

# Introducing Animal Reiki in Professional Environments

BY PAMELA ALLEN-LEBLANC

**O**VER THE LAST FEW YEARS, I have had the honor of working with Colleen Benelli, Sioux Strong, and Robyn Benelli, creating the newly released International Center for Reiki Training, Animal Reiki courses, Levels I & II, and Master level training. Previously, many teachers have taught animal Reiki classes, leading the way with the development of Reiki innovations, tools, and techniques. We are grateful for what they have done and all who currently provide Reiki to animals. While we initially thought we were writing a manual to teach techniques for giving Reiki to animals, we eventually realized we were also receiving a *new* Reiki energy specifically for animals. This article discusses information presented in the *ICRT Animal Reiki Training I & II Manual* and includes how three respected veterinarians use Reiki in their practices and suggest ways to introduce animal Reiki in professional environments.

What an incredible experience Colleen, Sioux, Robyn, and I had: listening to the energy, waiting for it to be ready, and the excitement of what revealed itself as we developed the animal Reiki training curriculums. We discovered that this energy is special with its own unique Reiki frequency for animals that also establishes the healing connection between animals and people. The courses include Animal Reiki Placements, which unify human and animal consciousness and also harmonize the animal Reiki energy to work with the students' Usui Reiki energy and symbols. Practitioners from any lineage can take the animal Reiki classes. We taught animal Reiki classes for a while to learn how the process works before developing it as a regular ICRT class. And we continue to listen. First, we were



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amazed at the healing that took place for our students and the animals. Then, we felt enthralled with the new energy and what we learned. When a Master level course was ready, we were in awe and excited to get the knowledge into the world so others could experience the incredible energy, use the tools and techniques to channel it, and teach the class to others. We soon realized that one key to advancing animal Reiki's significant benefits is the ICRT training and its expansion into professional animal environments.

## Animal Reiki in Formal or Professional Environments

Besides working with individual clients, there are many ways to offer your services as an animal Reiki practitioner. Various animal organizations can benefit from Reiki given to the animals and staff. Some of the formal environments in which you might wish to work are veterinary offices,

traveling veterinarians, medical/veterinary schools, zoos, wildlife rehabilitation facilities, animal shelters, therapy animal organizations, animal sporting facilities and events, animal training facilities, animal sanctuaries, and guide animal organizations.

There are many options for offering your animal Reiki services in these settings. For example, offer hands-on or distance treatments to animals, staff, trainers, and caregivers, or offer “combined” sessions with animals and their human caretakers. You could give an “Animal Reiki Talk,” offer chair sessions to staff, or conduct an animal Reiki meditation. You can cleanse and clear negative energy from barns, kennels, or spaces, particularly after euthanasia or traumatic events.

Being on hand in veterinary emergency rooms, working with animals before surgery, offering post-surgery help when coming out of anesthesia, or being on call for difficult situations are valuable contributions. Likewise, being present for euthanasia and helping caretakers or staff process grief after losing an animal gives needed comfort. In addition, you could help set up a formal Animal Reiki Program and train staff.

If this is what you want to do, we suggest inviting Reiki to help you choose an organization, aid in your research, and help you find the right language and contacts. Then get to know the organization, its goals, and its people. Before you approach them, know what animals you will work with, be familiar with the language and terminology used, and know what you want to offer. Do not be afraid to change the language you use to match that of your audience. We do that with “human Reiki” all the time. You may find the needs of the organization differ from what you expected. Be flexible.

Prepare a proposal that presents you as a professional animal Reiki practitioner, addressing safety, professional behaviors, expectations, cost, language, and other criteria. Then, send Reiki ahead to your meeting. Be prepared with simple explanations, ideas, and goals. Do not apologize or be embarrassed. Many formal health settings across North America and around the world recognize Reiki. Animal Reiki is equally helpful, and it is real. Be proud to be an animal Reiki practitioner.

Just like Reiki, animal Reiki is a complementary rather than an alternative treatment. It is never intended to take the place of training or veterinarian care; rather, it works alongside them, supporting them. But if an organization is not interested in working with you, let it go and move on.

Knowing this upfront saves you time and effort. Besides, you will have planted a seed. Walk away, then invite Reiki to help you refocus as you choose another setting and refine your offerings or presentation.

