

Horse Handler Duties

The primary focus of the horse handler (HH) is to remain consciously engaged/connected as much as possible with the horse during a Hippotherapy (HPOT) treatment and to facilitate the horse movements that therapists may request. They should be able to anticipate a horse related problem before it happens. Safety is of the utmost importance during training, tacking, grooming and especially during therapy sessions. The HH is an important team member and shares in the responsibility for the patient during a HPOT or Equine assisted counselling session. A minimum of 2+ years of horse experience are preferred, however, interested persons may be considered on a case-by-case basis

- HH is responsible for the overall care of the horse before, during and after a therapy session.
- The HH ensures that the horse is warmed up and ready to go at the appropriate time.
- The HH is in charge of the horse and strives to anticipate a problem before it escalates. The horse handler is aware of the environment, ensures that horses not in use for lessons or HPOT are safely secured, the arena is safe and set up before a treatment, and is very aware of horse behavior and responses.
- The HH is relied upon to correctly interpret the body language of the horse.
- HH will demonstrate kind and humane treatment of the horse at all times.
- HH is responsible for being aware of the following: the horse's treatment schedule that day, tack required, therapist(s) and side walkers, and especially who is the "tied-in" side walker.
- If during a therapy session, a horse demonstrates undesirable behavior, please call for a "time out" to confer with the therapist.
- HH can communicate to the therapist during a session as to what the horse can or cannot do.
- HH will be responsible for maintaining a horse's therapy readiness by reviewing and completing the horse readiness checklist.
- HH should insure the needed training and maintenance of therapy horse's skills. Documentation of this may be requested.
- HH is responsible for demonstrating knowledge of an Emergency Dismount "911".
- HH may participate in introducing a patient to the horse and helping to demonstrate grooming and horse care before a session begins and/or upon therapist request. Additionally, a HH may be called upon to instruct patient, per therapist request, in a brief horse safety orientation, on the ground.
- Be familiar with the evacuation procedures and roles
- If you open a gate/gates, please make sure to close them.
- While working/volunteering at 15 Hands & Hearts, "handle" only one horse at a time (1 HH per 1 horse) during removal from stall, tacking, and grooming.

Signature

Date