

# Guide dogs for kids: expectations of stakeholders

Jennifer Gravrok



Anthrozoology  
RESEARCH GROUP



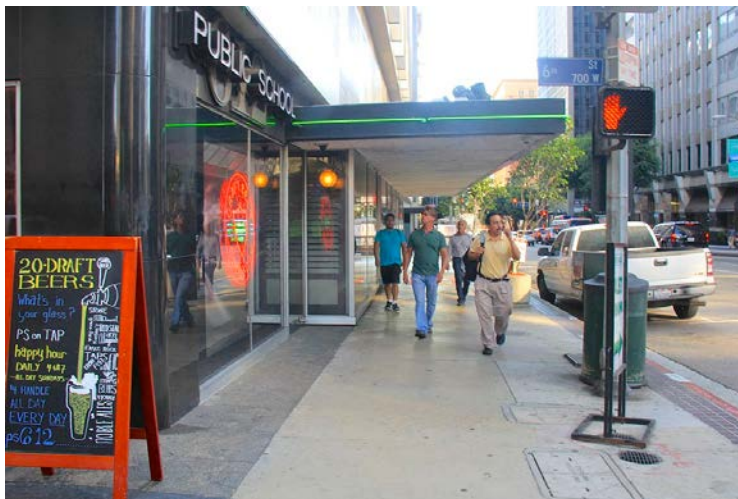
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# Outline



# Guide Dogs for Adults

- How do guide dogs assist?
- Physical challenges
  - Guide around objects
  - Stop at curbs
  - Walk in a straight line





# Guide Dogs for Adults

- How do guide dogs assist?
- Social challenges
  - Companionship
  - People like dogs
  - Social catalyst




# Guide Dogs for Adults

- How do guide dogs assist?
- Psychological challenges
  - Self-esteem
  - Control
  - Quality of Life



# Thriving

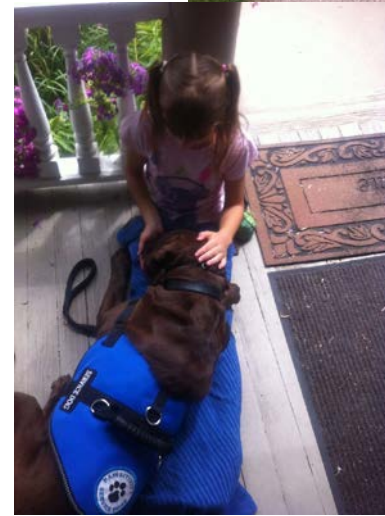
Having the ability to grow and flourish

- Individual characteristics
    - Behavioural skills
    - Individual strengths
    - Emotional engagement
  - Contextual factors
    - Community participation
    - Interdependent relationships
    - Resources
- 



# Service Dogs for Children

- Traditionally the majority of service dog organizations did not work with children
- Facilitated Service Dog
  - Parent has primary responsibility



# Guide Dogs Victoria

- “Guide Dogs 101” camp
- Participants
  - 4 Adolescents
  - 5 Parents
  - 6 Camp Instructors
  - 3 other GDV staff
- Explore expectations and benefits adolescents are expected to receive with a guide dog.





1. Mobility

2. Safety

3. Confidence

# Benefit 1: Mobility

- Increase physical mobility
  - Speed
  - Smooth
- Increase freedom of movement/travel



1. Mobility

2. Safety

3. Confidence

## Benefit 2: Safety

- Actual safety
  - Hurt themselves less
- Perceived safety
  - Feel less vulnerable



2. Safety

3. Confidence

4. Independence

# Benefit 3: Confidence

- Confidence in mobility
- Self-confidence





3. Confidence

4. Independence

5. Companionship

# Benefit 4: Independence

- Less reliance on others
- Motivation to be independent



4. Independence

5. Companionship

6. Social

# Benefit 5: Companionship

- Strong relationship/bond
- Unconditional love
- Less lonely



4. Independence

5. Companionship

6. Social

## Benefit 6: Social

- Family challenges
- Teacher-student relationship
- Peer interaction
- Positive interaction with strangers

