

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

ScholarWorks@UARK

Animal Science Undergraduate Honors Theses

Animal Science

7-2021

Through the Lens of EAAT Facility Manager: Benefits of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies to College-aged students

AnnaLee Parker

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/anscuht>



Part of the [Animal-Assisted Therapy Commons](#), [Animal Studies Commons](#), and the [Zoology Commons](#)

Citation

Parker, A. (2021). Through the Lens of EAAT Facility Manager: Benefits of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies to College-aged students. *Animal Science Undergraduate Honors Theses* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/anscuht/50>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Animal Science at ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Animal Science Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu, uarepos@uark.edu.

Through the Lens of the EAAT Facility Manager: Benefits of Equine-Assisted Activities and
Therapies to College-aged Students

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Dale Bumpers College of
Agricultural Food and Life Sciences Honors Program

By

Annalee Parker

University of Arkansas

July 2021

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Purpose and Objectives.....	7
Literature Review.....	7
Mental Health in the United States.....	8
Mental Health in Higher Education.....	8
Physical Benefits of EAAT.....	9
Post Trauma Patient Benefit.....	9
Juvenile Behavior Benefit.....	10
Development Plan.....	11
Design Process and Creative Works.....	13
Results.....	15
Discussion.....	16
Conclusion.....	16
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	17
References.....	19

Appendices

Appendix A Initial letter sent to equine therapy facility managers.....	22
Appendix B Equine therapy facility manger and co-worker interview questions.....	23
Appendix C Pamphlet Draft with Expert Comments.....	25
Appendix D Educational Resource Pamphlet.....	26

Abstract

This study aimed to explore and gather information on the benefits of equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) to college-aged students so that the information may be given to college students as an educational source and a mental health relief resource. This study strived to explore, through the lens of managers of EAAT organizations and their coworkers, how EAAT has positively affected college-aged students, including those with PTSD, behavioral problems, communication obstacles, Down syndrome, family differences, abusive relationships, depression, anxiety, and/or physical ailments. As a whole, EAAT is viewed as more of a recreational activity rather than a method of therapy. Insurance companies do not provide funds that completely cover the cost of sessions. Not having funds for EAAT leads to many not being able to choose it as an option for treatment. Even though insurance may pay for the mental health professional during the session, it does not cover the outside costs associated with EAAT. This creative project highlighted stories as reported by EAAT professionals that revealed the positive impact that EAAT can have on college-aged students and people of all ages and walks of life. This information was presented in a format that can be used by college-aged students to introduce the benefits of EAAT as they walk through the mental health challenges and the typical stressors experienced by this age group.

Introduction

There has been a major increase in mental health service use within the past two decades in the United States which reflects the trend of increasing incidences of mental illness in the United States (Mojtabai & Jorm, 2015). Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) is a method of therapy which is used to treat clients with both physical and mental health challenges. Forms of equine therapy have been heavily relied upon for decades (Jacobson, 2018). One of the first uses of EAAT was by Olympic Silver medalist, Liz Hartel. It was not until Hartel won a silver medal at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games that equine therapy was taken into serious consideration. Ms. Hartel had suffered from paralysis from polio and the practice of therapeutic riding helped her to strengthen her legs (Jacobson, 2018). Medical professionals investigated how to help her recover and found that equine therapy was the most logical option because she was an accomplished horseman.

In addition to a respectable relation to an Olympian, Hartel's story supports the theory of equine therapy's positive effects on people who encounter physical obstacles. Unlike Hartel, many people are not familiar with the equine industry. However, lack of prior knowledge does not prohibit clients' participation in equine therapy. The horse and the environment in which it lives are tools for people with a wide range of needs and abilities. Equine therapy and the environment in which it is practiced has been utilized for decades for the betterment of an individual's health. Many have considered the man-horse relationship an intense psychological relationship (Bracher, 2000).

There are several different categories of equine therapy used around the world. Three of these categories include hippotherapy, therapeutic riding, and equine-assisted activities. There

are distinct differences between these types of therapies which depends on the way the horse is used. The term “hippotherapy” refers to the practice of using horses within a therapy session in which a licensed physical therapist, speech therapist, or occupational therapist is present. In contrast, therapeutic riding cannot be used interchangeably with these forms of therapy because most of the time therapeutic riding does not involve a licensed therapist (White-Lewis, 2019). Therapeutic riding mostly involves skilled horsemen who are able to provide horse interaction and riding opportunities for those in need of mental health relief, social wellbeing, and/or for those with special needs. A more commonly known form of equine assisted therapy is equine assisted activities. This is defined as an intervention for companionship, socialization, reduction in emotional blunting, improvement in attachment issues, personal space/boundary improvement, self-esteem enhancement, reflectivity, and metacognition (White-Lewis, 2019). Equine assisted activities include the use of miniature horses that go into hospitals, nursing homes, and/or school care facilities (White-Lewis, 2019).

