

The Equine Program Pilot Project

An Interdisciplinary Educational Experience for Patients with SCI

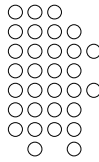


Terry Chase, MA, ND, RN

EAGALA Level I

Gestalt-Equine Therapist (in training)

Patient & Family Education Coordinator
Craig Hospital, Englewood, CO



Objectives



- At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will be able to:
 - Describe a unique learning opportunity for newly injured persons with SCI.
 - Outline critical components of an equine-assisted educational session.
 - Summarize key lessons learned by participants in this pilot project

Theoretical Basis

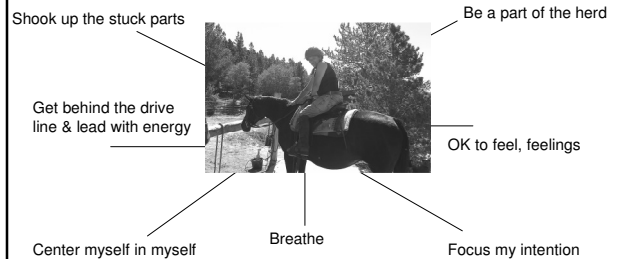


- **Theory of Human Caring**-Jean Watson, PhD
 - Caring as a special way of being-in-relation with one's self, with others, and the broader environment (Watson,1991).
- **Dialogue Education**-Jane Vella, PhD
 - DE shifts the focus of education from what the teacher says to what the learner does, from learner passivity to learners as active participants in the dialogue that leads to learning (Vella, 2002).
- **Gestalt Equine Psychotherapy**-Duey Freeman, MA, LPC, Joan Regier, MA, LPC
 - A horse-human-therapist encounter where the horses offer a unique opportunity for experimenting with being in relationship experiencing authentic contact (Kirby, 2010).

Gestalt-Equine Psychotherapist Training & Horsemanship Skills



My Learnings....



Craig Hospital Englewood, CO

www.craighospital.org



- Craig Hospital is a not-for-profit, free-standing, acute care and rehabilitation hospital.
- Providing a comprehensive system of inpatient and outpatient medical care and comprehensive rehabilitation .
- ANCC-Magnet certified and NIDDR-Model System Center for both spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury.



The Why

- Living with a SCI requires a wealth of new knowledge, new skills and new attitudes.....and the ability to exercise muscles of the body, mind and soul.
- Living successfully with a SCI requires a high sense of self-care, self-responsibility and self-confidence.



The Why

- The Equine Program is offered as an adjunct to the standard education of all patients.
- Experiential opportunity to focus on issues of living outside the protective rehab hospital setting.
- A unique learning opportunity in working with horses---about personal safety, verbal and non-verbal communication, leadership and intention.



Why Horses?

Horses are teachers of self-awareness; they are keenly alert, intuitive, emotional, and authentic animals. Like humans, horses are social beings that live together in herds with defined hierarchies, roles, responsibilities, and relationships very similar to our family systems.

Horses maintain a state of constant awareness. Their survival depends on instinctively scanning all aspects of their environment. Interacting with horses can help illuminate our patterns of contact, allowing us to receive direct and immediate feedback from the horse on our intentions, behaviors, and incongruities.

<http://gestaltequineinstitute.com/why-horses.html>



So is this Equine-Assisted-Facilitated or What?



- **Equine-Assisted Education***
...used to enhance existing educational endeavors.
- **Equine-Facilitated Human Development***
... a melding of therapy, education and learning.
- **Working with Horses...**

*Hallberg, 2008

The What

- A Present, Here & Now Focus
- Relational skill building
- Communication skills: verbal & non-verbal
- Power of Choice
- Health & wellness through experiential learning

The Who

- Rehab Patients with Spinal Cord Injury
 - Close to discharge home
 - Completed SCI LifeStyles//Tetra Topics classes
 - Medical stability confirmed
 - Interested in trying something new
- Staff
 - Craig Hospital—PT, TR, Nursing/Patient Education
 - SaddleUp! Foundation Equine Staff
- Horses
 - *Slick, Isabell, Prince Phillip, Zeek & Toby*

