

PetMassage for K9 Officers  
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The environment that can be experienced by K9 unit dogs and their handlers can be stressful to say the least. K9 dogs are expected to perform well in various situations, such as finding a suspect through smell, protecting its handler, finding hidden objects in a 150'x150' area, knowing how to respond when under fire, and detecting explosives and narcotics.

The idea here is to provide PetMassage for the dogs to help them deal with any physical injuries, and even more importantly, dealing with any stress and/or trauma they incur on the job. The handler is also going to benefit from this work because another aspect of the idea is to teach them how to do the PetMassage as well so they can connect with their dogs on a deeper level. The dogs have to learn the character of the handler so it is easier for them to work and live together. The handlers have to learn how to deal with any behavioral issues and understand their dog so as to enhance the dogs' performance rather than hinder it.

PetMassage will help the handlers add to the training they get in behavior and body language. They will be able to connect with their dog differently with the energy work to find any invisible issues, unlock any emotional or energetic stagnation, and overall have a stronger bond with their partner while dealing with the day to day ups and downs of various police situations.

The logical start is to contact the K9 Unit supervisors for my area: York County in South Carolina, and Mecklenburg County in North Carolina, both around the Charlotte area. Then I considered what to present to them, and I realized I didn't really even know what went in to being a K9 officer, either the dog or the handler. To remedy that I decided to contact some trainers that I was referred to that had some experience with training either K9 Unit dogs, attack dogs, or aggressive dogs. This should help in deciding whether or not to do the PetMassage myself, or create a class to train the handlers how to do it themselves. I needed to know what to expect from the animal on my table.

A friend of mine recommended the dog trainer that she had sent her dogs to at Priory K9 because he had experience in working with aggressive dogs and K9 unit dogs. I had a nice talk with him about what PetMassage was and what I was wanting to provide for the dogs and their handlers. He was interested in seeing a demo and saw the value that could be had with utilizing PetMassage for the K9 officers.

A client of mine, human massage that is, has her own animal training business here in Charlotte and was very interested in learning more about it. I even did a demo for her and her team helping a dog with anxiety get some much-needed rest in a new place.

They both gave good insight on what the situation may be like having one of the K9 officers (dog) on my table. They are on alert so often, they may have some trouble relaxing on the table and fully calming down to the massage. There also is always the

chance of getting bitten which does not make for a relaxing session, though the thought to have the handler present during the session and/or have a small class to teach them some PetMassage techniques could be a help for that issue.

For the trainers the benefit was clear even if the process may have its own kinks to iron out. However, as much as I was hoping the response to be similar with the K9 supervisors themselves, it didn't happen that way.

To start out, I figured it would be best to stick to the areas that I'm planning to work in: York County, SC and Mecklenburg County, NC. I spent several months placing calls to the unit supervisors with no response. I visited the police stations to find they didn't have a physical office, so the only way to contact was via phone.

I did finally get a hold of someone at the York County K9 Unit. I had hoped they would show some interest in providing this service for their dogs, but they were not receptive to the idea. Quite bluntly I was told they weren't interested in the PetMassage and had no time to consider a class to learn themselves to work with their animals. I still have not been able to reach anyone from the Mecklenburg County K9 Police Unit.

It seems that currently PetMassage is not on their radar. I realize some of the pitfalls with putting this into play would be finding the time, also budgeting either for individual owners or, the more likely option, through the city funding. It takes a lot to care for these dogs already, and I know they are looking to expand the unit in Mecklenburg County, so I will continue to try and make better connections with these officers and build a relationship with them and people they know to increase the awareness of the benefits for all involved.