



Volunteer Manual

WELCOME to Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Riding Program! As a non-profit organization, Boots to Grasses relies heavily on the strength of dedicated volunteers to assist our students and staff in a variety of different areas. This manual is to serve as a guide for any questions or concerns you might have regarding your job as a volunteer for Boots to Grasses. Keep it in a safe place; it is a great reference tool! Because of the nature of our work and the people we serve, it is important that everyone be as knowledgeable and consistent as possible to uphold the highest quality and safety standards. Most of all, volunteering for Boots to Grasses is a wonderful way for you to make new friends and help make a difference in the lives of some very special riders. However, if you ask any volunteer they will tell you, "I get more back from our students than I could ever give."

Any time you spend volunteering with us is GREATLY appreciated. You are a very important part of the Boots to Grasses team! Thank you in advance for your time, effort and help! IMPORTANT! Please remember that it is very important you let your instructor know as soon as possible if you are unable to make a class for which you are volunteering (at the very least, one day prior to the class For last-minute emergency cancellations, please call 419-602-1143 or 419-602-0912. If the instructor does not have time to replace you, the student you work with may not be able to ride. Thank you for your cooperation.

Confidentiality Policy—please read carefully

At Boots to Grasses, we place great importance on protecting the confidential information of our clients, our staff and our volunteers. "Confidential Information" includes, but is not limited to, personally identifiable information such as name, nickname(s), telephone numbers, addresses, e-mails, etc., as well as the non-public business records of Boots to Grasses. In particular, medical information about clients, and information about their disabilities or special needs, must be protected as Confidential Information. Volunteers shall never disclose Confidential Information to anyone other than Fieldstone Farm staff. In addition, volunteers must seek staff permission that consent has been given before taking any pictures or videos.

Volunteer Opportunities for Boots to Grasses

Leaders/Sidewalkers - These volunteers may help in a variety of different areas such as leading and sidewalking, lead volunteer, grooming and tacking. Beginning with the basics, each job is outlined with the volunteers' responsibilities and safety procedures. We realize that there are as many ways to do things in the horse world as there are people who work with horses. For this reason, please follow these procedures closely. They were created to ensure everyone with Boots to Grasses is safe and happy!
REMEMBER - SAFETY ALWAYS COMES FIRST!

Ground Lesson Aide - Assists the ground lesson instructor in teaching ground lessons.

Volunteer Criteria Guidelines: Boots to Grasses Therapeutic Riding Program accepts volunteers regardless of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin and economic status.

In the interest of maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety, volunteers of Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center will be assessed according to the criteria outlined below.

Baseline Criteria: All Boots to Grasses volunteers must: · commit to a regular schedule or be available to substitute · inform their instructor when they are unable to attend · be a minimum of 14 years of age and demonstrate mature, responsible and reliable behavior · submit to a criminal background check if over 18 years of age · abide by barn rules and general facility procedures

All Boots to Grasses volunteers must: · demonstrate good judgment · work with students, staff and fellow volunteers in a respectful, cooperative and positive manner · take direction willingly from staff and Lead Volunteers · communicate areas of concern to the instructor

Physical Guidelines: All Boots to Grasses program volunteers should possess the willingness and ability to: · thoroughly groom a muddy horse and tack up · pick up a horse's hoof and balance it while picking it out or ask for assistance if uncomfortable · react quickly and sensibly to an emergency situation in the barn aisles, stalls, crossies or surrounding areas · lead or sidewalk for one full hour without leaning on or into the horse · lead or sidewalk with a rider around the entire carriage trail · lead or sidewalk at the trot one full lap around the ring while maintaining control of horse and/or rider · handle the responsibility involved in working directly with student participants · as a leader, be able to handle a misbehaving horse without jeopardizing the safety of the rider, horse, volunteer(s) or any other person · react quickly and sensibly in an emergency lesson situation with or without mounted students

Volunteers that qualify as students will become volunteers at the discretion of the staff and shift availability.

Rules & Reminders

1. All volunteers must have a volunteer registration form on file. These forms must be updated annually. If you are under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must also sign the form.
2. There is absolutely NO SMOKING anywhere on the property.

3. Please leave personal pets at home. We do not allow dogs in the barn and leaving them in your car is unsafe for your pet.

4. Please refrain from giving the horses treats brought from home. We provide treats that meet the nutritional needs of our horses.

5. ALL students must wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets when they are in the barn area. ALL volunteers must wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets when they are riding or driving.

6. Remember, volunteers are asked to help in many ways. Please speak up if you are asked to do anything you don't know how to do or are uncomfortable with.

7. Once volunteers have started to work with and around the horses and students, cellular phone use is prohibited. If you have an emergency call or text, please inform your instructor so they may find a temporary replacement for your position.

