



Mental Health & Pets Survey Factsheet

Mental Health America (MHA) and the Human Animal Bond Research institute (HABRI) partnered together to field a survey of 4,000 MHA constituents to learn more about how people connect with pets, how the human-animal bond relates to mental health and wellbeing, and to gauge interest in and understand the need for resources regarding pets and mental health.

Key Findings

The human-animal bond is incredibly strong among pet owners:

- I miss my pet when I'm away from him/her.....**88%**
- I believe my pet is my best friend.....**77%**
- I would make major life changes, if necessary, to accommodate my pet.....**83%**

Pet owners overwhelmingly report positive health benefits resulting from their pet

- **98%** of pet owners reported **at least one health benefit resulting from their pet**
- **80%** of pet owners reported their **pet has had a positive impact on their health**
- **79%** of pet owners reported their **pet makes them feel happy**
- **73%** of pet owners reported their **pet has made them feel less lonely**

The human-animal bond is particularly important for those living with a mental or physical disability

- **Those with a disability are most likely to be highly bonded (60%)** to their pets compared to those without a disability (49%)
- **Those with a disability (79%) are more likely to say they are interested in pets to support their mental health** compared to those without a disability (50%)
- **Those with a disability (59%) are more likely to be interested in getting an Emotional Support Animal (ESA)** compared to those without a disability (37%)

There is high interest in pet ownership and in resources on pets for mental health, particularly for those living with a mental or physical disability

- For all, it is **hard to find reliable information about pets and mental health (43%)** and there should be **more support for pet ownership and animal-assisted interventions (AAI) in society (93%)**
- **71%** of respondents are **interested in working with a mental health professional who incorporates pets or animal-assisted interventions (AAI) into their practice**
 - Pet owners that report the highest bonds with their pets and those **living with a disability (81%)** are **most likely** to be **interested in information and support related to pets and AAI**
 - Pet owners that report the highest bonds with their pets and those **living with a disability (76%)** are **most likely** to be interested in **working with a mental health professional who incorporates pets in their practice**