Introduction to Hippotherapy and Adaptive Riding

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Bernie DeWit OTR/L

- Occupational therapist since 1988 and has been practicing hippotherapy in the greater Atlanta area since 2002.
- Level 2 registered American Hippotherapy Association therapist.
- PATH International Instructor.
- Extensive experience working with children in a variety of settings including the “Babies Can't Wait" program, sensory integration and adapted listening programs.
Hippotherapy

- Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes.

- Equine movement provides multidimensional movement, which is variable, rhythmic and repetitive.
Benefits of Hippotherapy

- It is an excellent tool for increasing trunk strength and control, balance, building overall postural strength & endurance, addressing weight bearing, and motor planning.
- Equine movement offers well-modulated sensory input to vestibular, proprioceptive, tactile and visual channels.
Hippotherapy Functional Uses

- The effects of equine movement on postural control, sensory systems, and motor planning can be used to facilitate coordination and timing, grading of responses, respiratory control, sensory integration skills and attentional skills.
- Equine movement can be used to facilitate the neurophysiologic systems that support all of our functional daily living skills.
## Who can Benefit From Hippotherapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Impairments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>• Impaired balance responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>• Impaired coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developmental Delay</td>
<td>• Impaired communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Genetic Syndromes</td>
<td>• Impaired sensorimotor function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>• Postural asymmetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensory Integration Disorders</td>
<td>• Poor postural control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speech-Language Disorders</td>
<td>• Decreased mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke</td>
<td>• Limbic system dysfunction related to arousal and attentional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abnormal muscle tone</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Adapted Riding is riding for individuals with Physical, Psychological or Developmental needs.

Students learn riding skills in a adapted environment taught by a licensed instructor.
Benefits of Adapted Riding

- Independence
- Confidence and Self-Esteem
- Social
- Balance, muscle strength, flexibility, joint movement and posture
- Bonding with the Horse
- Quality of Life for Degenerative Diseases
Who can Benefit from Adapted Riding

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