



4STEPS Therapeutic Riding Program Volunteer Manual 2019

4STEPS TRP uses horses to bring hope, joy and unlimited possibilities through the healing power of the horse! **Our horses provide therapy, education, pleasure, and sport in an environment of safety.**

You have chosen to give some of your valuable time to volunteer to help improve the lives of the disabled children and adults at **4STEPS**. We hope that in doing so you will find that your own life has been enhanced as well. All of us at **4STEPS** are proud of the fine work we do and the extraordinary results we see. Thank you for becoming a part of our unique organization.

This manual has been developed to provide you with some guidelines for working with our disabled riders. **Please read it carefully.** The information it contains is important and will improve the quality of your work. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We want you to know that every person you are helping at **4STEPS** TRP is aware of and grateful for your help. Without you this program could not exist. You are valuable to us and we appreciate all that you do.

Sandy Winter, Program Director

Our Mission

The mission of 4STEPS Therapeutic Riding Program is to enhance and enrich the lives of individuals with physical, developmental, emotional, and learning disabilities by providing therapeutic horseback riding and equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT).

THE BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING AND EAAT

Physical

The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides rider hip, back, and trunk action that simulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles and improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility and coordination.

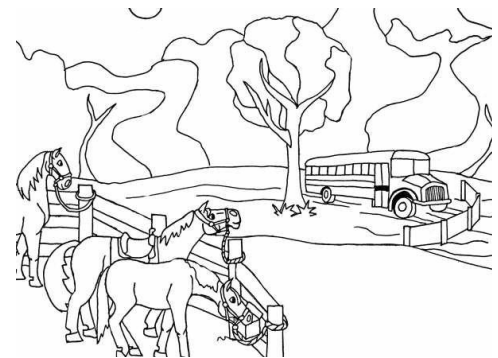
Psychological

Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a noncompetitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline, and improved concentration build self-confidence and self-esteem. EAAT provides a general sense of well-being. These activities occur outdoors in the fresh air, away from hospitals, doctors' offices, therapy rooms or home.

Social

Horseback riding nurtures a positive self-image. Riders may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and a sense of being a part of a team.

Our participants not only come to 4STEPS to learn to ride and to participate in horsemanship activities, they come for therapeutic intervention. For many, 4STEPS is the place where they can feel normal and accepted. For some, we provide the only positive social experiences they may have in a day. And for many the day they come to 4STEPS is the best day of the week! Many of our children benefit from direct interaction and are distracted by collateral conversation.





Many of our participants are here to develop social skills and to engage in positive shared interaction.

This means that we must be engaged with our riders from the time they arrive, while they are grooming, putting on helmets, or waiting to mount their horse and we must appropriately coach in the arena and on the trail. We hope that this experience enhances your own life. Playing games, telling stories, interacting, breathing, and relaxing are keys to discovering the extraordinary.

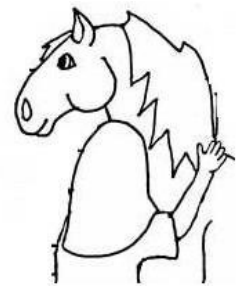
We encourage each rider to be the best he or she can be, on or off the horse. At 4STEPS our riders will find friendship and enjoyment and develop a respect and love for animals.

Thank you for becoming a part of our volunteer team!!!

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Riders, staff, volunteers and their families have a right to privacy that gives them control over the dissemination of their medical or other sensitive information. Anyone who works or volunteers for, or provides services to 4STEPS is bound by the policy.

The staff shall keep confidential all medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding a person and his/her family. This kind of information is protected and staff/volunteers who receive this information must not disclose it to anyone else without proper authorization.



4STEPS preserves the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.

WHO DO I CALL



If you know ahead of time that you can't come or if you find out you can't come on the day of the session, call us at: **(410) 835-8814**. You can call and leave a message on the phone at any time.

How do I sign in?

There is a sign-in book on the porch. Please fill out one sheet for yourself (blank sheets are in the back of the book). Sign in and sign out each time you come.

Where are the fire extinguishers?

There are 2 fire extinguishers located on the property in designated places. One is outside the tack shack and the other is in the house.

Where is the phone?

There is a land phone in the house. The instructor has a cell phone at the arena and on the trail.

What do I do in an emergency?

There is more information on this in the manual, but basically, you follow the directions of the instructor of the class.

What are the hours of operation?

March through December; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, AM and PM.

SAFETY

Alcohol and drug use do not mix with horses. If you are taking any medications that will impair your reflexes or judgment, it is better to refrain from participating until you are no longer using them.

