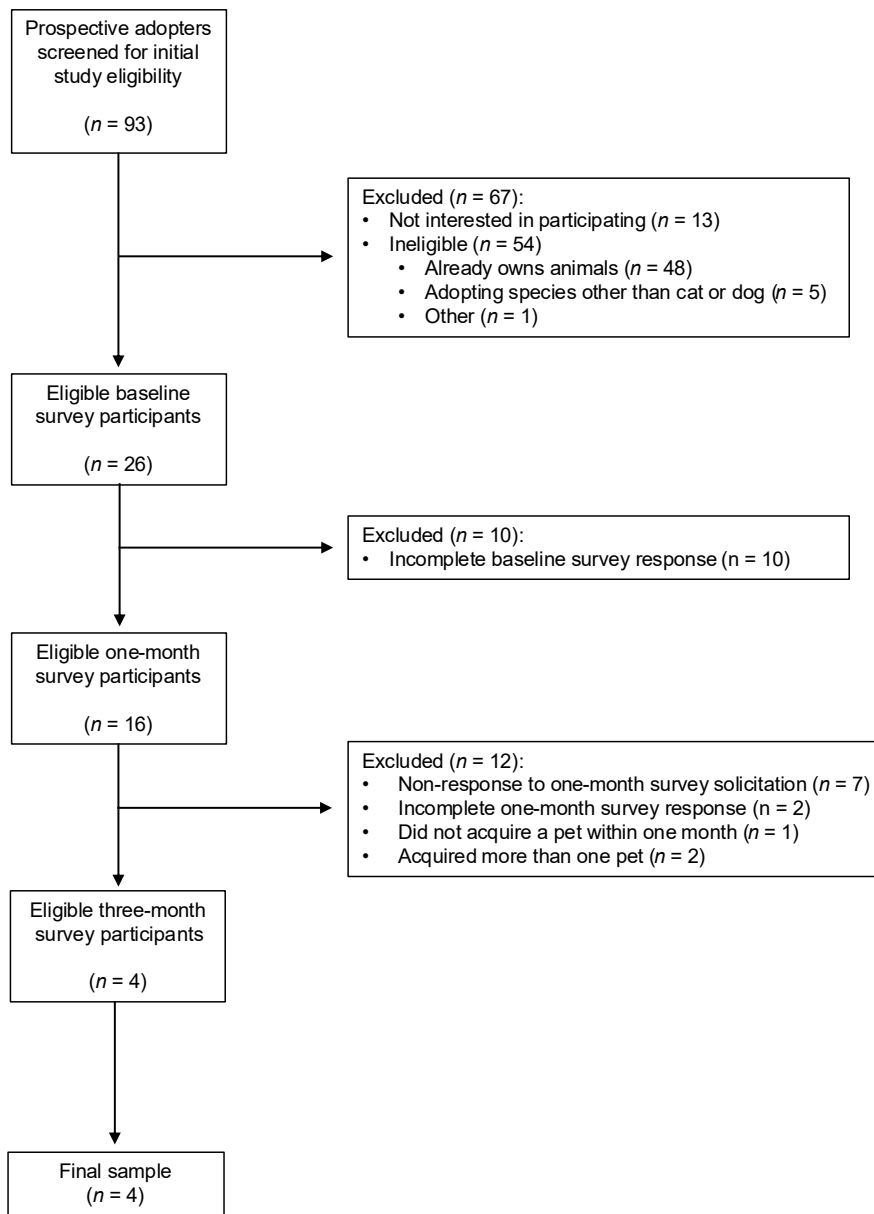


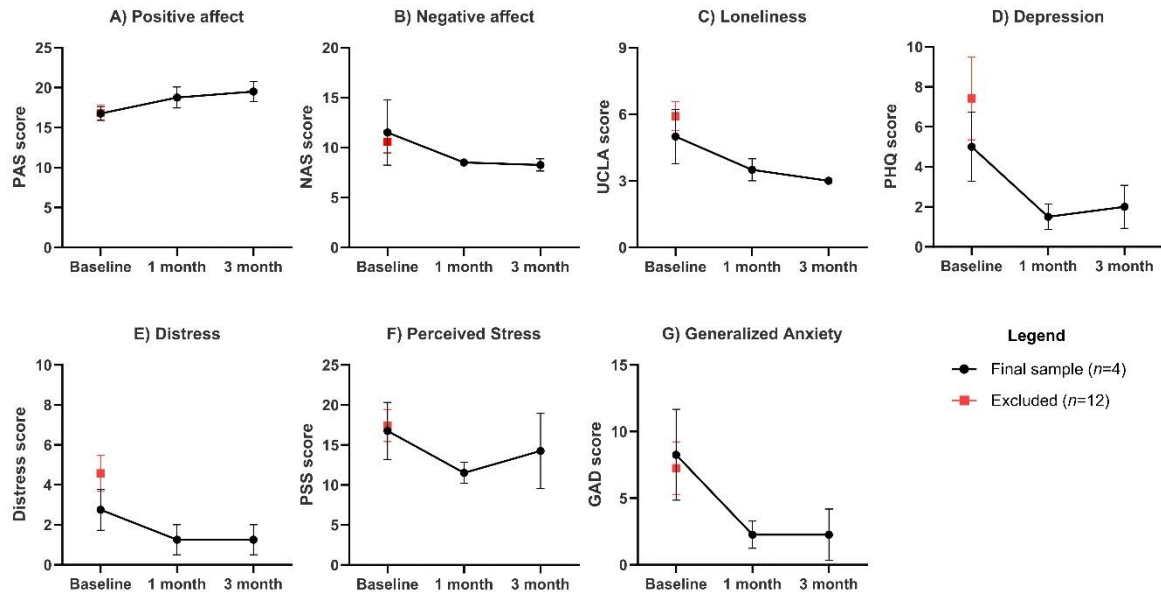
Supplementary material

The series of validated scales for mental well-being included the Distress Thermometer, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale, the Patient Health Questionnaire, the Perceived Stress Scale, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Results are presented in Supplementary Figure 1. The Distress Thermometer is a Likert scale used to measure the intensity of distress or anxiety. Questions are scored between 0 and 10, with a score of 0 as “No distress”, and 10 as “Extreme distress”.²¹ The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale consists of 7 questions used to screen for and measure the severity of generalized anxiety disorder symptoms. Measurements are on a 4-point scale of “Nearly every day” as the maximum score of 3 and “Not at all” as the minimum score of 0. Questions are scored cumulatively for anxiety severity, with scores of 0 to 4 designated as “Minimal anxiety”, 5 to 9 defined as “Mild anxiety”, 10 to 14 designated as “Moderate” anxiety, and scores greater than 15 as “Severe anxiety”.²² The Patient Health Questionnaire scale consists of 9 questions to screen for and measure the severity of depression symptoms in adults who have occurred within the last two weeks. Measurements are on a 4-point scale of “Nearly every day” as the maximum score of 3 and “Not at all” as the minimum score of 0. Questions are scored cumulatively for depression severity, with scores of 0 to 4 designated as “Minimal or none”, 5 to 9 defined as “Mild”, 10 to 14 designated as “Moderate”, 15 to 19 designated as “Moderately severe”, and 20 to 27 as “Severe”.²³ The Perceived Stress Scale consists of 10 questions to assess the respondent’s subjective feelings of stress. Measurements are on a 5-point scale of “Very often” as the maximum score of 4 and “Never” as the minimum score of 0. Questions are scored cumulatively for stress severity, with scores ranging from 0 to 13 designated as “Low stress”, 14 to 26 as “Moderate stress”, and 27 to 40 as “High stress”.²⁴ The short form of the PANAS was used to assess the balance of positive & negative emotions, providing insights into individual emotional states. Measurements are on a 5-point scale of “Extremely” as the

maximum score of 5 and “Very slightly or not at all” as the minimum score of 1. Questions are scored cumulatively for positive affect-focused questions and negative affect-focused questions separately. A higher Positive Affect score indicates experiencing more positive feelings, and a higher Negative Affect score indicates experiencing more negative feelings.²⁵ The UCLA Loneliness Scale consists of 3 questions to assess the respondent’s subjective feelings of loneliness. Measurements are on a 3-point scale of “Often” as the maximum score of 3 and “Hardly ever” as the minimum score of 1. Questions are scored cumulatively, with scores of 3 to 5 designated as “Not lonely” and 6 to 9 defined as “Lonely”.