



The Science of the Human-Animal Bond



HABRI Vision & Mission

Vision:

The human-animal bond is universally embraced as an essential element of human wellness.

Mission:

Advance, through science, education and advocacy, the vital role of the human-animal bond in the health and well-being of people, pets, cultures, and communities.

What is the Human-Animal Bond?

"The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors considered essential to the health and well-being of both. This bond is beneficial to the mental, physical, and social health of people and animals."



A large, faint, stylized graphic of a person in a dynamic, athletic pose, possibly a dancer or athlete, rendered in a light purple color against a dark purple background. The figure is positioned centrally, with arms and legs extended in a fluid motion.

About HABRI

About HABRI

- Robust pipeline of new research – 60 studies and growing
- Tools and information to support the pet care community
- Using research-based messages to encourage pet ownership
- Impacting policy for a more pet-inclusive world



The
**REAL
REASON**
for pets



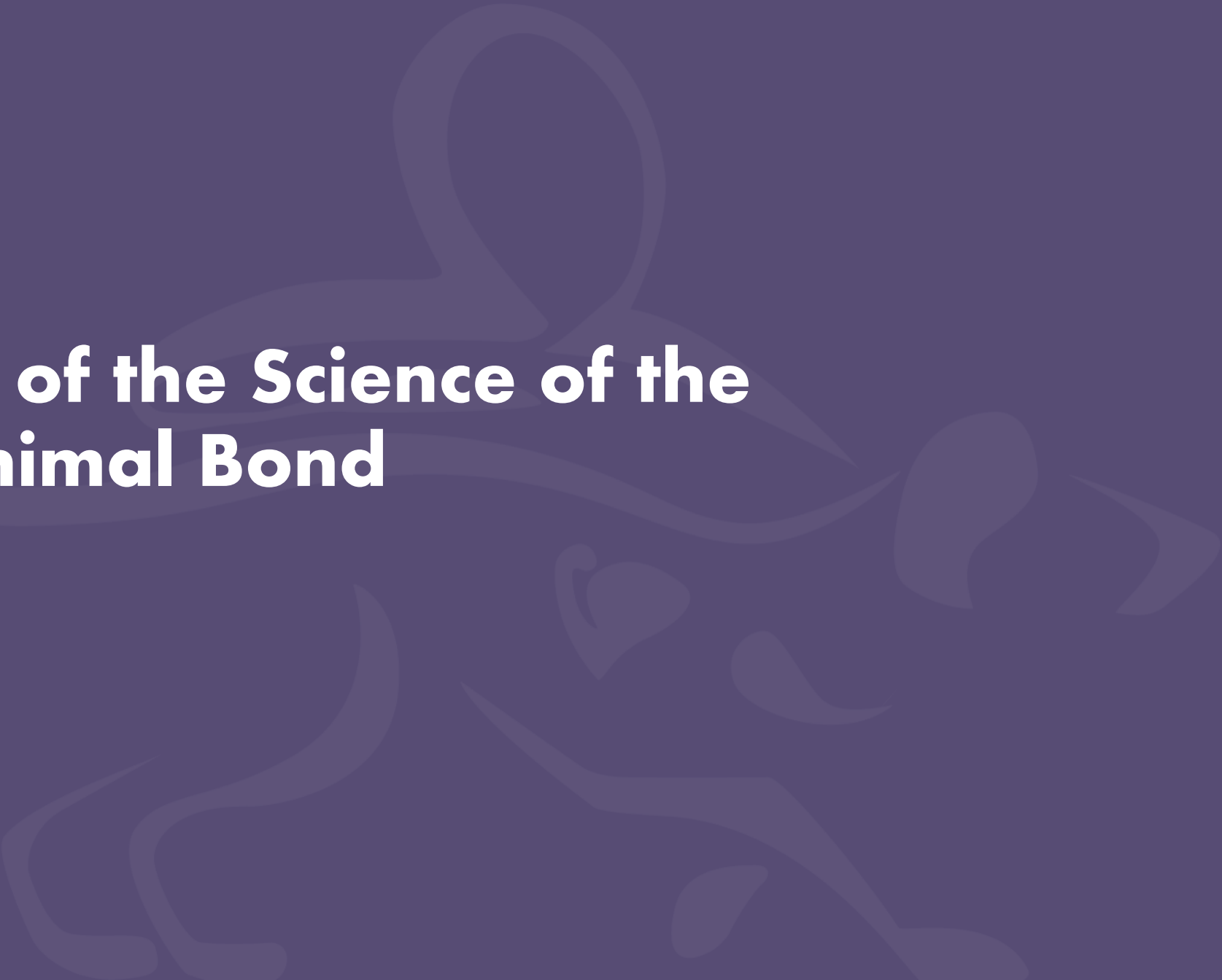
HABRI Strategic Priorities

Advance the role of the human-animal bond in society. Strengthen the body of scientific evidence to raise awareness and educate key opinion leaders about the mental, physical, and social health and economic benefits of the human-animal bond.

Pet ownership and affordability. Develop data, solutions and initiatives to make pet ownership available and pet care services accessible for everyone, working to overcome economic and cultural barriers to pet ownership and care.

Pets and mental health. Build pathways to integrate pet-inclusive approaches and animal-assisted interventions into everyday settings and drive societal adoption of these practices.

Pet-inclusive housing. Develop persuasive data and advocate for policies that increase the supply of pet-inclusive housing.



Overview of the Science of the Human-Animal Bond

Human-Animal Interaction Research Findings

Physical Health & Wellness

- Heart health & disease prevention
- Physical activity

Mental & Social Health

- Social & emotional support
- Improved mood
- Reduced stress

Child Health & Development

- Reduced risk of Allergy & Asthma
- Social skills development
- Responsibility, empathy and self-esteem

Healthy Aging

- Loneliness & isolation
- Longevity
- Cognitive health

Beetz, A., Uvnäs-Moberg, K., Julius, H., & Kotrschal, K. (2012). Psychosocial and psychophysiological effects of human-animal interactions: The possible role of oxytocin. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, 234.

Souter, M. A., & Miller, M. D. (2007). Do animal-assisted activities effectively treat depression? A meta-analysis. *Anthrozoös*, 20(2), 167-180.

McNicholas, J., & Collis, G. M. (2000). Dogs as catalysts for social interactions: Robustness of the effect. *British Journal of Psychology*, 91(1), 61-70.

Friedmann, E., & Thomas, S. A. (1995). Pet ownership, social support, and one-year survival after acute myocardial infarction in the Cardiac Arrhythmia Suppression Trial (CAST). *American Journal of Cardiology*, 76(17), 1213-1217.

Cutt, H., Giles-Corti, B., Knuiiman, M., & Burke, V. (2007). Dog ownership, health and physical activity: A critical review of the literature. *Health & Place*, 13(1), 261-272.

Cole, K. M., & Gawlinski, A. (2000). Animal-assisted therapy: The human-animal bond. *AACN Clinical Issues*, 11(1), 139-149.

Purewal, R., Christley, R., Kordas, K., Joinson, C., Meints, K., Gee, N., & Westgarth, C. (2017). Companion animals and child/adolescent development: A systematic review of the evidence. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(3), 234.

O'Haire, M. E. (2013). Animal-assisted intervention for autism spectrum disorder: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 43(7), 1606-1622.

Wood, L., Giles-Corti, B., & Bulsara, M. (2005). The pet connection: Pets as a conduit for social capital? *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(6), 1159-1173.

Serpell, J. (2006). Animal-assisted interventions in historical perspective. In A. H. Fine (Ed.), *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 3-20). Academic Press.

Banks, M. R., & Banks, W. A. (2002). The effects of animal-assisted therapy on loneliness in an elderly population in long-term care facilities. *The Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, 57(7), M428-M432.

Friedmann, E., Thomas, S. A., Son, H., Chapa, D., & McCune, S. (2013). Pet's presence and owner's blood pressures during the daily lives of pet owners with pre-to mild hypertension. *Anthrozoös*, 26(4), 535-550.

The Science of the Human-Animal Bond

Biophilia Hypothesis

bio·phil·ia
(bahy-oh-fil-ee-uh) noun

an innate and
genetically determined
love for the natural world
felt universally by humankind.



"It's no wonder that a history of staring at animals has left us with a brain that can't help but seek them out and understand them."

Meg Daley Olmert, Author, *Made For Each Other: The Biology of the Human-Animal Bond*

The Science of the Human-Animal Bond

Coevolution



"What it really comes down to is that we think of ourselves as domesticating dogs, cats, and horses. But especially with dogs it was really a coevolution. They helped us survive as much as we helped them survive."

James A. Griffin, Ph.D., Director, Early Learning and School Readiness Program, Child Development & Behavior Branch, National Institutes of Health, National Institute for Child Health and Human Development

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Neoteny



Beck, A.M. 2014. The biology of the human-animal bond. Anim. Front. 4:32-36.

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Social Support

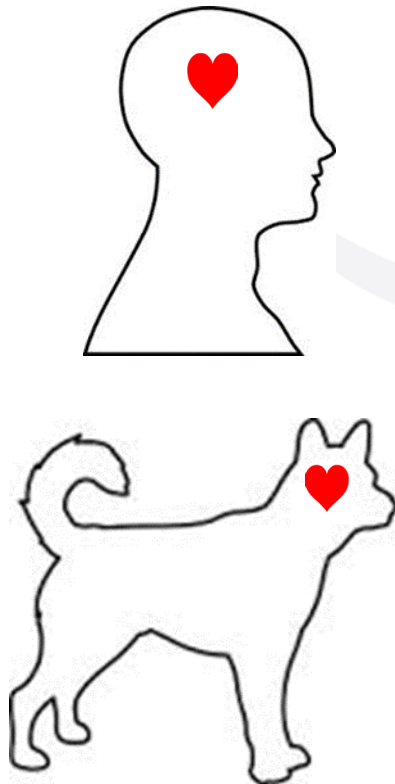
Social Support Theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships and networks in providing various forms of support that enhance well-being.

