



Nash Hill Equestrian Center
Therapeutic Riding Volunteer Manual
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WELCOME to Nash Hill Equestrian Center ...

Introduction to Volunteering at Nash Hill Equestrian Center

Nash Hill Equestrian Center relies heavily on volunteers to assist our students and staff in a variety of different areas. This manual is to serve as a guide for any questions or concerns you might have regarding your job as a volunteer at Nash Hill Equestrian Center.

Keep it in a safe place; it is a great reference tool! Because of the nature of our work and the people we serve, it is important that everyone be as knowledgeable and consistent as possible to uphold the highest quality and safety standards.

Most of all, volunteering at Nash Hill Equestrian Center is a wonderful way for you to make new friends and help make a difference in the lives of some very special riders.

Our Mission

It is the mission of our therapeutic riding program to provide a riding program that will cater to those with physical, developmental, social, and emotional disabilities by offering a fun and stimulating riding experience to all of our students.

Your Volunteer Time is Important!

We recognize your time is valuable and it is our responsibility to make sure that your volunteer time is spent in worthwhile and rewarding activities. Any time you spend volunteering with us is **GREATLY** appreciated. You are a very important part of the Nash Hill Equestrian Center team! Thank you in advance for your time, effort and help!

IMPORTANT: Please remember it is very important you let your instructor know as early as possible if you are unable to make a class for which you are volunteering. If the instructor does not have time to replace you, the student you work with may not be able to ride.

The number to call for cancellations is 716-257-5257.

Thank you for your cooperation.

What is Therapeutic Riding?

Overview

Horseback riding can be an instructional technique in specialized programming for the physically handicapped, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, deaf and visually impaired. The therapy utilizes a multi-sensory approach to developing and facilitating psychomotor, language, mathematics, social and emotional skills. This approach has demonstrated its effectiveness in inducing a positive change in a student's attitude toward self, peers and ability, which has promoted a sense of accomplishment and increased self-confidence. Children and adults have become more confident in their own abilities to master and control themselves and their environment and also to have confidence in others who can help those master skills.

The Unique Feature

Students of horseback riding learn basic skills through planned interaction experiences with the horses. They learn not only riding skills, but also the structure, needs, personality and environment of a horse. They develop sensitivity to the needs and learn all the activities involved in the grooming, feeding, caring for and riding these animals. Through these activities, the student develops an awareness of his own care and needs and sensitivity to the needs and care of all things, living and inanimate, which he or she can apply to everyday learning.

Major Concept & Skill Development

- ◆ **Body Localization** - Student develops the ability to locate and identify parts of the horse's body. This activity aids in developing awareness and understanding of one's own body.
- ◆ **Body Abstraction** - Student develops the ability to generalize and transfer body localization to him and others.
- ◆ **Muscular Strength** - Student develops the ability to use his muscles to perform physical tasks with the horse.
- ◆ **Health & Hygiene** - Student develops an understanding of the principles of health and hygiene. In caring for the horses, students are led to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- ◆ **Balance & Rhythm** - Student develops the ability to maintain gross and fine motor balance and to move rhythmically with the horse. Student is continuously involved in interpreting and reacting to the horse's movements.
- ◆ **Body Spatial Organization** - Student develops the ability to move in space. The majority of the activities require the student to direct and move the horse within a given area.
- ◆ **Directionality & Laterality** - Student develops the ability to know and respond to right, left, up, down, forward, backward, and directional orientation. Activities focusing on directing the horse in a specific direction are used to aid the student in developing sensitivity to directionality of his body and space.
- ◆ **Time Orientation** - Student develops an awareness of time concepts, by involving him in determining feeding time, exercise time, and resting time for the horse; students develop an awareness of the effect of weather and seasonal changes on horseback riding activities. They learn to anticipate riding activities based on weather conditions.
- ◆ **Visual Acuity** - Student develops the ability to see objects in his visual field and to differentiate them meaningfully and accurately. Activities, which require the student to direct and move his horse around objects or through objects in the riding, ring aid in developing this skill.
- ◆ **Visual-Form Discrimination** - Student develops the ability to differentiate visually the forms and symbols in the horse's environment. Activities in and around the stable aid in developing this skill. A student identifies equipment, stall, food and the name of "his" horse.
- ◆ **Anticipatory Response** - Student develops the ability to anticipate the probable outcome of his behavior with the horse. If he yells or kicks the horse, he knows the horse will probably become frightened or run. This aids the student in predicting the consequences of his own behavior and that of others in a given situation.