Please drive slowly. The speed limit is 5 miles per hour. Horses spook at fast cars and there are children around that you may not see.

Children *MUST be supervised at all times.* Running, ball playing, or other activities that may spook a horse are NOT allowed while riding is in session.

Please do not bring your pets to the farm. Do not leave them in the car.

Do not smoke while you are here. If you need a cigarette break notify the instructor and smoke off the property.

Make sure gates are securely closed to prevent loose horses!

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Attire: Please dress neatly. Long pants and closed shoes are required even in hot weather. Long pants protect you from ticks, chiggers, and biting flies. Walking shoes, boots, or sneakers with a high ankle are preferred (to prevent foot injuries-no sandals or loafers are allowed). Avoid loose clothing and jewelry as they can be obstructive and cause injury. Wear sunglasses or a hat to protect your eyes. When weather is cold cover up! Wear a hat, gloves, and even long-johns.

Please turn your cell phones off when you are on duty. Leave your phone in your car or in the mailbox on the porch. Answering a call takes your attention away from your most important job – the safety of our riders.

Chewing gum, eating and drinking are not allowed in the arena or when working around horses. This is both for your safety and the safety of the riders.

Please sign in. If you are getting school credit for volunteering we need proof that you were here. We also use it to make us eligible for certain kinds of funding. Your hours are also noted for use in volunteer recognition and volunteer rewards.

We depend on you to be here. If you can't come, please let us know ahead of time so that we can arrange for a substitute. We really appreciate your consideration.

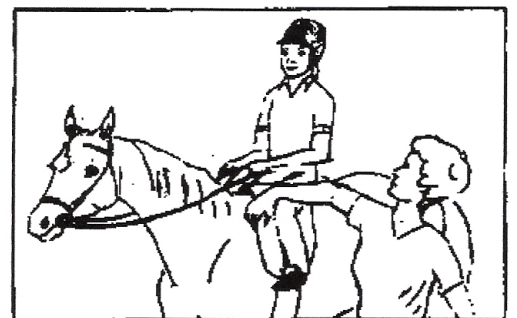
We treat our horses GENTLY. NEVER kick or hit a horse. If a reprimand or schooling is necessary, let the instructor do it.

We treat our students with RESPECT. Talk to them appropriately for their age and never yell. Use positive rather than negative reinforcement. Be patient. Count to 30 before repeating a request, especially if the student is learning disabled. He or she might need extra time to process what you asked. Be understanding of fear, but if you can't handle a problem with a student ask the instructor for help.

Keep busy. If you have a long break, there are plenty of things you can do to help out. Clean up the tack room or office, wash out buckets, groom a horse that isn't being used, muck the paddock, or just ask us how you can help.

The tack room is the building where we store saddles, bridles, reins and other horse related equipment. A well-organized tack room makes the job of the volunteers easier. Keeping things in order is vital a smooth running program. Please keep our tack room neat and clean!

Have fun! Smile, laugh and enjoy yourself. Your enthusiasm is contagious!



STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN - USE CAUTION WHEN WORKING AROUND HORSES

Horses are frightened by loud noises and sudden movements. They may react in an unexpected way.

APPROACHING A TIED HORSE Approach the side of the horse at the neck and shoulder area. As you approach him call his name and look for the horse's eye and pay attention to his demeanor.

Pet his neck and shoulder, talking gently.

Make a big wide safety circle and go around the horse's butt to his other side using your voice so the horse is aware of where you are. Be consistent. Do to one side what you do to the other.

Never walk under a horse's neck while he is tied. He might rear up from fright. Never walk under a horse. You might not be that short but some children are.

Never wrap or tie anything attached to your horse around your body. Being wrapped may result in your being dragged by your horse.

If a tied horse rears or pulls back or otherwise acts up-set, **STAY AWAY**. Let the instructor handle the problem. A panicked horse is very dangerous.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The following are policies of 4STEPS for emergency procedures in case of a fire, natural disaster, medical emergency, or any other circumstance requiring the immediate dismount of the rider.

- Know the location of the phone**
- Know the location of first aid supplies**
- Practice safe emergency dismounts at regular intervals**

Before mounting the rider the instructor will discuss with the team what their responsibilities are concerning the rider in the case of an emergency. Spontaneous, unexpected events that pose a risk to the rider and or team constitute an emergency. Safety of the rider in most cases is the result of a safe emergency dismount. To ensure the smooth execution the team must be familiar with emergency procedures and practice it on a regular basis.