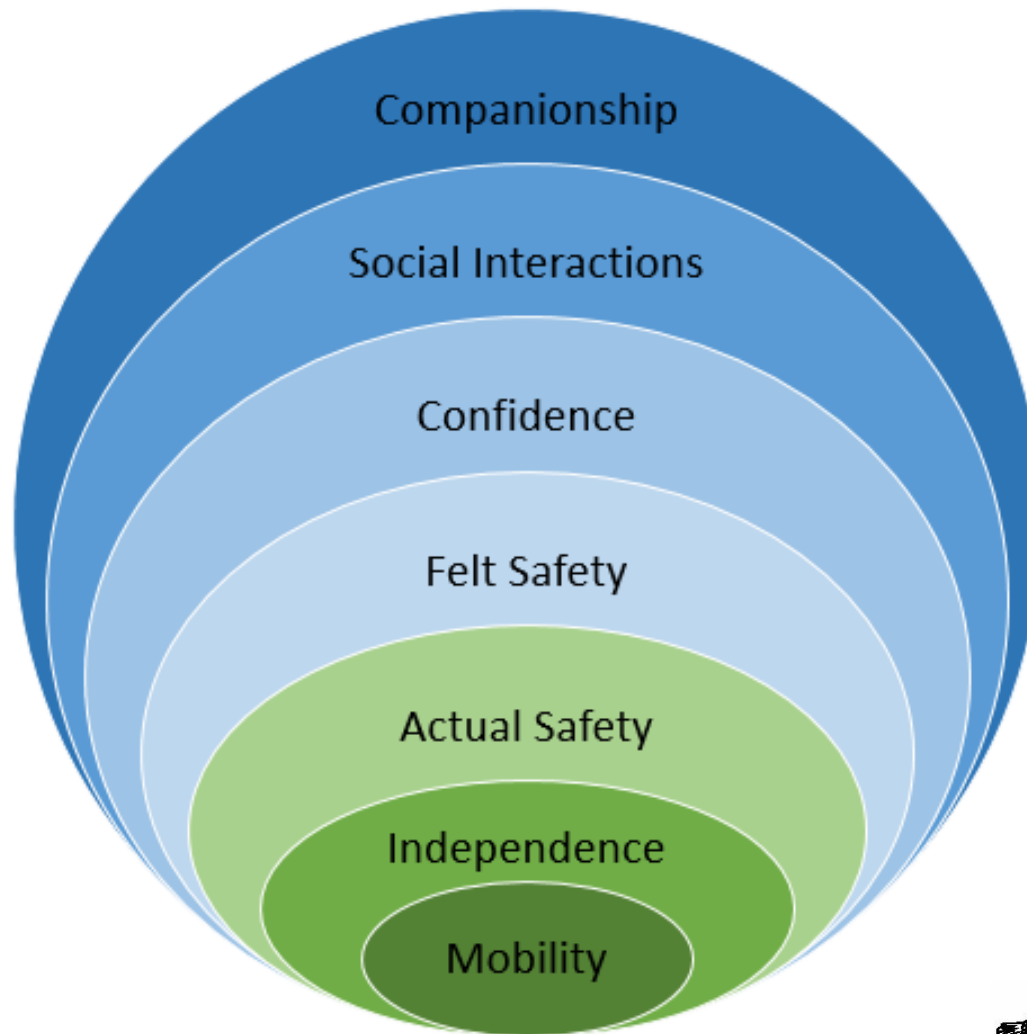




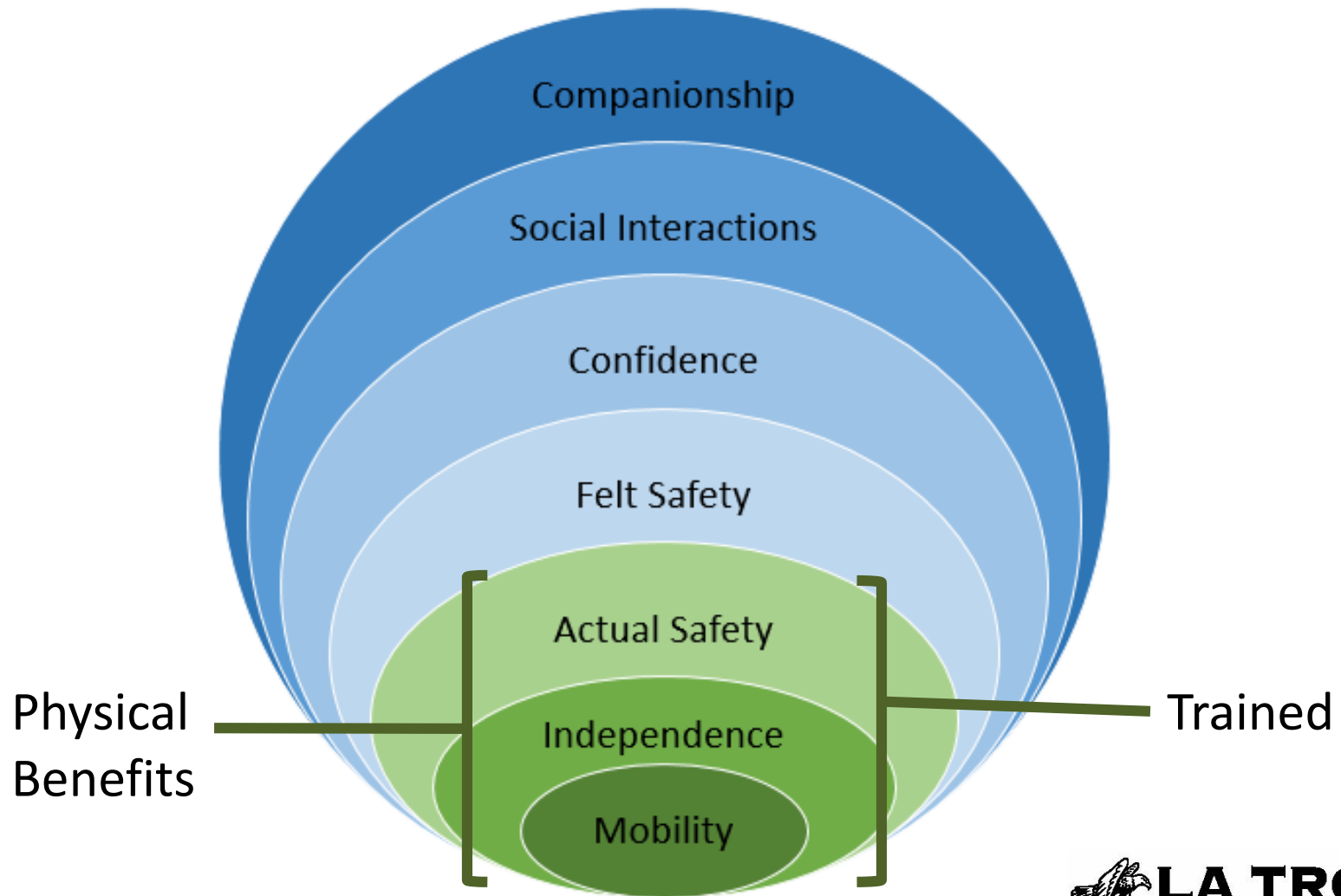
# How does this compare?

- Expected benefits align with reported:
  - challenges visually impaired adolescents face
  - benefits adult guide dog users experience
- Benefits contribute to thriving
  - Contextual factors: social, companionship
  - Individual characteristics: confidence, independence