- ◆ **Comprehension** - Student develops the ability to use judgment and reasoning in riding and working with the horse. This enhances his ability to use judgment and reasoning when interacting with other forces in his environment.

Therapeutic at Nash Hill Equestrian Center

The therapeutic qualities of horseback riding are recognized by many medical professionals, including the American Physical Therapy Association and the American Occupational Therapy Association as a form of therapy that can change lives – strengthen bodies and minds, and offer lifelong opportunities for recreation and well-being. Classes take place in an environment that focuses on the rider's ability rather than disability

Nash Hill Equestrian Center's therapeutic riding program was established in order to provide riding opportunities for individuals of all ages with mental, physical, emotional and learning disabilities.

Through the horse's soothing rhythm, strength, warmth, and three dimensional movement patterns our riders can benefit from a healthy exercise while improving circulation and muscle tone. Studies have shown that working with horses and the social interactions between peers benefit the mind and spirit raising self-esteem and increasing self-sufficiency through accomplishment. The unconditional love of the horse is proven to reduce anxiety, encourage interaction and offer a haven where riders can feel a sense of empowerment.

Programs are conducted by instructors nationally registered by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA).

Meeting our clients' needs takes teamwork. Our staff, our volunteers, and especially our horses all work together to meet the unique needs of our very special clients.

Volunteer Opportunities

- ❖ **Program Volunteers** - These volunteers help in a variety of different areas such as leading and sidewalking, grooming and tacking. Beginning with the basics, each job is outlined with the volunteers' responsibilities and briefly describes Nash Hill Equestrian Center safety procedures.

Rules & Reminders

When You Become a Volunteer...

1. Make sure you have filled out a volunteer registration form. You must be 14 years of age to participate as a volunteer. If you are under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign the form.
2. There is absolutely **NO SMOKING** anywhere on the Nash Hill Equestrian Center property.
3. Nash Hill Equestrian Center's primary concern is safety!
4. Remember, volunteers are asked to help in many ways. Please speak up if you are asked to do anything you don't know how to do or are uncomfortable with.
5. It is very important to our instructors that you call **24 hours** prior to any class you are scheduled for and will not be able to attend. **The number to call is 716-257-5257.** Please leave your name and the time of the class you will be missing.
6. Please understand that all of the horses are the responsibility of Nash Hill Equestrian Center. The Equine Manager and the Program Director of Nash Hill Equestrian Center make all decisions regarding feeding, medical care, exercise and suitability for the program.

Responsibilities & Procedures

1. Arrive at least **30 minutes** before the scheduled start of a lesson.
2. Check with the instructor to see if there is anything you can do to help prepare for the lesson.
3. The instructor will explain the "game plan" of the lesson and assign volunteers to horses and riders. Things can change from week to week and it is important that everyone be on the same page.
4. Off to the lesson! Leaders are responsible for their assigned horses and side walkers are responsible for their assigned riders. Please tell the instructors any observations that you make during the lesson just in case they miss something that might be a safety issue or an improvement in the rider's abilities.
5. After the lesson, make sure you complete the following:
 - a) The student has finished his/her responsibilities and is with a parent or counselor.
 - b) Do not ever allow a rider to be in the ring or near horses unattended.
 - c) The horse is put away properly
 - d) All equipment is put away properly.
 - e) Remember to sign out before you leave.

Dress code for Volunteering at Nash Hill Equestrian Center ...

Appropriate jeans or long pants, boots are preferable but tennis shoes are acceptable. We consider revealing clothing (halter/cropped tops, short shorts), long jewelry, sandals or any open toed shoes inappropriate. Please dress accordingly or you may be asked to change.

Confidentiality...

Information relating to a student's particular disability will be provided to volunteers on a need to know basis. Specific information relating to Nash Hill Equestrian Center's students' diagnosis or personal situations is absolutely confidential.

Background Checks...

Nash Hill Equestrian Center reserves the right to perform a criminal background check at their discretion. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Volunteer Dismissal...