Traditionally, this theory has focused on human relationships, but it also extends to the bond between humans and animals, particularly pets.



The Science of the Human-Animal Bond

**This is your
Brain on Dog!**



Neurochemicals	Human with Own Dog	Dog
Phenylethylamine (Elation)	↑	↑
Dopamine (Energized)	↑	↑
Endorphin (Runners High)	↑	↑
Oxytocin (Happiness)	↑	↑
Prolactin (Nurture)	↑	↑
Cortisol (Stress)	↓	↓

Odendaal, J. S. (2000). Animal assisted therapy—magic or medicine? *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 49, 275-280.
Bergamasco L, Osella M, Savarino P, Larosa G, Ozella L, Manassero M, Badino P, et al. (2010). Heart rate variability and saliva cortisol assessment in shelter dog: Human–animal interaction effects. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 125, 56-68.
Coppola CL, Grandin T & Enns RM (2006). Human interaction and cortisol: can human contact reduce stress for shelter dogs? *Physiology & behavior*, 87, 537–41.
Shiverdecker M, Schiml P & Hennessy M (2013). Human interaction moderates plasma cortisol and behavioral responses of dogs to shelter housing. *Physiology & behavior*, 109, 75–79.

Physical Health & Wellness

- Owning a pet is linked to significantly lower heart rate and blood pressure in response to stress
- Pet owners have significantly lower resting baseline heart rates and blood pressure and faster recovery of these parameters to baseline after cessation of stress
- Dog owners experienced a 65% reduced risk of mortality after a heart attack, and a 24% reduced risk of all-cause mortality compared to non-dog owners
- Owning a cat makes you more likely to be alive one year after a heart attack. Non-cat owners had 40% greater likelihood of death



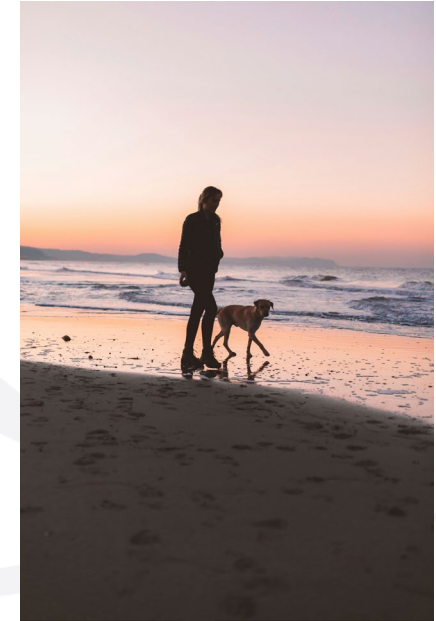
Allen, Karen, Jim Blascovich, and Wendy B. Mendes. "Cardiovascular reactivity and the presence of pets, friends, and spouses: The truth about cats and dogs." *Psychosomatic medicine* 64.5 (2002): 727-739.

S. B. Barker, J. S. Knisely, N. L. McCain, C. M. Schubert, and A. K. Pandurangi, "Exploratory study of Stress-Buffering response patterns from interaction with a therapy dog," *Anthrozoos*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 79-91, 2010.

Levine, Glenn N., et al. "Pet Ownership and Cardiovascular Risk A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association." *Circulation* 127.23 (2013): 2353-2363. <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2013/05/09/CIR.0b013e31829201e4>

Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Non-judgmental companionship can alleviate anxiety
- Interacting with pets has been found to elevate mood and decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression
- For people managing a long-term mental health problems, pets provide a sense of security and routine that provided emotional and social support
- Distraction & disruption from negative thoughts
- Encouragement for activities of daily living



[Friedmann, E., Thomas, S. A., & Son, H. \(2011\). Pets, depression and long term survival in community living patients following myocardial infarction. *Anthrozoos*, 24\(3\), 273–285.](#)

[Beetz, A., Uvnäs-Moberg, K., Julius, H., & Kotrschal, K. \(2012\). Psychosocial and psychophysiological effects of human-animal interactions: The possible role of oxytocin. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3, 234.](#)

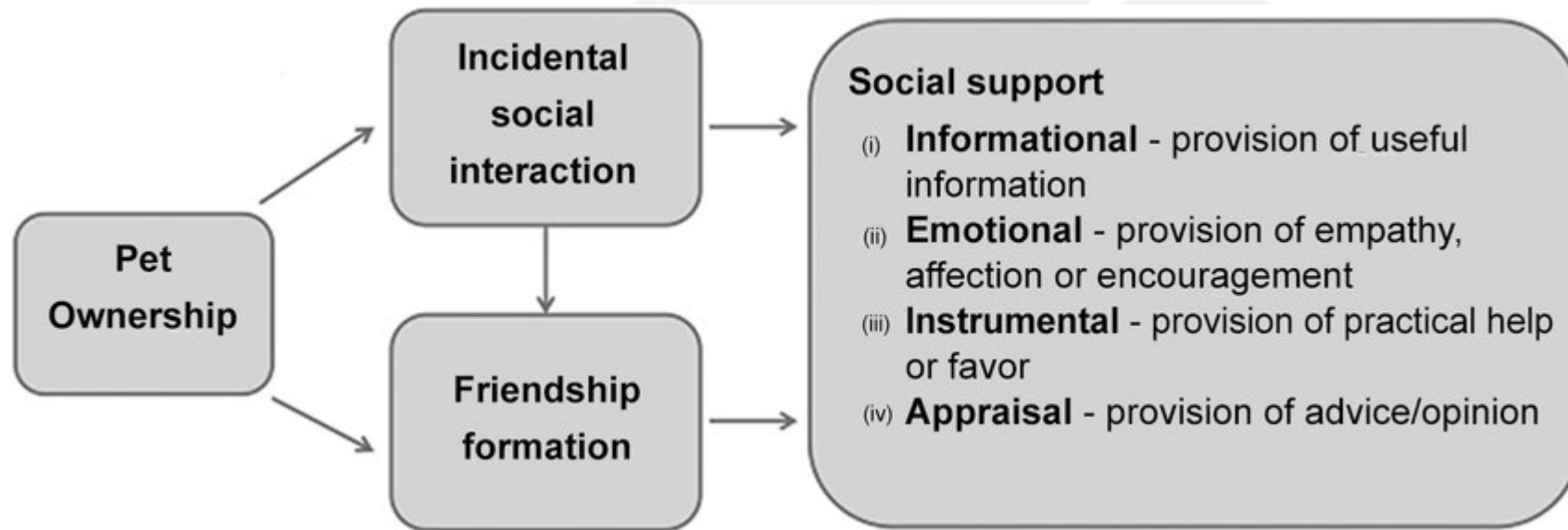
[Souter, M. A., & Miller, M. D. \(2007\). Do animal-assisted activities effectively treat depression? A meta-analysis. *Anthrozoös*, 20\(2\), 167-180.](#)

[Brooks, Helen, et al. "Ontological security and connectivity provided by pets: a study in the self-management of the everyday lives of people diagnosed with a long-term mental health condition." *BMC psychiatry* 16.1 \(2016\): 409.](#)

Building Social Networks

Pet Ownership Increases Social Capital

Around 40% of pet owners reported receiving one or more types of social support (emotional, informational, instrumental) via people they met through their pet



Social Isolation & Loneliness

Social Capital & Pets

- Reciprocity - perceived willingness to help someone else
 - Pets precipitate the exchange of favors
 - Pet owners report giving/receiving more neighborhood favors
- Civic Engagement
 - Pet owners are more likely to be concerned about and active in their communities



Wood, et. al. 2005, Wood, et. al. 2007

Social Isolation & Loneliness

- Self Worth
 - Pets instill a better sense of self worth and responsibility
- Buffer against loneliness
 - In a model controlling for age, living status, happy mood, pet owners were 36% less likely than non-pet owners to report loneliness
- Increased socialization
 - Care involved in owning a pet may lead to increased socialization



[Stanley, I. H., Conwell, Y., Bowen, C., & Van Orden, K. A. \(2014\). Pet ownership may attenuate loneliness among older adult primary care patients who live alone. *Aging & Mental Health*, 18\(3\), 394-399.](#)

[Muraco, A., Putney, J., Shiu, C., & Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I. \(2018\). Lifesaving in Every Way: The Role of Companion Animals in the Lives of Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adults Age 50 and Over. *Research on aging*, 40\(9\), 859-882.](#)

[Banks, M. R., & Banks, W. A. \(2002\). The effects of animal-assisted therapy on loneliness in an elderly population in long-term care facilities. *The journals of gerontology series A: biological sciences and medical sciences*, 57\(7\), M428-M432.](#)

Healthy Aging

- Dog owners are more physically active
- Pet owners over age 65 are more likely to maintain activities of daily living, such as climbing stairs, preparing meals and bathing independently
- Pet owners are more likely to have slower rates of cognitive decline
- Dog owners have a lower risk of dementia



Mubanga, Mwenya, et al. "Dog ownership and the risk of cardiovascular disease and death—a nationwide cohort study." *Scientific reports* 7.1 (2017): 15821.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-16118-6>

Li, Yanzhi, et al. "Pet ownership, living alone, and cognitive decline among adults 50 years and older." *JAMA Network Open* 6.12 (2023): e2349241-e2349241.

Taniguchi, Yu, et al. "Protective effects of dog ownership against the onset of disabling dementia in older community-dwelling Japanese: A longitudinal study." *Preventive Medicine Reports* 36 (2023): 102465.