Background Checks: All volunteer applicants over the age of eighteen are subjected to a criminal background check before they begin their service for Boots to Grasses. Boots to Grasses reserves the right to reject applicants who have been convicted of crimes involving violence, alcohol, theft, and any other crime we feel poses a possible risk to our students, staff and/or horses. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

Key Suggestions • Introduce yourself to your student and the other members of your volunteer team if you don't already know them. • Learn along with your student. Each lesson presents something new. • Enjoy yourself. An anxious volunteer can cause tension for the horse and/or the student. Enthusiasm is contagious! • Be empathetic. Try to understand your student and his or her challenges, and develop a rapport with him or her. However, avoid mothering, caretaking and over-sentimentality. • The students are there to perform to the best of their ability, and we are there to foster their independence and encourage them to new heights. • Be patient and sensitive. A considerable amount of patience may be needed to adjust to a student's slow movements and rate of progression. Learn to work with your student's pace of communicating and responding.

Lesson Procedures

(In the ring) There are two types of jobs for volunteers in the riding ring. They are LEADER and SIDEWALKER. The student should be the center of the volunteer's attention. Unrelated and unnecessary conversations between volunteers should not take place in the ring. However, you certainly should introduce yourselves to each other and to your student. Also, make sure your student knows the name of his or her horse.

The Sidewalker: Sidewalkers are the ones who normally get the most hands on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus their attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with the rider or other volunteers. Too

much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and for some riders with perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one sidewalker should be the designated talker. When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says, "Turn to the right toward me" and the student seems confused, gently tap the student's right hand and say "Right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and will learn when they need help and when they are just not paying attention. It is important to maintain a good position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy. The most commonly used way to hold a rider without interfering is the "arm over the thigh" hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse's size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm gently rests on the rider's thigh. Be careful not to dig your elbow into the rider's leg or the horse's side or pull back on the flap of the saddle. Avoid wrapping your arm around the rider's waist. At times, this can pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an effort to win! The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider stretch and grow to reach his/her fullest potential. You are there right by his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability. pg. 8

During mounting - Sidewalkers may or may not be asked to stand offside (on the right) of the horse in the mounting area. The instructor will provide direction. At the walk and trot - The sidewalker will need to adjust his or her speed to match the speed of the horse in order to keep their student balanced and safe. During dismounting - Sidewalkers are generally asked to stand by. A student should not dismount without an instructor helping. At the end of the lesson, sidewalkers very often accompany dismounted students back to their classroom or awaiting parent. Falls - Falls are very rare, but they can and do happen. If another rider falls, or another horse gets loose, your only concern is your student. Remain with your student until the instructor approaches to assess the situation. Sidewalkers may be asked to call emergency services if necessary. There is a list of emergency numbers by each phone in the facility. Remember to stay calm at all times. In weather or fire emergencies - Sidewalkers will accompany the students out of the facility in the case of fire to the northwest corner of the parking lot, or into a safe area within the facility in the case of a tornado.

The Leader: As a leader, your first responsibility is the horse. If you are working without sidewalkers, you must be constantly aware of your student also. If a situation arises where you must choose between the student and the horse, the student always comes first. If you are working with sidewalkers, they will take care of the student. You must take care of the horse. In the mounting area - While in the mounting area, pay close attention to the instructor. The instructor will tell you where to position the horse at the lift or block. Your responsibility is to keep the horse as quiet as possible while the student is mounting. Stand directly in front of the horse. If the horse is uneasy, rub the horse's neck and speak quietly to help calm it. After the student has mounted and before the stirrups are adjusted, you will be asked to move the horse forward into the center of the ring. The student will need to have his stirrups adjusted at this time. Once your student has mounted, the instructor will tell you when to proceed and where to position your horse in the group. As the class begins, the instructor will give instructions by the student or horse's name. Be sure you know both. How to lead your horse - The

proper position for the leader is to walk about in line with the poll (about between the head and shoulder). Care must be taken that the horse maintains a natural head carriage. Lead from the near side (left side) of the horse. A good rule of thumb for holding the lead line is to hold it in your right hand approximately six to twelve inches away from the buckle. The excess lead line should be held in your left hand. NEVER WRAP THE EXCESS LINE AROUND YOUR HAND. No matter how slow the horse you are leading is, the leader should not try to pull the horse forward nor should you stop the horse unless your student is unable to do it himself. The student is encouraged to do as much as possible on his own. The instructor will point out to you if the rider is in need of assistance. If the horse you are leading should balk or shy, with or without a rider, do not try to pull him. Wait until he relaxes, then move his head slowly to one side or the other and encourage him gently to go in a slightly different direction then straighten him out. In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line does not interfere with the reins. The lead line should be hanging between the reins, not over the top of them. None of our horses are known kickers, but all horses have the potential to kick if pressured by another horse positioned too closely to their hind legs. Give yourself enough room from the horse in front of you. If your student cannot maintain a safe distance, then help him to do so. Remember, many of our students have a poor sense of space orientation and do not realize when they are too close. Use common sense. If you see that your student is getting into trouble and is unable to follow the directions given by the instructor, you should give assistance. pg. 9 At the halt - The leader should step in front of the horse, and act as a physical barrier, to keep it from moving. At the walk - Be aware of your sidewalkers and give them enough room to walk behind you and still be at the student's side, and between the horse and the side wall of the arena. At the trot - The instructor will give directions at this time for each student and horse. Start to jog and stay near the horse's head. Do not pull or hit the horse with the lead line or your hand. Say "TROT" if the student is unable. During dismounting - Do the same as during mounting. A student should not dismount without an instructor's assistance. Falls - Falls are very rare, but they can and do happen. If another rider falls, or another horse gets loose, your only concern is the horse you are leading. Stop your horse immediately. Go in front and hold your horse as you would at the halt. NEVER let go of your horse. Remember to stay calm at all times. In fire or weather emergency situations - In fire situations, the leader is responsible for taking the horse to the nearest exit away from the barn. There are two large doors on the eastern wall and one on the northern wall that open directly to the outside. In a weather emergency, once the student has been dismounted and all students have left the arena, the leader should remain with the horse until the instructor gives further directions. In more severe weather situations such as an impending tornado, the leader should remove the horse's bridle and turn it loose. At this point, the leader should seek shelter in one of the designated tornado shelter areas. IF AT ANY TIME, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR JOB, YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK FOR HELP. WE WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU ASK THE SAME QUESTION 100 TIMES THAN NOT BE SURE THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS CORRECT!

