



 明愛青少年及社區服務

Gato House (貓空)

A drug rehabilitation project using  
animal-assisted interventions

# The understanding of drugs addiction

When we feel disconnected or alienated,

We experience pain.

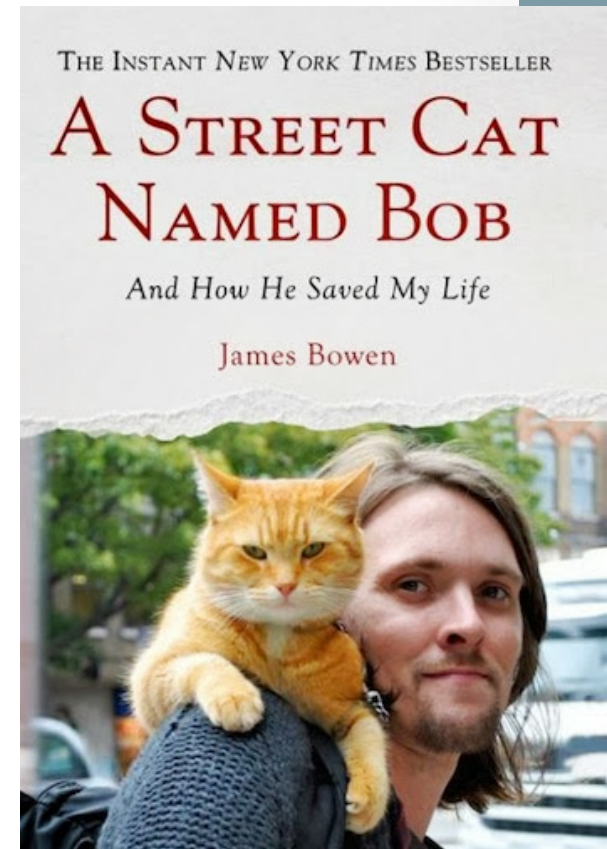
Addiction, depression, anger and violence  
are ways we cope with pain.

For healing,  
we must address the emotional wounds  
that are the root causes of our pain.

The emotional reasons and needs  
behind pain have to be addressed and  
heard, while recognizing the power and  
strengths of every individual's lived  
experiences...

# Background of Gato House

- The idea came from a book...