Child Health & Development

- Children with a family pet have been found to be more empathetic, have higher levels of self-esteem, greater physical activity, than non-pet owners
- Pets in the classroom may aid the learning process by providing children with positive experiences, while increasing their knowledge of social behavior
- Children with autism can benefit from pet ownership and animal-assisted interventions



Hart, L. A., Thigpen, A. P., Willits, N. H., Lyons, L. A., Hertz-Picciotto, I., & Hart, B. L. (2018). Affectionate interactions of cats with children having autism spectrum disorder. *Frontiers in veterinary science*, 5, 39.

Daly, B., & Morton, L. L. (2006). An investigation of human-animal interactions and empathy as related to pet preference, ownership, attachment, and attitudes in children. *Anthrozoös*, 19(2), 113-127.

Svensson, A.S. The impact of the animals on children's learning and their development—A study of what children learn from and with pets: The example of dog and cat. *Prob. Educ.* **2014**, 59, 77–85.



Advancing Research

HABRI Research

- Annual Call for Research Proposals
- Expert Scientific Advisory Board
- Applicants from across the globe

HABRI RESEARCH GRANTS

HABRI calls for research proposals on an annual basis to investigate the health outcomes of pet ownership and/or animal-assisted activity or therapy, both for the people and the animals involved. HABRI is interested in proposals that involve a variety of pet species (i.e. dogs, cats, fish, reptiles, small animals). Proposals should focus on innovative approaches to studying the health effects of animals on humans within the following broad categories:

Child Health and Development
Healthy Aging
Mental Health and Wellness

The following grant funding opportunities are available

GRANTS & FUNDING



Annual Request for Proposals

Addressing Evidence-Based Health
Benefits of Human-Animal Interaction

GRANTS & FUNDING



Special Request for Proposals

Pet-Inclusive Rental Housing Research

HABRI Published Findings

- First study on service dogs for post-9/11 veterans with post-traumatic stress
 - ✓ Better sleep
 - ✓ Improved quality of life
 - ✓ Increased work presenteeism
 - ✓ Overall reduction in symptom severity
- Largest ever study on pets in the classroom
 - ✓ 39 classrooms, 591 students, third/fourth grade
 - ✓ Increased pro-social skills, decreased problem behaviors, and improved academic competence



HABRI Published Findings

- Major study on therapy dog welfare
 - ✓ 600 canine saliva samples, 400 videos
 - ✓ No signs of undue stress
- Therapy Dogs Reduce Child Anxiety & Need for Anxiety Medication in the Emergency Department
 - ✓ 10-minutes with therapy dog-handler team in adjunct to child-life therapy (usual care)
 - ✓ 46% in therapy dog group saw decrease in anxiety scores in comparison to 23% in control group
 - ✓ 35% of therapy dog group received anxiety medication compared to 55% in control group



Research Spotlight: Fostering Felines Study

- Feasibility study conducted by researchers at the University of Georgia and Brenau University exploring the impact of fostering a shelter cat on loneliness and well-being in older adults living alone.
- The project also investigated whether older adults would express interest in adopting their foster cat after common barriers were removed
- This included basic supplies and regular veterinary care



Fostering Felines Study Results

- A significant improvement in loneliness from baseline to 4 months was found, and a similar improvement in mental health was observed
- 96% of participants chose to permanently adopt their cats after 1 year
- Fostering a shelter cat with the option for adoption may be an effective solution for alleviating loneliness and improving mental health in older adults.
- Interest in adoption was high when perceived barriers (adoption fees, pet care supplies, veterinary support) to adoption were removed.



AAHA > AAHA publications > NEWStat® > 2023-12 > New study offers promising results for both shelter cats and older adults

New study offers promising results for both shelter cats and older adults

By Jen Reeder - 12/16/2023

 Medical Xpress

Fostering a cat can ease loneliness, study finds

Fostering a cat can ease loneliness, study finds ... No one needs science to tell them that dogs make faithful and loving companions. Cats, on the other hand,...



Citation: [Sanderson, S. L., Emerson, K. G., Scott, D. W., Vidrine, M., Hartzell, D. L., & Keys, D. A. \(2023\). The Impact of Cat Fostering on Older Adult Well-Being and Loneliness: A Feasibility Study. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, gbad140.](#)

Fostering Felines Study Results

"Frankie makes my day, and he makes it worth getting up in the morning," Marion shared about her experience with the study. "He is my constant companion and the most affectionate cat I have ever had. He also responds when I speak to him."

- Marion, study participant



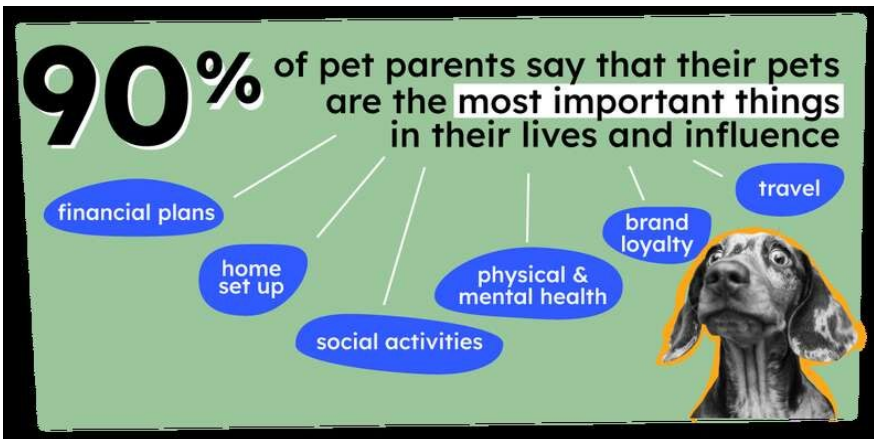
2025 Research Projects

- Possible Mechanisms Linking Pet Ownership to Mortality: A Mediation Analysis of Psychosocial and Health Behavioral Variables Among Older Adults
- The Role of Human-Dog Interactions in Perinatal Mental Health and Wellbeing: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Study
- Geriatric and End of Life (EOL) Pet Care Including Euthanasia Decisions
- Detection of Pre-Seizure Odor by Trained Dogs: A Scientific Validation Study
- Enhancing Healthy Aging by Pairing Older Adults with Foster Cats
- Validating the Effectiveness of Animal-Assisted Therapy for Individuals with SCI/ABI in Inpatient Physical Rehabilitation
- Understanding the role of pet deposit assistance in increasing tenants' perceived housing security and preventing pet relinquishment





Exploring Data on the Human-Animal Bond and Pet Owner Behavior



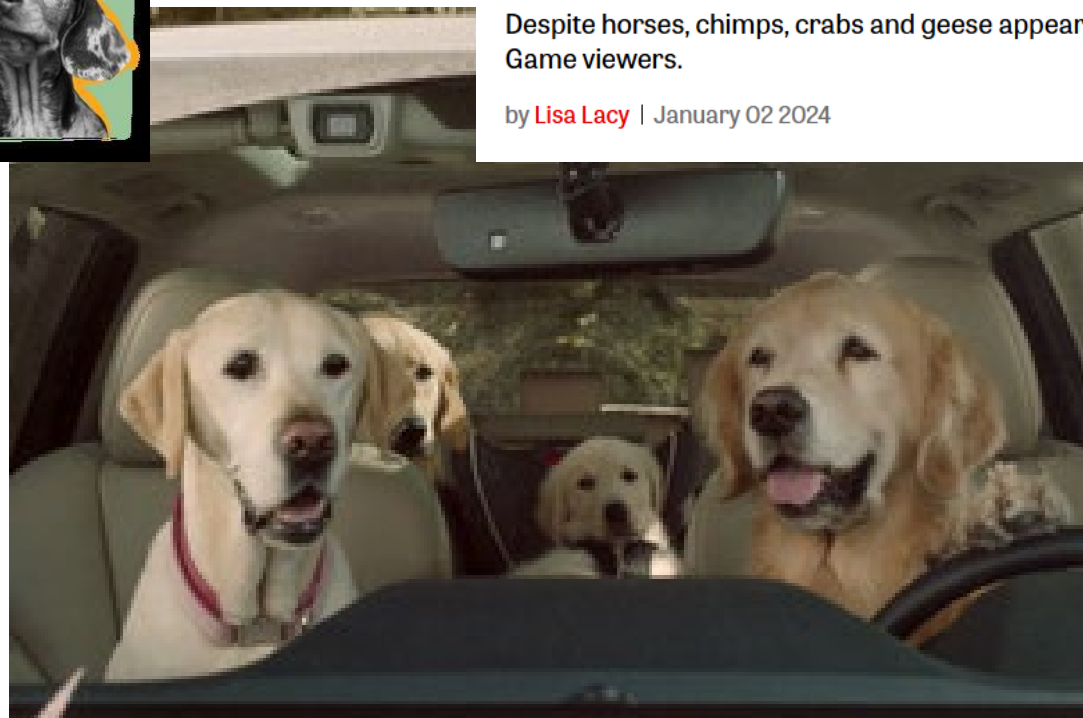
campaign

HOME IN-DEPTH ▾ NEWS ▾ THE WORK SOUNDS OPINION ▾ THE KNOWLEDGE More ▾

How dogs became Super Bowl advertisers' best friends

Despite horses, chimps, crabs and geese appearing in winning creative, dogs resonate most with Big Game viewers.

by [Lisa Lacy](#) | January 02 2024



GENERAL

44% of Millennials See Their Pets as Starter Children, and That's a Big Opportunity for Brands

