



### The benefits to your mental health when you own a dog!

Evidence suggests that attachment to pets is good for human health and even helps build a better community.

It's no secret that pets can contribute to your happiness. Studies show that dogs reduce stress, anxiety and depression; ease loneliness; encourage exercise and improve your overall health. For example, people with dogs tend to have lower blood pressure and are less likely to develop heart disease. Just playing with a dog has been shown to raise levels of the feel-good brain chemicals oxytocin and dopamine, creating positive feelings and bonding for both the person and their pet.

Pets can be especially helpful as we grow older. In a survey on healthy aging, adults over 50 reported these top 3 benefits:

- Less stress
- Better sense of purpose
- More social connection

## **5 ways pets help your mental health**

1. Pets can reduce work-related stress. Two out of three employees say work stresses them out and 40% say their job gets in the way of their health. Studies show that pets in the workplace help reduce stress and improve employee satisfaction.
2. Pets can help increase productivity, wherever you work. When a dog joins a virtual meeting, group members rank their teammates higher on trust, team cohesion and camaraderie.
3. Pets help manage anxiety. Now more than ever, many people are feeling anxious or struggling with mental health. Pets provide companionship and support.
4. Pets can help you be more active. They give you a reason to get outside, get some fresh air and get active, which is proven to improve your mood, sleep and mental health.
5. Pets provide a sense of togetherness. The bond with a pet helps you to not feel alone. When owners see, touch, hear or talk to their companion animals, it brings a sense of goodwill, joy, nurturing and happiness.

\*Source: heart.org