

Introduction to Therapy Services Incorporating Hippotherapy as a Treatment Tool /Strategy for Families

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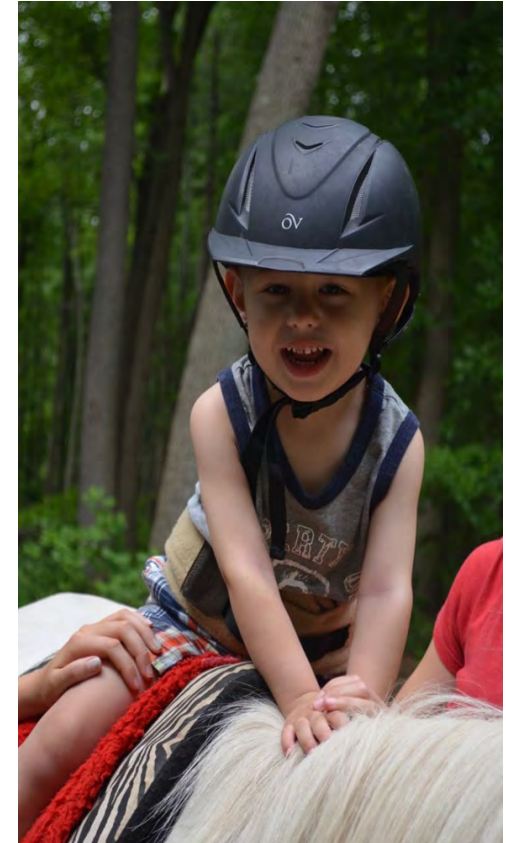
www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org



"Treatment with the Help of a Horse"

WHAT IS HIPPO THERAPY?

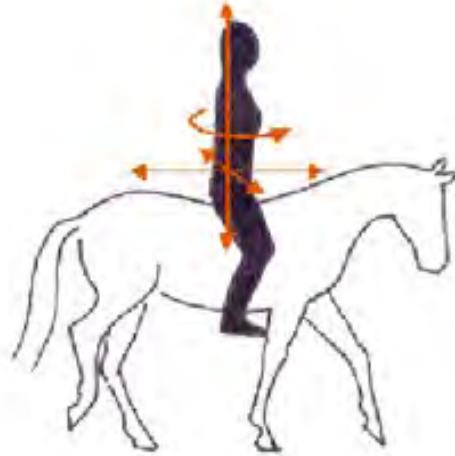
- Hippotherapy is a term used to refer to *equine movement* being incorporated into occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language therapy.
- *Equine movement* is just one of many therapy tools/strategies a therapist might use to facilitate functional outcomes for a patient.



WHAT IS HIPPO THERAPY?

- Licensed therapists use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement to engage the sensory, motor, and cognitive systems to achieve functional outcomes.
- In conjunction with the affordances of the equine environment and other treatment tools/strategies, hippotherapy is part of a patient's integrated plan of care.

Why the horse?



Equine movement is multi dimensional and provides rhythmic, consistent, and predictable input to the patient that is carefully monitored and manipulated by the treating therapist.

Equine movement is integrated with other therapy tools/strategies to facilitate the neuromotor systems that support our functional skills.

Why the horse?

- Therapists primarily use the horse's walking gait, although there are times when a very controlled and collected trotting gait may be used as well.



- *Horses take an average of 100 steps/minute (100 neuromotor inputs/minute).*
- *Each treatment can average 2000 to 2500 neuromotor inputs to the patient.*
- *The movement of the horse cannot be duplicated by any piece of equipment.*

Purposeful Manipulation of Equine Movement



- The therapist can modify equine movement to appropriately stimulate/challenge their patient:
 - Can change the horse's tempo and speed
 - Can change the direction the horse is walking
- The therapist can also modify the position of the patient on the horse to change how the movement influences them: forward-facing, rear-facing, side-sitting, lying on back or belly

Affordances of the Equine Environment

- Offers a unique setting that incorporates the benefits of a natural environment with opportunities for meaningful interactions.
- The equine setting offers a motivating and contextually rich environment in which to facilitate functional skills.