This wide variety of options within equine therapy makes it considerably adaptable to clients with many different disabilities. Even though all of these categories involve equine usage, they are very different. The clients with disorders who benefit from equine therapy include those with attention deficit disorder, cerebral palsy, depression, anxiety, autism, drug and alcohol abuse, genetic disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (White-Lewis, 2019).

There is a specific science to the work that takes place in an enclosed area, commonly referred to as the “arena”, in which therapy sessions occur. An arena typically consists of a gated-in area that has a dirt floor designed for ease of equine movement and comfort. These arenas can be enclosed with a roof or may be open to the outside environment. In the arena, there are stories of genuine success where people of all ages apply what they learn to their

everyday life. This may sound simple; however, it is difficult to understand how the smallest thing in a person's life can create such a daily struggle when completing even the most simple, everyday tasks. In fact, horses can even help with the most important asset that humans have – communication (Scopa et al., 2019).

In addition, equine therapy can help with self-image, socialization, and help to relieve psychiatric symptoms (Large & Van Valin, 2016). Even though horses cannot speak, they can influence humans to speak. Successful relationships are not possible without communication. Scholars focus on communication to determine the success of relationships (Guerrero et al, 2021). If you step into an arena with a frustrated attitude and aggressive approach, you will not get the best response from a horse. Horses change their behavior based on the behavior of the human with which they are interacting. To successfully communicate with a horse, the use of positive mannerisms is needed. These mannerisms include appropriate body language and voice tone. In EAAT the horses teach clients who have trouble with communication in society to control their feelings (Scopa et al., 2019).

College-aged students face many stressors. It has been reported that depression and loneliness in college-aged students is on the rise (Reavley & Jorm, 2010). Enormous pressure to succeed is felt by college-aged students because competition for jobs, graduate school admissions, and good relationships is high (Twenge, 2006). Mental health challenges in college-aged individuals are steadily increasing in number and severity (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Czyn et al. (2013) reported that many college students struggling with mental health problems do not utilize professional help because they do not want to be associated with the stigma that comes with mental health treatment.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore the benefits of EAAT for college-aged students and create an educational EAAT resource.

The following objectives were developed for the project:

- Create a list of interview questions concerning the effects of EAAT on college-aged students to ask EAAT facility managers and their coworkers.
- Interview EAAT facility managers and their coworkers to determine the effects of EAAT on college-aged students.
- Create a product in which the impact of EAAT on college-aged students is reported through stories gathered from EAAT facility managers and their coworkers.

Literature Review

It is necessary to further explore the components of, and approaches to EAAT, and to identify the impact EAAT has on its clients. Equine assisted activities and therapies include the interaction of a human client with an equine participant in order to accomplish a goal. The goal is for the human client to experience improved balance, well-being, quality of life, trust, self-efficacy, self-esteem, presence, pleasure, and/or a sense of accomplishment (White-Lewis, 2019). The literature review will explore the different concentration areas of EAAT while focusing specifically on the mental health benefits of EAAT to college-aged students.

Mental Health in the United States

Children in the United States face many different factors that induce mental health problems. These factors include drug use, violence, mental disorders, conduct disorders, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and/or tic disorders (Algeria et al., 2015). Each of these mental health problems that children may face can lead to fatally dangerous actions such as suicide if not treated properly and in a timely manner. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents aged 12-17 (Algeria et al., 2015).

Mental Health in Higher Education

The most common age for the onset of mental health challenges is the age at which most people begin to pursue a degree in higher education. Studies have shown that mental health challenges in college-aged individuals have increased in recent years (Reavley & Jorm, 2010). The bulk of evidence reveals increasing mental health problems within a group of those commonly pursuing higher education rather than the *process* of pursuing higher education (Reavley & Jorm, 2010). An elective recently incorporated at Stanford University, *Medicine and Horsemanship*, has the goal of reducing stress and teaching coping skills to students pursuing a degree in higher education. Students use horses to develop leadership qualities, interpersonal skills, and self-care techniques. The class, created by a physician from Stanford University, provides an opportunity for students to reduce stress and self-reflect. More than one fourth of medical students worldwide are impacted by high levels of stress and face depression (Chakales et al., 2020). These findings call for immediate action to better the mental health care medical students receive. The benefits of EAAT include a significant increase in mindfulness and a reduction in stress symptoms (Chakales et al., 2020).