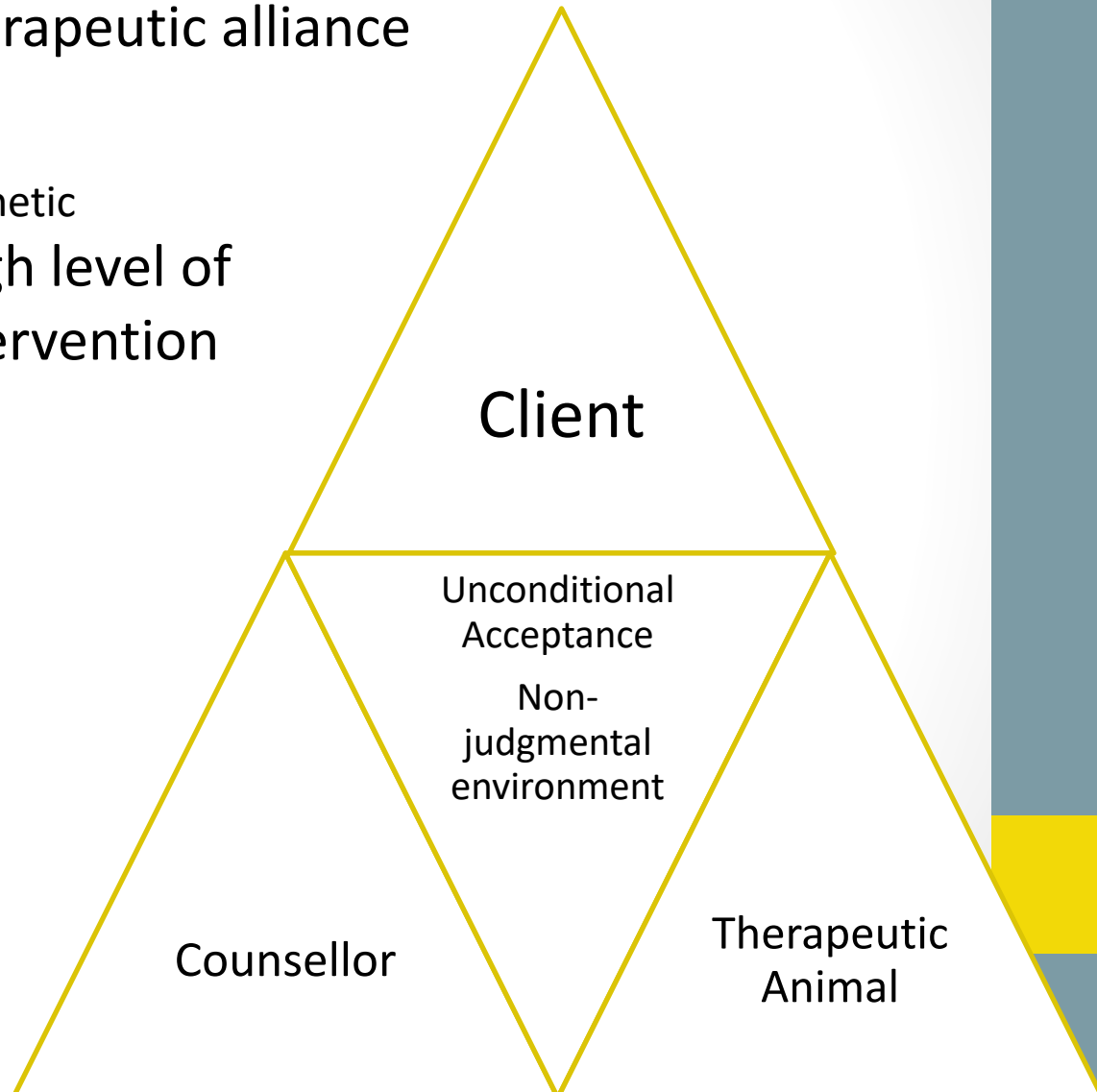
# Background of Gato House

- Funded by “Beat Drugs Fund”
- Starting from July 2015
- Service Target:
  - Substance misusers aged 30 or below
- Objectives:
  - Helping substance misusers /ex –users to channel and reflect on their emotions e.g. anxiety, depression and loneliness;
  - Strengthening therapeutic alliance; and
  - Enhancing autonomy and forging new identities.



# Animal – assisted Therapy : Human Animal Interaction

- Animals to enhance therapeutic alliance
  - Confidentiality
  - Here 'n' Now
  - Being genuine and empathetic
- Participants showed high level of engagement during intervention



# Home-like cat relaxation room





# Animals' stories as metaphors

- According to Chandler (2017), the involvement of animals helps to lower client's defense and resistance. The story of animals "helps to tap more deeply into suppressed and even repressed client feelings and experiences" (Chandler, 2017, p. 213)
- Elements of an animal's story help client to explore and reflect on similar experiences, leading to unique outcomes that are beyond the original problem-saturated narrative (i.e. drug abuse related story)
- Explore and consolidate needs and values from unique outcomes and rebuild identity other than that of drug abusers.

# Animals' stories as therapy metaphors



**Miss Hak Ding**

Hopelessness



**Miss Ga Ga**

Defensive



**Miss Nat Nat**

Single mother



**Nat Nat's  
sons and  
daughters**

Family dynamic

Parenting style



# Animals' stories as therapy metaphors



**Miss Dau Dau**



**Mr. Lion**

- Mother-and-son relationship

# Animals' stories as therapy metaphors

1. FBI

多少相遇與別離 才能在人海中找到對的人?  
 • 人一生總要遇見的六種人 •

1. 第一種是, 你恨愛對方, 但他不愛你的人;
2. 第二種是, 你不愛對方, 但他很愛你的人;
3. 第三種是, 你們也都愛對方, 但遇到的時間不對的人;
4. 第四種是, 你們都非常愛對方, 但最後不能在一起的人;
5. 第五種是, 難過了去去, 才明白自己有多少愛對方的人;
6. 第六種是, 經歷傷痛後, 終於遇上對的那個人。

2. "1" 的

3. 的

4. 的

5. 的

6. 的

多少相遇與別離 才能在人海中找到對的人?  
 • 人一生總要遇見的六種人 •

1. 第一種是, 你恨愛對方, 但他不愛你的人;
2. 第二種是, 你不愛對方, 但他很愛你的人;
3. 第三種是, 你們也都愛對方, 但遇到的時間不對的人;
4. 第四種是, 你們都非常愛對方, 但最後不能在一起的人;
5. 第五種是, 難過了去去, 才明白自己有多少愛對方的人;
6. 第六種是, 經歷傷痛後, 終於遇上對的那個人。

2018.11.2 "愛" 的

5. 六個月的等待...