Getting the Horse From Stall: If you have a student with you, talk to him about the things you are doing and show him the equipment before you enter the stall to use it. If your student uses a wheelchair, leave him outside the stall while you are getting the horse from the stall and taking it to the cross ties. Always check with an instructor before you take any student into the stall. 1.) Take your horse's bitless bridle from the wall at the aisle entryway. Remove the lead line from the green halter on the stall door and attach it to the ring at the bottom of the noseband. Do this before you enter the stall. 2.) When

approaching the stall, talk to the horse so he knows you're there. (Remember that horses sometimes sleep standing up.) A horse may be easily startled if he doesn't know you are there. 3.) Before you open the stall door all the way, make sure that the horse's hind end is not facing the door. If it is, open the door slightly and call to the horse, using the horse's name. 4.) When he is in a position that you can easily approach his head, open the stall door just wide enough for you to slip through. Then quietly, but confidently approach the horse's head. 5.) With your right hand, hold the bitless bridle by the crown piece. With your left hand, guide the horse's nose through the nose hole. Attach the buckle of the throat latch under the horse's throat. This strap does not need to be tight. Do not unbuckle any other piece of the bitless bridle. Please make sure the door is all the way open before taking the horse out. **CHECK THE AREA OUTSIDE THE STALL DOOR FOR STUDENTS OR OTHER HORSE TRAFFIC.** Lead the horse out of the stall, holding the lead line in your right hand near the horse's chin. Hold the remaining lead line in your left hand, folded neatly. Never drag the end of the lead line or wrap the excess around your hand. As you lead the horse, you should be positioned in front of the horse, looking ahead, not back at the horse.

Entering the Crossties: Take the horse into the cross tie area and turn him around so his head is centered between the cross ties. Attach the cross ties to either side of the bitless bridle to the outside rings at the nose end. Take off the lead line while the horse is in the crossties. Do not drape the lead over the horse's neck. A student should not be left unattended in the crossties. This is potentially a very dangerous area. Students and/or volunteers should never walk behind a horse. Care should be taken when working near the horse's face that the ties are not where a student might be injured. Many students with poor balance will try to support themselves by holding on to the ties. This is not only uncomfortable for the horse, it is also dangerous to the student should the horse throw his head. Remember that the students will imitate the things you do, even if you tell them something different, therefore, no one should be leaning or holding on to the cross ties. Grooming, tacking and learning the parts of the horse all take place in the cross ties. We have set up the following guidelines for grooming and tacking the horse specific to Fieldstone Farm. We hope that this will help to ensure that everyone is teaching the same thing to all students. If students are assisting you in the grooming process, use the time in the cross ties to teach the student about the various parts of the horse and tack. Included in this manual are pages with grooming tools, horse parts, and saddle parts. Please familiarize yourself with these terms. Before a student starts to groom, he should walk up and greet his horse. Approach in a quiet and unhurried manner and speak to the horse quietly while using slow body movements. The student should greet the horse with a gentle pat on the side of the neck. Remember that it is our policy to not pet our horses on their faces. All grooming equipment that you will need is located in the grooming boxes in each crosstie. Please be sure that all brushes are returned after they have been used, and be sure that the equipment is CLEAN when returned. This is especially important in the spring when horses shed out their winter coats.

Grooming Tools

1. Curry Comb: A round, rubber grooming tool. It is used first to loosen dirt in the horse's coat. It is used in circular motions. Always start near the poll (near the horse's ears) and work toward the tail. The curry comb is not used on the face, mane, legs or tail. Care must be taken when covering any bony protrusions

such as the withers, backbone, shoulder, and flank areas. The curry comb is cleaned by tapping it on a hard surface.

2. Stiff (hard) Brush: A wooden or plastic handled, stiff bristled brush. It is used to remove the dirt brought to the surface by the curry comb. It is used in short, flicking strokes, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and work toward the tail. The stiff brush is not used on the face, mane or tail. The brush is cleaned by holding it in one hand with the bristles up, while the other hand moves across the surface from the far end to the near end flicking dirt from the brush or you may use another hard brush or a comb across the bristles to remove the dirt and hair.