Physical Health Benefits of EAAT

There is evidence of the use of equine therapy for paralysis as far back as 1952 (Jacobson, 2018). Liz Hartel, an Olympic silver medalist, suffered paralysis from poliomyelitis after her life as a highly active athlete and accomplished Olympian. The practice of equine therapy was used to strengthen her legs so that she could restore a portion of the strength that she had before her polio diagnosis (Jacobson, 2018). The horses' movement is tri-rotational, and the forces which are provided from this movement resemble forces that are similar to walking. In addition, a horse's body temperature is 1–2°F hotter than that of a human's. This allows for the transfer of heat from the horse to the human which can decrease muscle spasticity and hypertonicity (White-Lewis, 2019). The physical benefits of EAAT are commonly measured by how the horse's movements positively affect the body. These measurements indicate how an EAAT client's strength, agility, circulation, respiration, and metabolism are impacted (Scott, 2005).

Post-Trauma Patient Benefits

Trauma patients make up a portion of those who have utilized equine therapy (Yorke et al., 2008). When a person goes through a traumatic experience, it can bring shame and fear when healing through counseling. Equine therapy provides a way for a nonjudgmental source (the horse) to walk through the patients' post-traumatic stress with them (Yorke et al., 2008). In a study done on post-traumatic mental health stress, there was a positive significant change found in the lives of the clients outside of the arena after a series of equine therapy sessions (Yorke et al., 2008). In another study, women who had lived through abusive relationships participated in

equine therapy. At the end of the study, the women reported that the practice of equine therapy positively impacted the power they felt within themselves (Meinersmann et al., 2008).

Juvenile Behavior Benefits

“At risk” teens who have not had in-depth previous experience with handling horses reported that they were fearful of handling horses during their first equine therapy session (Maujean et al., 2013). Throughout the sessions, the teens gained comfort while working around the horses. This new-found ease of working with horses allowed them to positively progress through the equine therapy sessions. The teens reported that overcoming their fear made them feel accomplished and fulfilled (Maujean et al., 2013). In fact, it is reported that working with horses has a positive impact on the development of life skills in juveniles (Thompson et. al., 2017).

Horses have the ability to have an influence on the humans who interact with them. Many Americans struggling with mental health issues can work through them using EAAT by partnering with a non-judgmental being such as a horse (White-Lewis, 2019). A majority of individuals facing mental health struggles in America are juveniles or college-aged (Reavley & Jorm, 2010). Improvements can be measured by smiles, communications of pleasure, and improved function (White-Lewis, 2019). In addition to mental health benefits, there are many physical benefits, including decreased spasticity and improved mobility that can be obtained using EAAT (White-Lewis, 2019). The different aspects and approaches of EAAT can work together to create a healthier and better quality of life for the participant (White-Lewis, 2019).

The purpose of this creative project was to create an informational resource about EAAT for college-aged students, so that they could gain an understanding of what equine therapy is and the benefits it offers.

Development Plan

The content for the informational guide was gathered through phone interviews with managers of EAAT facilities and their coworkers. The following steps were taken to conduct this project:

1. Researched regional equine facilities and created a contact list.

Equine therapy facilities were evaluated to be considered as a facility to contact for further information regarding this project through use of social media platforms, webpages, and web searches. There were different reasons why various facilities were chosen. Examples of these reasons were: high ratings, impactful marketing, outstanding recommendations, legitimacy of staff qualifications, and determination of college-aged participants in EAAT programs offered. Twenty-five EAAT facility managers and/or coworkers were contacted for the project.

2. Created a letter to be sent via email to EAAT facility managers

An initial letter was sent to EAAT facility managers that explained the objectives of the study and invited facility managers and their co-workers to participate. The goals of this project were described, and facility managers were asked if they or any of their coworkers would be willing to participate in a phone or ZOOM interview. The letter was designed to provide a brief amount of information on the project for the facility manager to review. This letter outlined what the interviewees could expect to be asked as well as how much of their time would be occupied

by this interview. In addition, this email specified the researcher's interest in experiences with EAAT and college-aged students and prompted the reader to prepare to share any information they had (Appendix A).

3. Scheduled Zoom or phone meeting

For the individuals who agreed to be interviewed, they were asked their availability regarding both dates and times. They specified which form of communication would be best for them and specified if they wanted to communicate through a regular phone call or a Zoom call. If they chose the Zoom call, a Zoom link was created and sent to the EAAT facility manager and/or coworker. If the respondent chose to communicate with a regular phone call, a time and date was scheduled for the phone interview. To ensure the correct amount of time was allocated to properly interview and obtain information, it was suggested that respondents set aside 30 minutes of their time.