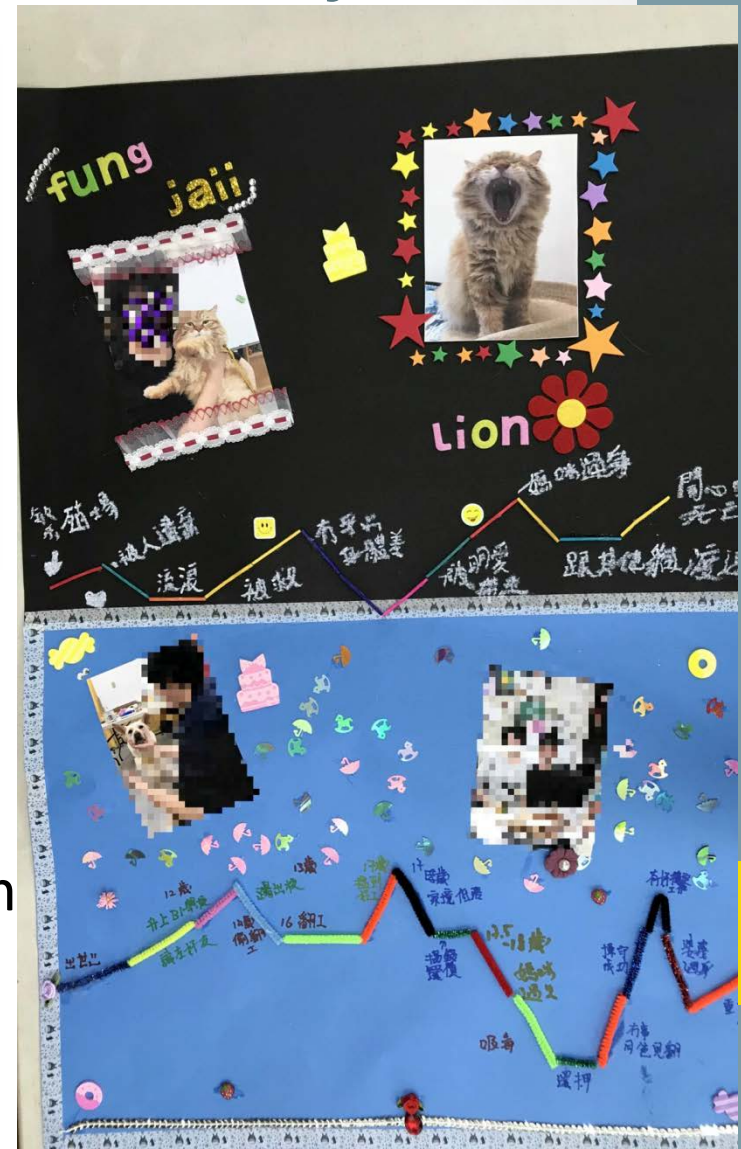
終有一天, 也許會遇到  
 隨緣 ~!!

不牙後悔!!



- ✧ The six major characters / witnesses in Nat Nat's story
- ✧ Who are they? What do they represent? What are your / their feelings, needs and values?

# Connecting with the Animals' story, client will also review their own story



- ✧ Explore unique outcomes other than the original problem-saturated narrative (i.e. drug abuse related story)
- ✧ Explore important needs and values from the unique outcome and build new identity .

# Components of Gato House



# Individual Counseling

- Channeling negative emotions during treatment
- Re-structuring daily life
- Developing a sense of competence and responsibility



# Counseling Group

- Using card games to facilitate clients to sharing their emotions and experiences



# Cat adoption

- ✧ Three cats were adopted by clients
- ✧ Positive changes include:
  - ✧ Increased motivation to work
  - ✧ Emotions become more stable
  - ✧ Increased motivation to re-structure daily life
  - ✧ Decreased drug-taking behavior
  - ✧ Developing new roles and new narratives



# Animal Welfare

- Health of therapeutic animals is a priority;
- Stress-free situation for therapeutic animals;
- Counsellors have sufficient knowledge about the physical and psychological health of therapeutic animals at work; and
- Full medical support from CityU VMC & Maple Veterinary Hospital and for therapeutic animals



Thank You!

Thank You!

Award-winning photographer : Crystal To