# Connections between benefits

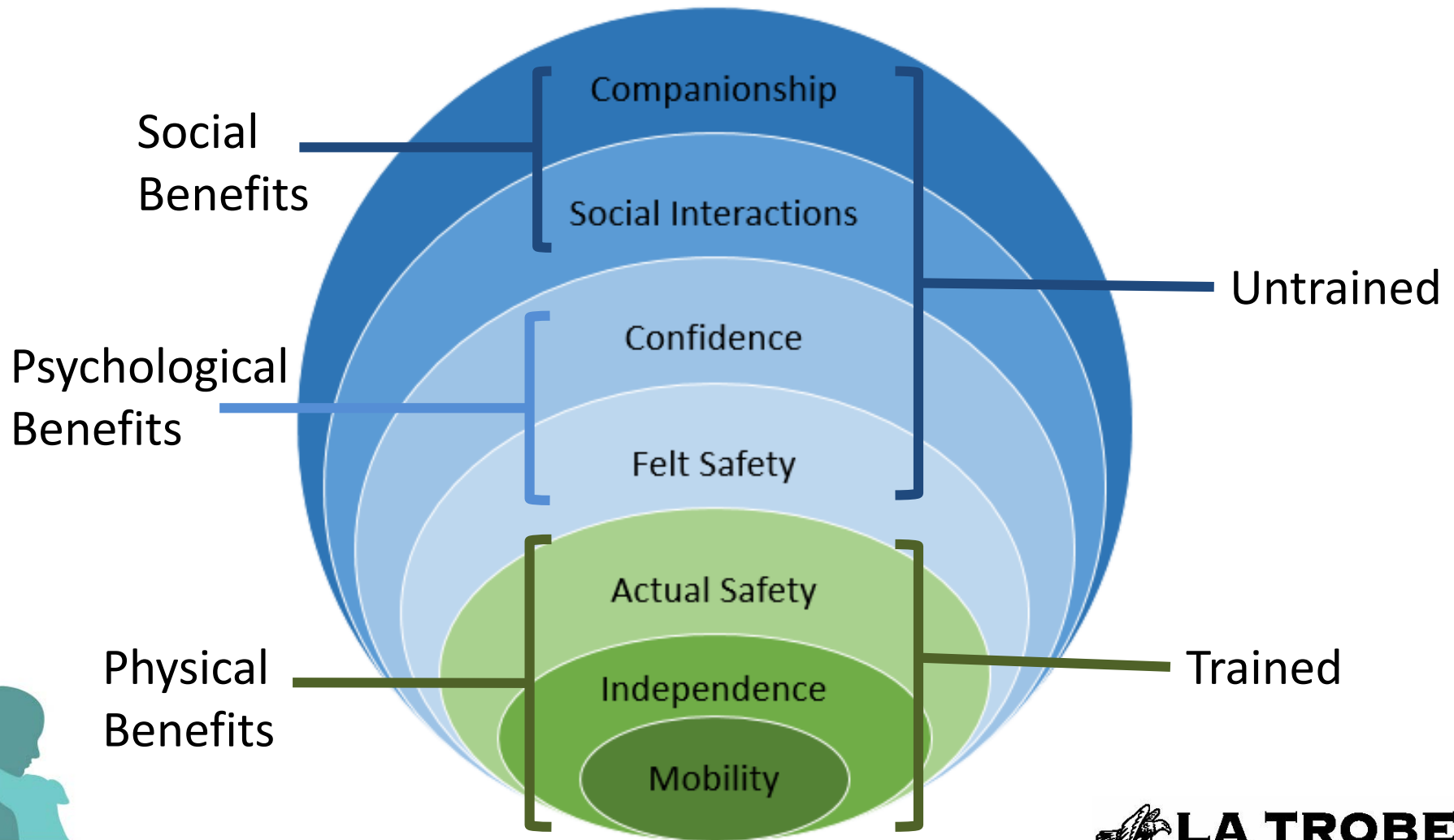


# Connections