

Sometimes what people need to heal is some horsepower.

If you are not familiar with Hope Reins, we offer equine assisted therapy - we use horses to help people improve their physical, mental and emotional well-being. While we may be mostly known for our work in helping Canadian Forces veterans and first responders, our treatment models work for all children and adults. People have come to us with anxiety, depression, addictions, self-regulation issues, post-traumatic stress, and other mental health concerns. We have met with people living with Aspergers syndrome, bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia. We welcome them all and we help them all.

So how exactly does hanging out with a 1,000 pound animal contribute to positive mental health?

People access our program in different ways. We have a hands-on experience program where people are readily engaged with horses on the ground and in the saddle. The focus of this



Horse Power

By: Alison Vandergragt
Program Director

program is building a relationship of mutual trust and understanding between the individual and the horse. This experience results in a lot of learning about oneself, and leads to the discovery of solutions that they can implement in their lives. For youngsters, our Pony Pals program helps children who experience anxiety, are on the Autism spectrum, or live with global delays.

The other way to access our program is through a more

traditional therapy session, except the office is the horse arena! While the individual has a therapy session, it is shared with a horse and the bridge is building a relationship where complete strangers develop a relationship. Issues arise and they are worked through. Horses are the perfect companion in this program because they do not offer unconditional trust until a balanced relationship is built. In addition, horses live in the moment and give immediate

feedback, a contrast to humans who live mostly in the past or present.

We are also pleased to be launching some new programs this year including a Horse Minded Series. This is for people who are looking to explore horsemanship with a focus on well-being. Mindfulness and grounding techniques are incorporated into the session.

Some of our horse therapy programs are between eight and 16 weeks long, while others are ongoing. Some individuals have been choosing to ride with us for four years!

If you or someone you know could benefit by being at Hope Reins, please connect with us. We are a great team - both human and horse - and we would enjoy the opportunity to help.

ASK THE EXPERT:

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