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A [study](#) conducted in 2016 by the Human Animal Bond Research Institute revealed that 74% of pet owners reported mental health improvements from owning a pet.

With COVID-19 causing many uncertainties and fears, health officials are concerned that a [mental health crisis](#) may be on the heels of the coronavirus pandemic. Depression and anxiety spikes have become a common occurrence with many individuals, and it can be hard for many people to complete their daily tasks under these circumstances, but pets are helping the students of Radford, and all across the country, cope with COVID-19.

Therapy animals and [Emotional Support Animals](#), or ESA's, have been [shown](#) to alleviate feelings of anxiety and social isolation. In times where everyone has been ordered to stay away from each other, pets are now more vital than ever to help individuals cope with mental stresses.

In a post on Facebook asking how pets have been able to reduce anxiety during COVID-19, several Radford students and former students responded with their experiences with how pets have been helping them mentally and emotionally while being stuck indoors.

Carly Sumpter, a senior at Radford University, has a cat named Louie. "I had him registered as an ESA before the pandemic, but I can already tell you that if I didn't have him, I probably wouldn't have any motivation to get out of bed and do any of my online assignments."

Morgan Williams, who is also a Radford University student, has a three-year-old cat named Yogurt. She found him as a kitten and raised him. "Yogurt has helped me with staying true to my routine since I've formed it mostly around him. He's kept me sane, and the cuddles always help."

Danya Wieder, a former Radford University student, has three pets. Two rabbits, named Ellie and Roo, and a family dog, also named Roo. "They make sure I'm up on time, or they'll throw a fit... The family dog makes sure I go outside every day, and disconnect for her daily

promised walk.” Both the rabbits Ellie and Roo are also registered as ESA’s.

To find more resources about COVID-19, check out these [Five Tips on How to Stay Sane While Stuck Inside](#), and [Understanding Autism and How Organizations Are Supporting Each Other](#).