

Workplace Wellbeing in  
Equine-Assisted Services (EAS) Organizations

**Understanding Culture, Challenges, and  
Organizational Health**

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Abstract Description**

Disabilities, experiences of trauma, and emotional challenges are not exclusive to participants in Equine-Assisted Services (EAS) programs—they also affect employees. Many EAS organizations lack formal employee assistance programs, which means that when an employee is facing personal or emotional difficulties, the impact can be felt throughout the entire organization. This session explores how workplace culture, awareness of employee challenges, and organizational support strategies can strengthen wellbeing across the entire EAS environment. Learning objectives include:

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Learning Objective 1 – Elements of Workplace Culture for Wellbeing**

<b>Identify</b>	key aspects of workplace culture that foster wellbeing.
<b>Consider</b>	the needs of employees, volunteers, participants, families, and equines.
<b>Explore</b>	how supportive culture strengthens the entire organization.

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How Do Organizations:

- ✓ Encourage trust
- ✓ Encourage teamwork
- ✓ Promote open communication
- ✓ Provide resources and have policies that promote employee/volunteer wellbeing

Audience Says

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4

### Boosting Wellbeing at Work



**Building Positive Culture**  
A supportive workplace culture encourages trust and teamwork, boosting employee morale and engagement.



**Open Communication**  
Recognizing and addressing challenges through open dialogue makes employees feel valued and supported.



**Organizational Support Strategies**  
Providing mental health resources and flexible policies improves wellbeing, productivity, and job satisfaction.

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

5

### POSITIVE WORK CULTURE

Key Elements



The diagram is a pyramid with five levels, each with a number in a colored circle to its left:

- 05 Meaning**: How much the team feels their work has significance
- 04 Impact**: How much the team feels their work makes a difference
- 03 Structure and Clarity**: Whether the team has established roles and rules of engagement
- 02 Dependability**: The extent to which team members are accountable to shared expectations
- 01 Psychological Safety**: How much the team feels they can be vulnerable and authentic with one another

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6

Learning Objective 2 - Disabilities, Trauma, & Emotional Challenges Impacting Employees

Recognize	common challenges employees & volunteers may experience.
Understand	the effects of trauma and emotional or psychological challenges.
Examine	how these factors influence individual wellbeing and organizational health.

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Systems Theory in Organizations

Organizations as Interconnected Systems  
Systems theory sees organizations as interconnected components working together to achieve shared objectives. Each part influences the whole.



8

---

---

---

---

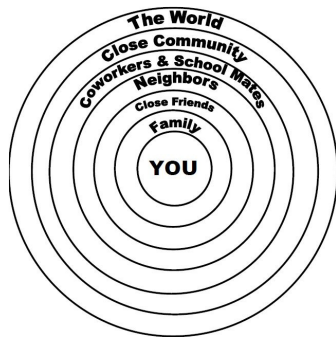
---

---

---

---

A systems approach helps organizations adapt, solve complex problems holistically, and sustain productivity and wellbeing.



9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Disability in the US Workforce**

Prevalence of Disability  
 Around 21 million adults in the US workforce have a disability (legally recognized), making up approximately 12% of employed adults. Unknown the number of non legally recognized.

10

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**THE IMPORTANCE OF NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

- DIVERSE PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
- KEEN EYE FOR ERRORS
- POTENTIAL TO EXCEL IN WORK ROUTINE
- ACCESS TO INNOVATION
- A CHANCE TO LEARN MORE
- A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE
- BROAD RANGE OF ABILITIES
- POTENTIAL FOR NICHE & EXPERT LEVEL SKILLS
- EXTRA CREATIVITY

DESIGNED BY SUNSHINE SUPPORT  
 BASED ON EXPERIENCES FROM OUR TEAM OF EDUCATORS  
[www.sunshinesupport.org](http://www.sunshinesupport.org)

11

**Understanding Neurodiversity**  
 Neurodiversity acknowledges natural differences in brain function and behavior, such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.

**Prevalence of Neurodivergence**  
 About 15–20% of the global population is

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Challenges & Strengths of Neurodiversity**

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**



**Prevalence of Neurodiversity**

An estimated 15-20% of U.S. working adults are neurodivergent, reflecting a significant portion of the workforce with unique perspectives.

**Natural Brain Variations**  
 Neurodiversity recognizes conditions like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia as natural differences in how brains function.

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss = Audience Participation



Awareness of employee challenges



Workplace Culture



Organizational support strategies

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

13

Audience Says



You, or "speaking for a friend"? (Current or past)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

14

Trends in Abuse and Violence

In 2022, approximately 600,000 children in the U.S. experienced abuse or neglect, equating to about 1 in 7 children annually.