Volunteers and/or guests who fail to comply with Nash Hill Equestrian Center's policies and procedures, or who engage in disruptive, inappropriate or unsafe behaviors, may be dismissed from their volunteer position and asked to leave the premises.

Volunteers with three (3) No call/No shows, will be relieved of their services.

Policy on horse discipline

Nash Hill Equestrian Center strongly advocates for the kind and humane treatment of the horse at all times. Without our partnership with the horse, we would be unable to offer therapeutic riding, or other related programs, to our students.

Nash Hill Equestrian Center volunteers, students and guests are prohibited from using physical discipline on program horses or trial horses. Physical discipline is defined as, and may include, but is not limited to, slapping horses using an open hand or closed fist, smacking, punching, pinching, kicking, biting, hard jerks using the lead line, bit, or cross tie, using any object to hit or strike the horse as a disciplinary measure or any other cruel behavior towards the animal. In addition, any training method, mounted or un-mounted, that causes extreme or consistent fear, could potentially injure, is over the horse's ability level and is inappropriate to the therapeutic riding setting will not be tolerated. The use of chain lead lines is strictly at the discretion of the Equine Manager. All issues regarding horse behavior or discipline are to be taken to the Program Director and Equine Manager, who will determine the appropriate course of action.

This policy applies to any volunteer, student or guest participating at Nash Hill Equestrian Center in any capacity. Individuals found to be in violation of this policy will:

- be stopped by any staff member observing such incident,
- meet within 24 hours with the Equine Manager, Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator, as appropriate,
- Be issued a written warning to be kept on file.

**Nash Hill Equestrian Center reserves the right to immediately
Dismiss any individual who is caught using physical discipline on program horses.**

In The Stall

If your student is in a wheelchair leave him outside the stall while you are getting the horse from the stall and taking it to the cross ties. It is a good idea to check with the instructor before you take any student into the stall. If you have a student with you talk to him about the things you are doing and show him the equipment before you enter the stall to use it.

1. Get a lead line and halter/rope halter **before** approaching the stall.
2. When approaching the stall, talk to the horse so he knows you're there. (Remember that horses sometimes sleep standing up.) A horse may be easily startled if he doesn't know you are there.
3. Before you open the stall door all the way, make sure that the horse's hind end is not facing the door. If it is, open the door slightly and call to the horse, using the horse's name. When he is in a position that you can easily approach his head, proceed to the next step.
4. Open the door just wide enough for you to slip through. Then quietly, but confidently approach the horse's head.
5. With your right hand, hold the halter by the crown piece. With your left hand, guide the horse's nose through the nose hole. Attach the buckle of the throat latch under the horse's throat. If using the green rope halter, hold the top strap (the part that goes behind the ears) in your right hand. The left hand can help guide the loop strap that goes around the nose while the right hand pulls the halter to the top of the horse's head and behind his ears. Bring the buckling strap under the throat and tie knot by the horse's left cheek.
6. Hook the lead line to the center ring on the under side of the horse's jaw.
7. **CHECK THE AREA OUTSIDE THE STALL DOOR FOR STUDENTS OR OTHER HORSE TRAFFIC.** Lead the horse out of the stall, holding the lead line in your right hand near the horse's chin. Hold the remaining lead line in your left hand, folded neatly. **DO NOT EVER DRAG THE END OF THE LEAD LINE. DO NOT EVER WRAP THE LEAD LINE**

AROUND YOUR HAND. As you lead the horse, you should be positioned in front of the horse, looking **ahead**, not back at the horse.

8. Take the horse into the cross tie area and turn him around so his head is centered between the cross ties. Attach the cross ties to either side of the halter to the outside rings at the nose end. Take off the lead line while the horse is in the crossties.

In the Cross Ties

Students and horses should not be left unattended by the crossties. This is potentially a very dangerous area. Students and/or volunteers should never walk behind a horse. Care should be taken when working near the horse's face that the ties are not where a student might be injured. Many students with poor balance will try to support themselves by holding on to the ties. This is not only uncomfortable for the horse, it is also dangerous to the student should the horse throw his head.

Remember that the students will imitate the things you do, even if you tell them something different, therefore, no one should be leaning or holding on to the cross ties.