Is It Safe?

- Horses used in a therapy setting receive substantial specialized training in order to optimize the movement quality transmitted to the patient.



Is It Safe?

- Licensed therapy professionals should have specialized training in the safe and effective use of equine movement as a therapy tool/strategy within their clinical practice such as is offered by AHA, Inc.
- The horse professionals who handle therapy horses also receive specialized training.



Indications for Incorporating of Equine Movement into Therapy

- Children or Adults with mild to severe neurological, sensory, oral- motor, communication and/or motor dysfunction.
 - Recommended for ages 2 years through adulthood
- ✓ *Hippotherapy is regarded as a standard practice tool/strategy by:*

American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Speech- Language- Hearing
Association

Indications for Incorporating of Equine Movement into Therapy

- Treating therapists who include equine movement into a therapy session make a sound clinical judgement as to the appropriateness of hippotherapy integrated into the plan of care
- Treating therapists address the patient's functional limitations and treatment needs through provision of medically necessary therapy services.

Indications for Incorporating of Equine Movement into Therapy

By presentation:

- Impaired muscle tone
- Impaired range of motion
- Impaired postural alignment
- Impaired dynamic postural control
- Impaired communication
- Impaired sensorimotor function
- Impaired mobility
- Impaired coordination
- Impaired cognitive function

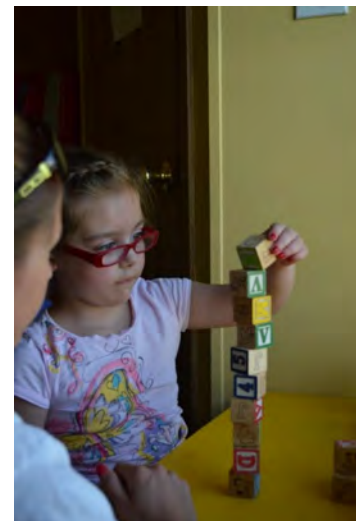
By diagnosis:

- Developmental delay
- Cerebral palsy
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Brain injury
- Sensory processing disorders
- Functional curvature of the spine
- Neuromuscular dysfunction
- Genetic syndromes
- Dyspraxia
- Developmental coordination disorder

These lists are a sample of impairments/diagnoses which may benefit and are not all-inclusive.

Occupational Therapy Incorporating Equine Movement as a Therapy Tool

- Equine movement impacts the whole person, providing input that the occupational therapist can use to impact physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional systems to address daily living skills.
- Occupational therapists can incorporate the horse into treatment through using equine movement, ground activities, and relationships with the horse - integrated with other standard tools/strategies to facilitate functional outcomes.



Physical Therapy Incorporating Equine Movement as a Treatment Tool



- Equine movement provides layered biomechanical and sensory motor input that can facilitate postural strength and control, balance/equilibrium responses, core stability and improved motor coordination and timing.



- The physical therapist is able to incorporate this powerful multidimensional movement to facilitate motor skills for improved stability, improved ambulation and improved motor skills.

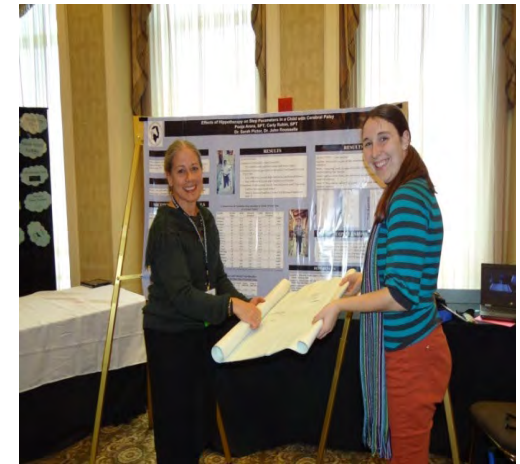
Speech/Language Therapy Incorporating Equine Movement as a Therapy Tool

- Equine movement can target the neuromotor systems that support speech and language production..
 - Postural control
 - ,Respiratory support,
 - Coordination and timing
- Equine movement can facilitate the neuroanatomy that supports our linguistic skills: Arousal, cognition, "linkage" between our thoughts/language, word finding.
- The speech-language pathologist integrates equine movement with other standard speech and language therapy activities.