4. Gathered personal observations/ statements through Zoom or phone meetings

In order to ensure consistency, interview questions were created and reviewed prior to being asked to each participant (Appendix B). Before interviews began, each person being interviewed was asked if they would agree to the Zoom or phone call being recorded. Recordings were reviewed post-interview for reference when creating the educational resource to ensure that any quotes from the interviewees were reported accurately.

5. Reviewed personal observation statement recordings and identified meaningful trends and quotes

After each interview was recorded, personal observations, statements and quotes were organized and put into a document. This document was edited for grammatical errors and used as a source of quotes and statements for the educational material. One goal of organizing observations, statements and quotes was to ensure that each story was strategically placed so that any reader, familiar with or unfamiliar with EAAT, could fully understand the concepts and benefits of EAAT that were presented in educational material.

6. Created educational materials

Personal statements, observations, quotes, and photographs were compiled to create a visual educational resource so readers could be introduced to the practice of EAAT. As many readers are unfamiliar with EAAT, this educational resource provided an explanatory visual. The purpose of this aspect of the project was to give readers a better understanding of the benefits of EAAT.

Design Process and Creative Works

Health education is a way in which educators are able to improve the health of both the community and individuals within the community. In situations where the goal is to educate a wide range of people over a long period of time, posters are recommended as a method of information dissemination (Hasanica, et al., 2020). Posters are beneficial because they bring information to the public quickly and build awareness. Common things that should be considered when creating these communicative works are color, font, impactful graphics, size, white space, and the way that the work flows. Most often, there is a combination of both visual and textual elements that can be found on an informative poster or pamphlet. Recent studies have shown that

the performance of informational flyers and papers are significantly improved and effective when they include visual aspects (Apostolova & Tomuro, 2014).

There is a large body of work that addresses the usage of poster displays to educate and inform the public and the community on resources used for health education (Hasanica et al., 2020). The health education resource design process outlined by Hasanica et al. (2020) stressed gender neutrality, word to photograph ratio, and emphasis on emotional statements. For this creative educational pamphlet, different colors and formats were explored to choose a layout that attracted both males and females. The fonts, color, and layout were chosen to be specifically gender neutral. Singh (2006) found that when people are examining materials that showcase products or interactions with people, they decide if they are going to continue reading the information on the pamphlet or not within the first 90 seconds of examining the work. A large percentage (62% - 90%) of the initial assessment is based on the colors used on the work. The choice of colors influences the positive or negative view of the work, as well as the moods and feelings of those viewing it (Singh, 2006). This is why examining colors to use on the creative educational pamphlet was important.

In addition, when considering the creative educational pamphlet design, the word to picture ratio displayed on the pamphlet was taken into consideration. It is important that a pamphlet be visually pleasing, and not overwhelmed with words nor too simple with too many photographs (Hasanica et al., 2020).

Quotes and information gathered during the personal interviews were included in the pamphlet in a way that would catch the eye of the reader. The quotes chosen from the interviews were chosen because they exemplified how EAAT can positively impact participants and/or

volunteers. The quotes were also chosen by examining which words would initially catch the eye and attention of the reader.

A draft pamphlet (Appendix C) created in Canva™ was reviewed and edited by an expert in EAAT content and an expert in pamphlet design. The final pamphlet produced in Canva™ (Appendix D) incorporated best practices in design as well as the expert suggested edits. Shorter quotes were chosen to be represented in larger font, purposefully drawing initial attention to the pamphlet, and representing some of the most important ideas. The photographs used were taken from the interviewers' facility website after permission was granted. In addition to the approved photos taken from facility websites, photographs taken personally were incorporated into the pamphlet.

Results

After interviewing, recording, and compiling quotes, it appeared that there were consistent sentiments reported by participants, even though they administered EAAT programs at five separate facilities. Each EAAT facility had a wide variety of clients ranging in both age, disability, and different reasoning for seeking participation in an equine-focused program. There were several success stories of clients who experienced life changing improvements behaviorally or physically, a recurrent theme at all the EAAT facilities represented in this project. Overall, the participants shared that their clients not only gained skills that could be transferred outside of the arena, but they also enjoyed the therapy itself. It was repeatedly discussed that one of the major benefits for clients was that they looked forward to equine therapy sessions, found them to be fun, and that participating in equine therapy transformed clients' lives. If clients can look forward to therapy sessions, they are able to get more out of the sessions and spend more time incorporating what they have learned into their everyday lives. Facility managers said that EAAT

was found to work when many other forms of therapy had failed, that many clients surpassed previously set limitations, and were able to live with a higher quality of life.