Reading a Horse's Body Language

You can tell a lot about how your horse is feeling by watching his body language.

- Relaxed – Ears fall to side or back. Neck is relaxed. Eyes are soft. He may be resting his weight on one hind leg.
- Irritated – Ears are pinned back. Tail swishes. Picks up hind leg as if to kick back.
- Attentive – Ears are upright, moving around, eyes may be looking around, and neck is more elevated.
- Frightened – Ears are upright, wide eyes, whites of eyes may be visible, neck craned upright, body tense.

Some horses have a naturally high head carriage and/or faster gait. Arabs, Morgan's, Hackneys and some gaited horses are often this way.

Grooming

Grooming, tacking and learning the parts of the horse all take place in the cross ties. We have set up the following guidelines for grooming and tacking the horse specific to Nash Hill Equestrian Center . **We hope that this will help to ensure that everyone is teaching the same thing to all students.**

If students are assisting you in the grooming process, use the time in the crossties to teach the student about the various parts of the horse and tack.

Before a student starts to groom he should walk up and greet his horse. Approach in a quiet and unhurried manner and speak to the horse quietly while using slow body movements.

Please be sure that all brushes are returned after they have been used.

The proper tools and their uses are listed below.

1. **Curry Comb**- A round, rubber grooming tool. It is used first to loosen dirt in the horse's coat. It is used in circular motions toward the tail. Always start near the poll (near the horse's ears) and work toward the tail. The currycomb is not used on the face, mane, legs or tail. Care must be taken when covering any bony protrusions such as the withers, backbone, and shoulder and flank areas. The currycomb is cleaned by tapping it on a hard surface.
2. **Stiff (hard) Brush**- A wooden handled, stiff bristled brush. It is used to remove the dirt brought to the surface by the currycomb. It is used in short, flicking strokes, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and work toward the tail. The stiff brush is not used on the face, mane or tail. The brush is cleaned by holding it in one hand with the bristles up, while the other hand moves across the surface from the far end to the near end flicking dirt from the brush or you may use another hard brush or a comb across the bristles to remove the dirt and hair.

3. **Soft Brush** - A wooden handled, soft-bristled brush. It is used to remove any dirt missed by the stiff brush, as well as to smooth and add shine to the horse's coat. It is used in long, smooth strokes with a flick at the end of each stroke, moving over the hair in the same direction it grows. Start at the poll and move toward the tail. It is not used on the mane or tail. It may be used on the face gently and with great care around the ears, eyes and nose. It is cleaned in the same manner as the stiff brush.
4. **Mane & Tail Comb** - Are used to remove tangles from the horse's mane and tail. They are used on the mane, starting at the poll and working toward the withers. They are used starting from the end and working in small sections toward the roots, the way a girl with long hair would comb her hair to prevent tangling. It is used on the tail by standing beside the horse's hindquarters, NEVER BEHIND THE HORSE. The tail should also be combed in small sections from the ends to the roots. The comb is cleaned as you would clean your own comb or brush, or by tapping it against a hard surface as with the currycomb.

*Students/Volunteers are not permitted to use a hoof pick. If a horse needs it's feet cleaned please contact the instructor.

Saddling

1. Be sure the horse is clean, especially in areas that will be covered by the tack. Therapy horses work hard and should be made as comfortable as possible. A clean girth area is especially important to prevent sores.
2. Place the saddle pad just in front of the horse's withers with the billet holders up.
3. Place the correction pad on top of the saddle pad with the fleecy roll towards the front
4. Add any additional therapy pads.
5. Place the saddle on top of the pads.
6. Slide girth through fleece girth cover.
7. Attach the non-elastic side of the girth to the off side, or right side of the saddle.
8. Attach the elastic end of the girth to the near side, or left side of the saddle. Only tighten the girth enough to keep it from slipping. (You will have time to tighten the girth once more before your student mounts.)
9. If you are using a girth that does not have elastic on one end, follow the guidelines below.
 - a. Folded leather - the fold goes toward the tail to prevent pinching.
 - b. String or canvas - both ends are the same and may go on either side of the saddle.

Walk the horse for at least 5 minutes before the class starts to warm him up and finish tightening the girth. The girth should be tightened one hole at a time, alternating walking for a few minutes and then tightening another hole. This is VERY important and keeps our horses from getting grouchy and developing sore backs.

