

**INTRODUCTION TO
EQUINE-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY
2nd Edition**

Preface.....iv
 What is Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy Anyway?
 My Mission
 Acknowledgments

Part 1 – Foundation

Chapter 1 – Experiential Learning.....1
 Comparison to Traditional Therapy
 Various Methods of Experiential Learning
 Benefits of Processing

Chapter 2 – Key Theoretical Orientations13
 Cognitive-Behavioral Theory
 Reality Therapy
 Gestalt Therapy
 Brief Therapy
 Systems Theory

Chapter 3 – Why horses?.....34
 Advantages of horses
 Comparison to other animals
 Horses as teachers

Chapter 4 – Benefits of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy.....48
 Advantages to Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy
 Research
 Case studies

Copyright 2013 by Patti Mandrell

Part 2 – Treatment Team

Chapter 5 -- The Role of the Mental Health Professional.....	73
Tasks and skills needed	
Planning and facilitating individual sessions	
Planning and facilitating group sessions	
Chapter 6 - The Role of the Horse Professional.....	81
Criteria for a safe EAP horse professional	
Tasks and skills needed	
Planning an individual session	
Planning group sessions	
Chapter 7 - The Horse.....	89
Horse psychology and body language	
Equine needs and attributes	
Horse cues	
Application to EAP	

Part 3 – The Client

Chapter 8 – Who can benefit	
Client structures	
Issues often addressed in EAP	
Common fears and misconceptions of clients	
Case summary	
Chapter 9 - Working with specific age groups	
Piaget’s Cognitive Development Theory	
Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development	
Special considerations in working with different age groups	
Chapter 10 -- Working with groups	
Benefits of group therapy	
Formation of the group	
Stages of group development	

Part 4 – Safety

Chapter 11 -- Physical and emotional safety

- Physical safety
- Emotional safety

Chapter 12 – Setting up a session

- Establishing a safe work area
- Tools and equipment used in facilitation
- Variety and creativity in equipment and therapy horses
- Guidelines in setting up an activity

Chapter 13 – Crisis Response

- Crisis intervention
- Action strategies for EAP professionals
- Legal implications
- Crisis Prevention

Part 5 – Multidimensional Processing

Chapter 14 – Components of processing

- Four components of EAP processing
- Why process?

Chapter 15 – Planning Sessions

- Incorporating client goals into the session
- Treatment planning
- Designing activities related to goals
- Choosing the appropriate horse and setting

Chapter 16- Facilitating Sessions

- Treatment goal implementation
- Setting up the session
- How to conduct sessions
- Documenting Process

Chapter 17 – Assessment and evaluation

The importance of assessment

Client assessment and evaluation– techniques and process

Professional assessment and evaluation

Program assessment – techniques and process

Appendix

Sample Activities

Group

Family

Individual

EAP Certification information

Code of Ethics

Bibliography

(c) Copyright 2013 by Patti Mandrell

PREFACE

Creating the first textbook written on the topic was an endeavor in itself. There is so much information, philosophy, and theory that come into play when you choose to include Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy into your toolbox of therapeutic tools. This endeavor has not been short-lived. I started this writing journey in 2002. Clients continued to take precedence as my writing time would quickly slip away from me. In 2006, I published the first edition. As the years pass, my understanding of EAP grows as clients and horses continue to take the session beyond where I had previously experienced possible. So after fourteen years of teaching the EAGALA model of EAP and hundreds of additional hours with clients, I am writing the second edition to this textbook. Personal growth in facilitation continues as I see the miracle of this work transform lives. The explanation and facilitation techniques of EAP continue to evolve through the years as experience helps us all become better facilitators; nevertheless, the core fundamentals of the approach remain the same. Fortunately, there is more research and information to scientifically support this work than was available when the first edition was written. This field continues to grow exponentially.

I continue to be amazed at the power in this form of therapy when I step back and allow the process to take place before me without my orchestration. It is such a privilege to work with clients and walk with them through their most difficult moments. The horses aid in this process so beautifully – better than any intervention I could remedy in my office!

My most recent awareness as a facilitator of this work is that the more I trust the process and get “myself” out of the way, the more room I leave for the client to find their own success and solutions. In this second edition, I have added the additional components and perspectives gained through the years in an attempt to give an even more complete and thorough overview than before, while I continue to peel away the layers of depth to this therapeutic approach.

What is EAP Anyway?

This question has been asked more times than I can count. I have spent the past fourteen years trying to explain what Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) is and what it is not. “I’ve got a horse that needs some therapy,” they would laugh and say as they walked by. No, EAP is not psychotherapy for horses although I have seen some horses become more confident and expressive after being involved in several EAP sessions. The others would quickly interrupt as I attempted in my explanation of EAP saying, “Oh yeah, I have a friend whose daughter is doing that for her physical therapy.” Again, the answer is no – EAP is not the same as hippotherapy or therapeutic riding. Nevertheless, I have seen many people with disabilities benefit from EAP. “Oh, so you teach the kids to ride. I know horses are good for teaching kids about responsibility and discipline.” They are right; those are some benefits to horsemanship. However, EAP is not horsemanship nor is it about learning to ride a horse!

So, you may be asking yourself now, “What exactly is Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy?” I’m so glad you asked. It will take the next seventeen chapters to explain what EAP truly is. By definition, EAP is a dawning approach to professional counseling that helps clients of all ages address behavioral, emotional, spiritual, and relational issues using horses as an intervention tool. EAP is a non-threatening and action-oriented team approach to counseling including a licensed counselor, horse professional, and horse(s). Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy helps clients cope with change and develop positive means of facing life’s struggles through the use of activities and experiences with horses.

Many people are still confused even after the definition is heard and the explanation has been made about what EAP is not. The most effective way to explain this approach remains in the arena. When they experience it themselves, then they begin to understand the depth to this work

My Mission

So, knowing the amazing impact the horses are having for clients and fully understanding the complexity of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), I felt compelled to be an active participant in the promotion of EAP as it continues to gain support and credibility worldwide. My mission in writing *Introduction to Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy* is to:

- present you with a clear picture of how Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy can work as an interventional tool for clients
- provide you with a solid foundation of the theoretical and philosophical backbone of EAP
- assist you in distinguishing why horses are more beneficial than other animals for this approach
- dispel some of the misconceptions and myths about Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, particularly the ones that confuse EAP with horsemanship, hippotherapy, and/or therapeutic riding
- aid in the respect for a balanced team consisting of horse professional, therapist, and horse
- offer information, not certification, about the versatile applications of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy
- contribute a quality introductory text to the EAP field

After reading this book, my goal is that you will hold a greater understanding and appreciation for the field of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy. I feel confident that with the knowledge gained through reading this text combined with the experience gained through the Equine-Assisted Growth and Learning Association's certification program (EAGALA), you will hold a thorough understanding and ability to apply this therapeutic tool. Mastery is only achieved through practice – no book can give that level of expertise.

My hope is that if you are interested in pursuing EAP as a component of your career that you will take the time to further your experience through certification and additional workshops. Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy is a very powerful tool. It is recommended that you only practice the activities presented in this text under the supervision of a certified EAP professional. Equine activities are highly active and participatory. Improper use of the activities described in this text may result in injury. I, the author, do not assume any liability for loss or damage, direct or consequential, to the readers or others resulting from the use of the materials contained in this textbook, whether such loss or damage results from errors, omissions, ambiguities, or inaccuracies in the materials contained herein or otherwise.

Having stated the disclaimer read forward and enjoy learning more about the dawning discipline of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy. This won't be the last you hear of it.