The fur baby economy is real

AUGUST 13, 2017

AD 1



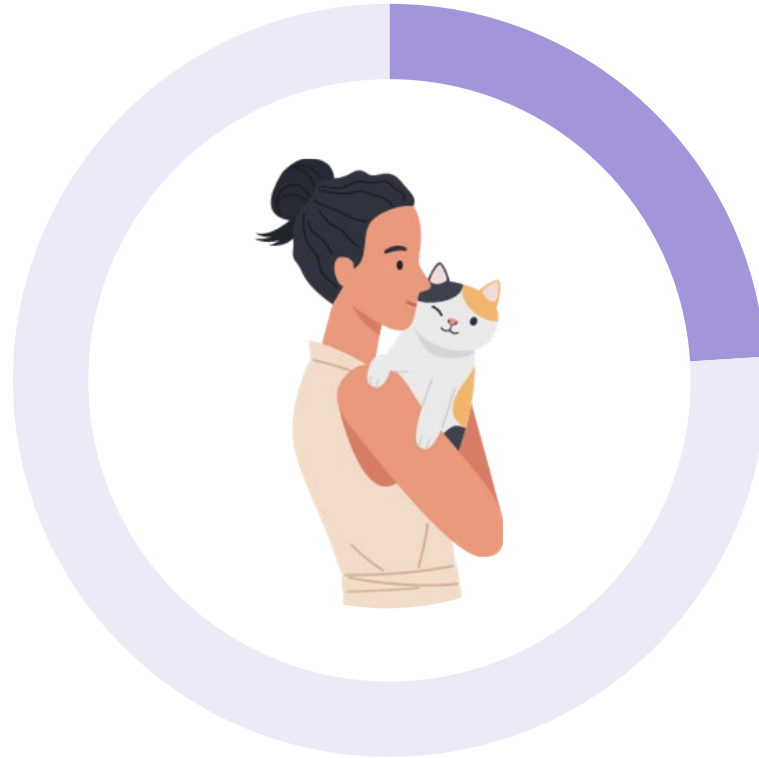
How is the importance of the human-animal bond reflected in the today's world?

- **71%** of U.S. households own at least one pet
- **83%** of pet owners say they spend most of or a big part of the day with their pets
- **95%** of pet owners globally consider their pet a part of their family
- **98%** of pet owners globally report at least one positive health impact resulting from owning a pet

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health Improvement

Among Total Pet Owners



87%

Say their pets have improved their mental health



HABRI Benchmark Survey, 2021

One-in-five pet owners have had a pet recommended for their health by their doctor or therapist



22%

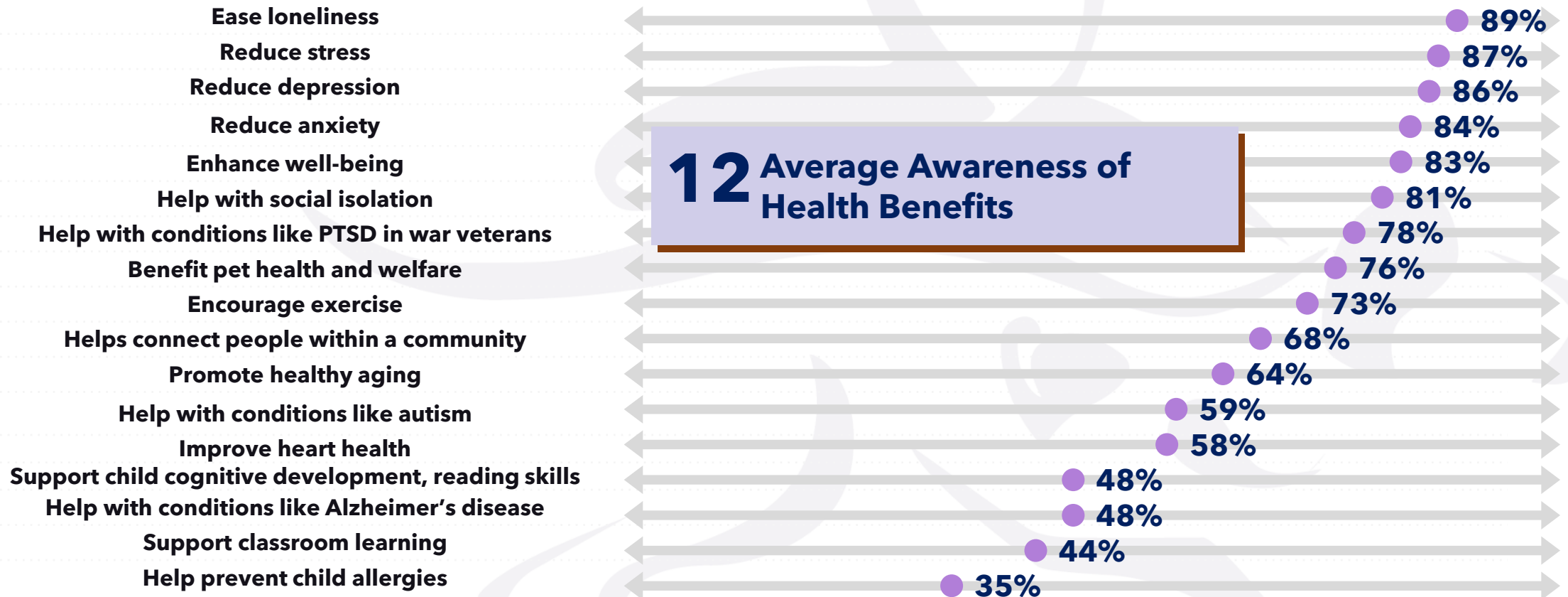
have had either a doctor or therapist
recommend a pet for health

Sources Recommended Getting a Pet for Improved Health

Awareness of Human-Animal Bond Research is Growing

Aware of Scientific Research

97% Aware of at least one Health Benefit



Awareness of human-animal bond research boosts pet care

Among Total Pet Owners - 'Strongly agree/Somewhat agree'

Knowing About the Research, Pet Owners are More Likely to...

**Maintain my pet's health, including keeping up
with vaccines and preventive medicine**

60%

91%

**Maintain my pet's health, including regular
check-ups with my veterinarian**

58%

91%

Take better care of my pet

58%

91%

Provide my pet with higher-quality nutrition

52%

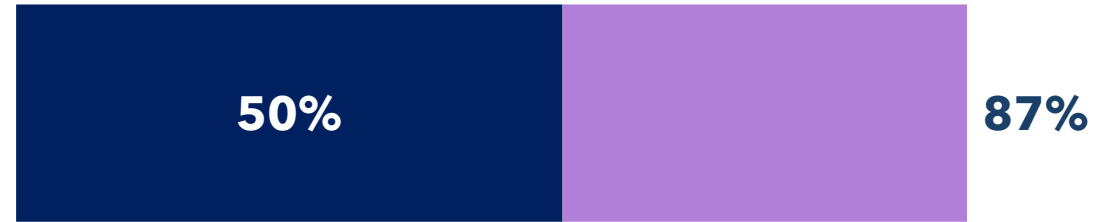
90%

Awareness of human-animal bond research boosts pet acquisition

Among Total Pet Owners - 'Strongly agree/Somewhat agree'

Knowing About the Research, Pet Owners are More Likely to...

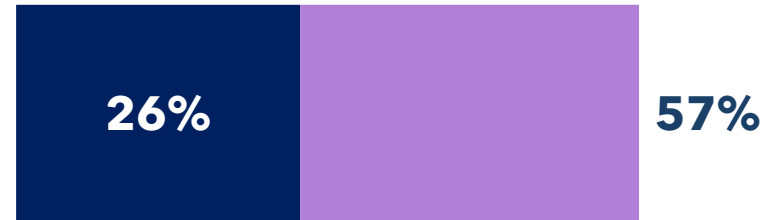
Recommend a pet to a friend or family member



Get another pet in the future (if one I have now passes away)

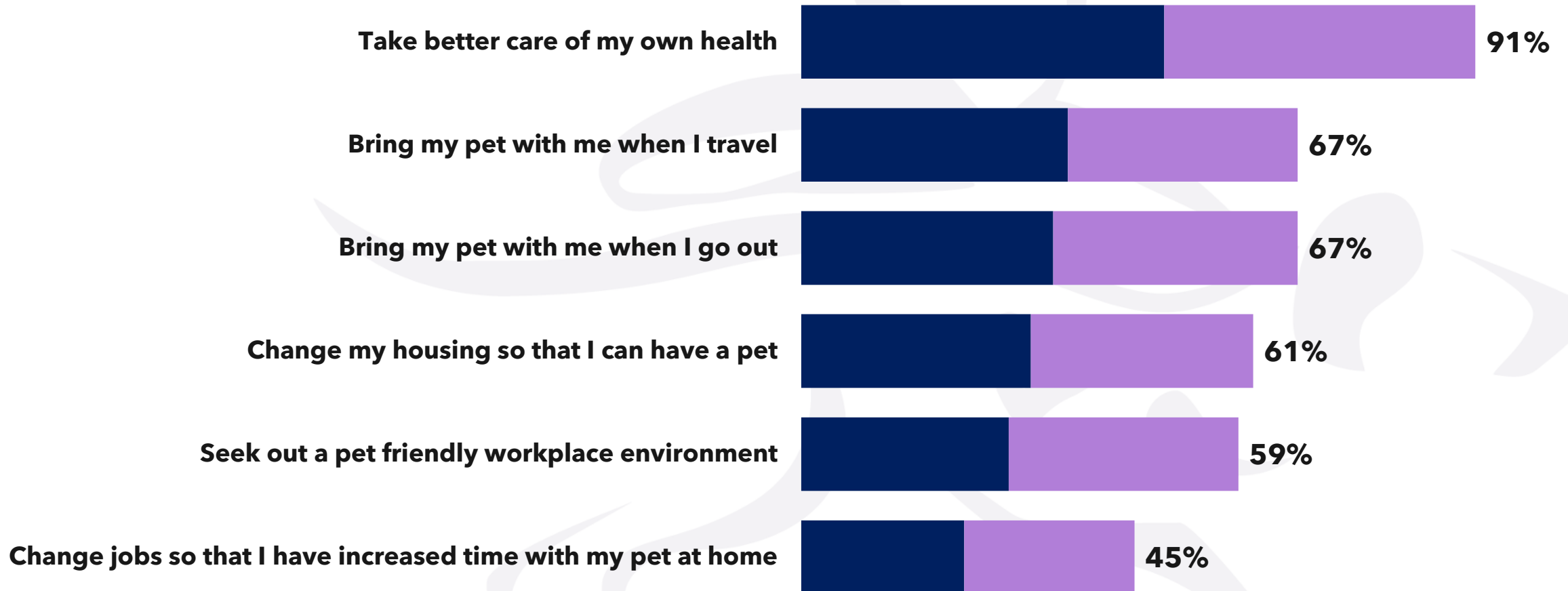


Get an additional pet



Awareness of Human-Animal Bond Research Creates Engaged Pet Owners

Knowing About the Research, Pet Owners are More Likely to...
Among Total Pet Owners - 'Strongly agree/Somewhat agree'