NOTE: ALWAYS double-check the TIGHTNESS of the girth as some horses hold their breath as it is tightened, thus swelling their chests. When they exhale, the girth will be too loose.

Bridling

Bridling is a certified skill. Only instructors may bridle horses. If you are working with a horse that needs a bridle, please find your instructor.

Attaching the reins to the halter

If you are using a halter, hook the reins to the side rings. If you are using a traditional bridle, the reins fasten directly to the bit. The horse's traditional halter will be left on the horse and the lead will be attached to the halter ring. Your instructor will help with this process.

Returning to the stall after the lesson

After every student has dismounted and left the ring the volunteers will return the horses to an empty crosstie, remove the tack and put the horses away. Do not take the tack off until you are sure the horse is not going to be used for any other lessons.

When the instructor gives the OK lead the horse out of the arena to an empty crosstie. Make sure the stirrups are up or flipped over the top of the saddle. Walk on the left side of the horse between the head and shoulder. Make sure the gate is open wide enough for the horse. When the horse is correctly in the crossties (he should be facing you), attach the crossties to the side rings of the halter. Once the horse is securely fastened remove the reins. If you are using a traditional bridle leave the reins around the horse's neck and remove the bridle (reins are still attached) and put the horse's halter on the horse. Now you can remove the reins and bridle and hang it up. Remove the girth on both sides and then remove the saddle and pads and either hang them on the saddle rack. Once the horse is completely untacked attach the rope lead line to the halter, release the crossties and lead the horse back to the stall (**Remember not to drag the lead line on the ground and not to wrap the end of the lead line around your hand.**)

Lesson Procedures (In the ring)

There are two types of jobs for volunteers in the riding ring. They are **LEADER** and **SIDEWALKER**. The student should be the center of the volunteer's attention. Unrelated and unnecessary conversations between volunteers should not exist in the ring. However, you introduce yourselves to each other and to your student. Also make sure your student knows the name of his horse.

The Leader

As a leader, your first responsibility is the horse. If you are working without sidewalkers, you must be constantly aware of your student. If a situation arises where you must choose between the student and the horse, the student always comes first. If you are working with sidewalkers, they will take care of the student. You must take care of the horse.

In the mounting area - While in the mounting area, pay close attention to the instructor. The instructor will tell you where to position the horse at the lift or block. Your responsibility while the student is mounting is to keep the horse as quiet as possible. **Stand directly in front of the horse.** If the horse is uneasy, rub the horse's neck and speak quietly to help calm it. After the student has mounted, and before the stirrups are adjusted, you will be asked to move the horse forward into the center of the ring. The student will need to have his stirrups adjusted at this time.

Once your student has mounted, the instructor will tell you when to proceed and where to position your horse in the group. As the class begins, the instructor will give instructions by the student or horse's name. Be sure you know both.

How to lead your horse - The proper position for the leader is to walk about in line with the poll (about between the head and shoulder). Care must be taken that the horse maintains a natural head carriage. Lead from the near side (left side) of the horse. A good rule of thumb for holding the lead line is to hold it in your right hand approximately six to twelve inches away from the buckle. The excess lead line should be held in your left hand. **NEVER WRAP THE EXCESS LINE AROUND YOUR HAND.**

No matter how slow the horse you are leading is, the leader should not try to pull the horse forward. Nor should you stop the horse if your student is unable to do it himself. The student is encouraged to do as much as possible on his own. The instructor will point out to you if the rider is in need of assistance. If the horse you are leading should balk or shy, with or without a rider, do not try to pull him. Wait until he relaxes, then move his head slowly to one side or the other and encourage him gently to go in a slightly different direction.

In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line does not interfere with the reins. The lead line should be hanging between the reins, not over the top of them.

At the halt - ***The leader should step in front of the horse to keep it from moving. In an EMERGENCY, the leader should face the horse to the client who may be on the ground. A horse that is facing the "commotion" is less likely to spook.***

At the walk - Be aware of your sidewalkers and give them enough room to walk behind you and still be at the student's side, and between the horse and the side wall of the arena.

