The role of animals in supporting students to achieve, thrive and survive the educational journey!

Jenny Phillips (Lecturer) Department of Adult, Child and Midwifery at Middlesex University, Ruairi Mulhern (Lecturer), Nicky Lambert (Assoc. Professor) – all from the Department of Mental Health and Social Work

Aim: Students are faced with academic stressors, which can be further compounded by factors including separation from their support networks, financial uncertainty, higher levels of mental ill health, post-graduation job insecurity, expectations of high academic achievement and the possible complications of learning needs. The number of students experiencing mental health problems has increased significantly and levels of suicide whilst in university settings continues to rise.

Animals can have positive roles to play in supporting students to achieve their academic goals while also encouraging physical and psychological wellbeing. We will draw on evidence based practice, as well as discussing our own experiences working with animals to support student resilience.

Intended learning outcomes:

- For attendees to recognise the experiences impacting students today in regards to their retention, wellbeing and academic achievement.
- Attendees will gain an understanding of the positive impact and effects that contact and engagement with animals can have on student experience.
- Attendees will explore methods and strategies that have proved useful in supporting students to achieve their best.

References: