

A close-up photograph of a horse's eye, showing the dark brown iris and the surrounding skin and hair. The eye is looking slightly to the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue sky.

# Equine Therapy

The use of horses within therapy can be traced back thousands of years. Their ability to **read human emotion**, **their honesty** and **their lack of judgement** is perhaps why we look to them so often in times of distress.



Pick me!





**WALK ON!**



**Chickens too!**

# What happens in an equine therapy session?

- There is normally no horse riding involved, and if you don't want to - you don't even have to touch the horse. Various **exercises** are set up to help you think and act in ways you may not have thought of before. Normally the exercises will require you to **interact** with the horse; you may be asked to lead the horse over a series of obstacles or to lead it in a certain direction - often without the aid of a lead rope.



A photograph of a brown and white pinto horse standing in a muddy field. A young boy in a dark blue jacket and black boots is leading the horse by a rope. Two women, one with red hair and one with blonde hair, are standing behind the horse, looking on. The ground is muddy with puddles, and there is a wooden fence in the background.

Sometimes horses go where you want them to and .....





....sometimes they just don't!!!





**Please move today!**





errrm...what now?!!!



# Why horses?

- Because of their size

As horses are large and powerful animals, they can be intimidating. For some people, this presents them with a challenge as soon as they start therapy - to **overcome this fear**. Combating this initial issue can be incredibly liberating and helps to boost feelings of confidence and self-esteem.

- Because they are herd animals

Horses are herd animals, which means they naturally desire company and often want to be led. This makes them very social animals that want to create bonds – just like humans. Horses are therefore ideal for this type of therapy, as they will be inclined to develop a **relationship** with you when you are ready.

- Because they mirror behaviour

Another reason horses are used is because they have an innate ability to mirror the thoughts and behaviours of others. Because they are prey animals, they can read body language and respond instantly. This means that if you enter the horse's space with a negative **attitude** and defensive body language, chances are the horse won't want to interact with you. Alternatively, if you enter with a sense of calm, confidence and openness - you should find the horse responds more positively.

- Because they have their own personality

Horses can be incredibly human in their personalities - they can be stubborn and seemingly defiant at times. They also like to have fun and often turn exercises into games. Horses can be incredibly **caring** too, and if you are upset they often respond in a nurturing manner. These personality traits once again make horses a natural companion during the therapeutic process, providing vast opportunity for growth.





That's more like it!



# All together now ....







**Come on Beth!**



# Happy Faces

























# WHAT CAN EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY HELP WITH ?



Addiction  
Anger  
Anxiety  
Autism  
Trauma

Low self-confidence  
Leadership  
Problem-solving  
Behavioural problems

Teamwork  
Assertiveness  
Creative thinking  
Confidence