

EQUINE THERAPY SESSION INFORMATION SHEET

“It is only when the internal experience of the body changes that one’s perceptions can shift and one is able to become fully present and move forward in life.”

WHAT IS EQUINE THERAPY?

Equine Assisted Therapy is body work. It is not talk therapy meaning that we don't go into the details of a situation or re-live a trauma which is known as our story. Instead, with support we focus on being grounded and present in nature so clients can connect with what they are feeling in their physical body to access where the trapped emotional energy from the situation or trauma is located.

When and if the client is ready to release the trapped emotional energy (grief, sadness, resentment, fear, anger etc), the intuitive, healing energy of the horses will help to clear it out of the body. They do this by regulating our nervous systems and moving discordant energy to help lighten ‘our load’ thereby increasing our capacity for life. As balance and vitality are restored, and fragmented parts of clients are re-integrated, they become clearer. Clients are supported as they create new meaning, update beliefs, and navigate changes that come with a new perspective.

With time, clients are more able to work through their ‘stuff’ and become coherent, more congruent and available for whatever life has to offer.

WHY HORSES?

Horses’ primary need is for safety. More than food, water, comfort and companionship, safety is paramount to a horse.

When we interact with them, they want to know who are we. Can we be trusted? Will we hurt them? Where do we fit in the pecking order? Consequently, they are intently focused on us. They tune into our energetic vibration to get a ‘reading.’ The energetic space you’re holding emits a frequency based upon the emotion you choose to express in every moment.

- **Everything is energy**

Everything is energy, and energy carries information. We carry a lifetime of information in our cells – which are constantly vibrating and sending out information. Our physical health carries a certain vibration, along with multitudes of other vibrations including our beliefs, experiences, emotions, intentions, and thoughts. Each of us has a unique energetic signature.

- **Energy flows where our attention goes**

Horses tune into our vibrations that have the most intensity which are usually those aspects of ourselves that are unresolved and/or consume much of our attention whether we are conscious of it or not.

- **Like attracts like**

The quality of energetic vibration that we receive must match the quality of energetic vibration that we send out. Therefore how the horses respond to us matches what we are transmitting. Horses are our energetic mirrors and through their responses to us, we can instantly get a sense of how we ‘show up’ in the world. When we are grounded, heart-centred, and present (in other words congruent), the horses are drawn to be near us.

- **Dynamic process**

As we reflect on the horses' responses, and move through our thoughts and emotions, the horses will provide a continuous, energetic response that reflect the changes occurring within us in the moment. When we are aligned with our truth and values, the horses become relaxed; when we move away from our truth and values the horses become disinterested or even agitated. With this kind of feedback we become clearer about our choices and actions.

- **Horses teach us to be present**

Most of us have a natural tendency to 'be in our heads,' where we are thinking, analysing, and judging. While this is important and how we make sense of our world, we usually don't spend enough time 'being in our bodies,' and being present. Being in our bodies is being aware of our physical sensations, our emotions, and our outer environment as perceived through all our senses.

When we are in our heads we are not comfortable to be around – apart from the thought-energy we transmit, we are not 'pulling our weight' as a member of the herd. Instinctively horses are always scanning their environment for potential danger. In this way every member of the herd contributes to the herd safety. When we are in our heads, we don't 'have their back,' and a potential predator could sneak up while we are not paying attention. We become a liability to the herd.

Of course, for humans, being present is where our personal power resides – not in the past or future. The more we are present, the more influence we have on our inner and outer environment.

- **Horses teach us leadership and emotional intelligence skills**

Humans are usually more goal-focused, competitive, and outcome driven than horses. When we attempt to engage with the horses without respecting their needs, they will respond by not cooperating. When it comes to relationships and leadership, their needs are much the same as ours: they want respect, honesty, clarity, trust, congruence, confidence, consistency, and compassion. As we develop and exhibit these qualities and balance them with our own outcome driven needs, the horses willingly engage with us.

- **Horses heal us**

Physically and emotionally healthy horses live predominantly in a state of being relaxed and aware – similar to what we experience in meditation. All of their body functions are in an optimum state. When we become present and spend time in proximity to these horses, we experience a heightened sense of well-being. This is because their electromagnetic field is stronger and more powerful than ours, and our body's biorhythms synchronise with the horses'.

