

## WHAT IS AN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL?

An **Emotional Support Animal (ESA)** is a companion animal which provides therapeutic benefit such as alleviating or mitigating some symptoms of the disability, to an individual with a mental or psychiatric disability. Emotional Support Animals are typically dogs or cats, but may include other animals. They are meant solely for emotional stability and unconditional love. In order to be prescribed an Emotional Support Animal by a physician or other medical professional, the person seeking such an animal must have a verifiable psychological disability. An animal does not need specific training to become an ESA. The National Institute of Mental Health shows more than 1 in 4 adults in the United State have some form of mental disorder. If you are suffering from an emotional support or psychological condition then you may be entitled to an Emotional Support Animal.

### LIST OF DISABILITIES

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Fear/phobias
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PLEASE CONSULT AN ATTORNEY IN REGARDS TO THE FOLLOWING IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT OR CONFUSION.

### HOUSING

In the U.S. federal protection against housing discrimination is afforded to mentally disabled persons under two federal statues: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA). These statues, and the corresponding case law, create the general rule that a landlord cannot discriminate against disabled persons in housing, and if a reasonable accommodation will enable a disabled person to equally enjoy and use the rental unit, the landlord must provide the accommodation. Persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a waiver of a "no pets policy," for any assistance animal, including an Emotional Support Animals, under both the FHAA and Section 504. Building managers or landlords may not refuse your Emotional Support Animal for your condition.

## **AIRLINES**

The Air Carrier Access Act establishes a procedure for modifying pet policies on aircraft to permit a person with a disability to travel with a prescribed Emotional Support Animal, so long as they have appropriate documentation and the animal is not a danger to others and does not interfere with others (through unwanted attention, barking, inappropriate toileting, etc.) There is no charge to travel with your Emotional Support Animal. Please contact the airline when making a reservation to ensure no other documentation is needed. Certain airlines ask for additional paperwork that must be completed 48 hours prior to departure.

## **COLLEGE**

On April 25, 2013 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sent notice to its regional offices that public universities are required to comply with the Fair Housing Act, which includes allowing Emotional Support Animal into college dormitories and residence halls.

If you believe that an ESA is right for you, consult your clinician for more information.