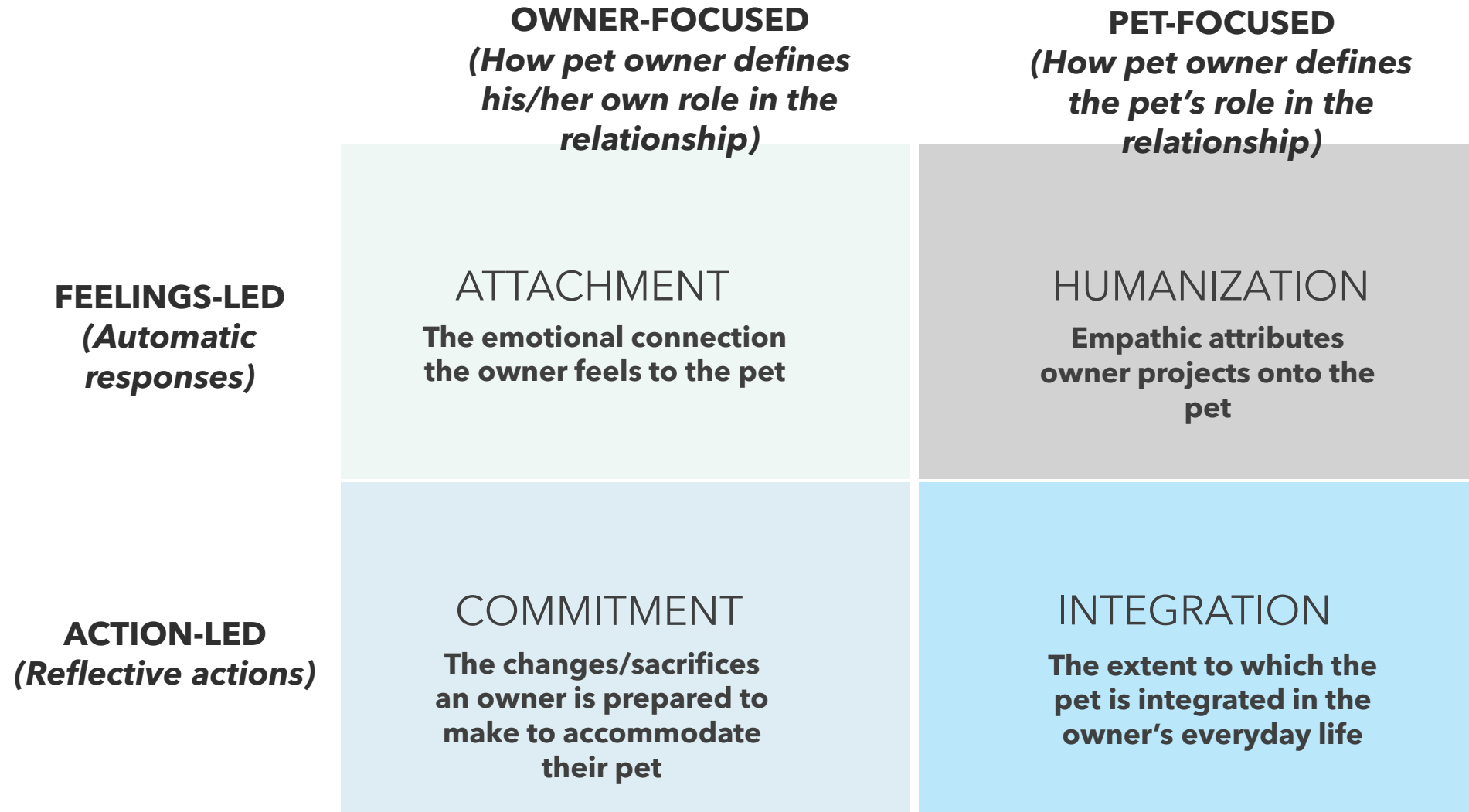
THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

Pet Owners Around the World



How do we measure the human-animal bond?

The HABSCORE Framework



How The Habscore Was Calculated

14 Human-Animal Bond (HAB) Score Statements

ATTACHMENT

- My pet and I have a close relationship
- I miss my pet when I'm away from him/her
- My feelings toward people are affected by the way they react to my pet

HUMANIZATION

- I believe my pet is my best friend
- My pet is part of my family
- My pet understands how I'm feeling
- I celebrate my pet's birthday

COMMITMENT

- Nothing would ever convince me to give up my pet
- I would make major life changes if necessary, to accommodate my pet
- If my pet needed extensive veterinary care, I would pay whatever it takes
- I would take any intervention necessary to prevent my pet from undergoing pain & suffering

INTEGRATION

- My pet is allowed on the bed
- I often bring my pet with me when I travel
- I spend time playing/interacting with my pet every day

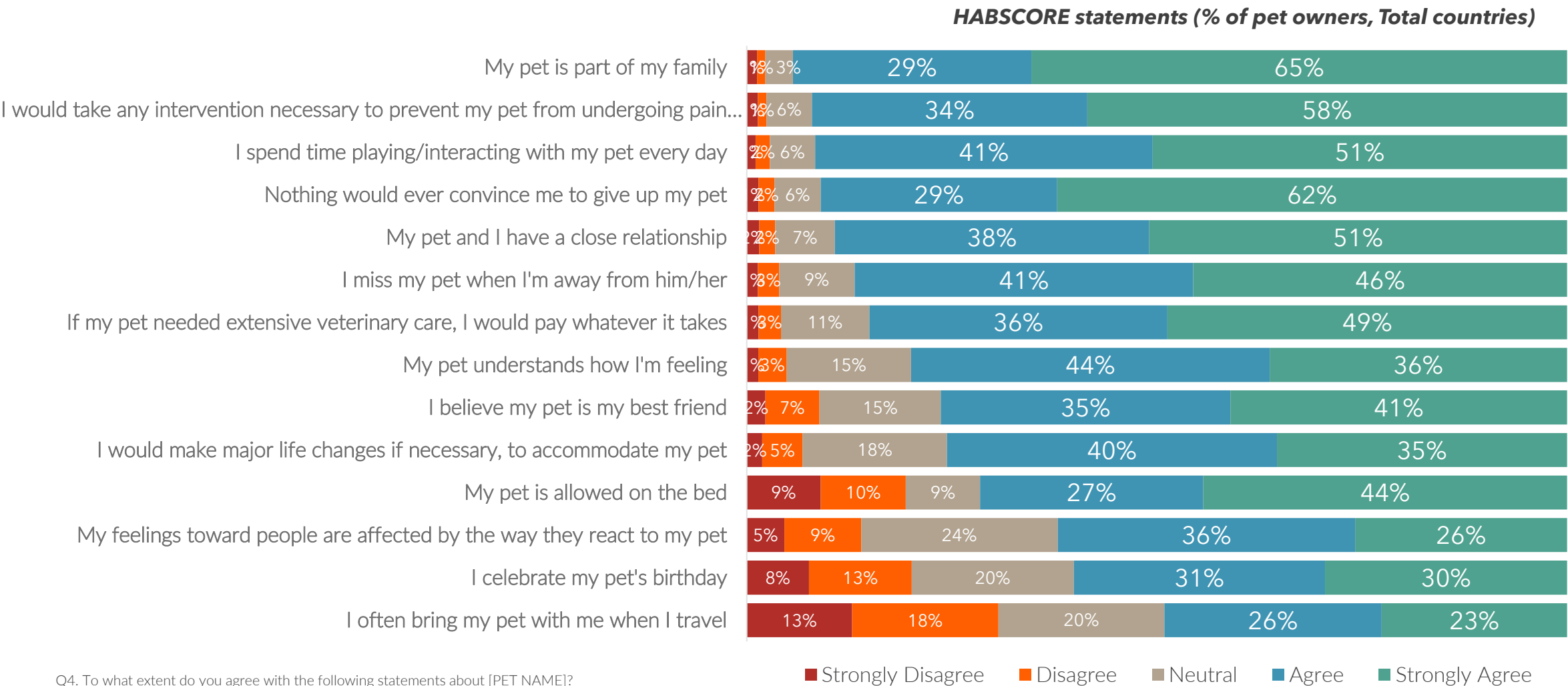
**Answered as:
1=Strongly Disagree
to 5=Strongly Agree**

