

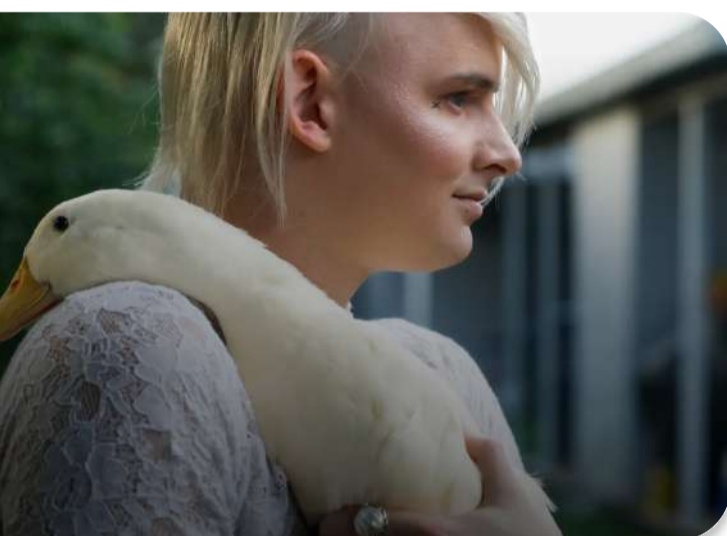
Emotional Support or Just a Pet?

Skills:

- Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
- Can argue a case on a complex issue, formulating points precisely and employing emphasis effectively.

Adults

Group



Let's watch this TikTok video:



1 Discuss the questions in pairs.

1. What is an “emotional support animal”?
2. Have you ever encountered someone with an emotional support animal in public?
3. What do you think about the increasing trend of people claiming they need animals for their mental health?
4. How would you react if you saw someone bringing an unusual animal like a duck or insect into a restaurant as an emotional support animal? What would you do if you were the owner of the place?

2 Read the article and fill in the gaps in it with the options provided below:

clarifying that restaurants and stores have a right to keep support animals out

is a highly trained dog

was a medical necessity and not simply a pet

satisfied the landlord, who threatened eviction

obtaining phony certifications or letters from online therapists

try an emotional support animal

People Are Taking Emotional Support Animals Everywhere. States Are Cracking Down.

More Americans are saying they need a variety of animals — dogs, ducks, even insects — for their mental health. But critics say many are really just pets that do not merit special status.

A 26-year-old Starbucks barista in the suburbs of Tampa known as Vayne Myers has suffered from anxiety ever since he was a child. A co-worker suggested he _____(1).

So Mr. Myers bought a duck and named it Primadonna. The snow-white bird has worked wonders for his state of mind. But Mr. Myers's landlord objected, and demanded proof that Primadonna _____(2). Mr. Myers provided a letter from a therapist in California who spoke to him over a video chat, and then another note from a counselor who met in person with him (and the duck). But neither document _____(3).

The number of people claiming they have a right to live with animals for their mental health — as well as to take them onto planes and into restaurants and stores — has been growing rapidly.

Critics say that pet owners are _____(4) to avoid paying fees or to get permission to bring creatures where they wouldn't normally be allowed.

“We've seen everything from reptiles to insects,” said Amanda Gill, government affairs director for the Florida Apartment Association, which represents landlords.

More than two dozen state legislatures have enacted new laws to crack down on fraud.

Oklahoma just passed a law _____(5). Virginia’s law cracks down on websites that promise to provide E.S.A. verification letters for a fee, without having any therapeutic relationship with the animal’s owner.

“A true service animal _____(6),” said Tammy Townley, a state representative in Oklahoma who supports her state’s new law. “When someone comes in with an emotional support animal, they are saying, ‘It’s my service animal.’ No — it’s something you bought a vest for.”

3 Answer the questions.

1. What challenges did Mr. Myers face with his landlord regarding his duck, Primadonna?
2. How are people obtaining certifications for emotional support animals according to critics?
3. What actions have state legislatures taken to address the issue of fraudulent emotional support animals?
4. According to Tammy Townley, what distinguishes a true service animal from an emotional support animal?

4 Here are 3 opinions on the issue of bringing emotional support animals to public places. Choose one that you agree with and elaborate on it, provide 2-3 arguments and examples supporting your point of view.

“I think it's great that more people are able to bring their emotional support animals with them. My dog, Max, helps me so much when I'm feeling anxious in public places. He calms me down and makes me feel safe.”

Jake



I completely disagree with the idea of emotional support animals in public places. It's not fair to other customers who may have allergies or fears of certain animals. Plus, some animals can be disruptive and cause issues for businesses.

Sarah



I'm kind of on the fence about this. While I understand the benefits of emotional support animals, I also see the potential drawbacks for businesses. It's a tough situation to navigate.

Ryan



5 In pairs, choose one of the the suggested options and create a dialogue:

Student A: a person who needs an emotional support animal

Student B: a coworker/landlord/therapist/airline rep

Correct answers

1

Created in the “Discussion Questions” tool.

2

Made in the “Fill in the Gap” tool.

1. try an emotional support animal.
2. was a medical necessity and not simply a pet
3. satisfied the landlord, who threatened eviction
4. obtaining phony certifications or letters from online therapists
5. clarifying that restaurants and stores have a right to keep support animals out
6. is a highly trained dog

3

Created in the “Open Questions” tool.

1. Mr. Myers faced objections from his landlord who demanded proof that Primadonna was a medical necessity and not just a pet, leading to threats of eviction.
2. Critics claim that pet owners are obtaining phony certifications or letters from online therapists to avoid fees or gain permission to bring their pets where they normally wouldn't be allowed.
3. More than two dozen state legislatures have enacted new laws to crack down on fraud related to emotional support animals.
4. Tammy Townley states that a true service animal is a highly trained dog, whereas emotional support animals are often misrepresented as service animals by their owners.

4

Generated in the “Four Opinions” tool.

5

The idea was generated in the “Lead-in activities” tool.