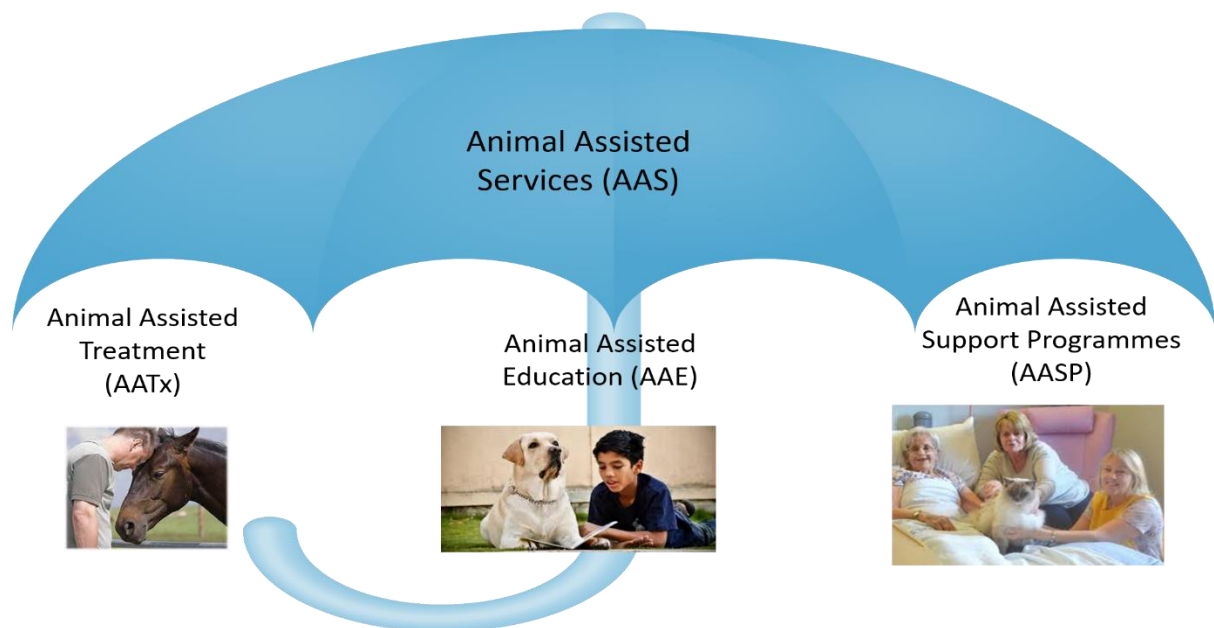


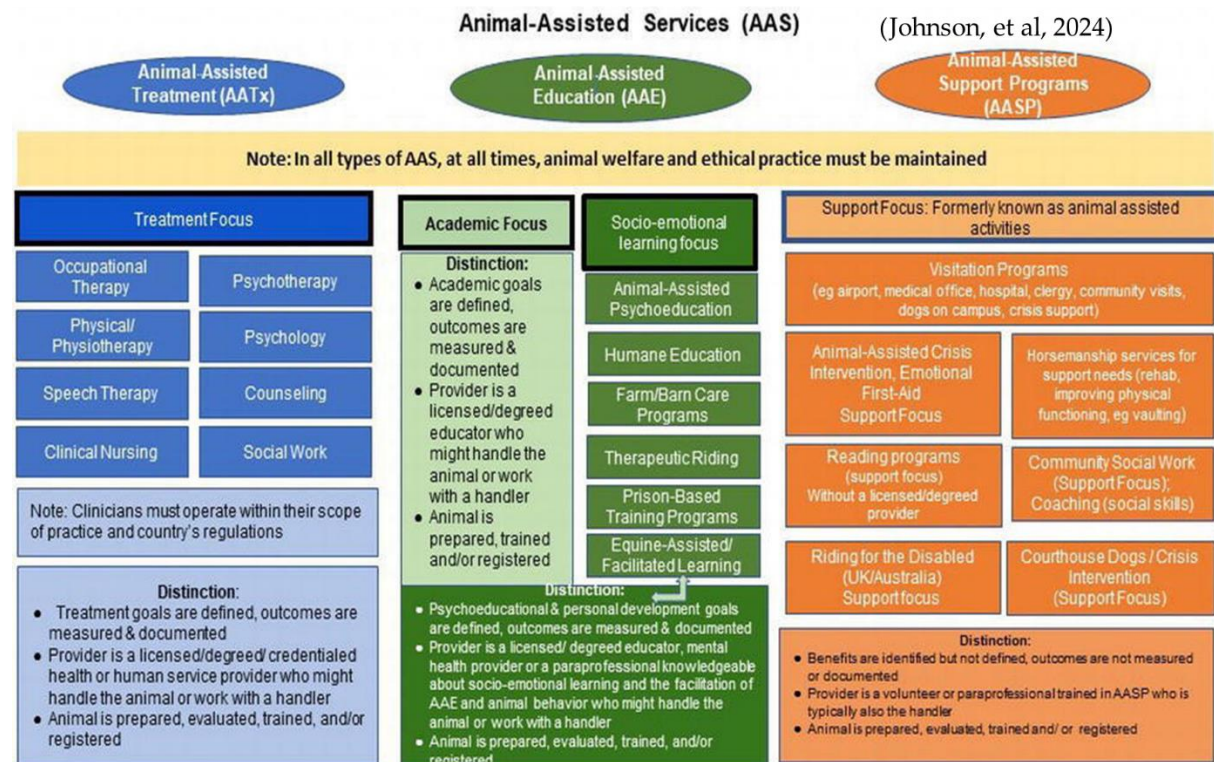
## Animal Assisted Services Definitions



**“the mediated, guided or facilitator-led practices, programs and human services that incorporate specially qualified animals into therapeutic, educational, supportive and/or ameliorative processes aimed at enhancing the well-being of humans while ensuring the welfare of the animals involved in these practices.” (Johnson, et al, 2024)**

**“Three categories of AAS:**

- **animal-assisted treatment (AATx),**
- **animal-assisted education (AAE),**
- **animal-assisted support programs (AASP)” (Johnson, et al, 2024)**



**Fig. 2.** Examples of animal-assisted services that includes area of focus and distinctions. (Binder et al, 2024)

**“Animal Assisted Education (AAE) is a goal-oriented, planned and structured intervention directed and/or delivered by educational and related service professionals.” (IAHAIO, 2018)**

**AAE is “any educational program in which animals are integrated, directly or indirectly, as a critical component of an ongoing educational process” Johnson, 2024**

Those providing these services should have:

- Qualified (degree level) general and special education teacher.
  - Regular teachers must have knowledge of animals involved.
  - Focus on academic goals, prosocial skills (helping behaviours), cognitive functioning.
  - Progress is measured and documented. E.g. dog assisted reading programme.
- 

**“Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA) is a planned and goal oriented informal interaction and visitation conducted by the human-animal team for motivational, educational, and recreational purposes.” (IAHAIO, 2018)**

**“Animal Assisted Support Programmes (AASP) are programmes in which animals are engaged, directly or indirectly, in activities aimed at supporting and enhancing the well-being of humans” (Johnson, 2024)**

Those providing these services should have:

- Must have received introductory training.
  - May be more formal, and work with specialists in healthcare and education on specific documentable goals but largely informal social visits.
  - E.g. meet and greet in nursing homes.
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**“Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a goal-oriented, planned, structured therapeutic intervention directed and/or delivered by health, education and human service professionals.” (IAHAIO, 2018)**

**Animal Assisted Treatment (AATx) is a “mental or physical health professional treatment modalities for which the integration of animals, directly or indirectly, is a critical component of the treatment approach of the professional” (Johnson, 2024)**

- Intervention is measured and includes professional documentation.
- Delivered by formally trained and qualified professional (degree or equivalent)
- Focuses on enhancing physical, cognitive, behavioural and/or socioemotional functioning.

