

An Alternative Therapy:
Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy
Equine-Facilitated Activities &
Learning Therapy

“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

- Winston Churchill



Horses Healing Heroes is an IRS approved 501(c)3 non-profit

Conveniently located in Herald, CA we offer Heroes of all kinds a path towards healing to Release, Readjust and Reconnect™ . When the human spirit connects with that of the horse, both are transformed and empowered.

Release limiting emotions and behaviors

Readjust through self awareness & self discovery

Reconnect to life and others

Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed, it means the damage no longer controls our lives.

"Release, Readjust & Reconnect" to Break Free for Heroes™

Veterans, Law Enforcement & 1st Responders

PTSD, Depression & Related Issues

For Individuals:

Services for individuals who desire to work through issues related to PTSD such as panic attacks, relationship issues, conduct disorder, anxiety, adjustment issues, impulse-control, and more. Clients in the "Break Free" program will learn to recognize habits & destructive behaviors and learn new skills to release, readjust and reconnect and break free from behaviors that are holding them back.

For Couples & Families:

When someone is suffering from PTSD relationships, communication and family dynamics break down. Horses are herd animals that function together as a unit for survival. They have clear and honest communication, boundaries, and effective discipline within their horse-family which allows them to work together. Families and couples in our "Herd" program will learn to recognize when the herd dynamics of their family is changing or struggling, and practice new skills learning to work together as a cohesive and loving unit.

From Forces to Horses™
8-Week Horsemanship Program
Groundwork to Mounted

UNDERSTANDING THE PREY/PREDATOR RELATIONSHIP

Horses are prey animals and perceive everything around them to be dangerous. They have a flight or fight reaction, and if they feel that their life is in jeopardy, they run.

Humans are predators, direct line thinkers. When a predator wants something, he walks straight over and gets it. Predators are very intentional and predictable. By nature, horses and humans are not meant to get along together. We're different creatures, and we think in completely different ways.

Humans are predators so horses naturally view us as a threat so we must prove to the horse that we really aren't that bad, and have no intention of hurting him. Trust is established on the ground.

Starts with “Seeing” as a Horse: Monocular Vision

A horse has monocular vision- he uses each eye separately.

He may spook at something that he's already walked past, seeing it for the first time with his other eye.

He has two small blind spots, one right in front of his nose and another directly behind his tail.

Poor depth perception as to how far away or how deep an object is, particularly when it is close to him, often bob their heads up and down when they're looking at objects that are up close and down low to them- they're trying to get a grasp of them.

Horses may stop at the edge of the puddle, tilt their head to the side and snort at it. That's the horse trying to see the object from a better angle. Because of his vision, it's hard for him to tell whether the puddle is two inches deep or two feet deep.

MOTIVATED BY SAFETY, COMFORT, FOOD AND STIMULATION

You will be more effective in communicating with your horse if you know what is important to him. As with many other things when working with horses, you need to balance between the mental and the physical.

UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES AS A PREDATOR

The biggest mistake people make when working with horses is forgetting about the prey/predator relationship. As a general rule, the contact we have with the animal world is mostly limited to other predators, whether it be with other people or our pet dogs and cats. Until we teach them otherwise, horses view us as a threat. To effectively communicate with your horse, it's important that you understand what sets the two of you apart and how you can act less like a predator when you're around him.

GROUNDWORK VS. MOUNTED

Two-thirds of the sessions are spent on groundwork. If you can't get a horse to do something with your feet on the ground, you won't get their cooperation with you, a predator, on their back.



RESPECT AND LEADERSHIP

Horses are natural followers, but they want a leader they can respect and trust. Every day, your horse will test you to see if you deserve to lead him.

RESPECT AND LEADERSHIP TEACHES CONFIDENCE

Horses want a leader and naturally look for somebody worthy to follow. If we're not up to do the job, then the horse will eventually step up to the plate and do it himself. We have to prove to the horse that we are worthy of the job.

This is teaching confidence and communication clandestinely.

REACTIVE SIDE VERSUS THINKING SIDE

The reactive side is run first, think later. If he can't run, then he'll fight (kick, bite, strike, etc.) to survive the situation. Horses constantly lookout for danger because they know that if they spot a predator too late, they're going to be his next meal. They live in a state of hypervigilance to survive.

The thinking side of his brain is calm, analytical, rational, safe and obedient. The thinking side is shoved way back in the corner of the horse's brain. He doesn't naturally know how to use it. It's our job to show him how.

People with PTS also get stuck in React vs. Think mode. Through the horsemanship skills we are teaching, the client starts to assess their own coping mechanisms, or lack thereof. As they begin to establish rules and boundaries and rewards with the relationship with their horse, and they begin to consciously and unconsciously have epiphanies that filter over into their lives outside of the horse environment.

