

CANINE- ASISTED THERAPY



WHAT IS GOING ON..

Canine-assisted therapy, commonly known as dog therapy, is a therapeutic practice that leverages the presence and assistance of dogs to aid patients in a variety of ways. These canines may guide individuals, retrieve items for them, or simply offer emotional support through their companionship. This innovative and heartwarming form of therapy began in the Czech Republic in 1993, marking the start of a new approach to aiding those in need through the unique bond between humans and dogs.

Although any dog breed can participate in this type of therapy, medium-sized dogs are most commonly used. Their size is advantageous as they are large enough to perform necessary tasks but small enough to manage easily. Among the preferred breeds, Golden Retrievers and Labradors stand out due to their exceptional abilities and kind, patient nature. These breeds are particularly well-suited for therapy work, given their intelligence, trainability, and innate friendliness.

Currently, there are no formal associations dedicated exclusively to canine-assisted therapy in the Czech Republic. Instead, individuals with a passion for this work often take the initiative to become involved. To become a qualified trainer, one must undergo a specialized training course that provides comprehensive education on all aspects of working with therapy dogs. This training ensures that both the dogs and their handlers are well-prepared to meet the needs of their clients effectively.

Therapy dogs play a crucial role in the lives of individuals with motor skill impairments, such as those experiencing tremors or other movement disorders. These dogs offer physical support and stability, helping individuals perform daily tasks and improving their overall quality of life. Furthermore, the emotional support provided by therapy dogs can be profoundly comforting, reducing anxiety and enhancing emotional well-being.

Canine-assisted therapy is versatile and can be beneficial for people of all ages, from young children to the elderly. Studies have consistently shown that this therapy is highly effective and well-received by patients. The presence of a therapy dog can lead to significant improvements in mood, mobility, and social interaction, making it a valuable complementary treatment in various therapeutic settings.

However, accessing canine-assisted therapy does involve some costs. A personal session lasting one hour typically costs around 600 Kč, while a group session is approximately 300 Kč. Despite the financial investment, the numerous benefits of this therapy make it a worthwhile expenditure for many, providing invaluable support and comfort to those in need.