None of our horses are known kickers, but all horses have the potential to kick if pressured by another horse being too close to their hind legs. Give yourself enough room from the horse in front of you. If your student cannot maintain a safe distance, then help him to do so. Remember, many of our students have a poor sense of space orientation and do not realize when they are too close. Use common sense. If you see that your student is getting into trouble and is unable to follow the directions given by the instructor, you should give assistance.

At the trot - The instructor will give directions at this time for each student and horse. Start to jog and stay near the horse's head. **DO NOT PULL**. Say "TROT" if the student is unable.

During dismounting - Do the same as during mounting. A student should not dismount without an instructor helping.

Falls - Falls are very rare, but they can and do happen. If another rider falls, or another horse gets loose, **your only concern is the horse you are leading. Stop your horse immediately.** Go in front and hold your horse as you would at the halt. **NEVER** let go of your horse. Remember to stay calm at all times.

The Sidewalkers

Sidewalkers normally get the most hands on duties in therapeutic riding. **They are directly responsible for the rider.** As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson.

In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus their attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with the rider or other volunteers. ***Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and for some riders with perceptual problems, it can be overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one sidewalker should be the designated talker.***

When the instructor gives a direction allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says, "Turn to the right toward me" and the student seems confused, gently tap the student's right hand and say "Right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and will learn when they need help and when they are just not paying attention.

It is important to maintain a good position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

The most commonly used way to hold a rider without interfering is the "arm over the thigh" hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle (flap or pommel depending on the horse's size) with the hand closest to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm gently rests on the rider's thigh. Be careful not to dig your elbow into the rider's leg or the horse's side.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider's waist. At times, this can pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the rider's are to do the exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an effort to win!

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider stretch and grow to reach his/her fullest potential. You are there right by his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

IF AT ANY TIME, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR JOB, YOU HAVE A QUESTION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK FOR HELP. WE WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU ASK THE SAME QUESTION 100 TIMES THAN NOT BE SURE THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS CORRECT!

Emergency Procedures

1. Instructors are the primary persons dealing with all emergencies or accidents. All of our instructors are trained in CPR, First Aid and Universal Precautions.
2. Instructor assistants or someone appointed by the instructor will supervise the rest of the class while the instructor is attending to the emergency.
3. The first Aid Kit is in the office.
4. The portable phone is located in the white viewing room by the first window. Please use the phone only in an emergency or if given permission by the instructors.
5. Remember, keep calm and stay with your assigned student.

Emergencies in the Ring

1. When you hear the word “**HALT**” during your lesson it means for everyone to stop and wait for instructions. Anyone, instructor or volunteer, can use the word to stop the class if they see something they feel is an impending danger. The instructor cannot see the entire ring all the time and is counting on the eyes and ears of the volunteers.
2. If your student has fallen off make sure he/she is clear of the horse and wait for the instructor. Move your horse to the center of the ring. Allow the horse to face the activity. As a leader stay with your horse!
3. If it is not your student that has the emergency, stop your horse and wait for instructions from either the instructor or the assistant.
4. If you are a side walker and it is your rider involved in the emergency, **STAY WITH YOUR RIDER!** You are to see to his safety and follow directions given by the instructor. If it is not your rider involved, **STAY WITH YOUR RIDER** and wait for directions from the instructor.
5. These rules can also apply to a student who has slipped or tripped and fallen to a student who is acting inappropriately for their surroundings.
6. If a student is prone to seizures, they will have a side walker assigned to them during the riding lesson. In case of a seizure, the side walker will alert the leader by saying **HALT** and the instructor will assist the rider safely off the horse (the side walker will assist, if necessary) Remain calm and let the seizure runs its course. Do not interfere with the individual’s movements and do not remove the rider’s helmet. Protect the individual from possible injury by removing all objects around the immediate area. The instructor and/or counselor/parent will handle the situation.

Emergencies in the Barn

- ❖ In the event of a fire or an emergency that necessitates the evacuation of the barn, you will use the word **HALT** and everyone is to go to the parking lot. This is important as a head count will be taken to ensure everyone is accounted for. Listen for direction from the instructor. If there are horses in their stalls or on crossties let the barn staff decide if they need to be evacuated and if so let the barn staff handle the evacuation of horses. If you are leading a horse at the time of the evacuation, lead them out to the outdoor arena. The most important thing is that you and the rider exit the barn safely. Your student and horse are counting on you, so stay calm.

