



HEALTH AWARENESS

Managing Depression Symptoms With “Man’s Best Friend”

(NAPSA)—For people with depression, support from a doctor, family and friends can be key to the recovery process. But many people may be overlooking an important member of their family who can also help them feel better—their dog.

Research has shown that there are benefits to having a dog that match areas healthcare professionals believe can help people with depression. Dogs can:

- Help decrease the effects of depression like loneliness and isolation
- Offer an incentive to be more physically active
- Provide the desirable qualities of a best friend, like companionship and physical contact.

“I have witnessed first-hand the benefits dogs can provide people with depression,” explains Joan Esnayra, Ph.D., president of the Psychiatric Service Dog Society (PSDS), a non-profit organization that works with mental health consumers who wish to train their dogs to assist with the management of depression and other mental illnesses. “Whether it’s giving someone a reason to get out of bed in the morning, being a constant companion, or providing an opportunity to meet new people, dogs can make a real difference in the life of someone with depression.”

Support Partners: Canine Companions

To help people learn how to include their dog in their recovery process, Eli Lilly and Company and the PSDS have launched a program called *Support Partners: Canine Companions*. The program offers a brochure that provides information about the potential benefits of having a dog, the different levels of support a dog can offer and easy ways pet owners can immediately incorporate their dogs into their support network.



People with depression can derive support from a doctor, family and friends—and their dogs.

Tips for Including Your Dog in Your Recovery

1. Exercise—Walking, running and playing with your dog are great ways to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, which may help people with depression. Remember to always consult with your physician before beginning any new exercise regimen.

2. Visit the dog park—Dog parks can be a great place for dogs and people to socialize with one another. Interacting with other people may diminish feelings of loneliness.

3. Pet your dog—If you are feeling anxious or upset, petting your dog has the potential to reduce your heart rate and lower your blood pressure, potentially resulting in a calm, relaxed feeling.

For More Information

To learn more about *Canine Companions*, and to download the brochure, visit SupportPartnersProgram.com.

Support Partners: Canine Companions is the newest component to the *Support Partners* program, which encourages a support team approach to overcoming depression. *Support Partners* is co-sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company and the National Women’s Health Resource Center.