²⁶ Surveys conducted one-month and three-months after adoption included questions on challenges associated with companion animal ownership (Supplementary Table 1). Questions used a five-point Likert scale to assess the perceived difficulty of caring for their companion animal, the perceived access to veterinary care, and the perceived access to companion animal-friendly housing, as well as an open-text question to describe any additional benefits or challenges of companion animal ownership they encountered.



Supplementary Figure 1: Flow chart showing the inclusion and exclusion of participants.



Supplementary Figure 2: Mean mental health and well-being survey scores $\pm$ standard error of the mean from baseline to three-month follow-up among valid participants who acquired an animal within one-month month of baseline (black circles). Baseline scores for excluded participants are displayed in red squares. A) Positive Affect Scale (PAS) as part of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS). B) Negative Affect Scale (NAS) as part of PANAS. C) UCLA Loneliness Scale. D) Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ). E) Distress Thermometer. F) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). G) Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Scale. Higher scores reflect greater outcome values.

Supplementary Table 1:

Survey question	One-month survey	Three-month survey
Have you found pet ownership difficult or challenging?		
Very easy	0 (0%)	2 (50%)
Somewhat easy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Not difficult or easy	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Somewhat difficult	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Have you taken your pet to a veterinarian since you acquired them?		
Yes	2 (50%)	3 (75%)
No	2 (50%)	1 (25%)
How would you describe your ability to access veterinary care?		
Very easy	4 (100%)	4 (100%)
Somewhat easy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Not difficult or easy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
What has made it difficult for you to access veterinary care?		
My pet's behavior	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cost of services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Distance to clinic/lack of transportation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Language/communications barriers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Clinic opening hours	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Availability of appointments	0 (0%)	1 (25%)
My pet hasn't been sick or needed to see the veterinarian	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
None of the above	3 (75%)	2 (50%)
How would you describe your current access to pet-friendly housing?		
Very easy	3 (75%)	4 (100%)
Somewhat easy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Not difficult or easy	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Very difficult	0 (0%)	0 (0%)