Discussion

The goal of this project was to gather information to put into a creative educational resource that would display the benefits of EAAT to those who had no knowledge of the subject. The target audience for this resource was college-aged individuals because they are a group who may not have been exposed to or educated on the benefits of EAAT. The benefits that EAAT offers college-aged individuals include improved mental health, confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness, and a decrease in undesired behaviors. These benefits and skills can be carried into life outside EAAT sessions (Wilson et al., 2016). These benefits make college-aged individuals the perfect target for an informative educational resource on EAAT. Typically, information about the benefits of EAAT are targeted toward children with special needs and adults with PTSD. The goal of this project was to create an educational resource to expose and inform college-aged students to the benefits of EAAT, so that they could gain an understanding of what equine therapy is and the benefits it offers.

Conclusion

Introducing college-aged students to EAAT can help through an increase in the amount of volunteer opportunities, communication development, mental health therapy, and stress reduction. College-aged students experience many stressors and EAAT can benefit the health and wellness of these individuals. With the increasing workload and intensity that college students face to succeed, EAAT is a great way to meet college-aged students where they are and help them to learn to work through their everyday problems with simple methods and approaches taught through EAAT. Furthermore, the volunteerism opportunities that are provided through

EAAT can help college students connect with their community. In addition to volunteerism opportunities, mental health therapy, and de-stressing, EAAT can help college-aged students with communication skills that can be carried over into their life after college. With communication being such a necessary component of any relationship, skills learned through EAAT can be used in the workplace, at home, and in the community. Introducing EAAT to college-age students has the potential to provide these individuals with skills, knowledge, and coping mechanisms that can be carried over and practiced in future career endeavors.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Extenuating circumstances affected this project. The design had to be adjusted due to the travel restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic. The initial design of this project was to travel to at least 10 equine therapy facilities and interview facility employees, managers, and/or founders in person. While there, photographs were going to be taken at the facilities to be used in the pamphlet. Since this was not possible, the alternative was to interview respondents via Zoom or phone call, which ultimately was a good choice. I suggest future researchers interview respondents via Zoom or phone because it is not necessary to travel to each facility. The same amount of information can be obtained over the phone and most facilities have photographs they are willing to share.

The proposal and methodology for the project had to be modified due to COVID-19 restrictions. Modifying the initial project meant redesigning an honors project which ultimately impacted the timeframe in which I could complete the project. Time between identifying, contacting, and interviewing respondents was shortened.

Another limitation to this project was the lack of response from EAAT facility employees. Due to COVID-19, many facilities were closed or run by a skeleton crew. Twenty-

five facilities were identified and contacted, however, only five individuals responded. However, the five people interviewed provided a substantial amount of information and the purpose of creating an educational EAAT resource for college-aged students was achieved.

With future, continued research on this topic it is recommended that a larger number of facilities be identified and contacted. Identifying more facilities could potentially increase the number of respondents. This in turn would yield a wider choice of quotes, pictures, and reflections for use in the pamphlet.

References

- Algeria, M., Green, J. G, McLaughlin, K., Loder, S. (2015). *Disparities in child and adolescent mental health and mental health services in the US*. New York, NY: William T Grant Foundation, 2015.
- Apostolova, E., & Tomuro, N. (2014). Combining visual and textual features for information extraction from online flyers. *Proceedings of the 2014 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)*. <https://doi.org/10.3115/v1/d14-1206>
- Bracher, M. (2000). Therapeutic horse riding: What has this to do with occupational therapists? *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(6), 277–282.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030802260006300606>
- Chakales, P. A., Locklear, J., & Wharton, T. (2020). Medicine and horsemanship: The effects of equine-assisted activities and therapies on stress and depression in medical students. *Cureus*. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.6896>
- Czyz, E. K., Horwitz, A. G., Eisenberg, D., Kramer, A., & King, C. A. (2013). Self-reported barriers to professional help seeking among college students at elevated risk for suicide. *Journal of American College Health*, 61(7), 398–406.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2013.820731>
- Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2021). *In close encounters: Communication in relationships* (5th ed., Vol. 22, pp. 20–26). essay, SAGE.
- Hasanica, N., Ramic-Catak, A., Mujezinovic, A., Begagic, S., Galijasevic, K., & Oruc, M. (2020). The Effectiveness of Leaflets and Posters as a Health Education Method. *Materia socio-medica*, 32(2), 135–139. <https://doi.org/10.5455/msm.2020.32.135-139>