3. Soft Brush: A wooden handled, soft-bristled brush. It is used to remove any dirt missed by the stiff brush, as well as to smooth and add shine to the horse's coat. It is used in long, smooth strokes with a flick at the end of each stroke, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and move toward the tail. It is not used on the mane or tail. It may be used on the face gently and with great care around the ears, eyes and nose. It is cleaned in the same manner as the stiff brush.

4. Mane & Tail Com: A plastic handled brush with an end that looks like a curry comb with teeth. It is used to remove tangles from the horse's mane and tail. It is used on the mane, starting at the poll and working toward the withers, starting from the end and working in small sections toward the roots, much like the way a girl with long hair would comb her hair to prevent tangling. It is used on the tail by standing beside the horse's hindquarters, NEVER BEHIND THE HORSE. The tail should also be combed in small sections from the ends to the roots. The comb is cleaned as you would clean your own comb or brush, or by tapping it against a hard surface as with the currycomb.

5. Hoof Pick: It is a metal pick with a metal, rubber coated handle. The feet should be cleaned thoroughly as part of the grooming procedure. Students generally do not do this but they enjoy watching.

To properly pick out a horse's hooves: Stand facing the back of the cross-ties starting with the front left hoof. Run your thumb and fingers down the sides of the horse's leg, between the knee and ankle, pressing firmly to make him pick his foot up. If he does not lift his foot, push against his shoulder with your shoulder. Hold his foot at the toe for leverage to prevent his jerking his foot away. Always stand up and lean over from the waist to do this. Do not squat down or kneel down to clean a hoof. You cannot move out of the way if the horse decides to move in some manner. Using a hoof pick, clean the depressions at the sides of the frog, the spongy pad at the center rear of the foot; scrape the sole free of dirt. The indentation in a V shape is called the frog and should be clear when the hoof is clean. The angle of the V points to the toe and is shallow. The ends of the V are deeper and come out at the heel. Work from the heel to the toe with your hoof pick. Doing this in reverse could cause you an injury. Use no more force than is necessary to clear out all foreign matter, although it might take a little muscle to remove impacted dirt! Work with the left front foot first and then proceed to the left rear, the right front and then the right rear. Many volunteers are uncomfortable picking out hooves at the beginning of their volunteer service. If you are uncomfortable doing this, please ask another volunteer or instructor to help you. Clean and healthy hooves are very important to the overall health of a horse!

Saddling: Be sure the horse is clean, especially in areas that will be covered by the tack. Therapy horses work hard and should be made as comfortable as possible. A clean girth area is especially important to prevent sores.

1. Place the saddle pad just in front of the horse's withers.
2. Place the horse's personal correction pad on top of the saddle pad with the fleecy roll towards the front.
3. Add any additional therapy pads.
4. Place the saddle on top of the pads.
5. Slide girth through fleece girth cover.
6. Attach the non-elastic side of the girth to the off side, or right side of the saddle.
7. Attach the elastic end of the girth to the near side, or left side of the saddle. Only tighten the girth enough to keep it from slipping. You will have time to tighten the girth once more before your student mounts. NOTE: ALWAYS double-check the TIGHTNESS of the girth as some horses hold their breath as it is tightened, thus swelling their chests. When they exhale, the girth will be too loose. Always check for tightness at the bottom of the girth, not the sides. Once in the ring, walk the horse for at least 5 minutes before the class starts to warm him up and finish tightening the girth. The girth should be tightened one hole at a time, alternating walking for a few minutes and then tightening another hole. This is VERY important and keeps our horses from getting grouchy and developing sore backs.

Bridling/Bitless Bridles: Attaching the reins and leather lead line to the bitless bridle/bridle If you are using a bitless bridle, hook the reins to the side rings. If you are using a traditional bridle, the reins fasten directly to the bit. The leather lead line attaches to the lower ring on the bitless bridle. On the traditional bridle, simply feed it through the bottom of the noseband. The bridle is put on just before the horse is to leave the cross ties. HORSES ARE NEVER TO BE TIED IN ANYWAY WITH A TRADITIONAL BRIDLE. Once your horse is tacked, take him into the arena and walk him around to warm him up. Your student may or may not walk with you at this point. *When you enter the mounting area from the barn aisle or exit the mounting area to the barn aisle, please push the gate away from you to prevent injury to your horse.*

After the Lesson: Once your student's lesson is completed, it's time to put away your horse and its equipment. If you are the leader, wait for all students to exit the arena before taking your horse back to the barn area. Take the horse back to the cross ties and re-attach the ties to the side rings on the bitless bridle. If your horse is using a traditional bridle, please ask your instructor or a bridle-certified volunteer to remove it before you re-attach your horse to its halter. Remember, never attach a horse by its bit. This is very dangerous and will more than likely result in injury to the horse if it becomes startled. Once the horse is reattached, start by removing the reins and lead line from the bitless bridle. Place these on the hook outside the cross tie. Next, unfasten the girth and pull the saddle and pads off of the horse from the left. Place the pads and saddle on the saddle rack outside the cross tie.