between benefits

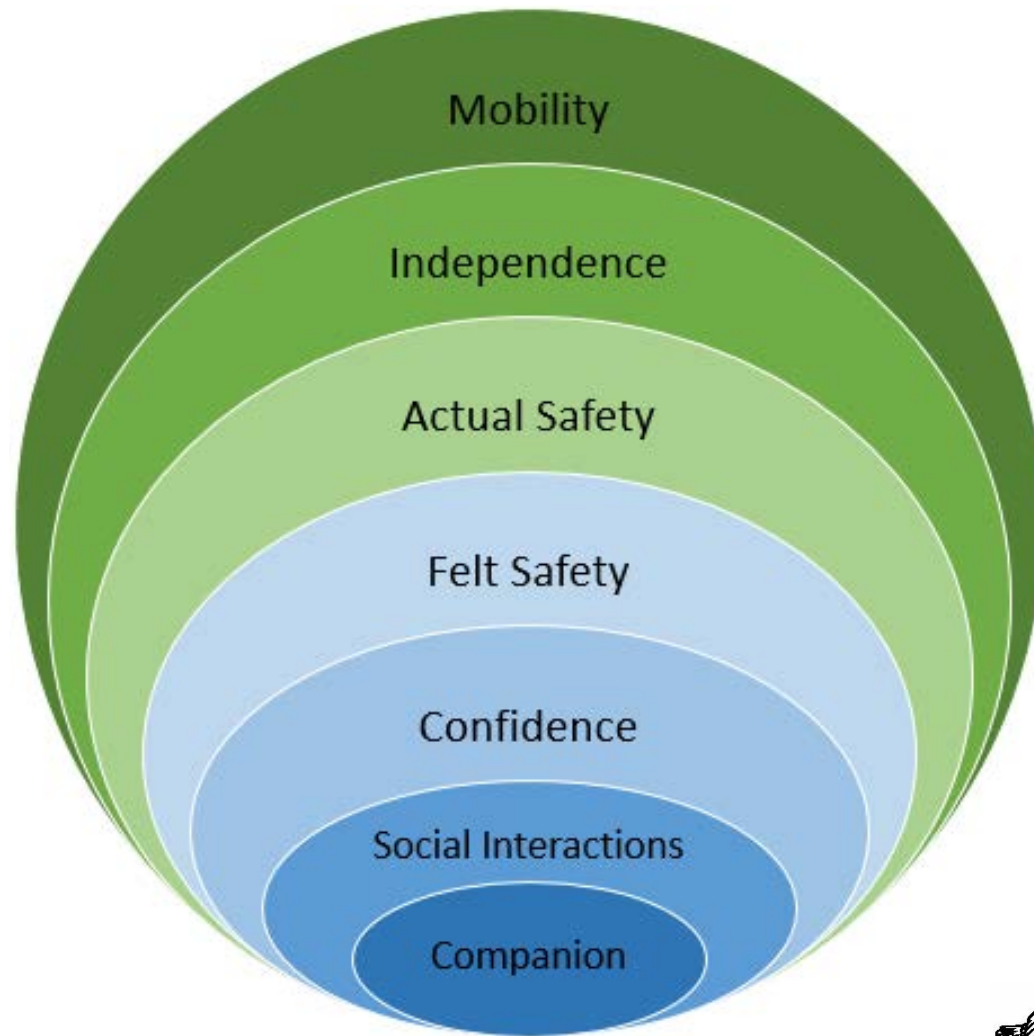




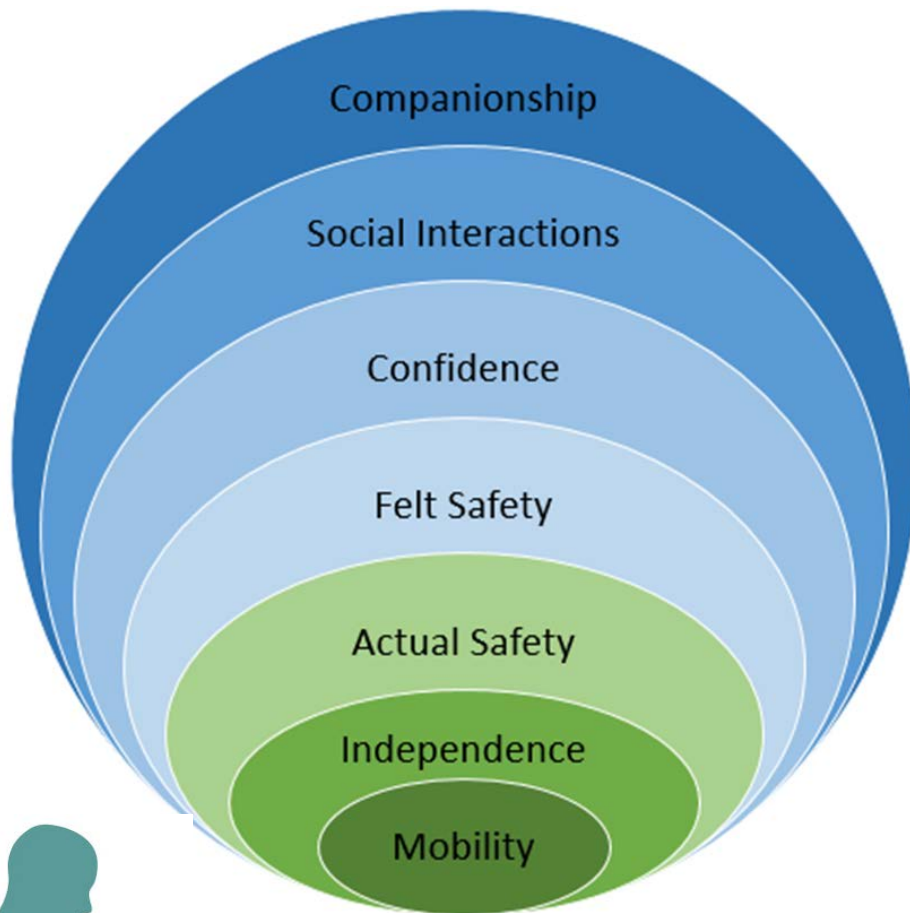
