



## Seminar – Step One in Our Client and Handler Training Process

In 2013, paws4people added “seminars” as the first step in the Client and Handler Transfer Training (TT)/Intervention Transfer Training (ITT) process. Seminars are an intensive introduction to the TT/ITT process, where Conditional Clients and Conditional Handlers spend 1 day in the classroom learning all paws4people academics, handling protocols, and safety protocols required for Conditional Client and Conditional Handler success. They then spend 2 to 3 days beginning public access training in retail establishments, indoor and outdoor attractions, restaurants, etc. for about 10 hours per day. This intensive “bootcamp” intro to TT/ITT leaves the Conditional Clients and Conditional Handlers feeling very experienced (and tired!) after their first session with their Assistance Dogs or Facility Dogs. We have found that by immersing everyone intensely during their first session, the rest of TT/ITT progresses much more successfully.

Seminars are followed by as many TT/ITT sessions as each Conditional Client and Assistance Dog and Conditional Handler and Facility Dog needs to become a successful working Team. paws4people believes that this individualized approach to transferring the Assistance Dogs to their Conditional Clients and or Facility Dogs to their Conditional Handlers leads to much more successful Team performance for their careers than a standardized 1 or 2 week team training approach. As always, paws4people continues to focus on quality over quantity in our placement approach.

## Transfer Training

Transfer training (TT) is the process whereby Conditional Clients for all types of Assistance Dogs--other than Psychiatric Assistance Dogs-- and Conditional Handlers of all types of Facility Dogs learn to utilize their Assistance Dogs and Facility Dogs. TT is conducted using the mutual aid model<sup>1</sup>, such that Conditional Clients and Conditional Handlers are able to use both their similarities and their differences in abilities to help each other learn to better utilize their Assistance Dogs or Facility Dogs.

The duration of TT varies greatly amongst Conditional Clients and Conditional Handlers. Some Conditional Clients are able to make the necessary progress in utilizing their Assistance Dogs for symptom control/increased independence, as well as refine their skills within 5 sessions. For others, the process can take months. Some Conditional Handlers are able to make necessary program in utilizing their Facility Dogs in the scope of their profession and in professional settings within 3 to 5 sessions. For others, the process can take months due to the complexity of the work that the Conditional Handler and Facility Dog is doing.

The duration of TT and the decision as to when a Conditional Client or Conditional Handler is ready to work independently with his/her Assistance Dog or Facility Dog is made at the sole discretion of the training staff, in conjunction with the Conditional Client's family (when applicable), the pMET and the respective Conditional Client's medical treatment team (when applicable).

paws4people believes that this individualized approach to transferring the Assistance Dogs or Facility Dogs to their Conditional Clients and Conditional Handlers leads to much more successful team performance for their careers than a standardized 1 or 2 week team training approach. As always, paws4people continues to focus on quality over quantity in our team.

All Assistance Dog Conditional Clients must pass a Public Access Test (PAT) during their final TT session. This allows them to go home with “black vest status” (training vest) until their final PAT is scheduled (usually at the next paws4people Annual Reunion). Once that final PAT is passed, the Assistance Dog receives his/her custom “red vest” and the team is official!

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<sup>1</sup> Gitterman, Alex and Robert Salmon. *Encyclopedia of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Routledge, 2009.



All Facility Dog Conditional Handlers must pass an Initial Facility Dog Observation, which allows each to go home with "black vest status" (training vest) until his/her Final Facility Dog Observation is scheduled (usually at the next paws4people Annual Reunion). Once that Final Facility Dog Observation is passed, the Facility Dog receives his/her custom "green vest" and the team is official!

### **Intervention Transfer Training**

Within the paws4vets program, the process of a Conditional Client learning to utilize his/her Psychiatric Assistance Dog to mitigate their symptoms is known as Intervention Transfer Training (ITT). ITT is conducted by highly experienced and specially trained paws4vets staff and trainers, as well as paws4vets peer mentors. paws4vets peer mentors are paws4vets Certified Clients who have successfully completed ITT and are now working full-time with their Psychiatric Assistance Dogs to improve and enhance their daily living.