REFERENCE INFORMATION: When You Meet a Person with a Disability Be yourself when you meet a person who has a disability. Be a friend and treat him or her as an equal. At the same time, though, be aware of the disability. One of the hardest aspects of volunteering is standing back and letting the student do things for himself. Lend a hand if asked, or if you see a dangerous situation arising. Be patient. Also, try not to predetermine your student's abilities. They will always surprise you. Don't talk about the student in front of him/her. Talk to the student. Information about students and their disabilities is CONFIDENTIAL. Details are shared on a need-to-know basis. If you have a question about a student please ask your instructor.

Disability Overview

Hearing Impairment: Loss of hearing might be: profound, partial or intermittent. It may have been present at birth or acquired during life. Deafness is one of the greatest handicaps because it is not instantly recognized by others and therefore does not immediately arouse sympathy or understanding. A lack of hearing means failure to understand what is going on in the world. Deaf students might be overactive, noisy and frustrated. They may learn best by imitation and sign language, but miss out on verbal instruction. Hints for Helpers Encourage the deaf rider to copy all he can. Let him watch others, but do not stop talking to him, as he may hear and understand some of what you are saying. Turn your head toward the rider. He might be able to lip-read. He may understand parts of words, resulting in confusion. Constant and clear repetition of words will help.

Visual Impairment: Blindness may be present at birth or result later from disease or accident. Loss of sight might be gradual or sudden with no time to readjust. Visual loss may be partial or complete. When it is partial, it may be restricted by blurring, by being adequate for short distances only, by constant eye movement, so the world is constantly moving, by loss of vision to the left or right, by tunnel vision when only objects straight ahead can be seen, or by loss of central vision when only objects on the periphery can be seen. People with visual impairments might have difficulty moving about, rely on speech and non-speech sounds for judging distances and find echoes and traveling sounds to be of great value. Hints for Helpers Use your voice and speak even when moving. Describe where you are so that new sounds can be identified (for example, the sounds horses' hooves make on different surfaces or at different gaits). Increased mobility and independence are the main area of achievement. Help the student count the horse's paces down one side of the arena so they can learn when a corner is near. Remember that a blind rider cannot learn by visual example. He must find out for himself with verbal guidance and touch. Remember also that he is not deaf and you do not have to shout at him in normal conversation.

Learning Disability: This term describes problems in the areas of speech, language, spelling, writing or arithmetic, which occur in children with average or above-average intelligence. These learning problems are not a result of visual, auditory or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental disadvantage. Hints for Helpers Learning disabled children may be easily distracted, sometimes hyperactive, impulsive, talkative, awkward, aggressive, socially immature and easily frustrated. They often need clear and simple explanations with practical demonstrations of the skills to be learned in the lesson.

Mental Disability: Mental Disability means that intelligence is reduced because of an abnormality of, or damage to, the brain. There are often additional handicaps such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy and speech disorders. Some mentally disabled riders will have recognizable signs of a condition such as Down's Syndrome, but others will have no specific clinical conditions. Mentally disabled riders might behave as if they were younger, have limited speech and understanding of speech, may learn slowly and require much repetition. They may have limited awareness of danger and may need careful supervision. Hints for Helpers A pleasant and understanding approach to the mentally handicapped rider will be beneficial. Riding provides a social occasion, and opportunities for practicing good manners, learning to take turns, obeying instructions, using speech and learning to win and lose. This rider will need encouragement and discipline that he can understand.

Emotional Disability: Many of these students attend special schools and are taught by specially trained staff. The maladjusted child may have normal, low or high intelligence. He may have a behavior disturbance, which means that he is at odds with his family, friends, the world and himself. Frequently he is frustrated, unhappy and bad tempered. He might feel he is already a "loser" in society and therefore dislike competition and the feeling that he may lose yet again. Hints for Helpers: The maladjusted child usually responds well to the horse and the opportunity to care for him, showing his capacity to love and care. Friendships with his peers might be difficult, but he may crave the company of his helpers and his horse. Maladjusted children will respond to a challenge, provided they are given the confidence by support and friendship. Stable work will provide an opportunity to join the team at work, and the enjoyment of a task well done.

Cerebral Palsy: This is a medical term denoting brain damage, so that messages for movement, from the brain to the limbs, are imperfect or misdirected, and therefore the limbs may be weak, stiff, clumsy, constantly moving, floppy or more than one of these abnormalities. Muscles involving speech, eye movement, swallowing and so forth may also be involved. Intelligence may or may not be impaired, but whatever the intelligence, communication is likely to present difficulties. The rider with cerebral palsy may have to make a great effort to do even the simplest movements, so that life is a struggle and the smallest skill is a great achievement. Hints for Helpers If a good position in the saddle can be maintained with the assistance of the helper, the rider's control of his head, arms and back muscles may be made easier. Foot position in the stirrup is important. In some cases, the helper may grasp the back of the ankle to help keep the heel down. The rider should be encouraged to look where he is going, as control of the head facilitates the use of the arms. Muscle control for riders with cerebral palsy is hard work, but worthwhile.

