



“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

-Winston Churchill

The overarching missions of **Warriors H.E.A.L.** is to utilize horses to help servicemen and women who experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) heal from their emotional trauma.

Hosting Organization

The facility delivering Warriors HEAL is Equus Rescue and Therapy, located in Millstadt, IL. This location is within 15 minutes of downtown St. Louis, MO, 20 minutes from Scott Air Force Base and serves the entire St. Louis Metropolitan Area.

Equus Rescue and Therapy rescues, rehabilitates and retrains ex-racehorses and other horses that find themselves in horrific situations such as starvation, shipping to slaughter, abuse and neglect. Through retraining, these incredible creatures find a new purpose in serving a like human population that has experienced similar horrific events in their lives. Both horse and human are given new purpose and a second chance. The motto of Equus Rescue and Therapy has always been, “A noble life deserves a second chance.”

What is Equine Assisted Therapy?

Equine Assisted Therapy is a unique therapeutic approach utilizing horses as catalysts for emotional growth and learning. This approach has shown to be effective in treating individuals, including combat veterans, with PTSD, depression, anxiety, ADHD and conduct disorders.

Horses are well-suited for the therapy environment of their natural instincts and communication methods. While humans have an internal dialogue and have a constantly running inner “story” making sense of their environment, horses live entirely in the moment without judgment or inner “story.” Because they are prey animals, they are constantly reading the heart rate, respiration and energy state of those around them and responding instantly as these physical states shift. This provides real-time feedback for the participant and for the coach/therapist. In one of many ways that horses provide healing and learning, they act as a non-threatening mirror allowing participants to see themselves more clearly.

What are the benefits of Equine Assisted Therapy?

This is a somatic, tactile understanding and experience beyond intellectual awareness. Equine Assisted Therapy provides an opportunity to identify patterns of thought and behavior, and examine their usefulness in a non-threatening environment that provides immediate biofeedback. Participants experience support and comradery as they learn about themselves and others by participating in activities with horses, and then processing feelings, behaviors and patterns with a

coach/therapist certified in Equine Assisted Learning. It allows for immediate integration of concepts in real-time. The concept of experiential therapy is essential when supporting a sufferer of PTSD. Much of a traumatic experience simply cannot be verbalized or explained with words. Today's leading therapists working with PTSD recognize and promote the importance of getting out of your mind and into your senses.

Additionally, since Equine Assisted Therapy takes place in an open and non-traditional environment, patients tend to be much more relaxed and less anxious than in a traditional talk-therapy session, and the action-based approach removes much of the stigma that many servicemen and women have about therapy. Most people actually enjoy coming to their sessions and look forward to it.

What does a session look like?

Sessions are tailored specifically for the group's/individual's needs. It may be as simple as interacting in a round pen, grooming, or having a horse walk over a pole, or as challenging as creating an obstacle course and getting the horse to move through the obstacles. The coach/therapist provides support, feedback and insight as needed throughout the process.

What can participants expect to gain?

- A significant decrease in the symptoms of PTSD such as anxiety, depression, anger, disconnection from others

- A significant increase in trust, safety, intimacy, power/control, and self-esteem
- Experiential action-based learning in an environment that promotes comradery and fellowship with other servicemen and women
- Learning basic horsemanship skills such as grooming, leading, catching, and handling