

PROGRAM UPDATES

Equine Therapy at Abraxas Ohio Teaches Youth to "Ride Through It"



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ABRAXAS EQUINE:

WHERE HORSES MAKE

Hearts Smile



Abraxas Ohio is always looking for new and exciting ways to provide cutting edge treatment for the clients we provide services for. As a result, we have partnered with an exciting new program specifically designed to meet the needs of the youth in our care. The program is Hobby Horse Hill Therapeutic Equestrian Center (HHTEC). HHTEC has developed the "Rider Guided Therapy" curriculum to work with Abraxas youth.

The Rider Guided Therapy program uses a flexible curriculum that is tailored to meet the specific program needs of Abraxas. The core of Rider Guided Therapy is based on using the horse as an educational tool and as a metaphor that represents various problems, obstacles, or issues the client faces in their life and past history. Rider Guided Therapy believes through all of life's obstacles and setbacks there is only one way to overcome them and that is to "Ride Through It".

RIDER GUIDED THERAPY USES 5 PRINCIPLES:

1

SAFETY: Safety is paramount when working in a barn and around powerful animals. The goal of Rider Guided Therapy is to provide a safe atmosphere for the clients and the horses to interact and foster meaningful outcomes. The safety lessons taught in the sessions are then used as metaphors to discuss safety issues as it pertains to life issues and how the youth can pay more attention to their personal safety and those around them.

2

Communication: Effective communication is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish. Being able to clearly get a point conveyed can be elusive. Horses are nonverbal and therefore require that we be present in the moment. They require a pure form of communication that requires attention to details. This has proven to help people that struggle with the identification of emotions and a history of being misunderstood to be able to communicate their feelings and intentions more clearly. A greater ability to communicate improves social skills, therapeutic engagement and improves self-esteem.

3

TRUST: Horses are herd animals and they are prey animals. This means they like to be around other horses and they have to depend on one another for their safety and survival. Horses are big and powerful, but they are dependent on others for safety. Therefore, horses are willing to work together for the good of all. This need to work together makes horses great for therapy purposes. They have proven to be soothing, gentle animals. They are honest in their interactions. Their survival depends on straightforward relationships without the desire or need for lying or manipulating. They do not judge or blame. Horses have to depend upon one another and are thus not only trusting but completely trustworthy. Their presence alone can be immensely healing, creating loyal bonds between them and humans for many years. This kind of trust and loyalty becomes a big part of the healing process.

4

RELATIONSHIPS: Working with horses can benefit us in a number of ways. Horses have a calming effect that can help people alleviate stress, reduce anxiety and depression, and build strong bonds. Horses do not harbor and hold onto feelings of anger, guilt, shame, inadequacy and abandonment. They do not dwell on the past. They are present in the moment and provide you their full attention.

5

CONFIDENCE: Learning to build trust and communicate with the very epitome of strength, grace and power is awe inspiring. The level of growth in confidence is amazing when you realize what you are truly capable of.

WHY WE USE HORSES

Horses are herd animals. That means they thrive in social settings. It is this herd mentality that gives horses the ability to create an incredible ability for bonding. The powerful bonds that horses create have allowed them to not survive but to thrive while being prey animals. It is this incredible ability to bond that has allowed horses to influence people in powerful ways. Helping them to learn to develop relationships and overcome many of life's problems. Caring for horses' has proven to effect people in meaningful ways.

Equine therapy has shown to have many positive benefits. Some of them include: Confidence, Self-Efficacy, Self-Concept, Communication, Trust, Perspective, Decreased Isolation, Self-Acceptance, Impulse Control, Social Skills, Boundaries Clarification, and Spiritual Connection.

This type of therapy usually includes instruction in horse care, grooming procedures, saddlery, and basic equitation. Safety is the number one priority for all participants in the Hobby Horse Hill equine therapy programs.

Horses provide the optimum in experiential counseling. The size and power of a horse is naturally intimidating to many people. Accomplishing a task with a horse, in spite of those fears, creates confidence and provides for wonderful metaphors when dealing with challenging situations in life.