**Camel Assisted Interventions**

**Introduction:**

Camels have traditionally been used for dairy, meat, transportation, riding and racing. In Europe camels also are used to support human health (socially, mentally, psychologically etc.). This use is summarized as Camel Assisted Interventions (CAI). CAI can be considered as a kind of therapy. However „therapy“ requires a specific certified degree (physiotherapist, psychologist etc.). Interventions can be applied by people without a certified therapy degree. Therefore the term “Interventions” is used.

**What makes a camel so special for CAI?**

Camels are social animals without any strict hierarchy. They try to save energy as often as they can – thinking of the harsh environment where the originally come from.

Watching camel, they mostly seem to be relaxed, calm and friendly. Humans take over these emotions and calm down themselves. Especially in stressed people and active children this effect can be seen effectively.

Camels like the company of others but don´t need to be in continuous body contact. It´s more likely that they keep a bit of distance, which is also helpful for e.g. autistic people. It allows to observe first and get closer once the person feels comfortable enough.

Furthermore camels are huge (most likely) unknown animals. Most people react respectful and awake. They can´t „read“ the camels reaction, which leads to an open-mind and encourages to linger in the present moment.

Fascination of the presence and beauty of a camel on the one side conflicts with respect and awareness on the other side. This conflict of emotions focusses concentration. All current problems seem to disappear. There´s just the magic of the present moment. That´s where CAI starts and works. The camel caregiver needs to create this moment. It is important to use well trained camels and to build a setting that allows this intimate situation.

**Experiences with Camel Assisted Interventions.**

As far as now studies on CAI have not been published. Nevertheless several camel owners work with camel assisted interventions as to disabled people, children, social groups, elderly or mentally handicapped people. The European Camel Ranch Owners Association helps workers with camel assisted interventions to take advantage of each other’s experiences e.g. as to reaching target groups and getting financial support.

If you do camel assisted interventions with your visitors or in collaboration with therapists and you are interested in connecting with others, please contact [therapiekamel.de](http://therapiekamel.de/) or info@therapiekamel.de. Therapiekamel is a German non-profit organisation aiming to create a network to connect, support and spread the CAI use in Europe.