

**Did your GP, Psychologist or other medical professional
recommend you get
an EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOG?**

**what is an emotional support dog?
what does an emotional support dog do?**

An emotional support dog is a pet dog
who's companionship may boost
the physical, mental & emotional health of their owner.

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/7-ways-pets-improve-your-health>

**Pet/emotional support dogs provide companionship,
love, affection & comfort to their owner by -**



- relieving loneliness
- encouraging you to get out of the house
- lowering your blood pressure, cholesterol levels & resting heart rate

Emotional dogs don't have public access rights

**Therapy Dogs provide comfort & affection to other people in
facilities or environments where their affection brings joy**



Therapy Dogs must love cuddles from others,
be well trained in obedience &
well socialised to many different settings

Therapy Dogs don't have public access rights



Assistance Dogs provide companionship, affection & comfort to their handler BUT more importantly they are highly trained to perform specific tasks to assist someone diagnosed with a disability

the tasks Assistance Dogs perform are directly related to the person's disability
(not all disabilities are visible)

Assistance Dogs DO have public access rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA 1992) (there are only a few places they can't go)

What can you do, or what shouldn't you do, when you see an Assistance Dog and their handler while you're shopping or at the movies?

Please don't -



- **touch** ie pat, try to move or lure the dog in any way
- **feed them** ie don't drop food or offer it 'treats'
- **talk to them** ie don't try to get the dog's attention, call it, or whistle to it
- or **otherwise distract an Assistance Dog or ADiT**

Some Medical Alert Assistance Dogs are trained to detect changes in their handler's physical condition (eg diabetes) and if they are distracted their handler's health, or life, could be in danger.

If you want to talk to the person with an Assistance Dog, what should you do?

Please – • respectfully approach the person (to a safe distance to the person & AD
• introduce yourself & • talk to the handler/person NOT the dog

Please don't be offended if the handler –

- doesn't want to talk with you (being in public can be stressful for them)
- doesn't allow you to pet their Assistance Dog

We hope this information is useful to you and will help you understand the vital role Assistance Dogs (and Assistance Dogs in Training) play in the lives of people living with disabilities.

Assistance Dogs in Training Australia (ADiT)

www.adita.com.au