This is a 3 course sequence. Students may choose to take all 3 courses in one summer, or to span the courses over multiple summers. Courses are open to enrolled students or practicing professionals graduates of any master's level counseling or counseling-related program. Distance-friendly options for online/webinar participation are available for most courses. Reduced cost on-campus housing arrangements can be made available to distance students wishing to attend in person.

What our Friends are Saying

“Pet Partners is excited to see a certificate option with a strong focus on therapy animal welfare, particularly with an intensive supervised applied practice component with a registered therapy animal. Dr. Stewart’s work as the primary author for Animal Assisted Therapy Competencies in counseling has done much to articulate the need for knowledge and skills in this burgeoning field. This certificate is a great opportunity for practitioners/counselors to develop those knowledge and skills to bring the power of the human-animal bond to those who may benefit.”

-Annie Peters, President & CEO of Pet Partners

“I’m delighted to see that Idaho State University’s Animal-Assisted Interventions in Counseling program focuses on all three points of the triangle: the needs of the client, the skills of the practitioner, and—of vital importance to me—the comfort and well-being of the animal involved. The curriculum keeps professionalism and animal advocacy front and center, and it aligns with the Pet Partners and ACA Competencies, which all skillful practitioners must master.”

-Colleen Pelar, CPDT-KA and CDBC, Author “Living with Kids and Dogs”

9-Credit Certificate Program in Animal Assisted Interventions in Counseling (AAI-C) based on the American Counseling Association Competencies for providers of Animal Assisted Therapy in Counseling (ACA, 2016).

“The field of AAI has been growing over the past few decades. Graduate level coursework for counselors and other mental health professionals is critical to support the training of these individuals in bridging research to best practice. Idaho State University’s triad of courses provides a strong overview of the major tenets facing the field. It is highly recommend for any professionals interested in incorporating AAI in their regime of practice.”

-Aubrey H. Fine, Professor/Licensed Psychologist, CA Poly State University

The Courses

- Introduction to Animal Assisted Interventions in Counseling (Online Only)

- Best Practices in Animal Assisted Interventions in Counseling
  (Live Webinar/In-Person)
  - Professional ethics, provider competence, and animal advocacy

- Applied Practice in Animal Assisted Interventions in Counseling
  (In person only)
  - Experiential skills development course integrating AAI theoretical knowledge with applied AAI skills (In-Person only).

About the Instructor

Dr. Leslie Stewart is an assistant professor in ISU’s Department of Counseling. In addition to facilitating therapeutic horsemanship as a former Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH,Intl.) instructor, Dr. Stewart has incorporated animal assisted interventions (AAIs) with dogs and rabbits in college counseling and juvenile detention settings, as well as in clinical supervision and counselor education. Dr. Stewart is a nationally recognized scholar and practitioner of animal assisted interventions in counseling and the primary author of the American Counseling Association’s Competencies for Animal Assisted Therapy in Counseling.

Dr. Stewart may be reached directly at stewlesl@isu.edu.