Equine Assisted Programs

Presented to WALLA by

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What are equine assisted programs?

- Learning and development
- People of diverse needs
- Using the characteristics of horses, ponies, donkeys, or mules
- Abbreviated as “EAPs”
The History of EAPs
Ancient Horses and Man

- The use of horses for sport, recreation, and transportation is an old concept
  
  - First recorded interaction in cave drawings c.15,000-10,000 BC

- As early as 600 BC, Orbassis of Lydia documented the therapeutic value of riding

  *Routine horseback riding was acknowledged as a way to improve the health and well-being of people with handicaps*
Turn of the Century EAPs

- With the advent of tractors and cars, there was a change in classification from ‘work animals’ to hobby horses

- In 1875, a French physician used horseback riding as a treatment for patients with neurological impairments

- Oxford Hospital used riding as a therapy for wounded soldiers of WWI
The rider who wouldn’t give up

- Liz Hartel, an accomplished rider from Denmark, contracted polio
- Worked to continue horseback riding despite her physical limitations
- Won two Olympic medals against all male, able-bodied competitors
- With her physical therapist, began to use horses as therapy tool for others
EAPs in North America

- In 1960, the Community Association of Riding for the Disabled began in Toronto, Canada

- 1970: The Cheff Center in Michigan provided the first recreational riding programs for the disabled through a Kellogg grant

- 1971: North American Riding for the Handicapped Association Inc (NARHA) founded in Virginia
Standards and Regulations

- Voluntary compliance with organizations dedicated to promoting excellence and quality

- NARHA is the most popular organization in US
  - Center accreditation
  - Instructor certification

- Different types of EAPs have different governing rules
  - Licensed professionals
  - Specialists
The Expansion of EAPs

- EAPs can be generally classified based on the purpose of the provided activities:

  - Recreation
    - Can provide benefits that are therapeutic in nature

  - Therapy
    - Accomplish treatment goals with licensed professionals
Principles of Equine Assisted Programs
Why use horses?

- Multi-dimensional motion
- Large and powerful animals
- Social animals
- Require work and care
- Have distinct personalities
- Can mirror cues from human body language
General Benefits of EAPs

- Special relationship through the human-animal bond

- Provide healthful and developmental benefits
Psychological benefits of EAPs

- Improve self-esteem
- Improve interpersonal relations
- Improve behavior
- Increase confidence
- Increase verbal and nonverbal communication
- Teaches responsibility
- Teaches impulse control
Physical benefits of EAPs

- Balance
- Posture
- Respiration
- Speech/language
- Circulation
- Strength
- Sensory input
- Perception
- Coordination
- Muscle tone
Specific Types of EAPs
Therapeutic Horsemanship

- “Adapted riding” that is purely recreational as a leisure activity
- Can be on the ground or astride
- Benefits can include:
  - Lower blood pressure
  - Unconditional acceptance and love, comfort
  - Trunk support, posture, balance
Therapeutic Riding

- Therapeutic intervention focused on skill development, facilitated by a qualified instructor

- Focused on goal progression

- Benefits can include:
  - Social team interaction
  - Physical, cognitive, sensory challenges
  - Learning riding skills
Therapeutic Riding Participants

- Many TR students have a wide range of disabilities

- The multifactor experience of riding has a multifactor therapeutic impact
  - Muscle tone and development
  - Auditory, visual, and sensory input
  - Objective-centric lessons for focus
Therapeutic Driving

- Use of any type of equine-drawn cart for recreation or therapy by a qualified instructor for those unable/unwilling to ride

- Physical limitations may prevent riding astride

- Benefits can include:
  - Personality development
  - Overcoming fear
Hippotherapy

- Therapeutic intervention facilitated by credentialed professional

- Patient is positioned on the horse, and actively responds to the horse’s movement

- Used as part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional outcomes
  - Speech
  - Movement
Principles of Hippotherapy

- The natural 3-dimensional movement of the horse is within centimeters and 90 degrees of natural human pelvis movement
  - Lateral
  - Rotational (vertical)
  - Anterior and posterior tilt

- The movement of the horse promotes responses in the patient for improved functional capabilities
Equine Assisted Psychotherapy

- An emerging field focused on emotional growth and learning through experience, involving a licensed therapist and a horse professional.

- Can be any type of horse-related lesson conducted by a therapist.

- Benefits can include:
  - Assertiveness
  - Creative thinking, problem solving
  - Attitude (motivation, reward)
  - Responsibility and work
Interactive Vaulting

- Gymnastic exercises on horseback

- Provides a unique opportunity for development of communication, cooperation and trust

- Benefits can include:
  - Coordination and balance
  - Strength
  - Team work
  - Different, more intimate interaction with the horse
Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning (EFEL)

- Activities incorporating the experience of horse interaction in an environment of learning or self-discovery

- Goals may be related to self-improvement, social interaction, and education

- Usually focused on school groups but corporate programs can use EFEL to promote and facilitate change within businesses
Principles of EFEL

- These activities allow people to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

- Participants may feel comfortable in this setting.

- Interaction with the horse may provide motivation or interest.
The Future of EAPs
Science and Research

- While the field is respected by supporters, it still remains a relatively unscientific area
  - Humans and Horses Foundation
  - Center for the Human Animal Bond

- Continued investigation on aspects like:
  - Changes in horses through EAPs
  - Learning abilities of students, riders, and horses
  - Long term impact of EAPs
Education

- Interdisciplinary programs require advanced education and training

- Presence of EAPs usually based on ‘subscribers’ to the programs

- Outreach for diverse or uninformed populations through a community of supporters
Concerns and current trends in the horse industry have an impact on EAPs and their future.

- Cultural values
- Hay prices
- Economic recession
- Land management
- Fuel prices

The same issues affecting mainstream programs can have even bigger impact on EAPs.

- Sustainability, proper welfare and worthy operation is paramount
EAPs in Indiana
Equine Assisted Activities in IN

- Most horse industry activities are in part overseen by the Indiana Horse Council (IHC)

- They have established a committee for Equine Assisted Programs which helps promote and protect these centers

- In 1993, there were 3 EAPs in the state

- Currently there are over 30 centers that operate equine assisted activities
EAPS in Indiana

- Most EAPs in the state (and the US) are classified as 501c3 non-profit organizations.

- Horses are generally on their 4th or 5th ‘job’, and are typically donated specifically to programs.

- Usually employ large, loyal volunteer bases, to assist in many aspects of the program.
Program Participants

- Many EAPs target specific clientele
  - Individuals with special needs
  - Youth at risk
  - Survivors

- Requirements for participation are based on qualification and documentation

- Experience many opportunities for competition and rider development
  - Indiana Youth Challenge
  - Special Olympics Inc
Helping EAPs

- Many EAPs in the state are tax-deductible for donations of equipment, horses, goods, and money

- Operating budgets can come from donations and grant writing

- Volunteers are always needed for something!
EAPs in the Area

- Purdue Equine Assisted Programs Club
  - A Purdue student organization dedicated to promoting the mission and goals of EAPs in the community through fellowship and education

- Therapeion
  - A therapeutic riding center in Brookston, IN serving children who have been victims of abuse or violence, for battered women, and youth at risk.

- Equiventure
  - A therapeutic riding center in Kokomo, IN providing equine assisted activities to individuals with special needs and providing information on principles of therapeutic riding
The End

Thank you!
Questions?