

natural **HORSE**

M A G A Z I N E

Healing the Spirit:

REIKI

for Peace and Calm

7
TIPS

for a
Trouble-Free
WINTER

**SLOW
FEED
SAVVY:**

How Your Horse & You Benefit!

Barn Cats:

**NEW IDEAS FOR
LITTER CONTROL**



Healing with Horses

by Diana Gogan

A Look at Equine Assisted Activities & Therapies



It goes by many names, yet the core principle and results are the same. Horses provide deep, personal healing for people on many levels. The growing professional field of equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) has been around for thousands of years. Since the mid-20th century, it's become a widely accepted therapy used by licensed therapy professionals and, more recently, professionals in the personal growth and coaching fields. The scope of EAAT ranges from national/ international organizations that provide training, certification, and professional standards to the powerful connection and healing many have experienced with their personal horses.

Why Horses?

Through their evolution, horses have developed a keen awareness of the energy in the world around them. It's vital for their survival to sense the subtlest of signs, feel what can't be seen, and trust their intuition without question. When an individual enters their space, horses are aware of what energy the individual brings with him, even if the individual isn't aware. Through this awareness and interaction, the horse mirrors back through physical movement and behaviors, responding to what is presented.

While participating in this unrestricted interaction, people gain insight and awareness into many aspects of themselves. If they desire to immediately change their behavior, thinking, and/ or energy, the natural result is immediate feedback from the horse. This creates an experiential experience that can be easily applied to daily life.

A Brief History

As early as 600 B.C., Greek records document the therapeutic value of horse riding to improve health and well-being. In 1875, a study done by French physician Cassaign showed riding was useful in the treatment of neurological disorders and resulted in psychological improvements. In modern times, professional organizations have provided studies, guidelines, standards, and certifications that have helped the field of therapeutic natural horsemanship to grow. Here are just a few of the organizations that provide certifications:

- Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH)
www.PathIntl.org
- Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA)
www.EAGALA.org
- Eponaquest www.Eponaquest.com

What is EAAT?



"Tell me and I'll forget.
Teach me and I'll remember.
Involve me and I'll learn."
— Benjamin Franklin

Generally speaking, equine assisted activities and therapies are experienced with one or more horses. An individual or group interacts directly or indirectly with horses through guided activities on the ground or in the saddle. The goal is to promote experiential learning and/ or therapeutic experiences that influence physical, mental, emotional, and/ or spiritual growth and development.

Some of the benefits individuals can experience through this work are:

- Learning to become present and live "in the moment."
- Taking what is learned and being able to immediately apply it in everyday life.
- Developing new perspectives and ways of seeing things instantly thanks to the experiential nature of the therapy/ activity.

There are many descriptive acronyms regularly used in this growing field. Some of the most common are:

- EFP:** Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy
- EAP:** Equine Assisted Psychotherapy
- EAL:** Equine Assisted Learning
- EEL:** Equine Experiential Learning
- EFL:** Equine Facilitated Learning
- EAA:** Equine Assisted Activities



Fire Horse Ranch

A Healing Place
For Women & Horses
Moving Through
Life's Transitions

Reiki for Women and Horses
Equine Guided Discovery™
Energy Healing Classes
Holistic Horse Care Workshops
Empowerment Workshops for Women

Growth • Self-Discovery • Horse Play

Diana Gogan • 480-720-0676
FireHorseRanch.com

*Only the
best
for your
horse*

For Love
of the
Horse 

- Naturally

Natural Herbal Horse Health Care

**Precisely formulated, pharmaceutical
grade Herbal Solutions**

For a full range of problems including: Laminitis,
Liver Disease, Tendon Injury, Insulin Resistance,
Uveitis, Neurological Disorders, Arthritis,
Ringbone, Gastric Ulcers, Heaves

Horse Health Advisors on staff to help you help your horse.
contactus@forloveofthehorse.com

(866) 537-7336 www.forloveofthehorse.com

- Creating a greater connection to one's authentic self, the surrounding world, and one's personal spiritual nature.
- A greater understanding of non-verbal communication and the large role it plays in daily life.
- Learning about the dynamics of relationships and interactions by observing and participating in activities with a herd of horses.
- Gaining greater emotional awareness and mastery by tuning into how emotions affect interactions with the world around them.
- Empowerment through finding one's own answers by tapping into intuition, feelings, thoughts, and the connection with their physical body.
- For those who've experienced physical, mental or emotional abuse or rejection, working with a horse can restore a sense of well-being, confidence, and trust.

If you or someone you know is interested in Equine Assisted activities or therapies here are a few guidelines to consider:

- Decide whether private or group sessions are appropriate. Aside from the personal attention received, costs often vary between private and group sessions.
- Understand what it is you want to accomplish and find an instructor with the proper licensing, certification, and/or background.
- Make sure the facility is clean, in good repair, and the horses well cared for. Any equipment used should also be in good repair.
- Ensure the program or activity is conducted in a safe environment. There is a difference between being skillfully guided outside your comfort zone and being put in a dangerous situation. Physical, mental, and emotional safety is of utmost importance for all involved.
- Ensure the facility is staffed properly for the type of program and/or activity. Therapeutic riding, activities where multiple horses are used, or group-based activities often require additional support staff to ensure safety.
- Understand the type of confidentiality and support that will be given both during and after the session.



"The horse will teach if you will listen."
– Ray Hunt

Self-Guided Equine Assisted Activity

There are many reasons to work with an equine professional for healing and personal growth. However, if you have a horse or access to one, here's a powerful activity you can do yourself. Use this activity when you're seeking direction, searching for an answer to a question, want to feel connected and grounded to the world around you, or are in need of a little self-reflection. In addition to a horse, you'll also need pen, paper, and a timer.

- 1 Before approaching the horse, take a few moments to pause and clear your mind, becoming fully present and grounded in the moment. Reflect on what you want to accomplish with this activity.
- 2 Enter the horse's space staying fully present in yourself. *Do not* be concerned about what the horse is thinking, feeling, doing, etc. Stay focused on you!
- 3 While in this space with the horse, take notice of what you are experiencing. What emotions, thoughts, feelings, memories, words, etc. are coming into your awareness or into your body? For instance, take note of how you feel if the horse walks away from you, walks toward you, interacts with you, ignores you, etc.
- 4 Write down what you experience, no matter how insignificant it might seem in the moment. Remember to stay focused on your experience and connection to your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self. If you find yourself drawn into the world outside, with gentleness bring yourself back in to focus on you.
- 5 Stay in this space for 8 – 10 minutes. A timer is a great way to monitor time without watching a clock, an action that will draw you out of the experience.
- 6 When your time is up, be sure to thank the horse for sharing space with you and then leave his area.
- 7 Once outside the horse's space, find a quiet moment to reflect on and review your notes. For example: What did you experience and how did you experience it? What new awareness did you receive? What stands out and has meaning for you?

Having been used successfully in cases of physical disabilities, post-traumatic stress disorder, team building, personal growth, business and life coaching, mental disorders, and autism, the world of equine assisted activities and therapies is experiencing rapid growth.

Remember, regardless of whether your goal is long or short-term healing or growth, you'll reap amazing benefits when you partner with a horse. ♡

About the Author

Diana Gogan is a Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) Coaching Master, Equine Professional, Reiki Master/ Teacher and founder of Fire Horse Ranch. She combines traditional and metaphysical modalities with teaching and mentoring; connecting women with animals and nature for healing and personal empowerment. The results are lives lived boldly, hearts filled with true passion, and souls connected to their authentic power.
www.FireHorseRanch.com