**The scores are then
added together to
calculate the HAB
Score, with a
maximum score of
70**



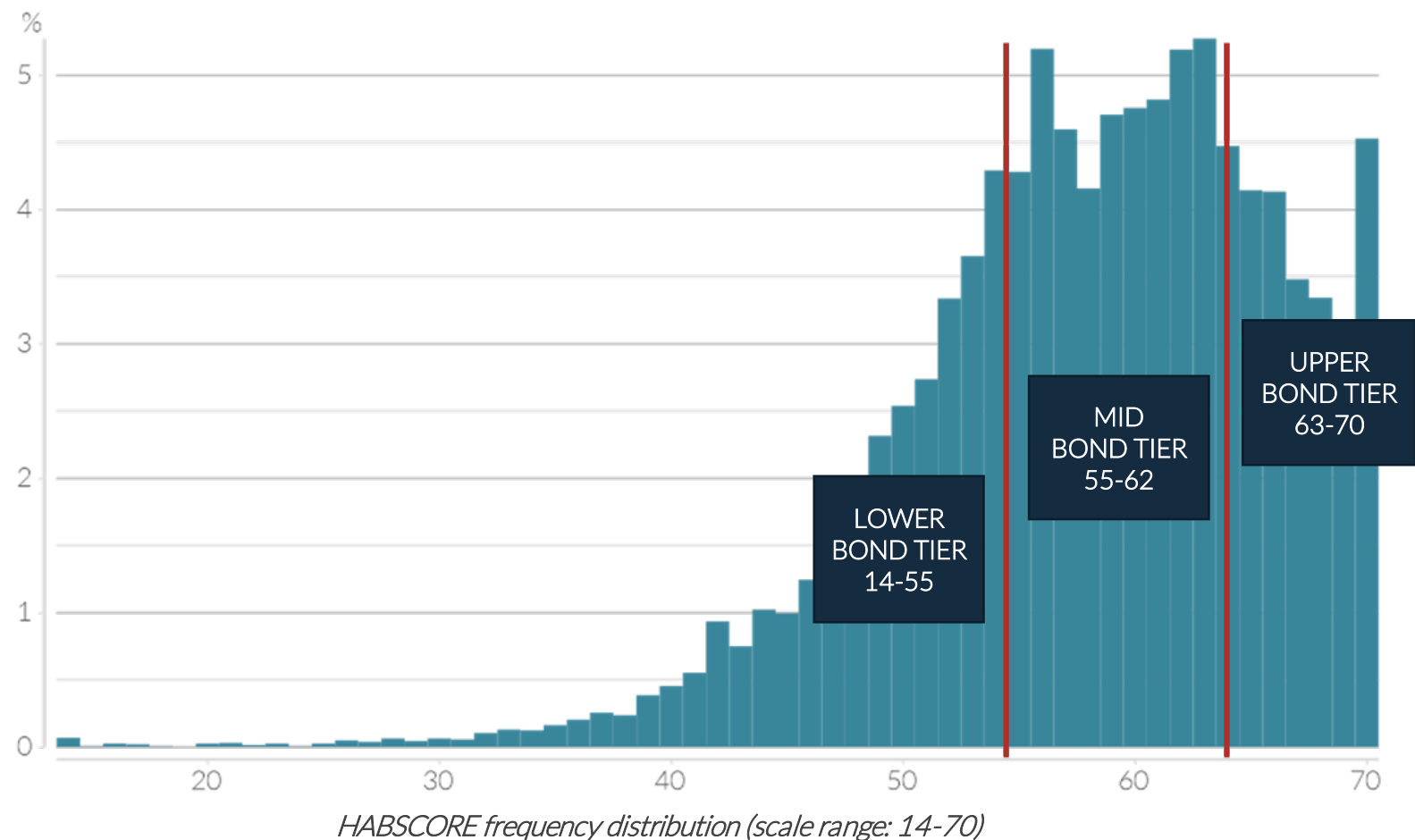
Overview of Habscore Statement Results Globally

The human-animal bond is universal and stronger than ever



Q4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about [PET NAME]?
Base: All pet owners (n=19,187)

Overview Of Scale Distribution And Grouping Of Pet Owners



HABSCORE GLOBAL AVERAGES

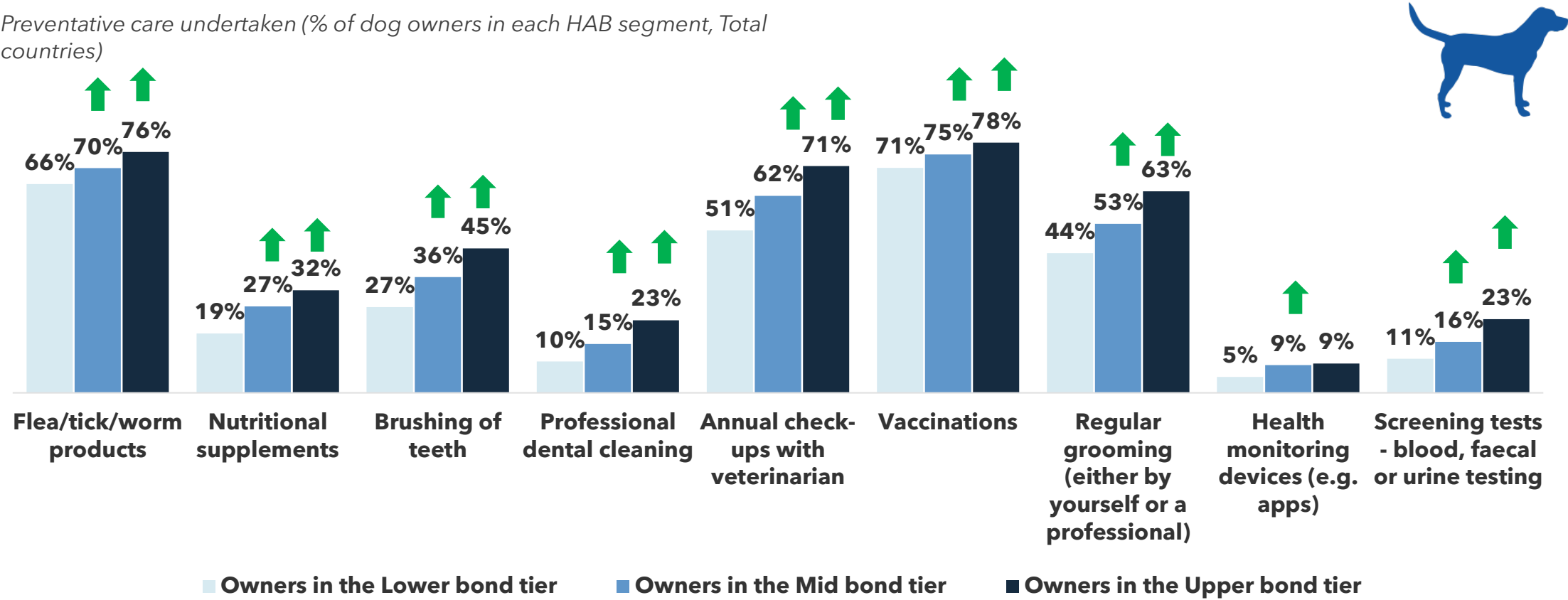
All pets: 57.5

Dogs: 58.1

Cats: 56.6

Strongly Bonded Owners Do More Preventative Care

There is a clear correlation between the strength of the human-animal bond and the propensity to engage in preventive care.



Q12 Do you currently do / use / administer any of the following products for #PETNAME#?
Base: All Dog Owners (n=10,925)

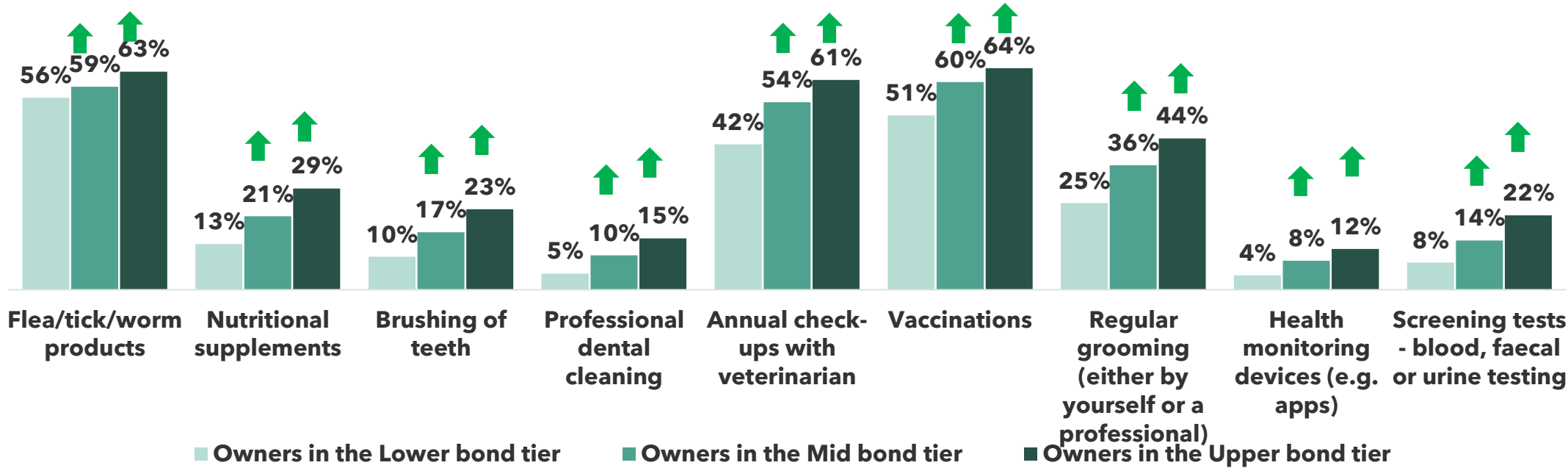
↑ Significance testing: higher than the preceding tier(s) (SIG: 95 confidence)

This Patterns Also Holds True for Cat Owners

Same pattern can be observed among cat owners, with those falling into the strongly bonded group being significantly more likely to use preventative care measures.