ITT is conducted using the mutual aid model, wherein group members are the providers as well as the recipients of the benefits of the services<sup>2</sup>. During ITT, we recognize that the experiences, strengths, and perspectives of each group member should be drawn upon to help other members of the group. We also draw heavily on the helper-theory principle, similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, wherein helping others helps the helper<sup>3</sup>. ITT is a peer-to-peer activity lead by Assistance Dog experts, not a therapeutic intervention lead by mental health practitioners. We have found that this offers directness and authenticity that often affords our clients progress they have not been able to find within the traditional therapy or medical settings.

paws4vets ITT staff leaders work with the paws4vets Medical Evaluation Team (pMET), which is a volunteer group of consulting mental health professionals. The pMET facilitates communication with the client's mental healthcare providers then works with the ITT staff to create training plans. This communication system creates continuity of care and likeness of goals with the Conditional Client's medical treatment team; ensuring the highest level of safety for all Conditional Clients, while also pushing past existing boundaries to realize real success in symptom mitigation.

**paws4vets staff are not acting as mental health practitioners, but rather as experts in the utilization of Psychiatric Assistance Dogs as adjunct assistive medical devices in the mitigation of PTS, TBI, MST, and other psychological conditions.**

The duration of ITT varies greatly amongst Conditional Clients. Some Conditional Clients are able to make the necessary progress in the symptom control, as well as refine their skills within 5 sessions. For others, the process can take months, even years. The duration of ITT and the decision as to when a Conditional Client is ready to work independently with his/her Assistance Dog is made at the sole discretion of the paws4vets training staff, in conjunction with the Conditional Client's family, the pMET and the respective Conditional Client's medical treatment team.

paws4people believes that this individualized approach to transferring the Assistance Dogs to their Conditional Clients leads to much more successful team performance for their careers than a standardized 1 or 2 week team training approach. As always, paws4people continues to focus on quality over quantity in our team.

All Assistance Dog Conditional Clients must pass a Public Access Test (PAT) during their final ITT session. This allows them to go home with "black vest status" (training vest) until their final PAT is scheduled (usually at the next paws4people Annual Reunion). Once this final PAT is passed, the Assistance Dog receives his/her custom "red vest" and the team is official!

<sup>2</sup> Gitterman, Alex and Robert Salmon. *Encyclopedia of Social Work with Groups*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Reissman, Frank. (1965). The "helper" therapy principle. *Social Work*, 10(2), 27-32. ISSN 0037-8046.



## After Placement Care

paws4people provides quality after care for Clients and Handlers and their Assistance Dogs or Facility Dogs. Each Client and Handler is welcomed into our growing family and supported as he/she learns and grows with his/her Assistance Dog or Facility Dog. We support each other during paws4people events and fundraisers, and most especially at our Annual Reunion. We all come together at least once a year for graduations to celebrate and to get to know each other better, thus forming stronger relationships.

Client/Handler Advocates support each new Client and Handler with contact once a week for the first 6 weeks, then once a month for the 1st year. After the 1st year, the Client/Handler Advocates remain in close contact with the Clients and Handlers, checking in with them once per quarter in perpetuity. Client/Handler Advocates are available to their Clients and Handlers each and every day and can be reached for help at any given time.

Client/Handler Advocates will communicate with the Clients and Handlers on the following schedule as a *minimum* and document these contacts within their email archives and/or in the Client's or Handler's digital file:

- From acceptance email until the Bump - bi-weekly contact
- From Bump to black vest - bi weekly contact
- From black vest to red vest - bi weekly contact
- From 1st official PAT (Initial Facility Dog Observation) to 2nd PAT - monthly contact
- After 2nd PAT (Final Facility Dog Observation) through retirement - quarterly contact
- Retirement through expiration of Dog – semi-annual contact

Each Client or Handler must provide his/her Client/Handler Advocate with the contact information for his/her veterinarian, and provide proof of a new-patient check up with this vet within 30 days of transfer of custody. At the first recertification Public Access Test (annual Facility Dog Observation), vet records must be submitted once again to prove the Dog is being regularly seen by his/her veterinarian.

Clients and Handlers have the right to ask for follow-up assistance and receive on-going training assistance to remediate unwanted behaviors, add new skills, or provide refresher training on an as-needed basis at the Client's or Handler's request.

Each Handler is required to attend 10 hours of continuing education annually specific to the Facility Dog's placement.

