

# Healing Companions: Service, Therapy, and Emotional Support Animals Explained

People with disabilities may use service animals and emotional support animals for a variety of reasons. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sets rules for the different parts of life where animals are allowed to provide help to people with disabilities. Even though the terms "service animal," "therapy animal," and "emotional support animal" are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing.

## What is the difference?

Frequently asked questions	Service	Therapy	Emotional Support
Is this animal covered under the <b>ADA</b> ?	✓		
Does this animal have <b>specialized training</b> to perform tasks that help people with disabilities?	✓		
Can this animal be any type of <b>species</b> ?		✓	✓
Is this animal allowed in <b>public schools</b> ?	✓	✓	
Is this animal allowed in the <b>workplace</b> ?	✓	✓	✓
Are you able to live with this animal in your <b>house and/or apartment</b> ?	✓		✓



The ADA only covers service animals. Emotional Support Animals (ESA) and therapy animals are not addressed in ADA.

While therapy animals and ESAs can help with things like companionship and anxiety, only service animals have special training to assist people with disabilities with daily tasks.

Only dogs (and in some cases miniature horses) can be service animals. Therapy animals and ESAs are not limited to one species.

The ADA allows a person with a disability to have their service animal at school. When working and given permission, therapy animals can also be in public settings.

Service animals and ESAs can be considered a reasonable accommodation for employment. Therapy animals may also work in office and/or clinical settings.

Service animals and ESAs can qualify as reasonable accommodations for housing under the Fair Housing Act (FHA).

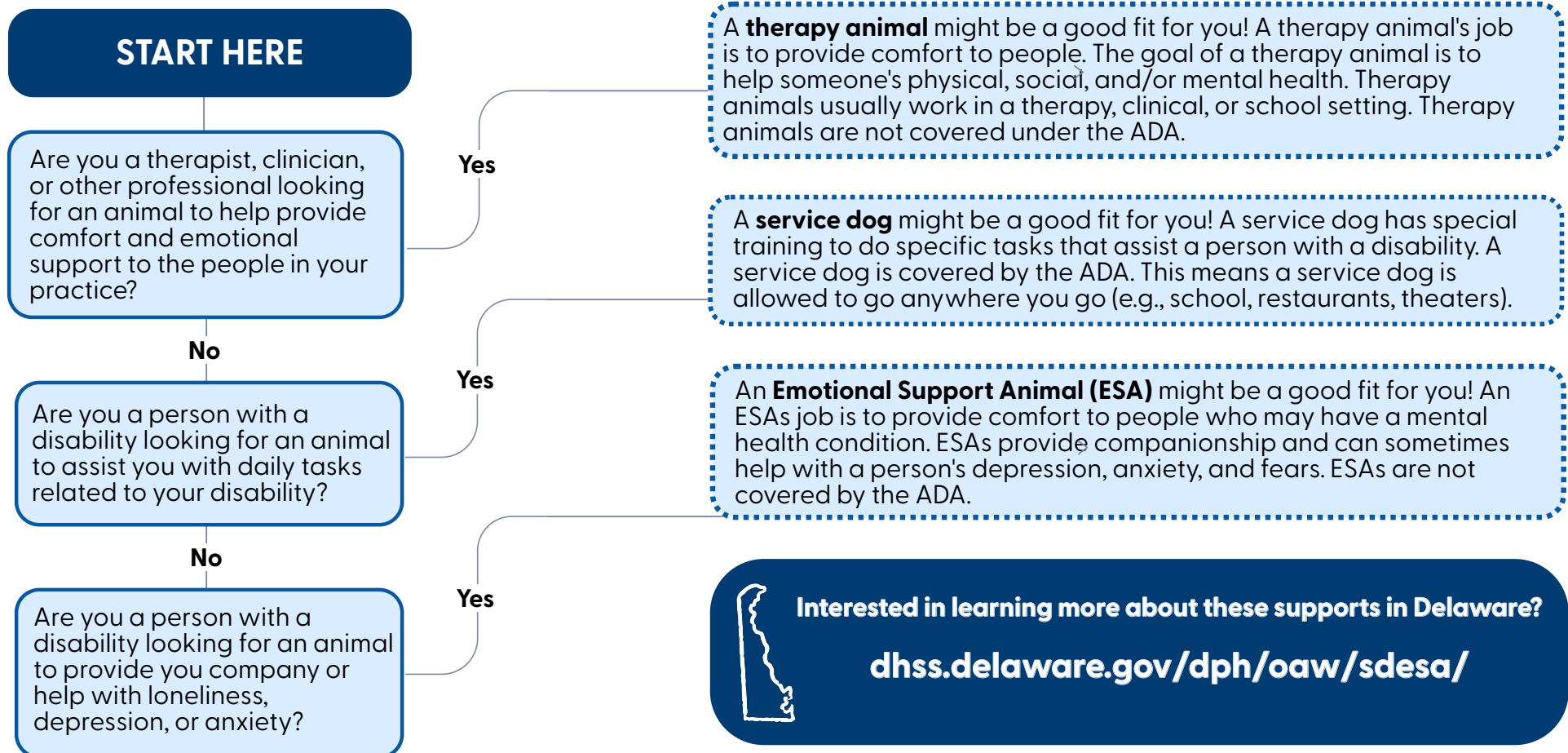
Additional resource guides and a full list of references at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.

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# Which Companion is Right for Me?

## A Service, Therapy, or Emotional Support Animal

Use the decision tree below to help you decide which companion may be the best fit for you and your needs.



### Reference

Brennan, J., & Nguyen, V. (2014). *Service animals and emotional support animals*. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network. <https://adata.org/guide/service-animals-and-emotional-support-animals>.

