asked the two treatment groups to respond with a sentence or two about how being involved in the study was beneficial or to describe how it impacted them. Even though I only got a few responses from this, all from my group who worked with the therapy dogs, they were incredibly touching to me.

“I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to play with the dogs every week. I actually sincerely miss doing it and find that I miss home a lot more now. I wish there was a way to continue with something like this even though your study is over!”

“Allotting an hour from my week to genuinely relax with fellow students and the therapy dogs was one of the best decisions I could have made for myself in that it allowed me the opportunity to be truly present and to set aside all of my other concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this study! It was so rewarding, and I looked forward to it every week.”

“Getting to play with the three therapy dogs was a great experience. It really made me feel more at home at JMU because I sincerely miss my pets and it can get lonely without a companion. Playing with Wicket and cuddling with Francis and Winston really helped me de-stress every week. One of the weeks in particular I almost didn't come because I was so stressed out about schoolwork but after the visit I felt so much better. Thank you

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so much for this experience and I will probably start working with the SPCA so that I can continue to play with animals while I am away from home.”

Reading these statements from the participants in my study made it feel like I had a meaningful project and made an impact on their lives. Whether it was a realization of how much they missed their pets and could put a name to that feeling, or just noticing how taking an hour to focus on something completely in the moment helped them de-stress from their busy schedules. It also makes me want to create something meaningful to leave behind for them, which I have done with a Field Placement experience in the Counseling Center working with Francis and Wicket. It was a treat for me to receive those messages from the students, and it softened how much I thought of this as a data driven project. These messages still make me feel like I gave the students something to hang onto for their first few weeks on campus, and I know that they will continue to seek out animals throughout their college careers.

Even though the results didn't come out how I had hoped, and analyzing the data wasn't nearly as easy as I had thought it would be, it didn't change how incredible an experience the last three semesters have been. It didn't change the fact that I made an impact in the lives of students freshly on campus in their first few weeks of college. The Honors College gave me an opportunity to grow and develop the research and writing skills I learned over my undergraduate career and in a way that I am truly passionate about. They let me be unique and create a program that could be a life changing factor for a future student. First year student adjustment doesn't have to stay the way it is right now in the Honors College. There is so much to offer, and just the curiosity of one student can change that in the time-period of a Senior Honors Project.

As I approach my graduation from JMU, I am preparing for a first-year adjustment of my own as a Clinical Mental Health Counseling first-year graduate student at Marymount

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University. I am excited to take my experiences from my undergraduate career and my Senior Honors Project and put them to more use in my graduate education. Since one of my passions lies in Animal Assisted Therapy, I am thankful to have found a faculty member at Marymount who teaches and researches Equine Assisted Therapy. Learning about the incredible human-animal bond and then it's continued benefits in the counseling environment, I am excited to take this knowledge with me and provide some insight to how Animal Assisted Therapy can work in different settings. I also look forward to training a dog of my own so I can include Animal Assisted Therapy in my own practice when I am discerning what that will look like in the next few years of my graduate experience. I cannot wait to see how the research and dedication I have put into this project will supplement and serve as a foundation to the work that I hope to continue as a graduate student and a professional.

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### **Appendix A: Survey given to participants in all treatment groups before treatment, directly following treatment and at the conclusion of the semester**

#### **Introductory Language**

Universities across the country offer incoming first year students' different orientation schedules, but these often only last until classes begin. Then students are left to indulge their new campus and explore new friendships and organizations. This study is designed to aid the investigator in understanding if a prolonged adjustment schedule that lasts into the first semester will relieve students in a certain pre-established community of increased anxiety and low levels of happiness. Your responses are very important. You will need to complete the entire survey in order for us to include your responses. We estimate the survey to take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Again, thank you for your time!

Please enter the code you created for the purpose of this survey. HINT: It includes the first letter of your name, the first letter of your mother's first name, the first letter of your father's first name followed by the day of the month you were born (ex. 01-31).

#### **Demographic Questions**

1. How do you identify?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Other
  - d. I prefer not to answer
2. What is your age?
  - a. 18
  - b. 19
  - c. 20
  - d. 21 or older
3. Have you been clinically diagnosed with depression or anxiety within the past 4 years?
  - a. Yes, depression.
  - b. Yes, anxiety.
  - c. Yes, both.
  - d. No, neither.

#### **Oxford Happiness Questions**

##### Instructions

Below are a number of statements about happiness. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each by entering a number in the blank after each statement, according to the following scale:

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- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

Please read the statements carefully, some of the questions are phrased positively and others negatively. Don't take too long over individual questions; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers (and no trick questions). The first answer that comes into your head is probably the right one for you. If you find some of the questions difficult, please give the answer that is true for you in general or for most of the time.

1. I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am intensely interested in other people. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I feel that life is very rewarding. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I rarely wake up feeling rested. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I find most things amusing. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I am always committed and involved. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Life is good. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I do not think that the world is a good place. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I laugh a lot. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I am well satisfied about everything in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I don't think I look attractive. \_\_\_\_\_
14. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I am very happy. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I find beauty in some things. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I always have a cheerful effect on others. \_\_\_\_\_
18. I can fit in (find time for) everything I want to. \_\_\_\_\_
19. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. \_\_\_\_\_
20. I feel able to take anything on. \_\_\_\_\_
21. I feel fully mentally alert. \_\_\_\_\_
22. I often experience joy and elation. \_\_\_\_\_
23. I don't find it easy to make decisions. \_\_\_\_\_
24. I don't have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
25. I feel I have a great deal of energy. \_\_\_\_\_
26. I usually have a good influence on events. \_\_\_\_\_
27. I don't have fun with other people. \_\_\_\_\_



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28. I don't feel particularly healthy. \_\_\_\_\_

29. I don't have particularly happy memories of the past. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Beck Anxiety Inventory Questions**

Below is a list of common symptoms of anxiety. Please carefully read each item in the list.

