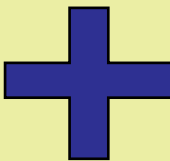




Holistic Healing Through Horses: Equine Assisted Psychotherapy with Veterans

Background

Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP)

has  impacts on:

- symptoms of trauma
- social functioning
- confidence
- self-esteem
- mindfulness practice
- communication
- impulse modification
- interpersonal boundaries
- detachment
- anxiety
- isolation



Melissa Herbert, LCSW

Methods

Participants

3 groups of 3-4 Veterans from Martinsburg VAMC PRRC

Three 90-minute Sessions

- Held at Project Horse Empowerment Center *
- Led by Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Equine Specialists
- Used EAGALA's (Equine-Assisted Growth and Learning Association) observational framework
- Activities addressed Veterans' treatment goals.

Measures

Self-Efficacy & Generalized Anxiety Disorder pre-and-post each session

Findings

Results

- Generally Veterans reported an increase in self-esteem and decrease in anxiety in pre-to-post sessions. **
- Some Veteran Responses:

"[It was] beneficial in finding more pathways to connecting through touch, smells, serenity in settings with the horses".

"The horses act just like me at times".

"I think the exercise we went over helped me throughout my life".

**NOTE: Due to the small number of participants, statistical results are not available.

* Due to COVID-19 pandemic most of the sessions were conducted virtually in which equine specialists served as Veterans' proxies with the horses.