Any cost incurred for follow-up training, training in addition to and beyond the normal paws4people processes (i.e., if special travel is needed), and annual continuing education will be the responsibility of the Client or Handler.

paws4people reserves the right to terminate this training if paws4people believes that the Client or Handler is not adequately maintaining the Dog's use and practicing the skills taught by the trainers.



**Recertification and Successor Placements**

Recertification Requirements

paws4people Assistance Dogs with public access are required to be re-certified annually, to include a temperament test, obedience test, public access test, general health check, and any other observation deemed necessary by paws4people staff.

paws4people Facility Dogs (without public access) are required to be re-certified annually per their respective Facility Observations.

Emotional Support Dogs do not have public access and do not require certification/re-certification.

<b>Type of Certification</b>	<b>Assessments/Req @ certification</b>	<b>Assessments @ Re-Cert</b>	<b>ADA Public Access Re-Cert Frequency</b>	<b>Facility-Specific Access Re-Cert Frequency</b>
Assistance Dogs:				
Physical or Neurological AD (PND)	Temp/AO, PAT, ITT	Temp/AO, PAT	Annual	N/A
Medical Alert AD (MED)	Temp/AO, PAT, ITT	Temp/AO, PAT	Annual	N/A
Facility Dogs:				
Rehabilitative FD (RFD)	Temp/AO, FD Checklist, 1 Facility Observation	FD Checklist w/ 1 Facility Observation	N/A	Annual
Psychiatric FD (PFD)	Temp/AO, FD Checklist, 1 Facility Observation	FD Checklist, 1 Facility Observation	N/A	Annual
Scent Detection (SCT)	Applicable Third Party Certification	Applicable Third Party Certification	N/A	Annual
Crisis Response (CRD)	Temp/AO, FD Checklist 1 Facility Observation	FD Checklist w/ 1 Facility Observation	N/A	Annual
Canine-Assisted Education (CAE)	Temp/AO, FD Checklist, 3 Facility Observations	FD Checklist w/ 1 Facility Observation	N/A	Annual
Therapeutic Facility Dog (TFD)	Temp/AO, FD Checklist 3 Facility Observations	FD Checklist w/ 1 Facility Observation	N/A	Annual
Emotional Support Dogs				
All Emotional Support Dogs	Temp/AO	N/A	N/A	N/A



### Recertification Logistics

All Public Access Tests and/or Facility Observations must be scheduled and completed during the fourth quarter of the calendar year. Upon successful passing, an ID card will be issued for January 1-December 31 of the subsequent calendar year. Any tests taken during any other quarter of the year, for any reason, shall result in certification only through December 31 of that calendar year. A new test must then be taken during the fourth quarter.

It is the Client's or Handler's responsibility to schedule his/her Public Access Test and/or Facility Observations. Each Client or Handler must contact his/her Client/Handler Advocate who will coordinate with paws4people Certified Public Access Test Evaluators or Facility Observation Evaluators to schedule a test for the Client or Handler. If an Evaluator's time cannot be conveniently scheduled in the Client's or Handler's geographical area, the Client or Handler will be required to travel to the nearest certified Evaluator.

If the Client or Handler fails to make this scheduling request within reasonable time and a test date is not available during the 4th quarter, the Dog shall become de-certified as of January 1 until such time a test can be scheduled.

### Expired Certification

If certification is allowed to expire for any reason, de-certification shall be effective immediately. Each Client or Handler shall be notified both by email and mail of de-certification. Re-certification may be obtained by scheduling the appropriate testing, as detailed above, within 60 calendar days of expiration.

If certification is expired for more than 60 days, in order to obtain re-certification, Team must complete, at a minimum: attendance of a Seminar and TT/ITT Session, temperament test, advanced obedience test, and applicable Public Access Test and/or Facility Observation Test.

*Additional evaluations, retraining, or TT/ITT Sessions may be required as determined by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis.*

### Retirement

paws4people controls the decision about when a Dog retires from active service. A Client or Handler may then be considered for priority placement of a Successor Dog per the Successor Dog Policy.

### Successor Placements

Successor dog placements shall be handled per the Successor Dog Policy.

paws4people reserves the right to decline subsequent dog placement if, for any reason, the Application Committee or Executive Committee deems that the Client or Handler is no longer a suitable placement candidate for any reason.

*paws4people reserves the right to deny, revoke, and/or otherwise modify Client or Handler status at any time, for any reason, and in its sole discretion when determined to be in the best interest of the organization.*