



"Treatment with the help of the horse"

AMERICAN HIPPO THERAPY ASSOCIATION, INC.

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AHA, INC. TERMINOLOGY

Revised 10.24.2015

In the interest of clarity and consistency, AHA, Inc. has adopted the following suggested glossary to describe the therapists, the therapy team, and the setting in which AHA, Inc. trained professional members work. We have also included terms related to the field of equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) to help with clarification. Using this terminology accurately in all written and verbal communications, including but not limited to website design, marketing materials, media, research, and clinical documentation will facilitate greater understanding throughout the equine and medical communities. Please review these terms and use them when describing equine assisted activities and therapies.

ADAPTIVE RIDING (AR): A riding lesson for individuals with special needs taught by specifically trained instructors. The goals of adaptive riding may address areas of recreation and leisure, education, socialization, or fitness and do not focus on rehabilitation.

AHCB: American Hippotherapy Certification Board (AHCB) – the organization that administers the certifying exams.

AHCB CERTIFIED THERAPIST: A licensed therapist (physical therapy, physical therapy assistant, occupational therapy, certified occupational therapist assistant, speech-language pathologist, or speech-language pathology assistant) who has attended both the AHA, Inc. Level I and II courses (or an equivalent) and successfully completed a national board written exam showing a baseline level of competency in using equine movement/related activities in treatment.

AHCB HIPPO THERAPY CLINICAL SPECIALIST® (HPCS): An experienced, licensed therapist (physical therapies, occupational therapist, or speech-language pathologist) who has demonstrated an advanced level of knowledge in using equine movement/related activities as a treatment strategy. All candidates must successfully complete a national board written examination.

BEST PRACTICE: Statements of best practice reflect a technique, methodology, or benchmark which, through experience and research, has been shown to reliably lead to a desired result. They are a set of guidelines, ethics, or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action. While best practices generally indicate the recommended course of action, some situations require such practices to be followed.

CENTER: A structured organization that provides equine-assisted activities and therapies to persons with or without disabilities.

EDUCATOR: An educator/teacher licensed or sanctioned by the state, school district, department of education, or equivalent designation.

EQUINE: A general description inclusive of horses, ponies, mules, donkeys, or miniatures.

EQUINE-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES (EAA): Any activity within an equine environment, mounted or un-mounted, where the goal is skill attainment, education, recreation and/or leisure. Examples of activities include: adaptive riding, equine facilitated learning, grooming, horsemanship, stable management, competition, parades, or demonstrations.

EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY (EAT): Therapy or treatment that incorporates equine activities and/or the equine environment. Rehabilitative or habilitative goals are related to the client's needs and the medical professional's standards of practice.¹ When referring to EAT, it is advised to specify the specific professional license that you are working under (i.e., Equine Assisted Physical Therapy).

EQUINE-FACILITATED LEARNING (EFL): An educational approach to equine-assisted activities. EFL content is developed and organized by credentialed practitioners with the primary intent to facilitate personal growth and development of life skills through equine interactions.¹

EQUINE-FACILITATED MENTAL HEALTH (EFMH): An approach to improving a client's mental health that involves the use of equines in interactive therapy and activities.¹

EQUINE-FACILITATED PSYCHOTHERAPY (EFP): An interactive process in which a licensed mental health professional working with, or as, an appropriately credentialed equine professional partners with suitable equine(s) to address psychotherapy goals set forth by the mental health professional and the client.¹

EQUINE PROFESSIONAL: A formally trained individual whose job description may include training and conditioning of horses, handling during a therapy session, training horse handlers, and ensuring safety and optimal performance of the horse within a treatment session.

FACILITY: The premises at which the center and/or practice conducts its activities and business including the buildings and grounds.

HIPPOTHERAPY (HPOT): The term *hippotherapy* refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems to achieve functional outcomes. In conjunction with the affordances of the equine environment and other treatment strategies, hippotherapy is part of a patient's integrated plan of care.

HORSE HANDLER: Indicates the individual preparing and handling the horse prior to and during a treatment session. They respond to directions by the therapist to alter the movement of the horse to cause an adaptive response in the client during a therapy session.

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL: A person who by education and experience is licensed/credentialed and is professionally qualified to provide counseling, psychotherapy, and/or mental health treatment designed to facilitate individual achievement of human development goals and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses that impact mental health and/or development.¹

PARTICIPANT: An individual who participates in a research project. Although the term “subject” is used in some venues, participant is preferred terminology.

PATH INTL.: Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International

PATH INTL. CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR: A riding instructor certified by PATH Intl. at the registered, advanced, master, or specialty (i.e., driving, interactive vaulting) level who holds an approved certification in the specific equine activity in which they teach. If a therapy practice is within the auspices of a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center, then a PATH Intl. certified instructor must be part of the therapy treatment team.¹

PATIENT/CLIENT: A general description of the person who receives EAT. There will be varied usage depending on the discipline and setting. Use of terminology related to persons with functional limitations will follow the common usage by the World Health Organization (WHO), that is, “people first, disability or diagnosis second.” Preferred statement: “patient with cerebral palsy (CP).” Incorrect: “Cerebral Palsy (CP) patient.”

PRACTICE: The exercise of a profession in which knowledge and skill is applied to benefit clients/patients. It also may include the organizational body supporting the practice.

SERVICE: Therapy services are skilled rehabilitative services (such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech-language pathology) provided according to the standards and conditions of state boards of practice or Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and within the scope of practice of the qualified licensed health professional.

SIDEWALKER: An individual who has received specific training to assist a therapist during treatment sessions. Their responsibilities include patient safety on and off the horse and assistance during therapy or therapeutic interventions.

TANDEM HIPPO THERAPY (T-HPOT): A treatment strategy in which the patient is handled by the therapist or skilled designee who is mounted on the horse behind the patient. AHA, Inc. has a written position statement on the use of T-HPOT in which tandem hippotherapy is no longer considered best practice.

THERAPEUTIC: A common term to define an activity that has a benefit to overall function of an individual. Therapeutic is a term that falls under one of several billable codes used by therapists (occupation therapists, physical therapists, or speech-language pathologists). Use of this term outside the realm of therapy can lead to confusion when a licensed therapist is not present.

THERAPY: Treatment interventions provided by a licensed/credentialed health professional such as a physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologists (and licensed assistants), psychologist, social worker, or MD, among others.

TREATMENT: A session by a licensed medical professional with a patient during which an integrated plan of care is implemented.

TREATMENT STRATEGY: The interventions/activities/techniques selected, implemented, and graded by the therapist with the goal of making a functional adaptation.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: Work re-entry, vocational exploration, and work hardening may all utilize EAT if integrated by the therapist as part of a medical treatment plan.

References:

1. Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. www.pathintl.org. Accessed Sept 6, 2015.
2. American Hippotherapy Association, Inc. Level I Treatment Principles Course Manual (5th Ed). 2015. Denver, CO.