Preventative care undertaken (% of cat owners in each HAB segment, Total Countries)

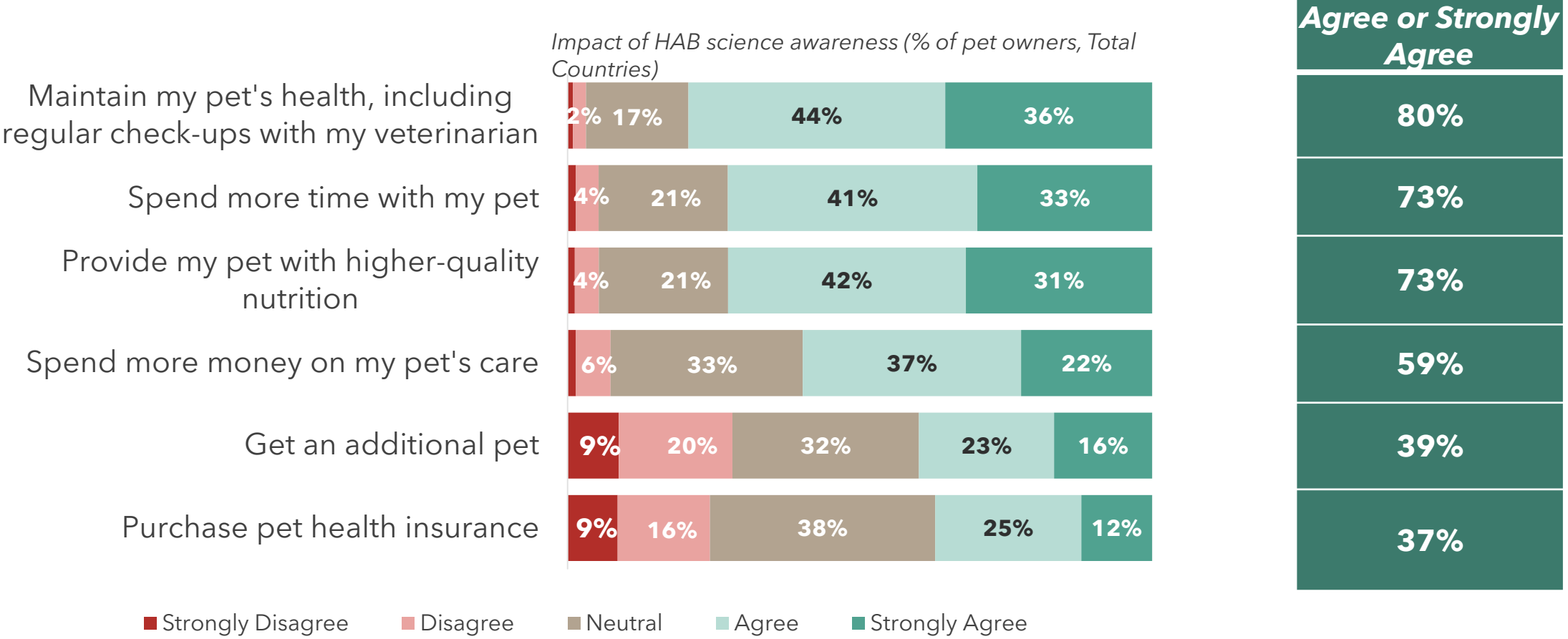


Q12 Do you currently do / use / administer any of the following products for #PETNAME#?
Base: All Cat Owners (n=8,262)

↑ Significance testing: higher than the preceding tier(s) (SIG: 95 confidence)

How Do Pet Owners Themselves Think That Greater Knowledge Will Impact Their Future Behavior?

Would learning more about scientific research on the health benefits of pets make you more or less likely to do any of the following in the future?



Q32. Would learning more about scientific research on the health benefits of pets make you more or less likely to do any of the following in the future?
Base: All pet owners (n=19,187)

Strong Support for Pets in Society

Hospitals, schools, etc., should welcome/have therapy animal programs available



Government should provide service animals to qualifying veterans suffering from PTSD



Emergency and temporary housing should accommodate pets



There should be fewer restrictions on pets in rental housing



There should be fewer restrictions on pets in society



More classrooms should have classroom pets for improved learning and engagement



Employers should consider allowing employees to bring pets to work



A large, faint, stylized silhouette of a dog, possibly a Golden Retriever, is visible in the background, rendered in a lighter shade of purple than the background itself. The dog is facing right and appears to be in a walking or standing pose.

Advocating for a More Pet-Friendly Society

The Human-Animal Bond Drives Better Health

Science demonstrates the human-animal bond has a positive impact on many aspects of human health



The human-animal bond is experienced by all and growing stronger



Efforts to support pet ownership and the human-animal bond in society will boost personal and public health

Research Driving Policy Change

Use Data and Research To Support:

- Pet-friendly workplaces
- Pets in classrooms
- Therapy animal programming in hospitals
- Pets and AAls in mental health practice
- Service dogs for veterans with PTSD
- Increased support of pet ownership for public health
- Pet-friendly rental, emergency & transitional housing



Shaping Public Policy

Pet Ownership Saves \$22.7 Billion in Health Care Costs

Annual Health Care Cost Savings Associated with Pet Ownership

ANNUAL HEALTH CARE COST SAVINGS OF PET OWNERSHIP	SAVINGS
Physician Office Visits	\$14,986,493,000
Obesity	\$4,536,476,000
Treatment of C. difficile Infections	\$90,470,000
Mental Health Costs for Anxiety in Children 8-10 Years Old	\$671,711,000
Mental Health Care Costs of Socially Isolated Seniors	\$1,776,146,000
Veteran PTSD Treatments (Emotional Support & Service Animals)	\$688,017,000
Total Identifiable Cost Savings	\$22,749,313,000

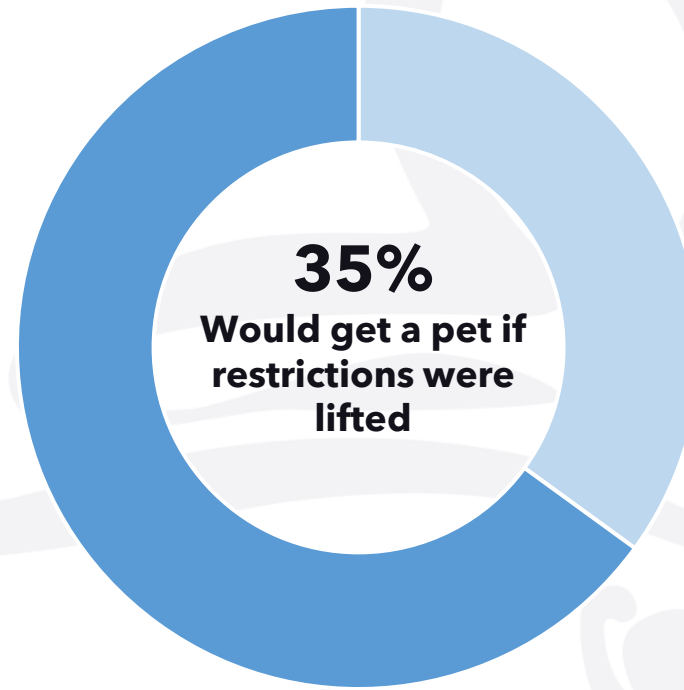
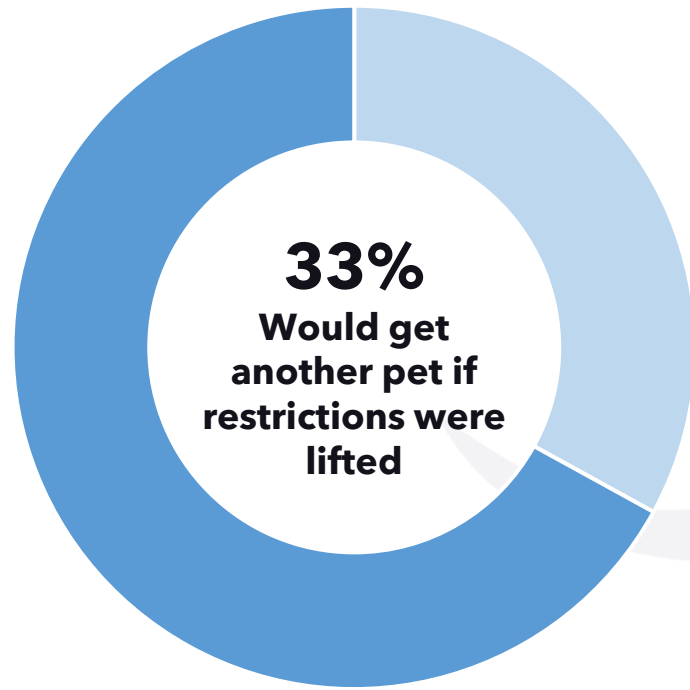


The full report, *The Health Care Cost Savings of Pet Ownership*, was made possible by a grant from Banfield Pet Hospital and is available for download at

habri.org/health-care-cost-savings



Housing



**Up to 8.5 Million
New Homes for Pets**



Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative

PRESENTED BY

Michelson Found Animals



Read the Full Report & Take Action

Together, we can create healthier, more cohesive communities through supporting strong, long-lasting human-animal bonds.

Visit www.petsandhousing.org to download the full report and learn more.



