

## Your Way to Dolphin therapy

Dear interested parties,  
dear families,

We would like to support you in realizing dolphin therapy. In this document we have put together all the important information about dolphin-assisted therapy and our non-profit organization.

For the next step, please send us the completed “Questionnaire for the Preparation of a Dolphin-Assisted Therapy”. Please note which therapy center you are interested in. Please also send us a copy of the patient's latest medical report (which shows the diagnoses) with the questionnaire. Thank you.

After sending us the questionnaire and a copy of the doctor's report, we will confirm your registration with us. By registering with our association, patients have access to the delfine therapieren menschen donation account for incoming donations - exclusively for the realization of dolphin therapy at the therapy centers we support.

In addition, you will then also receive our “Donation Guide” with lots of information and tips on how to successfully generate donations. Please read our information material and emails carefully. And please keep in mind that you will have to expect waiting times due to demand and the unfortunately limited number of therapy spots.

As a recognized non-profit organization, we are happy to provide you with advice and assistance. We have been accompanying affected people and family's step by step on their way to dolphin therapy for more than 25 years.

If you have any questions or need help filling out the questionnaire, send us an email to: [info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](mailto:info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de) or just give us a call:

delfine therapieren menschen e. V.  
Angermunder Straße 9  
D - 40489 Düsseldorf  
phone: +49 203 - 74 62 80  
fax: +49 203 - 74 81 063  
e-mail: [info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](mailto:info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de)  
website: [www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](http://www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de)

With kind regards,  
*Your team from*  
*delfine therapieren menschen*

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## Short portrait

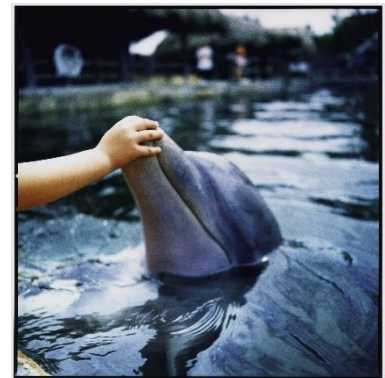


The story of delfine therapieren menschen is inseparably connected to the fate of Tim. The son of founder Kirsten Kuhnert drowned in an unsecured swimming pool. Emergency doctors brought him back to his physical life. But this life was surrounded by a wall. For 16 months, Tim remained in unresponsive wakefulness, a vigil coma. Doctors were at a loss, the family desperate.

Last hope: dolphin therapy in Florida. In fact, the dolphins were able to break through the wall. Tim, waking from his coma, marked the birth of our not-for-profit organization. In 2021, the association dolphin aid was renamed delfine therapieren menschen.

Since it was founded in 1996, delfine therapieren menschen has supported thousands of families. This enabled countless people with disabilities, who were often abandoned by conventional medicine, to make demonstrable and significant progress in their development.

Together with committed and convinced people, well-known sponsors and, above all, the large number of individual donations, delfine therapieren menschen have been able to pave the way to dolphin therapy for these families.



## Goals and limitations of dolphin-assisted therapy

The health improvements that can be achieved for patients with dolphin-assisted therapy are often a contribution to their health rehabilitation and can mean a turning point in their medical history.

Dolphin-assisted therapy can also promote the ability to participate in other conventional therapies. For the families of those affected, these steps also mean hope that the patient can lead a more independent life.

Dolphin-assisted therapy is not a miracle medicine. It cannot cure diseases. However, studies show positive effects when working with dolphins. A 2012 study by the University of Munich was able to demonstrate significant and, above all, sustainable improvements in the areas of intelligence, concentration, motor skills, prosocial behavior, emotional stress, communication, and several other skills.



Some studies show that children and adults with disabilities learn faster and with greater intensity when working with dolphins. They can become more attentive, more receptive, and awaken from their isolation and apathy. A success, that is invaluable for relatives and those affected. There are several studies and publications on dolphin-assisted therapy.

## Fields of application for dolphin-assisted therapy

Dolphin-assisted therapy can be used for a variety of health conditions and limitations. delfine therapieren menschen has decades of experience in the use and effectiveness of this therapy.

In dolphin-assisted therapy, the dolphin has a motivating effect and encourages attention. This makes it easier for the patient to participate. Experience shows that this is helpful in treating various illnesses and impairments. Corresponding scientific results are already available for some target groups. For example, several studies confirm positive effects on the communication skills and social behavior of children with various disabilities (e.g., physical disabilities, autism, Down syndrome). For the same target group, there is also initial evidence of improvements in cognitive and motor development. Individual studies also confirm positive effects for adults with depression. The use of a dolphin can apparently support the achievement of a wide range of therapeutic goals that are defined by the therapist.