Indicate how much you have been bothered by that symptom during the past month, including today, by checking the box in the corresponding space in the column next to each symptom.

The scale should slide between "not at all", "mildly, but it didn't bother me much", "moderately, it wasn't pleasant at times", and "severely, it bothered me a lot".

1. Numbness or tingling
2. Feeling hot
3. Wobbliness in legs
4. Unable to relax
5. Fear of worst happening
6. Dizzy or lightheaded
7. Heart pounding/racing
8. Unsteady
9. Terrified or afraid
10. Nervous
11. Feeling of choking
12. Hands trembling
13. Shaky/unsteady
14. Fear of losing control
15. Difficulty in breathing
16. Fear of dying
17. Scared
18. Indigestion
19. Faint/lightheaded
20. Face flushed
21. Hot/cold sweats

### **Conclusion Language**

Thank you for participating in this pre-test for First Year Honors College student affect towards adjustment period. If you feel that any of these questions have stirred discomfort or concern about your mental health, please do not hesitate in contacting the JMU Counseling Center on campus in the Student Success Center. They are available for your assistance and assurance.

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### **Appendix B: American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen® (CGC) Program Training/Testing: CGC Test Items**

Before taking the Canine Good Citizen test, owners will sign the **Responsible Dog Owners Pledge**. We believe that responsible dog ownership is a key part of the CGC concept and by signing the pledge, owners agree to take care of their dog's health needs, safety, exercise, training and quality of life. Owners also agree to show responsibility by doing things such as cleaning up after their dogs in public places and never letting dogs infringe on the rights of others.

After signing the Responsible Dog Owners Pledge, owners and their dogs are ready to take the CGC Test. Items on the Canine Good Citizen Test include:

#### **Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

#### **Test 2: Sitting politely for petting**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place as it is petted. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

#### **Test 3: Appearance and grooming**

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone, such as a veterinarian, groomer or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility. The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog. The evaluator then softly combs or brushes the dog, and in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot. It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.

#### **Test 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)**

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler. The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be

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perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops. The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there should be a right turn, left turn, and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The handler may talk to the dog along the way, praise the dog, or give commands in a normal tone of voice. The handler may sit the dog at the halts if desired.

### **Test 5: Walking through a crowd**

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash.

### **Test 6: Sit and down on command and staying in place**

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers). The dog must do sit AND down on command, then the owner chooses the position for leaving the dog in the stay. Prior to this test, the dog's leash is replaced with a line 20 feet long. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to get the dog to sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance. When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace. The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side.

### **Test 7: Coming when called**

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog.

### **Test 8: Reaction to another dog**

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 10 feet. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should go to the other dog or its handler.

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### **Test 9: Reaction to distraction**

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Examples of distractions include dropping a chair, rolling a crate dolly past the dog, having a jogger run in front of the dog, or dropping a crutch or cane. The dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise it throughout the exercise.

### **Test 10: Supervised separation**

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, "Would you like me to watch your dog?" and then take hold of the dog's leash. The owner will go out of sight for three minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position but should not continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness. Evaluators may talk to the dog but should not engage in excessive talking, petting, or management attempts (e.g, "there, there, it's alright").

### **Equipment**

All tests must be performed on leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather, fabric, or chain. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, etc. are not permitted in the CGC test. We recognize that special training collars may be very useful tools for beginning dog trainers, however, we feel that dogs are ready to take the CGC test at the point at which they are transitioned to regular collars.

The evaluator supplies a 20-foot lead for the test. The owner/handler should bring the dog's brush or comb to the test.

### **Encouragement**

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises. Food and treats are not permitted during testing, nor is the use of toys, squeaky toys, etc. to get the dog to do something. We recognize that food and toys may provide valuable reinforcement or encouragement during the training process but these items should not be used during the test.

### **Failures – Dismissals**

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. The only exception to this rule is that elimination is allowable in test Item 10, but only when test Item 10 is held outdoors.

Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog is not a good citizen and must be dismissed from the test.

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### **Appendix C: Hanging with the Hounds Curriculum- First Eight Weeks**

#### Week 1: Introduction to Hanging with the Hounds

Introduce the dogs, how Animal Assisted Activity works, and what to expect

#### Week 2: Adjustment in College

Who can students reach out to? What is on campus that you can be involved in?

#### Week 3: Coping with Loneliness in College

Finding a community that matches your interests or passions or values

#### Week 4: Coping with Anxiety in College

First exams start to come around this time

#### Week 5: Coping with Depression in College

#### Week 6: Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health

Help students understand how to help themselves and keep their mental health just as high as their physical health

#### Week 7: How to help a student in Distress

Presentation about how to help students you encounter and feel are in distress

#### Week 8: Self-Care presentation

Interactive with self-care activities

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