THE GOOD NEWS

**PTS is a *disorder*,
not a disease**

Whether our client chooses
therapy or horsemanship,
they are learning new skills.



“We will never have to tell our horse that we are sad, happy, confident, angry or relaxed. He already knows - long before we do.” *Marjike de Jong*



The cool thing about horses-
They don't have prejudice.
They don't care if
your tall or thin,
dark or light,
or if your rich or poor.
They don't care about that.

They care about
how you make them feel.
Buck Brannaman



www.bewithhorses.com

There is no way that the horse will ever try to take advantage of you. He's as honest and as truthful as anything you could ever work with. He has no ego that gets in his way. He has no pride that gets in his way. He doesn't know what win or lose is. And those are the things that get in the human's way.

It's very sad."

Ray Hunt

Our Solution

- **Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy** – “Experiential psychotherapy that includes equines. This must be accompanied by a licensed mental health professional and an equine professional.
- **Equine Assisted Learning/Therapy** – “Includes equine activities incorporating the experience of equine/human interaction in an environment of learning or self-discovery.”
- Goals: usually related to self-improvement, social interaction and/or education.
- Often used in group team building exercises



Our Team

- **The Horse:** Horses have many characteristics which lend them to being effective agents of change, including honesty, awareness, and ability with nonverbal communication. The role of the horses in a session is to be themselves.
- **The Equine Specialist (ES):** The ES chooses the horses to be used in sessions, works with the MH to develop activities, keeps an equine log to document horse behaviors in sessions, stays aware of safety and welfare of clients, horses, and team, and makes observations which can bring in potential metaphors.
- **The Mental Health Professional (MH):** The MH is responsible for treatment planning, documentation of clients, and ensuring ethical practice. The MH builds on the ES's horse observations, bringing in the metaphoric and therapeutic/learning relevance of the session.

What We Do

- Combine traditional therapy with specific equine activities
- Equine Assisted Psychotherapy involves creating activities designed to reflect real-life issues.
- Horses are so adept at responding to non-verbal messages, they provide powerful feedback.
- This provides the clients an opportunity to experience and explore their current behaviors and beliefs.



**HHH is certified through:
The OK Corral Series, the innovator of EFP**



- Solution-Oriented –rather than instructing or directing solutions, we allow our clients to experiment, problem-solve, take risks, employ creativity, and find their own solutions that work best for them

WHY IT WORKS

- Horses are large and powerful animals, which can incite fear or intimidation.
- Accomplishing a task involving the horse, despite their fears, creates confidence, and a sense of self-efficacy in the client.
- Working with horses provides the therapist with an object in the space (other than self) on which to promote projection and identification.
- Congruency: Allow therapist to discover unacknowledged emotions or get to issues faster.
- Develop problem-solving skills.



How it Works

EAP is used as an adjunctive service with traditional therapy. On several occasions, with only one of two EAP sessions, clients can move beyond “stuckness” that frequently happens during the therapeutic process. EAP can help the client succeed. Here are two ways EAP helps the clients.

- Interactive sessions with horses allow clients and therapists to “see” where the problems are and find ways to solve them. In the sessions the focus is on doing, being in the moment and finding solutions that provide faster, more permanent change. It is effective for clients of all ages and conditions.
- Uncovers the REAL client quickly by seeing how they react to different situations.



- Creates a more nurturing and comforting setting for client
- Many who avoid office therapy will participate in EAP

- Can address fear and empowerment issues (i.e., for dependant personality disorder can help discover how to establish boundaries and respect through self-empowerment)
- No incongruency—person can hide emotions from a person, horse picks up on that as their survival depends on reading their surroundings)





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A TYPICAL SESSION

The Exercise



- The clients are then asked to move a group of horses from the home space to the deployment space and back – representing their deployment transitions
- This in itself presents them with a number of difficulties: horses have different personalities, may not want to get separated from each other or might not want to be brought to a certain area
- How the clients go about this activity – which horses they pick and how they communicate with each other and the horses
- Each aspect of this process and the horses' responses to their choices is then discussed and related to parallels in their transition experience.

A TYPICAL SESSION

The Outcome

- Clients determine what metaphor the horses become for them: the horses may represent themselves or family members, or may represent feelings, expectations, strengths, dreams or hopes
- Clients have the opportunity to project on to the horses and experience real-life concerns, patterns, and beliefs
- By addressing the metaphors, the behaviors of the horses and experienced difficulties and successes, participants have the opportunity to draw parallels to how they react in similar situations with similar difficulties



Caring Means Sharing the Burden

We Never Charge a Client

Insurance Coverage is Challenging

We Rely on Individuals' & Organizations' Generosity to Provide our Service and Run the Ranch



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www.horseshealingheroes.org

Our Clients & Horses
Thank You!!