## The origin of dolphin-assisted therapy

This unique form of therapy was developed in the 1970s by Dr. David E. Nathanson, an American psychologist and behavioral scientist. Together with his specially trained team, he has helped almost 10,000 children from 55 countries around the world. Patients first work with their therapist and the dolphins on a floating dock. Later there is direct contact between the patient and the dolphin in the water. During this encounter, the dolphin recognizes the special nature of the patients and approaches them in a playful way. As a result, patients quickly lose their fear of the marine mammals. They develop new self-confidence and are better able to absorb the impulses of the outside world. In order to achieve the greatest possible treatment success, dolphin therapy should last two weeks.

## Our therapy concept

The therapy concept developed by delfine therapieren menschen follows a holistic approach that takes people into account with all their strengths and weaknesses. The focus is on the existing skills that are activated and improved through therapy. Also, parents and siblings are an important part of the concept and are included. Another component is the interaction between the dolphin and the patient. The therapy is designed to be interdisciplinary. This means that, depending on the clinical picture, in addition to the animal trainer and therapist, psychologists, speech therapists and physical and occupational therapists are also involved.

## The importance of animal welfare

One of the fundamental prerequisites for the success of dolphin-assisted therapy is that the dolphins are kept in an animal-appropriate manner. That is why animal protection is of great importance to delfine therapieren menschen. Because only happy dolphins “work” voluntarily with the patients and thus contribute to the success of the therapy. Only dolphins that were born in their future habitat and are domesticated are used for therapy.

delfine therapieren menschen e.V. cooperates exclusively with therapy centers where the animals live in their natural habitat (in the sea, in separate lagoons) and rejects any form of pelvic keeping as not species appropriate. delfine therapieren menschen has been committed to the responsible and species-appropriate handling of dolphins within the framework of animal protection for over 25 years and fundamentally rejects the capture of wild dolphins for therapy.

## Our area of activity

- general help and promotion of the interests of people with disabilities
- integration of people with disabilities into society
- promotion and support in carrying out dolphin-assisted therapy
- rehabilitation of people with disabilities
- financial support for socially disadvantaged families
- carrying out travel arrangements for the families
- voluntary bookings of flights, accommodation, and rental cars
- therapeutic support and advice
- negotiations with therapy centers, hotels, and airlines etc. about special conditions for the benefit of the affected families
- promoting research and science
- recognition of dolphin-assisted therapy in healthcare
- support with scientific theses on the subject of dolphin-assisted therapy
- creation of training guidelines for therapists who perform dolphin-assisted therapy
- creation of testing criteria for the certification of therapists and therapy centers

## The volunteer parent council

Conversations help and are often indispensable. We know that some conversations can go on for hours. People are sometimes happy to talk in detail, especially what it's like on Curacao or Florida. This form of sharing experiences has already helped many families.

The full-time employees try to answer all questions well and in as much detail as possible. But who could answer many questions better than parents who were there with their children and have gained a lot of experience? That's why the parents' council has been an important part of our organization for years. The members are themselves affected parents and relatives and have sufficient therapy experience.

Please find the contact details of our parents' council on our website:

<https://www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de/en/council/>



## The therapy centers

Below you will find an overview of the therapy centers we currently work with:

### Island Dolphin Care (IDC), Florida, Key Largo

<https://islanddolphincare.org/>

The Island Dolphin Care (IDC) therapy center is a non-profit organization and was founded in 1997 by Deena and Peter Hoagland. Their son Joe was an affected patient himself and still works as a dolphin trainer at the IDC today. The unique therapy concept, which was specially developed at the time, has been continuously optimized since then. Thousands of families, veterans, and people with special needs have successfully completed the therapy.

After a 2-year break due to Corona, the IDC reopened under new management in May 2022. The therapists were having the best experiences working with the dolphins with autistic, behaviorally disturbed, mistreated, and abused children and adults. In order to ensure the conditions for successful therapy, participating patients must be older than three years, be able to hold their head up on their own and be seizure-free. In general, therapy at Island Dolphin Care is carried out in English. Some therapists or interns also understand and speak German.

The IDC's mission is to provide unique and motivating dolphin-assisted therapy for children and adults with special needs and abilities. The IDC team is made up of professional therapists, interns, the dolphins and their trainers. The dolphins live in a natural seawater lagoon and not only have ideal living conditions but also receive the very best care.

### Curaçao Dolphin Therapy Center (CDTC)

<https://cdtc.info/>

Since 2004, the therapy center on Curaçao has been working closely with “delfine therapieren menschen“. The therapy concept we have developed for the Curaçao Dolphin Therapy Center (CDTC) is oriented toward current medical research and centers around the interactions between dolphin and patient. Positive patient development, an increase in quality of life and rehabilitation aim to be accelerated. As a major advantage of this center, therapists speak English, Dutch and German as well. Parents and relatives can communicate directly and without any misunderstandings with the therapists.

At the Curaçao Dolphin Therapy Center, the dolphins live in a natural lagoon with exceptional water quality. Here, people and animals alike are given natural conditions for their interactions. This holistic concept provides the basis for efficient therapy.

## Example cost breakdown

basis for calculation: 2 adults, 2 children - duration of therapy 2 weeks  
based on the following exchange rate: 1.00 (US\$-amount / 1.00 = €-amount)

### therapy costs

The different prices of the therapy are due to the different length of therapy times for the patient at the CDTC and IDC.

