

PATH INTL. EQUINE-ASSISTED SERVICES DEFINITIONS

(center name) is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (Path Intl.) and we follow PATH Intl. Standards that exist to provide consistent safety provisions for participants, highly-regarded facility and program management processes and humane treatment for working with equines.

The following definitions will help you have a clear understanding of the different types of equine-assisted services and what they entail. Meeting with the professionals at your local center is imperative to learn what services are offered there, and they will help determine what service best suits the individual needs of you or your participant.



This definition resource guide is provided as a member benefit for PATH Intl. Member Centers and Premier Accredited Centers. Each center is an independent entity and chooses the services they provide.
www.pathintl.org

Equine-assisted services refer to multiple services in which professionals incorporate horses and other equines to benefit people. The horse is the common thread that unites the three following distinct service areas.

Our center offers the following checked services for participants:

☐ THERAPEUTIC/ADAPTIVE HORSEMANSHIP

An area of non-therapy services focused on various riding disciplines, carriage driving and interactive vaulting for individuals or groups with diverse needs. Qualified equine professionals with specialty training or certification develop lesson plans that may include mounted and unmounted activities and fun, creative games to develop horsemanship skills and provide the healthful benefits of interacting with horses.

Horseback riding has a variety of physical, social and emotional benefits. Physical health benefits include improved fitness, balance, coordination and posture. Horseback riding can also be relaxing (calming) or invigorating, depending on the horse, the environment and the activities the instructor may present. Taking place indoors and outdoors, with the horses, other riders, the instructor and a helpful team of volunteers, riding has the social benefits from being part of a community. The emotional benefits of riding are demonstrated through accomplishments that increase self-confidence as well as through the human/horse connection.

Therapeutic/Adaptive sessions are conducted by a team that includes a certified instructor and the number of center volunteers deemed necessary by the instructor for the activities in the lesson plan.



□ THERAPY

Therapy is provided by licensed medical or behavioral health professionals working within their scope of practice in counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychotherapy, recreational therapy and speech-language pathology. The therapist determines how equine interactions, movement or aspects of the equine environment may enhance the client's individualized treatment plan with the goals of improving the client's sensorimotor, cognitive, behavioral, emotional or psychological function for improved health and wellness. Best practice dictates the therapy professionals obtain specialized training focused on the safe inclusion of horses in treatment.

The therapist leads the treatment team that includes a certified equine specialist or certified therapeutic riding instructor and trained staff/volunteers who ensure everyone's safety.



□ EQUINE-ASSISTED LEARNING

This area is a non-therapy service comprised of equine-assisted learning (EAL) in education, in organizations and in personal development. Specially trained or certified professionals leverage experiential learning activities involving interactive mounted and/or unmounted activities with horses and the equine environment to benefit participants.

A center might offer any of the following:

- **Equine-assisted Learning in Education:** Professionals with a knowledge of learning theory and teaching methodology focus on life skills, including leadership, character-building and academic skills. They may develop contracts with schools and integrate specific educational strategies, academic standards and character education within their curricula and provision of services.
- **Equine-assisted Learning in Organizations:** Professionals assist members of corporations, organizations and other work groups in building effective teams and leaders that enhance work dynamics and performance. They must have knowledge of organizational theory, team building, strategic planning or leadership development and may integrate a variety of coaching and teambuilding strategies.
- **Equine-assisted Learning in Personal Development:** Professionals assist individuals and groups in handling life challenges and opportunities by developing skills in effective problem-solving, decision-making and communication. Service providers must have extensive training or certifications in facilitation, coaching or teaching and knowledge of the distinct differences between personal development and psychotherapy.

Equine-assisted learning sessions will be provided by individuals such as teachers, organizational strategists and life coaches possibly with the inclusion of a certified equine specialist who helps make sure the sessions are safe for everyone and may also include center volunteers.

