



# Flying High Farm

## Mental Health Services for Youth

### For One to Fly, One Only Needs to Take the Reins

*Melissa James*

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**Flying High Farm incorporates the therapeutic magic of animals toward optimizing one's emotional growth.**

**F**lying High Farm is a Lunenburg-based psychotherapy practice devoted exclusively to youth that incorporates animals—horses, dog and cats—into clinical sessions.

Christine Randle, LICSW and Registered Therapeutic Riding Instructor, works with children individually as well as in groups to help them deal with and overcome emotional, social and cognitive challenges.

Horses and other animals are healing aids to helping children face and conquer the obstacles present in their lives. Christine has extensive experience working with youth whose histories includes:

- PTSD
- Neglect
- ADD/ADHD
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Poor social skills
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Suicidal ideas/attempts

The animal partners at Flying High Farm include Sea Spray (horse), Duncan (pony), Zar (Great Dane) and two cats, Ozer and Clue. These furry creatures make the children feel comfortable which energizes the therapeutic process, building the bond between child and therapist. In addition, incorporating animals into a child's therapy makes a sometimes dreaded appointment become something that is eagerly anticipated.

In summary, love for an animal drives the child's attention away from the self. The child forgets his/her own immediate interests and focuses on those of the animal. Love for the animal creates a relationship of mutual trust and confidence while building a bridge to the future and to greater self-awareness.

(adapted from Boris Levinson's Pet-Oriented Child Psychotherapy, 1969)

If your child is in need of clinical intervention or if you would like more information, please call Christine Randle at 978-582-7103 or visit her website at [www.flyinghighfarm.com](http://www.flyinghighfarm.com).

At this time, the following forms of insurance are accepted at FHF:

- BCBS
- Fallon
- Magellan (HMO Blue, Blue Choice Plan 2, Network Blue, etc.)
- UBH
- ValueOptions
- MassHealth (secondary)

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In addition, fees are offered on a sliding scale so all children can be accommodated. ☺



# How the Presence of Pets Affects People During Life Transitions

by Ann R. Howie, ACSW



## The Presence of Pets in Young Families Experiencing Cancer

What is the impact of the presence of pets on families undergoing a life crisis? Victoria Ravels, Francis Mesagno, Daniel Darus and Diane Gottfried of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York studied this issue and presented a paper at the 1994 Delta Society Conference documenting the results of their research.

They found that the presence of pets can have several beneficial consequences. The presence of companion animals, especially cats and dogs, had a beneficial impact on the adult caregiver while caring for the spouse who had cancer. Care-giving parents reported that pets helped them feel better when sad. A surprising number felt that pet care was not a burden, even though they were caring for their spouse. Adults who were terminally ill frequently remarked that their pets were important in helping them cope when they felt distressed during their illness by providing a reason to live and consistent companionship and affection.

The companionship of pets (particularly dogs) helped children in families adjust better to the serious illness and death of a parent. The benefits were observed in five areas: children received love at a time when their need for love was enormous; children were able to confide their feelings more readily to their pets than to people; taking care of their pet helped maintain daily structure in the midst of a vast disruption in their daily routines; children felt competent by taking care of the pet at a time when their lives felt out of control; and children felt needed by their pet.

*"...children were able to confide their feelings more readily to their pets than to people..."*

## Pets' Roles in Children's Emotional Development

Preschool through first-grade children view their pets as playmates and protectors. This view changes by the time children reach third through fifth grades; pets are then seen as a confidant and source of emotional support. Regardless of age and developmental level, however, most children view their pets as special friends and important members of their family. Sandra Triebenbacher from East Carolina University reports that most children talk to their pets. In addition, most children feel that mutual "love" is conveyed verbally and non-verbally between them and their pets.

When children are going through a transitional stage in their lives, they will choose a transitional object, such as a blanket or teddy bear. They keep this object close to themselves, and it gives them comfort. Triebenbacher found that children will interact with their pets in

much the same way they do with transitional objects: rubbing, stroking, cuddling and kissing. In this way, she learned that children may use their pets as transitional objects, seeing their companion pets as providing comfort, security and emotional support.