### 2 weeks of therapy Island Dolphin Care (IDC)

therapy costs, US\$ 6,000 (for 10x therapy units)	approx. €	6,000.00
flight costs Florida (economy, depending on the season)	approx. €	4,800.00
hotel costs Florida (no meals, depending on the season) apartment, 2 bedrooms approx. US\$ 280 / night x 14 days	approx. €	3,920.00
rental car costs in Florida depending on size and level of insurance for 14 days approx. € 1,000 up to € 1,500	approx. €	1,300.00
proportionate cost contribution delfine therapieren menschen (5% of total cost) proportionate administrative costs and fees (bank etc.)	approx. €	800.00
travel cancellation insurance and travel health insurance individually		
<b>total cost for a stay, no meals included</b> Island Dolphin Care, Florida for 2026	approx. €	16,820.00

### 2 weeks of therapy Curaçao Dolphin Therapy Center (CDTC)

therapy costs, 2026 US\$ 8,775 (for 10x therapy units) Note: 2026 off-season offer US\$ 6,500	approx. €	8,775.00
2027 US\$ 8,775 (for 10x therapy units) Note: 2027 high season price US\$ 9,500 and off-season offer US\$ 7,500	approx. €	8,775.00
flight costs Curaçao (economy, depending on the season)	approx. €	4,800.00
hotel costs Curaçao (no meals, depending on the season) e.g., Dolphin Suites Curaçao, delfine therapieren menschen special rate for accommodation in a suite approx. US\$ 265 / night x 14 days	approx. €	3,710.00
proportionate cost contribution delfine therapieren menschen (5% of total cost) proportionate administrative costs and fees (bank etc.)	approx. €	860.00
travel cancellation insurance and travel health insurance individually		
<b>total cost for a stay, no meals included</b> Curaçao Dolphin Therapy Center for 2026 and 2027	approx. €	18,140.00

## Registration form delfine therapieren menschen e. V.

To enroll a patient in our organization, please fill out the “Questionnaire for the preparation of a dolphin-assisted therapy” digitally interactive or in easy-to-read block letters. Which can also be found at: <https://www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de/en/registration-and-information/>  
Send it to us signed and with a copy of the latest doctor's report (which shows the diagnoses).

by e-mail: [info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](mailto:info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de)

note: Please send email attachments as easy-to-read scans, preferably as PDFs. Please no photos of documents! These cannot be processed by the therapy center either.

or fax: +49 203 - 74 81 063

or mail: delfine therapieren menschen e. V.  
Angermunder Straße 9  
40489 Düsseldorf  
GERMANY

If you are planning dolphin therapy for an adult patient or a foster child, please send us a corresponding power of authority or a copy of the Legal guardian ID card.

For underage patients, please observe the legal regulations. The consent of all legal guardians is required, especially when traveling abroad.

The entire therapy trip (therapy costs, flights, and accommodation) is usually financed by donations. If you can (co-)finance the therapy from your own resources, we must point out that the payment deadlines must be adhered to. We will send you a preliminary cost breakdown in good time.

We make our donation account available exclusively for the realization of dolphin therapy at the therapy centers we support.

## Note on the provision of financial assistance

The granting of financial support depends exclusively on the actual donations. We would like to point out that we can only provide financial support for a two-week therapy stay.

The applicant family or person cannot claim any right to financial support from delfine therapieren menschen. As a matter of principle, we only support socially, and economically weak families based on the rules of procedure.



## The association -facts and figures

**delfine therapieren menschen e. V.**  
association's headquarters:

Angermunder Straße 9  
D - 40489 Düsseldorf

telephone:

+49 203 - 74 62 80

telefax:

+49 203 - 74 81 063

e-mail:

[info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](mailto:info@delfine-therapieren-menschen.de)

homepage:

[www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de](http://www.delfine-therapieren-menschen.de)

donation account, general:

Stadtsparkasse Düsseldorf  
IBAN DE86 3005 0110 0020 0022 00

donation account, patients:

Stadtsparkasse Düsseldorf  
IBAN DE52 3005 0110 0020 0024 24

founded:

1996 as dolphin aid

registered association entry:

at the Amtsgericht Düsseldorf (VR8149)

members of the Board:

Timm Fries (Chair)  
Thorsten von der Heyde  
Peter Wieler

managing Director:

Timm Fries

travel coordination:

reiseart GmbH & Co. KG (Lückertz Reisebüro)  
telephone: +49 251 - 48 15 931

delfine therapieren menschen is advised and represented by:

Holger Stefaniak, auditor  
Wilms & Partner, tax consultant  
RA Prof. Dr. Vogel, lawyer

full members entitled to vote:

7 - We are happy to welcome new members!

supporting members, annual contribution:

€ 120,00

If you have any questions, we are happy to help.

With kind regards,

*Your team from*

*delfine therapieren menschen e. V.*