

## **CARE OF IMMUNOCOMPROMISED INDIVIDUALS: THE ROLE OF COMPANION ANIMALS IN MENTAL HEALTH**

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*One Health Framework Component:* Long standing and re-emergent diseases, and Health benefits associated with interaction with animals

*Student Audience:*

Veterinary, Medical, Psychology

*Synopsis:*

Unfortunately, the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS often carries social discrimination and misunderstanding. For many HIV/AIDS patients their pets are the only individual in their life that their relationship does not change with once a diagnosis is made. This case study will focus on the mental health benefits that pets play in the lives of immunocompromised individuals and weigh them with the health risks that they may present. Participants will play the role of both physician and veterinarian during this exercise. Through playing both roles, regardless of the participants training, they will be able to see the critical role these professions play in preventing zoonotic disease transmission. Collaborative discussions will elucidate the ways to minimize risk for the patient such as hygiene, behavior and veterinary care of the animal. This will morph into a discussion of mental health being an integral part of human health and, therefore, a critical pillar within One Health.