E.g. therapy dog/cat for physical and mental health services

Animal Assisted Support Program (AASP) vs Animal Assisted Treatment (AATx)

| AASP   | AATx  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goal directed activities to improve patients QoL</li><li>• Maybe therapeutic but not guided by credentialed therapist</li><li>• May include visits, petting, play</li><li>• Less formal interaction than AAT</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goal directed interventions, part of treatment process</li><li>• Credentialed therapist, goals, measures progress, evaluates</li><li>• Adjunct to existing therapy e.g. speech therapy</li><li>• Formal interaction</li></ul> |

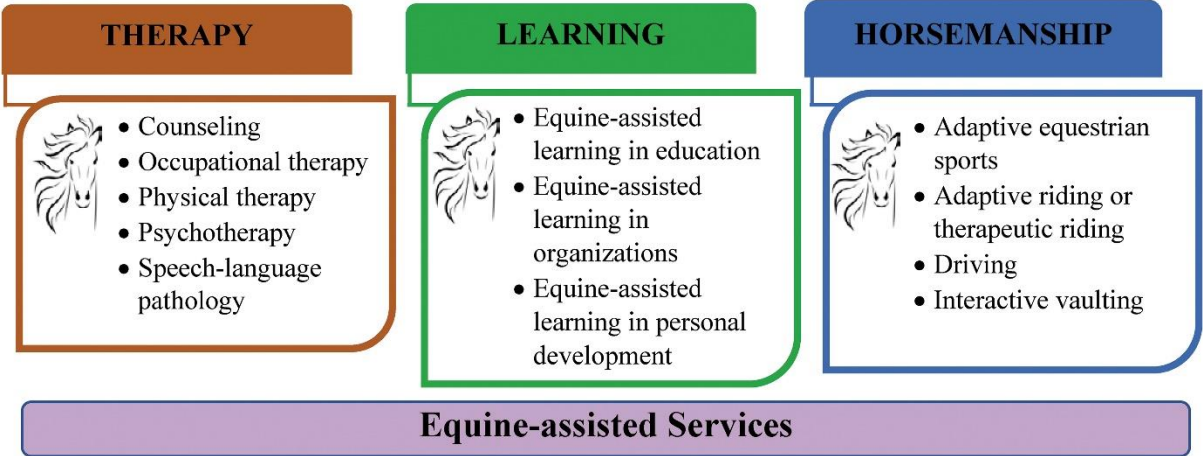


FIG. 2. Recommended terminology for 12 distinct types of services and for multiple services. (Wood et al, 2021)

References:

[IAHAIO http://iahaio.org/best-practice/white-paper-on-animal-assisted-interventions/](http://iahaio.org/best-practice/white-paper-on-animal-assisted-interventions/)

Johnson, A; Parish-Plass, N; Kirby, M; Winkle, M; Plesa Skwerer, D; Ackerman, L; Brosig, C; Coombe, W; Delisle, E; Enders-Slegers, M J; Fowler, J-A; Hey, L; Howell, T; Kaufmann, M; Kienast, M; Kinoshita, M; Ngai, D; & Wijnen, B. (2024). [Recommendations for uniform terminology in animal-assisted services \(AAS\) | Human-Animal Interactions](#) 12. 10.1079/hai.2024.0003.

Wood W, Alm K, Benjamin J, Thomas L, Anderson D, Pohl L, Kane M. [Optimal Terminology for Services in the United States That Incorporate Horses to Benefit People: A Consensus Document | The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine](#) 2021 Jan;27(1):88-95. doi: 10.1089/acm.2020.0415. Epub 2020 Nov 26. PMID: 33252244.

**Notes:**

To clarify, in terms of definitions, our students have references for significant and relevant research papers on terminology, in addition to the 3 shared here.

As our programmes are focused on Animals in general, however our students, in both the BSc (Hons) Human-Animal Interaction with Psychology and MSc Animal Assisted Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes, have sessions in which they are presented with the Wood et al paper, PATH, IAHAIO and other terminology related to Equine Assisted Services. Further they are provided with examples from the Wood et al paper, to demonstrate the importance both of the process in which the new terminology was chosen AND the need to use therapist/professional first language to ensure further professionalisation of the field simultaneously with recognising the essential requirements for animal welfare, wellbeing and choice within all AAS.

Most importantly in sharing terminology with students, we focus on the terminology journey and why we need clarity moving forwards, ensuring students are also aware of prior terms essential in sourcing earlier research papers. Rather than simply being provided with definitions of current AAS terms, students actively engage in an exploratory process related to the terminology. Students share and appraise their own and others interpretations of aspects of the field, alongside considering the processes involved in the changes involved in transforming and developing new terms and definitions. For example all students in the respective programmes provide words to describe the Human Animal Bond

## What does the human-animal bond (HAB) mean to you?