The Where



SaddleUp! Foundation Parker CO

- NARHA certified Staff
- Fully accessible facility
- Dedicated to special needs clients
- www.saddleupfoundation.org

1-Day Session Outline

- Learning Task 1: Welcome to SUF! Barn rules & Safety.
- Learning Task 2: Opening: What do you bring to the Barn?
- Learning Task 3: Meet your Horse and Horse Handler.
- Learning Task 4: Horse language, body areas and safety.
- Learning Task 5: Grooming, making contact.
- Learning Task 6: Haltering, pace, leadership.
- Learning Task 7: Lunging, forward movement, directing.
- Learning Task 8: Closing: What are you taking from the Barn?



Lesson Learned--Connection



- *“Working with the horses made me feel good and was comforting” CB*



Lesson Learned—Intention

- Working with lunging enables the patient to move the horse through intention, energy and focus.



Lesson Learned--Choice



- Through the experience of being chosen and choosing to participate, patients experience freedom....



Lesson Learned--Safety



- In situations where I feel unsafe, I tend to*proceed with caution and ask for help. DN*



Lesson Learned--Adaptability

- The best thing about working with horses was....*cleaning his foot. CB*



Lesson Learned--Pacing

- DN related to the group after walking....

"I have been worried about how I will get people back home to walk with me....since I am slower now. Isabell taught me it's OK to set my own pace and she walked with me."



Lesson Learned-- Part of the Herd



- Living with disability can be isolating and lonely.....the patients learned that having a wheelchair, braces and not walking were no barrier to being a part of this herd.



Pre & Post Evaluation

1-Never; 2-Sometimes; 3-Often; 4-Always

- I feel confident in directing others to assist me.
- I have positive relationships with those around me.
- I demonstrate caring toward myself and others.
- I use clear, effective communication.
- I am confident in directing my care.
- I am confident establishing safety for myself.
- I am confident as a leader.

Pre/Post Changes: 2↑directing care; 2↑relationship;
1↑communication;1↓safety; 1↑safety

Pre & Post Evaluation Open-ended questions

Pre & Post Questions

- In situations that are not familiar to me, I tend to.....
- In situations where I feel unsafe, I tend to.....

Post (only) Questions

- Make a statement about your experience in working with the horses.
- The best thing about working with the horses was.....
- The worst thing about working with the horses was.....
- Pick a number that describes your experience: 1-4 (Awful-Just OK-Good-Best Ever) 2-Good; 2-Best Ever
- Recommend to other patients? 4--YES

Further Evaluation

- **Learning:** Did the participants develop skills, knowledge and attitudes?
- **Transfer:** Can participants transfer their learning to real world situations?
- **Impact:** What difference did the participation in the Equine Program make in their lives after discharge?

Vella, Berardinelli & Burrow, 1998



Where Do We Go From Here??

- Continue program development into 2010-11
- Seek grant funding for program
- Share program components
- Recruit an Advisory Panel
- Expand to include TBI and outpatients
- Evaluation of program components, learning impact & transfer



Appreciation and Gratitude...

SaddleUp! Staff

- Alex
- Dani
- Felicia
- Whitney
- Shery McDonald

SUF Herd

- Prince Phillip
- Slick
- Isabell
- Toby

Craig Hospital Staff

- Brenda Bertrand, CTRS
- Claire Cahow, CTRS
- Carol Huserik, CTRS
- Laura Werhli, DPT

Craig Hospital Alumni

- Evelyn Refosco

Craig Hospital Foundation



And many more thanks to....

● Duey Freeman, Joan Regier & Students

Gestalt Equine Institute

● Julia Clavette

Star Peak Stables

● Sarge, BaDeer, Fairplay, Peaches, Slick, Robin & Salsa





Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, “grand passions”, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected.

They must have tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement.

A primary job of the educator is to help students overcome their fear and discover they have more in them than they think.

Cousins, 1998

References & Resources



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