# Connections between benefits



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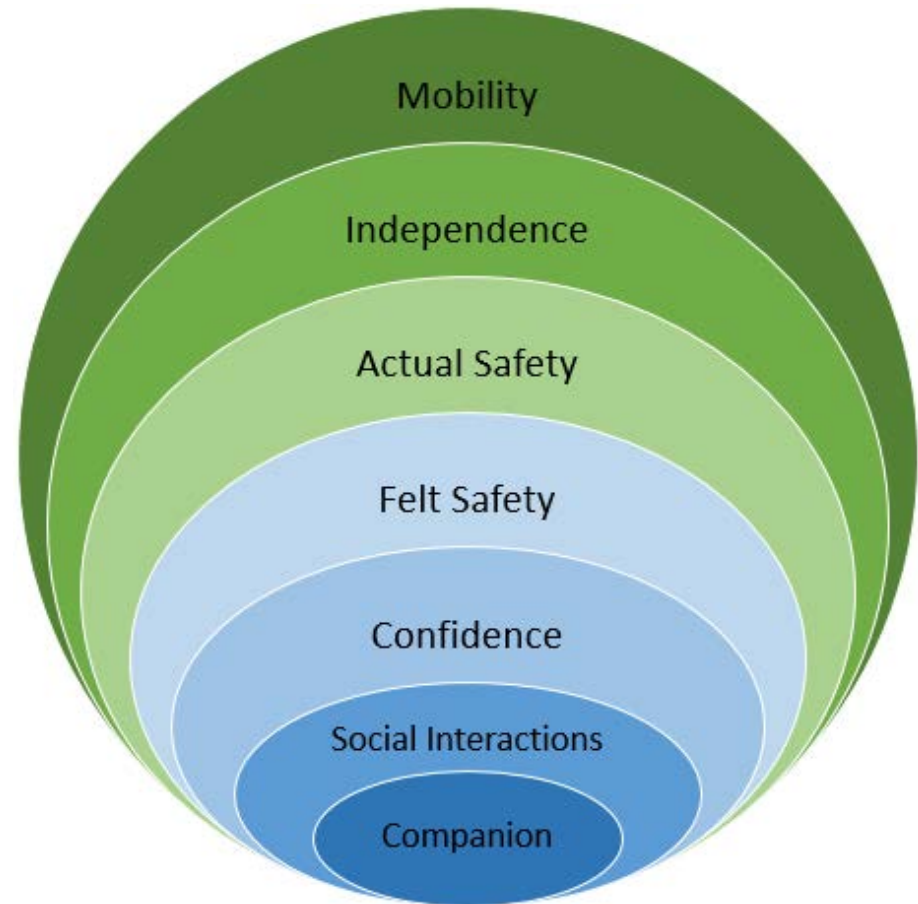
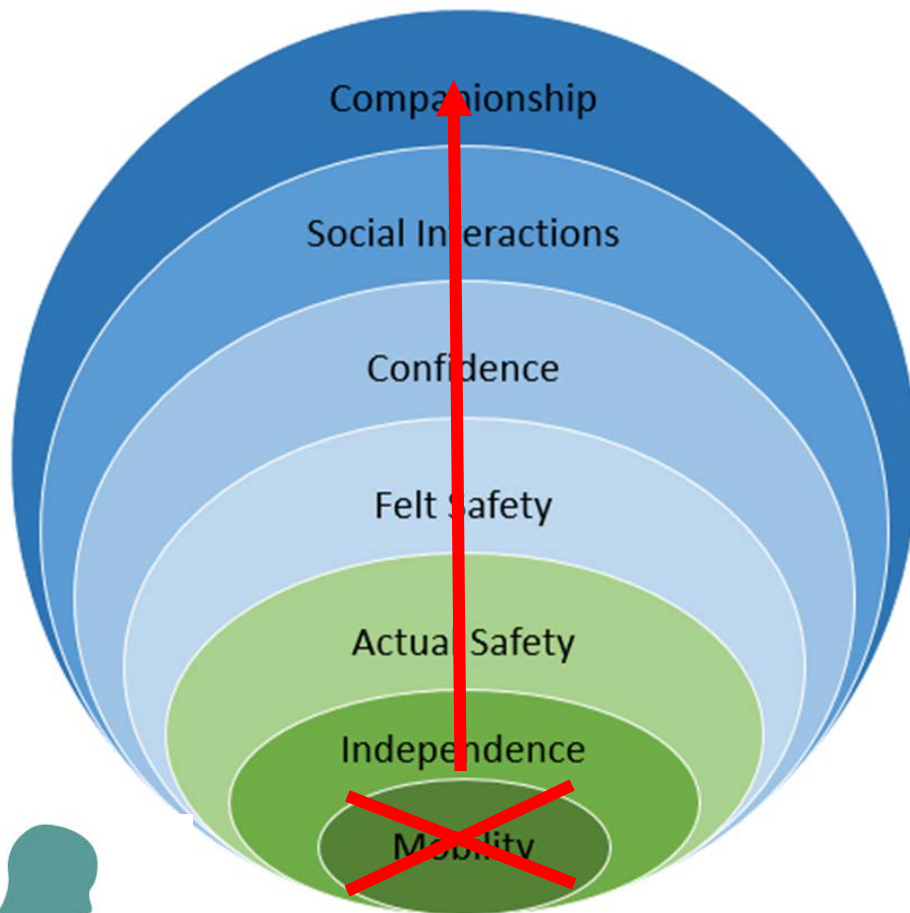