Multiple Sclerosis: This is a disease that generally affects adults. Nerve transmissions are interrupted on their way to muscles, which results in varying levels of disability. Chief among the many symptoms are difficulty in walking, weakness and clumsiness of the legs and arms and visual problems. Speech is often affected. Hints for Helpers It is important for the helper to understand the functional abilities of this rider. The instructor will be aware, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, of what the rider is able to do and with what he will need help. Unlike the rider with cerebral palsy, where every day is much the same, the rider with multiple sclerosis will have good days and no-so-good days. MS patients are mostly adults and can often offer valuable input as to their comfort level and the best way to assist them.

Infectious Diseases: Controlling the spread of viruses and infectious diseases is an important concern in any situation where the general public is dealt with. Infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B and the HIV/aides virus are transmitted when blood, semen and vaginal secretions of an infected person enter through the skin or mucus membrane of a non-infected person. Following simple safety precautions will help prevent the spread of these diseases. Hints for Helpers Hand washing is the most effective measure in the prevention of the spread of disease. Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after you leave the barn. Wash your hands again when you get home. Also follow these safety procedures: Ask the adult who has accompanied the student to the barn to take him/her to the bathroom facilities if the need arises. Ask the adult who is with the student or a Fieldstone Farm staff member to attend to any open wounds or bleeding that might occur while a student is at the barn. Make sure any open wounds that you may have are properly covered.

Autism: A broad spectrum of disorder ranging from mild to severe, which affects thought, perceptions and attention. Characteristics include: impairments in social interaction and communication; restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities; impairments in the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye to eye gaze and facial expressions; lack of social or emotional reciprocity; delays in, or lack of the development of spoken language; impairments in the ability to initiate or sustain conversations with others; abnormal responses to senses such as sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell, taste, reaction to pain; deficits in gross and fine motor skills. Most individuals on the spectrum are visual learners. Use a calm tone of voice; even in the midst of a behavioral outburst. If an individual has difficulty with communicating wants and needs or with requesting help, they may become frustrated or upset. Individuals need to be reinforced for specific positive behaviors. Instead of saying “nice job,” say “nice job of sitting.”

The Benefits of Therapeutic Riding

Physical: It is the horse’s movement that has a dynamic effect on the rider’s body. The horse stimulates the rider’s pelvis and trunk in a manner that closely resembles the normal gait of a human. Underlying all therapeutic riding activities is the regular, rhythmic movement of the horse. Benefits can include normalization of tone, postural control, and improved balance and strength. Sensorial Interacting with horses on the ground or in the saddle puts a student in a sensory-rich environment with new sights, smells, sounds and tactile input. The movement of the horse also can help with a variety of sensory integration issues. A smooth-gaited horse with a consistent pace can provide the needed input to help a rider establish rhythm. A horse with a choppy gait or heavy footfalls may be able to provide a rider with stimulation to help organize and integrate sensory input. Movement exploration while on the horse can help improve overall body awareness. Emotional The success of overcoming fear and anxiety can help a rider realize self-worth and increase self-esteem. The ability to achieve a riding skill will also have a positive effect on a rider’s self-perception. For many of our students, the companion-animal bonding and development of new skills are critical components to the success of the experience. The relationships that develop among students, volunteers, horses and staff are all integral to a positive emotional experience at Fieldstone Farm.

Cognitive: The horse provides many of our students with the motivation to learn new things. Educational goals such as letter recognition and sequencing can be incorporated into riding activities. Social

Therapeutic riding provides many opportunities for students to interact with peers, staff, volunteers and horses. Riding requires the student to solve problems, stay on task, and follow through with new skills. The Benefits of the Ground Work Physical Grooming incorporates large muscle groups as well as fine motor skills. The student is constantly stretching, bending and reaching, which requires balance and coordination. Activities around the farm encourage participants to be physically active and engaged in care of the horses.

Social/Relationships: Students have the chance to work together and help one another. They also have the opportunity to develop relationships with the volunteers, the instructors and the horses they care for.

Routine/Sequencing/Responsibility Grooming has a specific order to it, which brings routine and sequencing into play. In addition, each student's work has a direct impact on the horse's health and well-being; with that comes a sense of responsibility and pride. Finally, when the student has finished grooming his or her horse, the work is reviewed, creating a standard the student should strive to achieve.

Awareness/Focus Horses talk to us with body language. Learning to listen to a horse's body language is, in large part, what keeps us safe around these powerful animals. Students learn to be focused, present and "in the moment" when working with horses. Calming Horses respond favorably to a slow, quiet demeanor and a soft voice. As students become calmer and more soothing, they begin to notice the positive effect their behavior has on their horse.

Confidence/Empowerment The development of the horse/human bond assists students in gaining respect, trust and leadership skills. Each success empowers them and builds self-esteem, which motivates them to try new things and take an active role in their own education.

Helpful Terminology Terms related to equipment

Bitless bridle - A leather bridle specially designed for therapeutic riding purposes, which has no bit to go in the horse's mouth. Looks similar to a regular halter, but with specially placed rings.

Bareback Pad - A thick pad used in place of a saddle.