Evidence-Based Practice

- Evidence based practice includes using current research, clinical reasoning by treating therapy professionals and patient values/goals in developing a plan of care.
- A bibliography of over 88 peer reviewed research articles supporting the use of equine movement as a treatment tool/ strategy by physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals is included on the AHA, Inc. website:



<http://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org/research/>

Clarification of Therapy Versus Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding

	Therapy	Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding
Description	Medical treatment (OT, PT, SLP) incorporating the movement of the horse as a treatment tool/strategy to address functional goals	Recreational activity providing horseback riding lessons for individuals with special needs
Completed by	Licensed occupational, physical, or speech therapist	Certified adaptive riding instructor
Goals	Land-based activities and functional skills individualized to the specific needs of the patient	Skills associated with riding a horse
Setting	One-on-one treatment	Individual, semi-private, or group lessons
Payment	Insurance reimbursement, private pay, grants, scholarships	Paid by family, grants, scholarships
Timeline	Episodes of care model: plan of care individualized to patient, progress is periodically reassessed to determine need for ongoing services	Can become a lifetime recreation and leisure activity



Understanding Terminology

Therapy	Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding
Treatment session	Riding lesson
Patient	Rider
Dynamic moving surface	Horse
Horse handler	Leader
Therapy goals	Riding goals
Episode of care; length determined by therapist based on patient's progress toward goals	Riding session; based on calendar of facility, usually 2-3 months

American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.

- AHA, Inc. is a professional non-profit membership organization recognized as part of the international community that provides education, facilitates research, and hippotherapy as an effective treatment tool/strategy used to improve quality of life for individuals with disabilities
- The AHA, Inc. faculty is dedicated to developing, updating, and teaching curriculum to therapists who are interested in expanding their practice to include hippotherapy to address the needs of their patients



American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.

- Provides the only standardized educational curriculum for equine movement as a treatment tool/strategy in the United States
- Has created standards of care/best practice statements for the use of equine movement in therapy
- Facilitates research on equine movement in therapy
- Provides education and outreach on the use of equine movement in therapy to the medical community at large

American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.

- Organizes bi-annual conferences for therapy professionals who are interested in incorporating equine movement into clinical practice.
- Has ongoing dialogue with insurance providers to increase level of reimbursement for therapy utilizing equine movement
- Provides networking opportunities for therapists incorporating equine movement in their practice
- Is internationally regarded as a leader in promoting safe and effective use of equine movement as a treatment tool/strategy in occupational, physical and speech-language therapy.

How do I find an AHA, Inc. Trained Therapist?

- Visit the AHA, Inc. website: americanhippotherapyassociation.org
- Go to the “Find a Therapist” page to locate an AHA trained therapist/facility that offers therapy services incorporating hippotherapy in your area



What questions do I ask a prospective therapist?

- What treatment services do you provide (OT, PT or ST services)?
- In addition to your licensure credentials – have you taken the American Hippotherapy Association Treatment Principles Course – Level I and II?
- Are you AHCB certified or are you a Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist (HCPS)?
- What is the training of the horse staff and volunteers (if used)?

What questions do I ask a prospective therapist?

- What is the training of the therapy horses?
- Do I need a prescription or referral from my doctor?
- Do I need a pre authorization for therapy services?
- What is the process for getting scheduled for therapy?
- Do you accept my insurance? If not, how is payment made?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

American Hippotherapy Association Inc.

Improving lives by advancing education, best practices and resources for licensed healthcare professionals who incorporate horses in therapy.

americanhippotherapyassociation.org

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