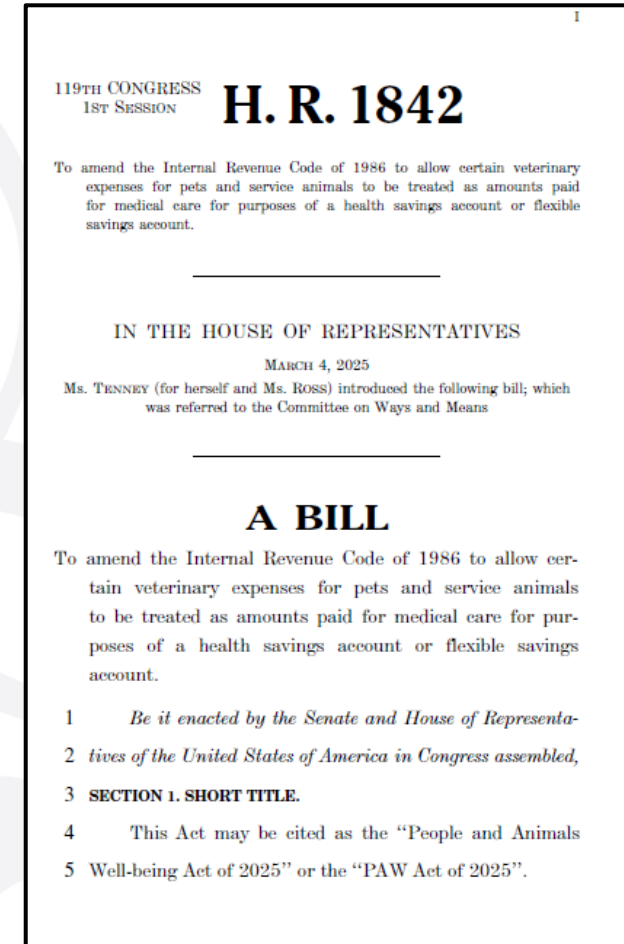
PETS & FAMILIES
HOUSING COALITION

Policy Impact

People and Animals Wellbeing (PAW) Act

- Expanding eligibility to include veterinary care expenses under tax-advantaged Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)
- Making veterinary care more affordable will also prevent pet relinquishment, keeping families and their pets together and reducing the burden on the animal welfare system.

“VETERINARY CARE. — For the purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘veterinary care’ means amounts paid for the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, condition, or injury, including diagnostic tests, medicine, medical equipment, nutritional products, surgery, and other services or items as authorized or prescribed by a veterinarian”



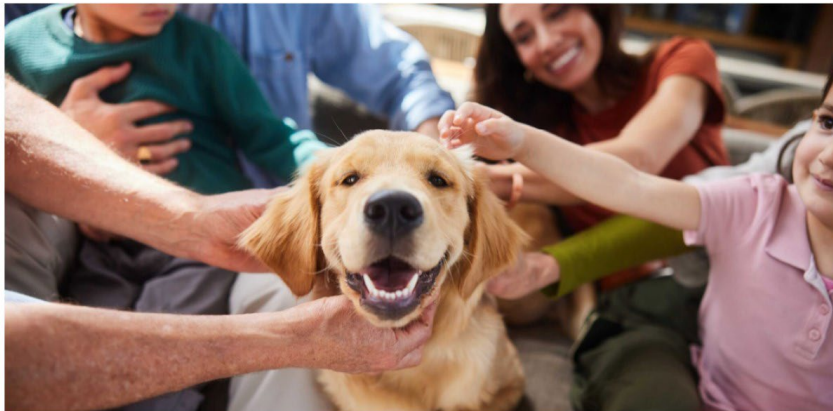
The Pets & Mental Health Resource Center

- Partnership with Mental Health America (MHA)
- Online hub for information about pets and mental health, including pet care and advice
- mhanational.org/pets

[Home](#) / Pets and mental health resource center

Pets and mental health resource center

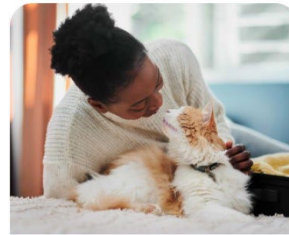
Mental Health America (MHA) is proud to partner with the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) to bring you resources, information, and tools that highlight the powerful role that animals can have in healing and nurturing your mental health. Whether you're already a pet owner, curious about owning a pet, or interested in pet-related therapy, this resource center is for you!



Having an animal companion — be it furry, feathered, scaly, or otherwise — has many benefits for your mental and physical health. Pet ownership provides comfort, makes you feel happy, and helps you be calmer and relaxed. Having a pet can also help relieve stress and symptoms of some mental and physical health conditions. Though pet ownership is already popular, you may not even begin to realize the benefits that your animal friends provide.

Considering becoming a pet owner?

Thinking about getting a pet? Animals can offer comfort, companionship, and purpose, but pet ownership is also a big commitment. These resources will help you explore what kind of pet best matches your lifestyle and needs and how to best prepare for your new pet.



10 tips for finding a pet that meets your needs

[Read more](#)



Preparing for a new pet

[Read more](#)

Take a mental health test

If you are struggling, screening is a great first step. Our free, confidential screens are a quick and easy way to check in on your mental health.

[Take a free, confidential test](#)



Pet Ownership and Affordability



OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to promote pet ownership by raising awareness of the benefits of the human-animal bond, generating interest and action toward getting a pet for both non-pet owners and current pet owners alike.

HABRI will serve as an advocate for the benefits of pet ownership and work with our partners to encourage people to choose pet ownership for themselves

www.realreasonforpets.com

TAKE HOME YOUR NEXT LOVE

Amazing pets of all kinds are out there practicing their 'take me home' faces. Go say hi. You might just meet your match.

Explore

FETCH MORE PET RESOURCES

We know how good pets are for us, so let's take great care of them. Explore helpful resources about pet ownership and care.

Find out more

SHARE THE LOVE WITH OUR PARTNER TOOLKIT

Everything you need to spread the word lives here. Download our campaign materials and bring this positive message to your community.

Download



bunnynamedtheodore and 2 others
Paid partnership with realreasonforpets
Company Money • I Love You More (feat...

bunnynamedtheodore 2w
He is small, but he changes the atmosphere of the entire house. Research shows pet ownership is associated with reduced stress and stronger social bonds. Amazing to know that our little bunny does all of that and more. Learn about all of the benefits of pet ownership @realreasonforpets @habriagram #realreasonforpets #HABRIPartner

realreasonforpets 2w
Theo truly makes the world a better place 😊💖
1 like Reply

View insights Boost reel

1.9K 23 February 25

Add a comment...

craig_love 4h



What's your **REAL REASON?**

craig_love 4h

The **REAL REASON** for pets



brittminetti and realreasonforpets
Paid partnership with realreasonforpets
Original audio

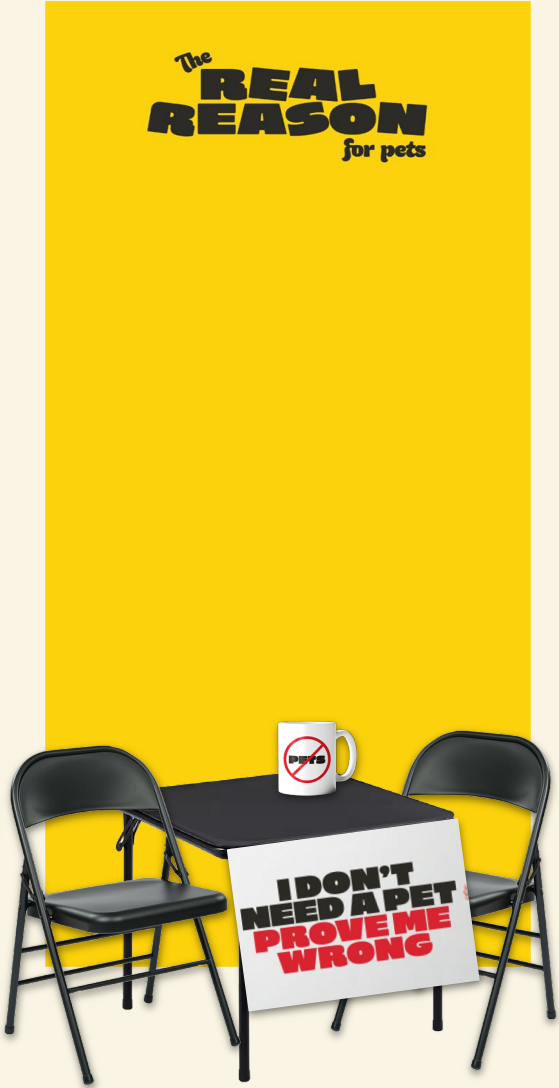
brittminetti 1w
my cats truly changed my life 🐾🐾

the real reason I got my cats?! well if you believe in the cat distribution system... they found me when I needed them the most. I was raised with pets my whole life, but I didn't realize how much having my very own would change me and make me a better person 💙 my life is filled with so much joy because of them!

studies show pet ownership improves mental health, reduces loneliness, supports heart health, and even contributes to long-term wellbeing...

View insights Boost reel

GLOBAL PET EXPO ACTIVATION



Your Work Supports the Human-Animal Bond

You are the champions of the human-animal bond and can strengthen it to support your business goals.

- Learn about and share the scientific research behind the human-animal bond
- Educate people about the powerful health benefits of pets and their need for regular, quality nutrition and care
- Infuse the human-animal bond into your work
- Advocate for policies that support pet ownership and strengthen the bond in society





Thank you

Lindsey Braun

lbraun@habri.org

Facebook:

@HABRI.org

Instagram:

@habrigram

LinkedIn:

@human-animal-bond-research-initiative-habri

Twitter:

@HABRItweets