

# Can a dog ownership and training program improve symptoms of PTSD among veterans?

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

The results of a new integrative health study that measures the effects of owning and training a therapy dog on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in veterans are published in *JACM, The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, a peer-reviewed publication from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers, dedicated to paradigm, practice and policy advancing integrative health.

The article, entitled "Dog Ownership and Training Reduces Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms and Increases Self-Compassion Among Veterans: Results of a Longitudinal Control Study," was coauthored by Dessa Bergen-Cico, Ph.D., Yvonne Smith, Ph.D., Collin Gooley, and Brooks Gump, Ph.D., Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY); Karen Wolford, Ph.D., SUNY Oswego (Oswego, NY); and Kathleen Hannon, Ryan Woodruff, and Melissa Spicer, Clear Path for Veterans (Chittenango, NY).

Researchers reported significant reductions in PTSD symptoms, as well as reductions in perceived stress, isolation, and self-judgement, and significant increases in self-compassion when comparing the veterans that participated in the Dogs2Vets program over a 12-month period to veterans that were on the waiting list to receive a dog during that time period.

"The short story here is that [dogs](#) may be the best friend for a [veteran](#) with PTSD who engages in this training program," says *JACM* Editor-in-Chief John Weeks, [johnweeks-integrator.com](http://johnweeks-integrator.com), Seattle, WA. "It is remarkable when research suggests that the best medicine for such a gnawing condition may be as close at hand and simple as this."

**More information:** Dessa Bergen-Cico et al, Dog Ownership and Training Reduces Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms and Increases Self-Compassion Among Veterans: Results of a Longitudinal Control Study, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2018). [DOI:](#)

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