- Hunt, J., & Eisenberg, D. (2010). Mental health problems and help-seeking behavior among college students. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46*(1), 3–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.08.008>
- Jacobson, T. (2018). *The history of equine therapy*. Retrieved May 1, 2021, from <https://www.ofhorse.com/view-post/The-History-of-Equine-Therapy>.
- Large, E., & Van Valin, B. (2016). Interdisciplinary mental health approach to equine assisted therapy for veterans. *Occupational Therapy Capstones, 117*. Retrieved May 15, 2021 from <https://commons.und.edu/ot-grad/117/>.
- Maujean, A., Kendall, E., Lillan, R., Sharp, T., & Pringle, G. (2013). Connecting for health: Playing with horses as a therapeutic tool. *Journal of Community Psychology, 41*(4), 515–522. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21547>
- Meinersmann, K. M., Bradberry, J., & Roberts, F. B. (2008). Equine-facilitated psychotherapy with adult female survivors of abuse. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services, 46*(12), 36–42. <https://doi.org/10.3928/02793695-20081201-08>
- Mojtabai, R., & Jorm, A. F. (2015). Trends in psychological distress, depressive episodes and mental health treatment-seeking in the United States: 2001–2012. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 174*, 556–561. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.12.039>
- Reavley, N., & Jorm, A. F. (2010). Prevention and early intervention to improve mental health in higher education students: A review. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry, 4*(2), 132–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-7893.2010.00167.x>
- Scopa, C., Contalbrigo, L., Greco, A., Lanatà, A., Scilingo, E. P., & Baragli, P. (2019). Emotional transfer in human–horse interaction: New perspectives on equine assisted interventions. *Animals, 9*(12), 1030. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9121030>

Scott, N. (2005). *Special needs, special horses: A guide to the benefits of therapeutic riding*.

University of North Texas Press.

Singh, S. (2006). Impact of color on marketing. *Management Decision*, 44(6), 783–789.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740610673332>

Thompson, C., Luck, L., & Karr, L. (2017). Impact of horse program involvement on youth on development and life skills. *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*, 52, 123.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jevs.2017.03.209>

Twenge, J.M. (2006). *Generation me: Why today's young Americans are more confident,*

assertive, entitled—and more miserable than ever before. New York: Free Press.

White-Lewis, S. (2019). Equine-assisted therapies using horses as healers: A concept analysis.

Nursing Open, 7(1), 58–67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.377>

Wilson, K., Buultjens, M., Monfries, M., & Karimi, L. (2016). Equine-assisted psychotherapy for adolescents experiencing depression and/or anxiety: A therapist's perspective.

Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 22(1), 16–33.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104515572379>

Yorke, J., Adams, C., & Coady, N. (2008). Therapeutic Value of equine-human bonding in recovery from trauma. *Anthrozoös*, 21(1), 17–30.

<https://doi.org/10.2752/089279308x274038>

Appendix A

Initial Letter Sent to Equine Therapy Facility Managers

Once a list of specific EAAT facilities and their managers was created, a message was sent through email, and/or social media direct messaging:



Annalee Parker

Sun 4/11/2021 8:59 PM



To: Sara.zurenko@southernreins.org <sara.zurenko@southernreins.org>

Greetings,

My name is AnnaLee Parker and I am a Pre -Veterinary Animal Science Major at The University of Arkansas. I am currently studying the effects of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) on those suffering from ADD, Anxiety, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Dementia, Depression, Developmental Delay, Genetic Syndromes (such as Down Syndrome), traumatic brain injuries, behavioral issues, abuse issues, and/or many other mental health problems. My goal is to bring exposure to EAAT and promote EAAT to college aged students at The University of Arkansas through the creation of a pamphlet that highlights the benefits of EAAT. I would greatly appreciate about 30 minutes of your time via a phone or a zoom interview so that I may ask a few questions and hear any impactful stories about the use of EAAT either you or your coworkers have personally witnessed and are willing to share. I am particularly interested in observations that you have about the benefit of EAAT to college aged individuals.

Before I close, I would like to thank you for all that you do in proving EAAT to our community and surrounding areas. Personally, EAAT has positively impacted me on a far greater level than I am able to place into words. My goal with this project is to bring exposure to EAAT so that students at my University can learn about and utilize what equine therapy has to offer.

If you or any of your coworkers are interested in providing personal observations, quotes, or statements, please contact me so we can set up an agreeable time to visit.

Sincerely,

AnnaLee Parker

Senior Animal Science Major

University of Arkansas

Appendix B

Equine Therapy Facility Manager and Co-worker Interview Questions

Is the Practice of equine therapy beneficial to its clients?