# Connections between benefits

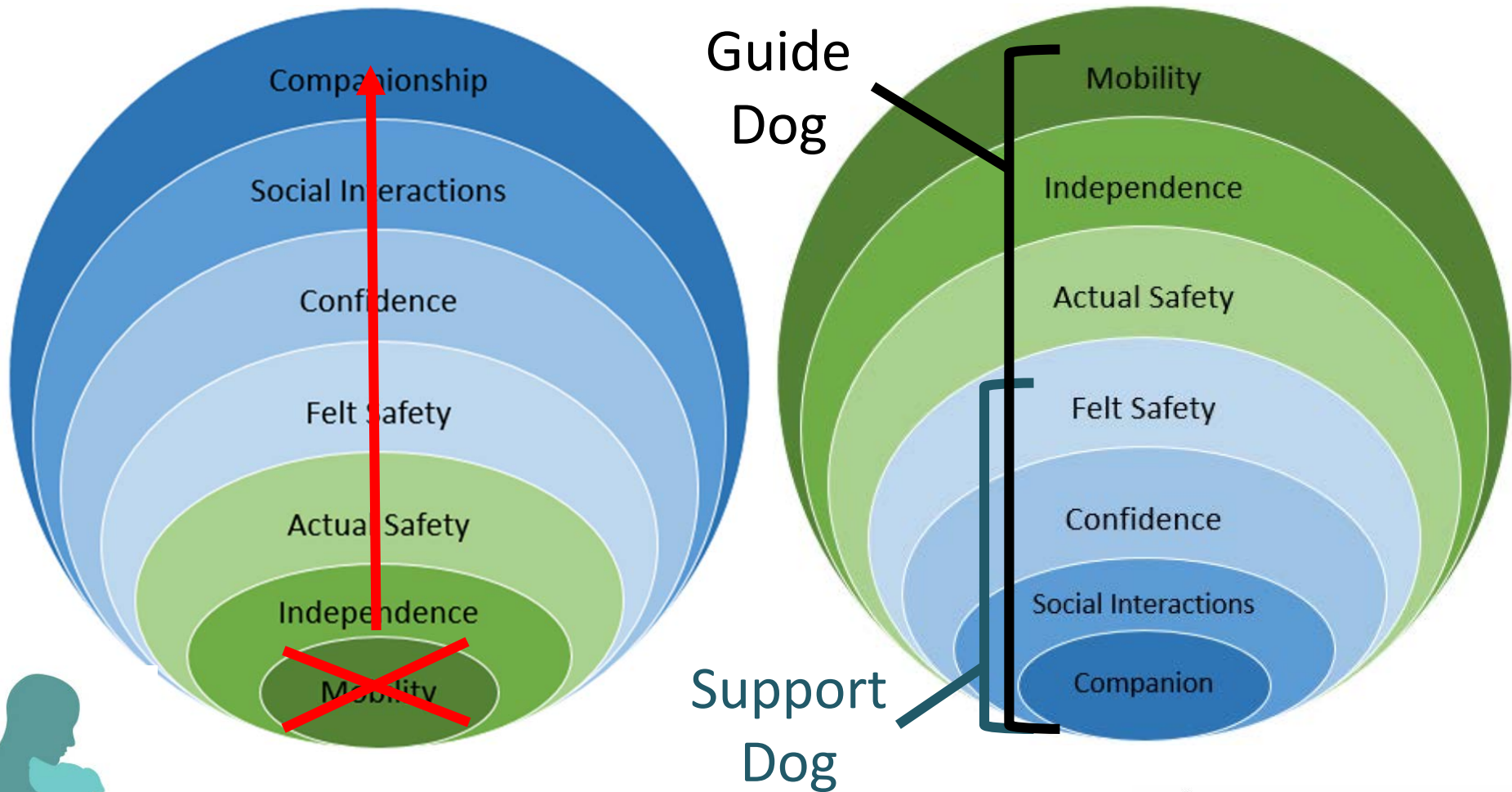




# Connections between benefits



# Connections between benefits



# Benefits

- Dog cared for by adult
- Adolescent develops better skills
- Increase education
- Manage expectations
- Provide benefits
  - Enable thriving



# Considerations

- What happens to the support dog when they get a guide dog?
- Should support dogs have public access rights?
  - School access?
- Where do organizations draw the line between guide dog and support dog?
- Who is eligible for a support dog?



# What does this mean?

- For guide dog organizations
  - No additional/different training for the dog
  - No changes to breeding
  - Ability to use failed and retired guide dogs
- For adolescents with vision impairment and their families
  - Increase early education
  - Increase family involvement
  - Provide support dog until able to have a guide dog



# What Next?

- Reframe the conceptualization of guide dogs
- Provide adolescents failed guide dogs as support dogs
- Guide dog organizations should not deny adolescents a guide dog due to age
  - Assess on adult criteria and family support.

# Thanks for your attention!

[www.anthrozoologyresearchgroup.com](http://www.anthrozoologyresearchgroup.com)

[j.gravrok@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:j.gravrok@latrobe.edu.au)



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