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### Benefits of Having a Pet at College: Perception of Today's College Students

The present literature review examined data from 10 studies that examined the benefits of pet therapy and well-being. Florence Nightingale, a pioneer of nursing, recognized these benefits in the early 1800s when she used animals to provide support to mentally ill patients. Since then, pets, but mainly dogs, have been used across various populations and in numerous settings such as with geriatrics in nursing homes, in disaster relief, with war veterans suffering from PTSD, with inmates in correctional facilities, with terminal patients in hospice care, and with pediatric patients in the hospital setting. In all of these scenarios, findings suggest that pets have proven to provide both physiological and psychological benefits for the humans with whom they interacted. Although the benefits of pet therapy with the above populations have been widely documented, there is a lack of evidenced-based research to support the benefits of having a pet when attending college. Results of the literature review, and the lack of data related to the benefits of college students having a pet, underscore the importance of conducting current research with today's college students who have pets, and hearing their perceptions of whether or not having a pet provides any physiological and/or psychological benefits that contribute to the student's perceived sense of well-being.