- Do clients who participate in equine therapy sessions have behavioral changes outside of the arena, in relation to their everyday life? If so, how? (ask for an example)
- Do these clients have to have past experience in working with horses? DO any of them have a fear of horses coming into it?
- Do the clients enjoy being in the therapy session, and do you know if they look forward to coming back?
- How are most of your clients introduced to this form of therapy? How were they exposed to equine therapy?
- Do the clients have someone, besides themselves, reporting their behavior outside of the arena, after starting equine therapy sessions?
- Is there a specific client that has attended these therapy sessions, and stood out as an extraordinary example of the impact that equine therapy can have on its clients? If so, could you tell me his/her story?

How can equine therapy be of help specifically to college students

- Do college-age students participate in equine therapy sessions? If so, how many would you say?
- In which ways do you think equine therapy could be beneficial to college students? Do you think they would have an interest in what equine therapy offers?

- Is there a specific story of a college student being effected by equine therapy that you could share?
- Is it possible that equine therapy could be viewed as less intimidating than a typical therapy session?
- Are there ways that college students could find funding to pay for this therapy?


Appendix C

Pamphlet Draft with Expert Comments

INVOLVEMENT IMPACT

"EAAT takes the focus off of you and gives you the opportunity to serve somebody else. Meaning that a patient needs your help, and that alone, can even out your stress level and get yourself in a good mental state because you are serving others. It gives you an outlet to do something out of the norm that is good for others."

-Karol Williams, MS, LPC, ET



"I do a pre and post test, it is 10 short questions that we ask. I do it during the intake process, 5 weeks into the process, and then at the end of the process. It gives a snapshot to see if you move the needle and 100% of my clients have improved."

-Karol William, MS, LPC, ET


EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES: A Young Professional's Hero

A 35 year old attorney resorted to Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies as a last resort. His success with EAAT changed his life.

"He was 56 by the time he came to visit us. John had a stroke and he came to us after he had been released from all other therapists because he had done all that he could do in all your typical therapy sessions. Both speech, PT, OT, and unfortunately in the medical field once you hit a plateau and they can't help you anymore you are kind of done with therapy. So John had a dear friend of his who has been looking at what else John could do to get stronger and get better and reach his goals. At this point, he was out of the hospital and had transitioned back to living at home but when he came to us he was still using all crutches to walk with. He could speak some words but was by no means speaking full sentences. He was not able to drive and so he came to us just looking to get more strength and he really wanted to be able to talk to his children. He had two small children at home. So John came to us and started riding with us. He came to us once or twice a week. I want to say he started off once a week, went to two times a week, and then went back down to once a week. And it was a work in progress, but in about over a year and a half, John speaks full sentences, John walks on his own with no assistance, he was able to start driving himself to his sessions, and the most remarkable part (it gets better) John was an attorney when this happened, he had another baby. He had a third child, and the most remarkable part is that he was actually invited to come back and work as an attorney at his law firm that he worked at before he had the stroke."

-Lulu Bogolin, Executive Director of Equine Assisted Therapy, Inc

A GLIMPSE INTO EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



"Horses don't really care how much money you have, or what you've been through, or how deep your trauma is. They live in the moment. It is very beneficial to connect with a thousand-pound animal who does not care what your background is."


-Karol William, MS, LPC, ET

How it Began

One of the first uses of EAAT was by Olympic Silver medalist, Liz Hartel. It was not until Hartel won a silver medal at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games that equine therapy was taken into serious consideration. Ms. Hartel had suffered from paralysis due to polio and the practice of therapeutic riding helped her to strengthen her legs (Jacobson, 2018). Medical professionals investigated how to help her recover and found that equine assisted therapy was the most logical option because she was an accomplished horseman. In addition to a respectable relation to an Olympian, Hartel's story supports the theory of equine therapy's positive effects on people who encounter physical obstacles. Unlike Hartel, many people are not familiar with the equine industry. However, lack of knowledge does not have an impact on the opportunity of a client to participate in equine therapy. The horse and environment in which it lives are tools for people with a wide range of needs and abilities. The use of equine therapy and the environment in which it is practiced, for the betterment of an individual's health, has been going on for decades. Many have considered the human-horse relationship an intense psychological relationship (Bracher, 2000).

What is Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies?

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) is a method of therapy in which equine is used to treat clients with both physical and mental health challenges.



"Horses are powerful and forgiving, social, and inquisitive, and highly tuned to their environment. They really provide a self-reflective experience that can provide improvement in healing in a lot of ways."

-Alyssa Pitts M.S. CCC-SLP

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The volunteerism opportunities that are provided through EAAT can help to get college-aged students away from their intense work and give them the opportunity to do something to help others, which will have potential to help them feel good because they are helping someone else.