Devs or Devonshire Stirrups - A hooded stirrup with a closed platform that prevents the rider's foot from moving too far forward.

Girth – A leather strap that goes around the horse's belly to keep the saddle in place. The non-elastic end is attached to the right side of the saddle first.

Hand Hold - A leather strap attached to the front of the saddle that a rider can hold onto.

Peas or Peacock stirrups - Stirrups that have a quick-release rubber band on the side that will allow the rider's foot to come out in case of a fall.

Polos - Wraps that go on the legs of some of the horses for extra protection or support. Pulling tack - A term used for getting all riding equipment ready before a class.

Rainbow Reins – Multi-colored reins used to teach proper use of reins. The instructor can direct the rider to “hold in the green” or “hold in the red.” The rider can then feel an appropriate response to their aids and have a guide for proper positioning.

Surcingle – A thick padded strap with a single center-positioned handle. Usually used over a bareback pad.

Tack – Equipment used for riding a horse (saddle, stirrups, bridle, etc

Ground Lessons - Students learn to take responsibility and improve daily life skills through hands-on experiences with horse care and stable management. This segment of the program supplements the mounted program and teaches participants how to groom, saddle, feed, and bathe a horse and to perform other appropriate activities that develop horse care skills

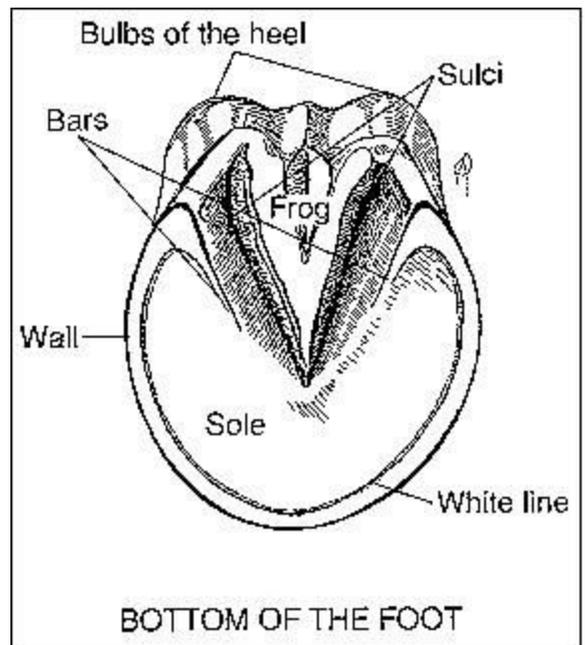
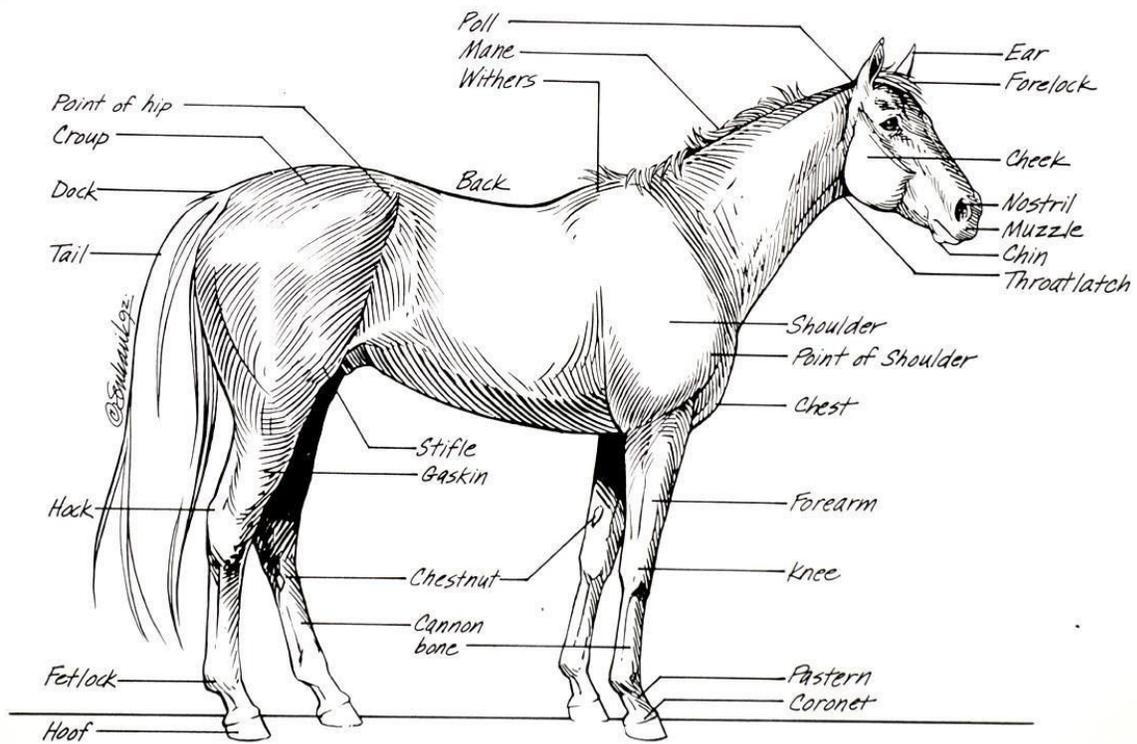
Terms related to Horses