## Companion Animals at the Time of Military Transfer

Military service members may encounter formidable barriers to taking their family pet with them at the time of transfer to a new service location. Transfer is inherently a disruptive and stressful time for military families. Having to make a decision whether or not the family pet can remain with the family adds substantially to many families' stress. In addition, having to leave a pet behind can worsen family adjustment problems in the new location. Chumley, Gorski, Saxton Granger and New, from the US Army Veterinary Corps and the University of Tennessee, studied this issue. They found that service members and their families often consider their pet to be a member of the family. High levels of pet attachment on the part of the person who had primary care of the pet led to more companion animals accompanying their military family at transfer time. Even when attachments were high, however, animals were sometimes left behind, and the researchers identified several barriers within the military system to transferring pets. They identified two important community health consequences of keeping pets and their families together: an animal surplus (leading to free-ranging animals or euthanasia) is avoided when families cannot find an alternate permanent residence for their pets; and emotional trauma and consequent personal and family problems are reduced.

♦ <http://www.deltasociety.org/changes2.htm>

# Creature Kindness:

## Caring for Baby Birds

In the spring it isn't uncommon to find baby birds on the ground or in nests that have fallen from trees. If a nest has fallen from a tree, try to put it back in the tree or in some other protected area. Then stay away from the nest and keep your pets away as well. The mother will find the nest and care for her babies.



Taking care of baby birds is very difficult and you should immediately call one of the vets listed below for guidance, they are both licensed to care for wildlife.

These vets are:

- Dr. Carl Flinkstrom in Lunenburg (345-2623)
- Dr. Michael Farrow in Lancaster (368-0051)

For more information on Massachusetts Wildlife Rehabilitators visit [www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfw\\_rehab.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfw_rehab.htm) or call 508-835-3607.

For more information on baby birds, visit [www.webbedworks.com/messingerwoods/babybirds.htm](http://www.webbedworks.com/messingerwoods/babybirds.htm)

## Baby Animal Word Search

K	I	D	S	E	A	K	S	P	R
A	Y	E	D	K	C	I	H	C	U
Y	N	L	C	A	N	T	Z	A	R
L	B	O	P	U	P	T	I	Y	F
L	Y	P	I	A	L	E	E	L	O
I	E	D	G	F	H	N	A	U	W
F	O	A	L	U	A	C	U	B	L
S	J	T	E	A	G	W	L	E	E
T	V	V	T	I	K	N	N	B	T
E	G	N	I	L	S	O	G	L	A
C	Y	G	N	E	T	C	O	L	N
E	G	N	I	L	H	C	T	A	H

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Kid       | Filly   |
| Foal      | Colt    |
| Kitten    | Pup     |
| Cub       | Fawn    |
| Hatchling | Kit     |
| Calf      | Joey    |
| Piglet    | Owlet   |
| Kit       | Tadpole |
| Chick     | Cygnets |
| Gosling   |         |

Search for these baby animals frontward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Good luck!



## Equine Facts



### Horses' Tails

In the summer, the horse's tail helps keep the flies away from him. Flies try to bite horses and without a tail, the horse would be defenseless. When a fly lands on a horse, he swings his tail which makes the fly scoot away.

In the winter, the tail keeps the horse warm. Since the back of his legs don't have much hair, the tail provides extra insulation.

Horse's tails can be styled in various ways; a few are described below:

**Banged tail:** Cut straight across the bottom to make a tail look more full.

**Pulled tail:** The hairs around the top of the tail are pulled out or clipped to make a refined look.

**Braided tail:** The top of the tail is French-braided and makes the tail look very fancy.

Some horses even wear extensions in their tails!



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### Contact Information

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### Compliance with HIPAA

At Flying High Farm, your and your child's privacy is a priority. We follow strict federal and state guidelines to maintain the confidentiality of your child's protected health information. Protected Health Information (PHI) is any information about your child's past, present or future health care or payment for that care that could be used to identify him/her.

You can view all HIPAA documents at  
[www.flyinghighfarm.com/HIPAA.htm](http://www.flyinghighfarm.com/HIPAA.htm). ☺

## Individual and Group Treatment

Openings are currently available for individual and group treatment. To schedule an intake or for more information, call Christine Randle, LICSW, at 508-572-5889.



FHF participant shares his riding experience.