WHY SHOULD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GET INVOLVED?


- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
- COMMUNICATION DEVELOPEMENT
- MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY
- STRESS REDUCTION

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPEMENT

EAAT can help college-aged students with communication skills that can be carried over into their life after college. With communication being a necessary component of any relationship, skills learned through EAAT can be used in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY AND STRESS REDUCTION

With the intense and increasing stressors college-aged students experience, EAAT can benefit the health and wellness of these individuals. EAAT is a great way to meet college-aged students where they are and help them to learn to work through their everyday problems with simple methods and approaches taught through EAAT.



Appendix D

Educational Resource Pamphlet

INVOLVEMENT IMPACT

"EAAT takes the focus off of you and gives you the opportunity to serve somebody else. Meaning that a patient needs your help, and that alone, can even out your stress level and get yourself in a good mental state because you are serving others. It gives you an outlet to do something out of the norm that is good for others."

-Karol Williams, MS, LPC, ET



Photo By: Couraigo Therapeutic Riding Center

*"I do a pre and post test, it is 10 short questions that we ask. I do it during the intake process, 5 weeks into the process, and then at the end of the process. It gives a snapshot to see if you move the needle and **100% of my clients have improved.**"*

-Karol William, MS, LPC, ET

EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES: A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL'S HERO

A 36 year old attorney resorted to Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies as a last resort. His success with EAAT changed his life.

"He was 36 by the time he came to visit us. John had a stroke and he came to us after he had been released from all other therapist because he had done all that he could do in all your typical therapy sessions. Both speech, PT, OT, and unfortunately in the medical field once you hit a plateau and they can't help you anymore you are kind of done with therapy. So, John had a dear friend of his who has been looking at what else John could do to get stronger and get better and reach his goals. At this point, he was out of the hospital and had transitioned back to living at home but when he came to us he was still using arm crutches to walk with. He could speak some words but was by no means speaking full sentences. He was not able to drive and so he came to us just looking to get more strength and he really wanted to be able to talk to his children. He had two small children at home. So John came to us and started riding with us. He came to us once or twice a week. I want to say he started off once a week, went to two times a week, and then went back down to once a week. And it was a work in progress, but in about over a year an a half, John speaks full sentences, John walks on his own with no assistance, he was able to start driving himself to his sessions, and the most remarkable part (It gets better) John was an attorney when this happened, he had another baby. He had a third child, and the most remarkable part is that he was actually invited to come back and work as an attorney at his law firm that he worked at before he had the stroke."

-Lulu Bogolin, Executive Director of Equine Assisted Therapy, Inc

A GLIMPSE INTO EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



Photo by: Mariah Farmer Photography

"Horses don't really care how much money you have, or what you've been through, or how deep your trauma is.

They live in the moment. It is very beneficial to connect with a thousand-pound animal who does not care what your background is."

--Karol William, MS, LPC, ET

HOW IT BEGAN

One of the first uses of EAAT was by Olympic Silver medalist, Liz Hartel. It was not until Hartel won a silver medal at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games that EAAT was taken seriously. Hartel had suffered from paralysis due to polio, and because she was a horseman medical professionals suggested therapeutic riding as a treatment. Therapeutic riding helped her regain strength in her legs. Hartel's story is one of the many stories that show the positive effects of EAAT. Unlike Hartel, many people are not familiar with horses, however, this does not prohibit participation in equine therapy. The horse can be used successfully as a tool for people with a wide range of needs. Equine therapy has been utilized for decades for the betterment of an individual's physical and mental health.



WHAT ARE EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) are forms of therapy in which horses are used to treat clients with both physical and mental health challenges.



"Horses are powerful and forgiving, social, and inquisitive, and highly tuned to their environment. They really provide a self-reflective experience that can provide improvement in healing in a lot of ways."
-Alyssa Pitts M.S. CCC-SLP

WHY SHOULD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GET INVOLVED?

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Communication Development
- Mental Health Therapy
- Stress Reduction

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The volunteerism opportunities that are provided through EAAT can help to get college-aged students away from their intense work and give them the opportunity to do something to help others, which will have potential to help them feel good because they are helping someone else.

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

EAAT can help college-aged students with communication skills that can be carried over into their life after college. With communication being a necessary component of any relationship, skills learned through EAAT can be used in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY AND STRESS REDUCTION

With the intense and increasing stressors college-aged students experience, EAAT can benefit the health and wellness of these individuals. EAAT is a great way to meet college-aged students where they are and help them to learn to work through their everyday problems with simple methods and approaches taught through EAAT.

