



Using Your Senses

Goal:

The goal of this activity is to allow the participants to explore their own senses and relate them to the horses.

Rationale:

When one is aware of his or her sensory response as it relates to the interface and interaction with the world, it allows the individual to be more fully in contact with their emotions (subconscious patterns that influence thinking and behavior, triggered by elements in the environment) and feelings (name or mental picture of the biological response in the body, activated by the emotion). When there is greater connectivity through the senses, it enables the individual to have a wider choice and range of emotions/feelings, thinking and behavior that can lead to a greater sense of personal control and trust – trust of self and others.

Objective:

- Establish a trusting environment
- Introduce the horses safely with little to no effort on the participant's part

Materials:

- Participants, calm horse

Activity:

- Participants stand in a line or circle in the arena and dig their feet until they reach solid ground, taking deep breaths.
- Explain the zones of the horse – front is stop or back, back is go or go faster, middle is neutral
- Stand horse 10 feet from the participants.
- Ask participants to use their eyes to trace the outline of the shape of the horse, then have them start from the poll and outline every little detail all the way to the tail.
 - Ask them to take a deep breath and feel their feet on solid ground
- Walk up to the horse (approach at the shoulder each time) and notice how many colors they see (most horses have 6 to 12 color variations in their body).
 - Go back to their spot and re-ground, taking deep breaths
- Walk up to the horse and have them smell the horse and try to describe the smell.
 - Go back to their spot and re-ground, taking deep breaths
- Walk up to the horse and touch the horse using a flat, closed hand. Begin at the neck and work back towards the tail. What does he/she feel like? How many textures do they feel?
 - Go back to their spot and re-ground, taking deep breaths
- Walk up to the horse and have the participant place his/her ear on the horse's barrel, just under the hooks. What do they hear?
 - Go back to their spot and re-ground, taking deep breaths



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Process

- Was this easy or hard? Why?
- How did using your senses affect your mental state?
- Were you more or less agitated before the activity?
- Why do you think you are more or less agitated after the activity?