



A paw-fect solution to improve staff wellbeing

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Volunteer & Archie, professional fluffball on 4 legs

AIM

Reduce staff stress levels, improve mood and joy at work for 1 day in January 2023

BACKGROUND

Increasing pressures on NHS staff contribute to work-related stress and decreased mental well-being. At CHS, 42% of staff have felt unwell in the past year due to work related stress (1) The use of therapy dogs involves interacting with a trained dog for the purpose of improving well-being & the benefits are well published, improving healthcare outcomes (2) and reducing stress

METHODS

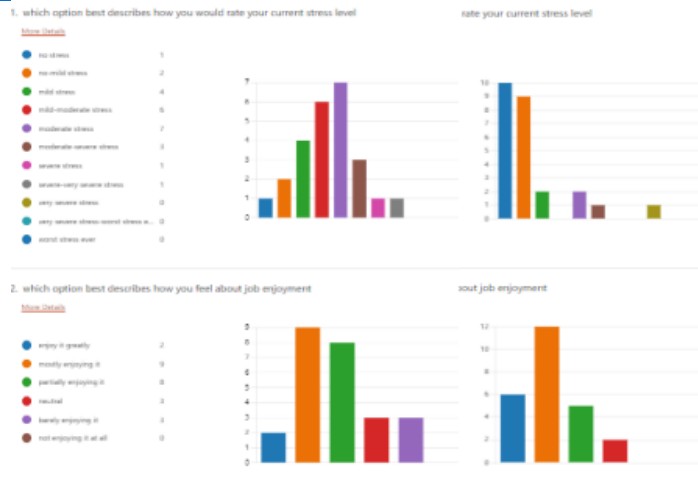
Plan: Pilot the use of a therapy dog visit for staff at CHS

- Collect baseline, wellbeing data for staff stress levels, job enjoyment & overall mood
- Visit the department with a therapy dog
- Repeat data collection with staff who interact with the therapy dog

Do: Pilot agreed with Maternity & AMU

- Staff uninformed about the intervention
- Baseline data: random staff from 10:00-11:00 via MSForm on IPAD
- Therapy dog visit from 13:00-14:00 (accompanied by the volunteer handler)
- Ward manager informs staff and rotates those interested, to interact with the dog for 10-15 minutes. Groups of no more than 5
- Re-survey staff after their therapy dog interaction

RESULTS (STUDY)



Average overall mood before visit: 6.44

Average overall mood after visit: 8.08

Results indicate that stress levels are lower, staff members enjoyed their job & overall mood was higher for those that interacted with the therapy dog

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS (ACT)

Encounters with a trained therapy dog has displayed a positive effect on staff wellbeing, particularly in reducing stress, increasing enjoyment of work and cultivating a happier work environment, however, the author appreciates that stress and mood are influenced by several factors and limitations of this project are acknowledged.

ACT: create local policy/guidelines for the use of therapy dogs at CHS, implement a therapy dog visit booking system, publicise offer and benefits to staff, continue to deliver and monitor the programme

References:

- [1] CHS staff survey. 2023. Retrieved 04/23, from: <https://cms.nhsstaffsurveys.com/app/reports/2022/RJ6-benchmark-2022.pdf>
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 [3] Ein, N., Li, L., & Vickers, K. (2018). The effect of pet therapy on the physiological and subjective stress response: A meta-analysis. *Stress And Health*, 34(4), 477-489. doi: 10.1002/smi.2812