### Three Veterinarians Share Their Thoughts

I asked three highly regarded animal medical professionals familiar with giving Reiki to animals to share their experiences and offer suggestions and advice on approaching professional organizations.

#### Dr. Keith Weingardt, DVM

Dr. Weingardt of Animal Healing Arts in Portland, OR, is a holistic veterinarian who has extensive experience incorporating the best of all worlds into finding a treatment plan that provides optimal health for his patients and their families. One aspect of the ICRT Animal Reiki Training guidance that came through was the importance of helping animal medical professionals with compassion fatigue and over-empathy, common conditions in the field. Dr. Keith Weingardt, DVM, agrees and says over-empathy, grief, and compassion fatigue almost killed him. He pointed to studies which showed emotional exhaustion and mental health illnesses are higher among veterinary surgeons and nurses, with the rate of suicide in the veterinary profession four times the rate of the public.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup> He realized he could not properly care for his animal patients if unhealthy himself. Fortunately, he found Reiki and follows the adage “healer heal thyself.” He made Reiki and self-care a daily priority and is excited that the *ICRT Animal Reiki Training I & II* course has specific meditations that help address this for humans and animals. He pointed out that animals can also experience compassion fatigue and difficult grief emotions.

Dr. Weingardt suggests that practitioners who use Reiki on animals approach organizations already open to holistic modalities and aligned with energetic work. He says we should start with organizations like the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AMVMA), [ahvma.org](http://ahvma.org), which lists veterinarians by state and the holistic modalities they practice. Look for those who practice Reiki, acupuncture, kinesiology, Chinese herbs, Bach flower essences, chiropractic, cranial-sacral therapy, and so forth. The AHVMA currently lists 126 veterinary organizations in the United States who offer Reiki! These organizations would provide a suitable place to start, and they may not yet be familiar with Reiki for animals. Dr. Weingardt says even if a veterinarian is not open to Reiki, sometimes re-

quests from their clients will create an inroad. He believes that when professionals like himself experience the benefits of Reiki, they will become advocates and help animal Reiki spread.

### **Dr. Deborah Rotman, DVM**

Dr. Rotman, the previous owner of Loving Hands at Home Pet Euthanasia, who performed home pet euthanasia services for dogs and cats in Northwest Oregon and Southern Washington, studied animal Reiki with Sioux Strong and said it was amazing to see the animal reactions. Deborah was always interested in hands-on healing and found Reiki and animal Reiki gave her guidelines to work with. She wanted the maximum number of tools in her toolbox and found more people in her field agree with and are receptive to complementary therapies. Dr. Rotman trained 25 years ago when training was all about the animals, and there was little taught to help the professionals find balance. She thinks many staff members in the veterinary profession are devastated by death and suffer from compassion fatigue. So, anything that can help them reduce pain and discomfort for themselves and the animals is welcome.

Dr. Rotman says animal Reiki works well with euthanasia, saying caretakers often experience guilt at an animal's end of life. Reiki can help with that and the grief her human and animal clients experience. She acknowledges we should shift our belief system around the death of an animal and bring the perspective that most pets are alive a lot longer than they would have been in nature, stating that normally, with other predators, they would have moved along much earlier. But, she added, "Animals have shown me they do not want their human caregivers to remain in grief; they hope they will process their grief and move into gratitude for the beauty and learning the relationship provided. So, the grief healing work from the ICRT Animal Reiki class can be especially useful."

To get started in your business, Dr. Rotman suggests arranging talks at New Age stores and gatherings. Talks may be something your local pet store, crystal shop, whole food store, or shelters would be interested in arranging or promoting with you.

She suggests another entry point into the industry through state veterinary medical associations that list the individual veterinary offices. Also, look into organizations like the International Association of Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (IAAHPC), [iaahpc.org](http://iaahpc.org), and approach ani-

mal chiropractors, animal acupuncture clinicians, massage therapists, and groomers to gauge their interest in working with you.

Dr. Rotman states that insurance and legal liability sometimes create a barrier to collaboration if you charge for services. So, check ahead to determine whether the organization you wish to approach accepts outside help or volunteers. Even if they do not, they may be open to providing referrals, so it may be worthwhile to connect and even conduct volunteer sessions with staff, knowing that your work will become better known.

She recommends you bring articles and information about animal Reiki or Reiki hospital programs to your presentation to leave with staff, which adds legitimacy to your offer. Finally, she reminds us that most veterinarians have just 20 minutes available per pet, and animals are their priority. So, be organized, presenting simple information, goals, and offerings efficiently.