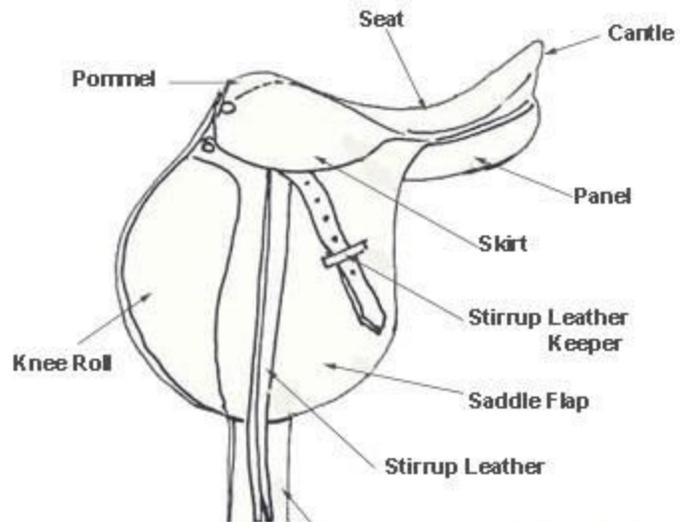
Gait – The way of going: walk, trot, canter

Haunches – The hindquarters of the horse

Near side – The left side of the horse

Off side – The right side of the horse





Stirrup



Peacock Stirrup

Devonshire Stirrup

UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR and EQUINE SENSES

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts, and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks, and increasing positive relationships.

SMELL: A horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables a horse to evaluate situations. Implications: · Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling. · It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them. · Volunteers are discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

HEARING: A horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. A horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of fright/flight response. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicate that they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person. Implications: · Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance. · Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse. · Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion, or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat, or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

SIGHT: A horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. A horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy on whether or not horses see color. Implications: · A horse may notice if something in the arena or out on trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with. · A horse has better peripheral vision; consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to its shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. A horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

TOUCH: Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs. Implications: · Handlers should treat the horses gently but firmly. · Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas). · Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist what is the best handling technique. · Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

TASTE: Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps a horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects. Implications: · Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick

or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

SIXTH SENSE: Horses do have a “sixth sense” when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you are having a difficult time relating or getting along with a particular horse.

THE HORSE’S LIFESTYLE: In addition to understanding the horse’s sixth senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of the horse’s lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his reactions to situations.

FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT: Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it. Implications: · At a sudden movement or noise, a horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. · A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he’ll relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse. · If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall. · If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful, it may be helpful to allow a calm horse to go in front, or more experienced leader to lead. · Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. A horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

HERD ANIMAL: Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest. Implications: · Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of others while out on a trail ride. · Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may attempt to trot or canter, too. · If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected. · For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one horse’s length between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse’s space and pecking order. Being aware of horse behaviors is one of the best safety precautions that can be used in your facility. Knowing how to ready your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your “mutual” relationship.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Human and Horse First Aid Kits Both first aid for humans and horses can be found in the tack room underneath the lesson book area. Please do not treat a horse injury without the approval of a staff member.

FIRE EVACUATION PLAN: Dial 911

ALL AREAS: · Walk to the nearest exit—DO NOT RUN! · Do not attempt to fight the fire! · Cover your nose and mouth to prevent smoke inhalation · Students (escorted by volunteers), Volunteers, Families

and Staff should assemble in parking lot · Staff should take a roll call as quickly as possible · Staff may evacuate horses by leading

Arena: · The instructor is in charge · Students, horses and volunteers should exit through the nearest outside exit using caution as emergency vehicles may be approaching · If still mounted, dismount at a safe distance from barn · Horse handlers should take horses to the nearest outdoor fenced area, remove all tack and lead lines and turn horses loose. Then secure the gate so that the horses do not attempt to return to the barn.

TORNADO SAFETY PLAN: Be Alert to Signs of a Possible Tornado: · Severe weather conditions: thunder, lightning and severe winds · Coloration of the sky—gray orange hues with dark cloud formations · High winds then stillness for about 2-3 minutes, then a roaring sound as if a train were approaching
Tornado Procedure: · Instructors will stop all classes and dismount students · Release horses outside the building, if time permits remove bridle/reins · Quickly proceed to designated “Tornado Shelter” areas on the lowest level of the facility *If out on trail: dismount, turn horses loose and lay flat (covering small children) in the lowest spot you can find (i.e. ditch, swale or behind amount of dirt).

HUMAN INJURY: In case of human injury, the person in attendance who is trained in first aid and CPR (all instructors are trained) should immediately take charge. · Remain calm · Stabilize the injured person; do not move them if possible · Assess the injury—use primary/secondary survey following first aid procedures · Send someone to dial 911 if warranted · Staff person/Instructor will assign someone to remove the uninjured people from the area and to stay with them