Physically and emotionally healthy horses also do not carry 'baggage' in the form of emotions, memories and trauma, and always live in the present moment. Consciousness (energy / chi / qi / shakti) flows freely through them, and consequently they usually have a higher vibration than we do. Their higher vibration causes any lower vibrations that we carry (e.g. baggage) to become dislodged and released – allowing energy to flow more freely through us, and self-healing to take place.

Horses heal us energetically at many levels – simply through the law of resonance. They patiently show us how to become the highest expressions of ourselves and reward us by gifting us with their unconditional regard and unlimited willingness to engage with us.

USES OF EQUINE THERAPY

Equine therapy sessions can be used to work with range of issues ranging from finding greater self-awareness to relief from the debilitating conditions that may be the result of chronic stress, trauma, or overwhelming events. No matter what the issue or how big or small, horses have an amazing capacity to facilitate our journey back to well-being and bring us back to equilibrium. Horses also act as mirrors into our own thinking offering us the opportunity to make powerful shifts in our own thinking patterns as conscious beings.

Stress and trauma are not actually the events themselves, but the impact they have on the body – they activate a cycle of survival, or self-protective responses that don't switch off, and result in a dysregulated nervous system. Since the nervous system controls every part of our bodies – including and especially our brains, we need it working efficiently for optimal mental, physical, and emotional health.

When your body's survival cycle is continuously activated – your brain is also flooded with chemicals that cause it to seem foggy and conventional talk-therapies are therefore not very helpful. We must first release some of the discordant energy and restore balance to the nervous system.

Restoring your mental, emotional and physical well-being from the debilitating effects of stress, trauma and unprocessed life events starts with the body.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN A TYPICAL SESSION

During a session, the pace, content, and depth is set by you. You will learn simple processes that help you negotiate the symptoms of stress and trauma without becoming overwhelmed. You will be guided to go 'underneath' the overwhelming emotions and touch into the physical sensations, to experience a sense of flow – a sense of 'coming home.'

Our consulting room is outdoors.

Being in nature has a calming, restorative and regulating effect on our bodies which helps to re-engage our thinking brains, immune and digestive systems.

Our healing and therapy team includes physically and emotionally healthy horses whose natural state is equilibrium. When we are in their space, our bodies' nervous systems naturally entrain or synchronise to the restorative rhythms of the horses. This can have the effect of re-setting our own nervous system to a state of equilibrium.

We usually sit in a space near or among the horses that you choose. Throughout our sessions you are invited to check in and notice how safe you feel, and what you would like to have happen for more safety or comfort.

From this balanced state, we gently begin to address what is causing you distress.

As your energetic presence shifts during our sessions, the horses respond in-the-moment to these changes. At times they will be supporting the release of discordant energy, at other times they will co-regulate your nervous system, and they may respond to your thoughts, beliefs, and emotions with their behaviour. For example, if you are feeling vulnerable, they may lay down around you.

Some important things to remember about a session include:

- **Go slow to go fast**
Ironically, we achieve more, and move faster towards your desired outcomes when we go slowly. This is because our nervous systems don't like surprises, fast-paced anything, overwhelm, or cathartic releases. A very small incremental shift yields big changes.

- **You are not required to re-live past adverse experiences**
Our bodies remember everything, and usually the imprint of past experiences show up in our current lives. We work with what shows up now, or what takes your attention and energy without reliving past adverse experiences.
- **You develop skills for working with emotions and intense experiences**
We show you important life skills to allow emotions and intense experiences to be felt in a safe and controlled way so that you can maintain equilibrium, feel safe in your body, and experience more vitality and greater resilience.

Together we will discover your unique body/mind/spirit impulses that lie in waiting to restore you back to wholeness. As you work through a series of sessions, you will experience more resilience in the face of life's challenges. Overall, you will experience more vibrancy and a greater capacity to succeed at the larger shifts you desire in life – whether they are physical, mental or emotional, or spiritual.

PREPARING FOR A SESSION

You can bring any issue or concern that has been keeping you awake at night, bothers you repeatedly or is something in your life you would like to change/ have more or less of. If you cannot think of anything, that's ok too. Whatever needs to surface will surface in the presence of the horses.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT EQUINE THERAPY

- No horse experience is required
- Horsemanship skills are not taught
- Participation is by choice for both humans and horses
- For young adults to seniors
- Suitable for people with physical limitations or fear of horses

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