### **Dr. Kellie Linqvist, DVM**

Dr. Linqvist, serves as the Managing Veterinarian at the Alaska Veterinary Clinic in Anchorage, Alaska and uses animal Reiki in a science-based veterinary practice with twenty-eight staff and says it helps her connect with animals more easily. She was the first veterinarian to introduce Reiki for animals and animal communication, and as she had been there long enough, the other veterinarians and support staff were willing to listen to her. She does not push Reiki on people or animals, and at first, she used it discreetly. But she noticed the more she offers it, the more people ask for it, and it integrates with her work beautifully.

Early on, she conducted a Byosen scan on a dog in front of staff members, and the dog whipped its head around and looked at the exact spot her hands indicated, repeating the obvious behavior a second, then a third time. The staff was amazed. So, when veterinary personnel ask for Reiki, she always provides it and occasionally arranges group "Reiki experiences" for her colleagues. In addition, she sometimes shares Reiki healing meditations with staff, who occasionally remind her to do Reiki in the office or with clients when she gets busy and forgets.

Dr. Linqvist spent time after learning Reiki, getting to know her intuitive style and realized that she could sense the animals' emotions and pain and recognized the need to use animal Reiki to balance her empathy. She also uses Reiki with euthanasia and has noticed a change since she

incorporated it. She can feel the animal's spirit release; animals experience a more peaceful passing with less resistance, and Reiki lessens the guilt and grief of the humans present. In addition, she finds animal Reiki activates on its own during end-of-life discussions, which often shift to a more spiritual conversation.

Dr. Linquist also uses animal Reiki post-surgery and finds the energy strong. She has noticed a significant difference in the recoveries since doing this. She also uses Reiki and animal communication together with fearful animals. Some decline Reiki, but many accept. She finds it helps, especially with fear and aggression, and noticed that most animals take sedation better after a brief session. She is continually finding new ways to use animal Reiki in her practice and her life.

The doctor says she is a worrier, often waking at night worried about patients, so she made a separate animal Reiki crystal grid for them. Now, when she wakes up, she sends Reiki to them through her grid and can sleep again afterward. She believes Reiki and animal Reiki have a positive impact on her own mental health at the same time as they help her patients.

Dr. Linquist meditates with animal Reiki regularly, learning how to expand it in her work and allowing it to guide her. She was surprised to find herself in a Reiki leadership position in her practice and loves reaching more people and animals this way. At times, she still doubts herself, but she has Reiki to keep herself grounded, mindful, and prevent burnout. As a result, she can create boundaries and listen better. She does daily self-Reiki on the way to work and is grateful for the balance it brings.

She recommends we present Reiki for animals from a scientific, results-based standpoint rather than a spiritual one. For example, share an experience or show a technique like Byosen scanning. She says when she activates Reiki and animals snuggle into her hands, people notice.

## Conclusion

The veterinary and animal community can be small and resistant to change, so put feelers out, familiarize yourself with the organizations and the community, then do your best to get the backing of veterinary professionals as they often lead the way. Go slow. Do your research. Be prepared and professional. Do not push. You might be surprised at how many medical professionals, trainers, and other ani-

mal professionals are open to Reiki or animal Reiki or are already using it. Everyone wants the best for their four-legged friends, and the two-legged friends will benefit too.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work, learn and listen alongside my incredible and talented colleagues. The experience of developing the ICRT Animal Reiki Training courses has been one of the most magical of my life to date. As this work spreads and grows, animals everywhere will continue to help, whether they have two legs or four. So, if you feel guided, please answer the call of advancing animal Reiki's significant benefits to animals and humans. Commit to taking it out into the world through individual clients or by expansion into professional animal environments. Thank you for what you do! Just for today, I am grateful for you and the beautiful light you are in the world! Namaste. ■



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## Endnotes

- Several studies have shown that emotional exhaustion and mental health illnesses are significantly higher among veterinary surgeons (VS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs), with the rate of suicide in the veterinary profession four times the rate of the general public.
- D. J. Bartram and D. S. Baldwin, "Veterinary Surgeons and Suicide: Influences, Opportunities and Research Directions," *British Veterinary Association* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, January 12, 2008), <https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1136/vr.162.2.36>.
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