More than 4 million referrals were made



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

15

**Domestic Violence Statistics**

- Nearly 20 individuals per minute in the U.S. suffer physical abuse from an intimate partner, amounting to over 10 million men and women each year.
- Severe intimate partner violence impacts 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men.
- Domestic violence hotlines receive over 20,000 calls daily.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

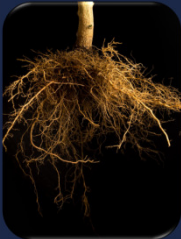
---

16

**Impact of Early Experiences**

Family dynamics and early education strongly affect emotional health and behavior throughout adulthood.

**Childhood Shapes Adulthood**



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

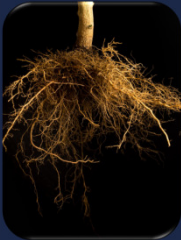
---

17

**Formation of Personality**

Positive or negative childhood events shape personality, coping strategies, and adult relationships.

**Childhood Shapes Adulthood**



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

18



19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Impact of Childhood Trauma

Trust Issues in Workplace

Childhood trauma can create trust issues, making collaboration and communication at work more difficult and less effective.

This Photo by Un

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Impact of Childhood Trauma

Conflict Resolution Challenges

Individuals may struggle with conflict resolution or misinterpret intentions due to heightened sensitivity, affecting relationships with coworkers.

An illustration of five people (three men and two women) in a meeting. They are gathered around a table, looking at a document. One man is pointing at the document, and another woman is also looking at it. They appear to be in a collaborative discussion.

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

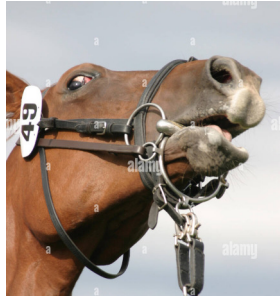
---

---

Impact of Childhood Trauma

Workplace Anxiety and Isolation

These effects can contribute to workplace anxiety or isolation, potentially hindering career growth if not properly addressed.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

22

Wellbeing Ripple Effect

Boosted Morale and Productivity

When employees feel supported, their morale and productivity increase, which lifts team performance and creates a positive work environment.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

23

Wellbeing Ripple Effect

Culture of Engagement

Enhanced wellbeing fosters engagement, where employees actively participate, support each other, and contribute to a thriving organization.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

24

Audience Activity: Role Play

Role Assignment and Interaction

1 Manager, 2 employees: simulating workplace input scenarios during summer camp planning.

Switching Perspectives

Participants switch roles to experience both giving and receiving input.

Reflecting on Feelings

Groups discuss how it feels to be asked for input and summarize group emotions around participation and feedback.

\* Make sure one "boss" tells the group what

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

25

Wellbeing Ripple Effect



Improved Retention and Collaboration

Higher wellbeing leads to reduced absenteeism, better retention rates, and greater collaboration between departments, driving organizational success.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

26



Importance of Relationships and Communication  
Strong relationships and effective communication between people/departments are crucial for organizational health and smooth operations.

---

---

---

---

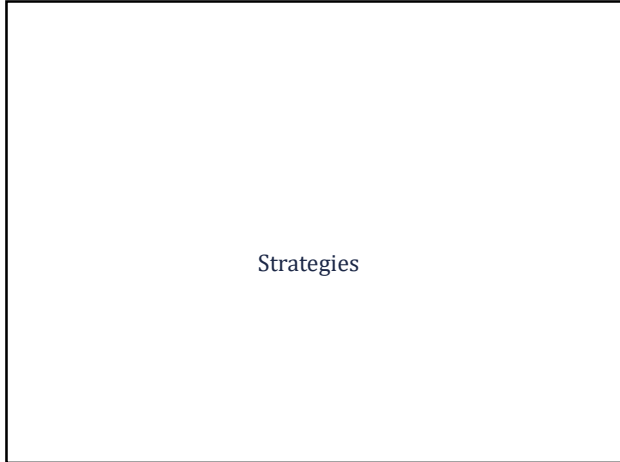
---

---

---

---

27



28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Individually

- Seek first to understand
- Respect differences in perspectives, knowledge, and lived experiences
- NO GOSSIP
- Address emerging conflict/s
  - Quickly
  - In private
  - With the affected individual
  - With enough time to Understand
- Practice Self-Care

An ounce of  
**PRACTICE**  
is worth more than  
tons of preaching.

Mahatma Gandhi

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Love What You Do- Do What You Love

STEVE JOBS

- Everyone knows mission, commits it to memory, discusses how decisions align or not with mission.
- Determination of Values
- Values Identification for employees and organization
- Valuescardsort.com
- Decisions are fair.
- Interaction Styles
  - Myers-Briggs
  - Disk/other
- Routine role clarification

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---