Examples of Emergencies:

- Therapy horse spooks and a dismount is called for
- Sudden violent weather change
- Patient feels nauseous or dizzy
- Unexpected grand mal seizure
- Major disruption outside the arena such as a loose horse
- Severe temper tantrum or violent behavior by patient

Procedures for an emergency dismount

1. Horse handler or instructor signals the need for an emergency dismount
2. Handler immediately stops horse and stays close to the horse's head to calm the horse
3. If stirrups are being used, both sidewalkers must immediately free the rider's feet
4. Sidewalker on the left side of the horse grasps the rider firmly around the waist and pulls the rider off and away from the horse and eases the rider to the ground...while simultaneously, the sidewalker on the right side of the horse assists in moving the rider's leg over the crest.
5. Handler turns the horse's head toward the side to which the patient is dismounting so that the hindquarters automatically swing away from the rider. The sidewalker not handling the rider moves sideways with the horse until he/she is able to step away from the horse safely.
6. Although dismounts are made to the left, the type and nature of the emergency may dictate otherwise and the sidewalker roles may be reverse. It is crucial that the team is familiar with and well practiced in the procedures so that decisions can be made instantly regarding what side the rider will be dismounted.

Two teams in the arena: The team not involved in the emergency will immediately come to a halt. Additional action will depend on the nature and severity of the emergency.

MORE RULES AROUND HORSES

APPROACHING A TIED HORSE

- ❑ APPROACH THE SIDE OF THE HORSE AT THE NECK AND SHOULDER AREA. AS YOU APPROACH HIM CALL HIS NAME AND LOOK FOR THE HORSES EYE AND PAY ATTENTION TO HIS Demeanor.
- ❑ PET HIS NECK AND SHOULDER AND SAY HELLO TO THE HORSE SO HE CAN RECOGNIZE YOUR VOICE.
- ❑ GO TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HORSE BY MAKING **A BIG WIDE SAFETY CIRCLE AROUND THE HORSE SO THE HORSE DOESN'T KICK YOU.** AS YOU MAKE THE SAFETY CIRCLE TALK TO THE HORSE SO HE KNOWS YOU ARE BEHIND HIM.
- ❑ ON THE OTHER SIDE, LOOK FOR THE HORSES EYE THEN APPROACH HIM AT THE NECK AND SHOULDER AREA - PET AND SAY HELLO TO THE HORSE ON THIS SIDE AS WELL.

IF THE HORSE IS STANDING WITH HIS HIP CLOSE TO THE FENCE, STAND BACK AWAY FROM THE HORSE AT THE FENCE AND GET HIS ATTENTION BY CALLING HIS NAME – WHEN YOU CAN SEE HIS EYE, MOVE IN TOWARDS HIS BELLY AND ASK HIM TO MOVE OVER BY TOUCHING HIS RIBS – WHEN HE STEPS OVER *THANK THE HORSE FOR MOVING*– IF HE DOESN'T MOVE OVER ASK A SENIOR VOLUNTEER FOR HELP

GROOMING

- **FIRST USE A CURRY COMB TO LOOSEN THE DIRT – APPLY FIRM AND LARGE CIRCLES ON HIS NECK, SHOULDER, BACK AND BELLY CLOSE TO THE FRONT LEGS. MAKE A BIG WIDE SAFETY CIRCLE TO GROOM THE OTHER SIDE WITH THE CURRY COMB.**
- **NEXT USE THE DANDY BRUSH TO BRUSH AWAY THE LOOSENED DIRT. APPLY FIRM AND LONG STROKES TO THE NECK, SHOULDER, BACK AND BELLY CLOSE TO THE FRONT LEGS. MAKE A BIG WIDE SAFETY CIRCLE TO GROOM THE OTHER SIDE WITH THE DANDY BRUSH.**
- **FINALLY USE THE MANE AND TAIL COMB TO TAKE TANGLES OUT.**
- DO AT LEAST 20 REPETITIONS IF YOU ARE GROOMING. 10-20 REPS IF YOU ARE WORKING WITH A CLIENT.
- DO NOT STAND BEHIND ANOTHER PERSON WHO IS GROOMING (EVEN THE CLIENT – STAND BY HIS SIDE NEAR THE BACK OF THE HORSE. ALLOW THE GROOMER TO BE ABLE TO GET AWAY IF SOMETHING WERE TO GO WRONG.
- NEVER GO UP UNDER A TIED HORSE'S NECK TO CHANGE SIDES – YOU CAN BE TRAPPED IF THE HORSE GETS FRIGHTENED AND THE ROPE CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY TO THE GROOMER.
- *PAY ATTENTION TO EVERYTHING AROUND YOU – SOMETHING MIGHT CAUSE ANOTHER HORSE TO SPOOK OR GET FRIGHTENED CAUSING THE OTHER HORSES DOWN THE LINE TO REACT*