Disability Overview

- ❖ **Hearing Impairment** - Loss of hearing might be: profound, partial or intermittent. It may have been present at birth or acquired during life. Deafness is one of the greatest handicaps because it is not instantly recognized by other and therefore does not immediately arouse sympathy or understanding. A lack of hearing means failure to understand what is going on in the world. Deaf students might be overactive, noisy and frustrated. They may learn best by imitation and sign language, but miss out on verbal instruction.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - Encourage the deaf rider to copy all he can. Let him watch others, but do not stop talking to him, as he may hear and understand some of what you are saying. Turn your head toward the rider. He might be able to lip-read. He may understand parts of words, resulting in confusion. Constant and clear repetition of words will help.
- ❖ **Visual Impairment** - Blindness may be present at birth or result later from disease or accident. Loss of sight might be gradual or sudden with no time to readjust. Visual loss may be partial or complete. When it is partial, it may be restricted by blurring, by being adequate for short distances only, by constant eye movement, so the world is constantly moving, by loss of vision to the left or right, by tunnel vision when only objects straight ahead can be seen, or by loss of central vision when only objects on the periphery can be seen. People with visual impairments might have difficulty moving about, rely on speech and non-speech sounds for judging distances and find echoes and traveling sounds to be of great value.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - Use your voice and speak even when moving. Describe where you are so that new sounds can be identified (for example, the sounds horses' hooves make on different surfaces or at different gaits). Increased mobility and independence are the main area of achievement. Help the student count the horse's paces down one side of the arena so they can learn when a corner is near. Remember that a blind rider cannot learn by visual example. He must find out for himself with verbal guidance and touch. Remember also that he is not deaf and you do not have to shout at him in normal conversation.
- ❖ **Learning Disability** - This term describes problems in the areas of speech, language, spelling, writing or arithmetic, which occur in children with average or above-average intelligence. These learning problems are not a result of visual, auditory or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental disadvantage.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - Learning disabled children may be easily distracted, sometimes hyperactive, impulsive, talkative, awkward, aggressive, socially immature and easily frustrated. They often need clear and simple explanations with practical demonstrations of the skills to be learned in the lesson.
- ❖ **Mental Disability** - Mental Disability means that intelligence is reduced because of an abnormality of, or damage to, the brain. There are often additional handicaps such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy and speech disorders. Some mentally disabled riders will have recognizable signs of a condition such as Down's Syndrome, but others will have no specific clinical conditions. Mentally disabled riders might behave as if they were younger, have limited speech and understanding of speech, may learn slowly and require much repetition. They may have limited awareness of danger and may need careful supervision.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - A pleasant and understanding approach to the mentally handicapped rider will be beneficial. Riding provides a social occasion, and opportunities for practicing good manners, learning to take turns, obeying instructions, using speech and learning to win and lose. This rider will need encouragement and discipline that he can understand.
- ❖ **Emotional Disability** - Many of these students attend special schools and are taught by specially trained staff. The maladjusted child may have normal, low or high intelligence. He may have a behavior disturbance, which means that he is at odds with his family, friends, the world and himself. Frequently he is frustrated, unhappy and bad tempered. This is a term used to describe students whose behavior makes for difficulties when education he may be rough with others. He might feel he is already a "loser" in society and therefore dislike competition and the feeling that he may lose yet again.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - The maladjusted child usually responds well to the horse and the opportunity to care for him, showing his capacity to love and care. Friendships with his peers might be difficult, but he may crave the company of his helpers and his horse.

Maladjusted children will respond to a challenge, provided they are given the confidence by support and friendship. Stable work will provide an opportunity to join the team at work, and the enjoyment of a task well done.

- ❖ **Cerebral Palsy** - This is a medical term denoting brain damage, so that messages for movement, from the brain to the limbs, are imperfect or misdirected, and therefore the limbs may be weak, stiff, clumsy, constantly moving, floppy or more than one of these abnormalities. Muscles involving speech, eye movement, swallowing and so forth may also be involved. Intelligence may or may not be impaired, but whatever the intelligence, communication is likely to present difficulties. The rider with cerebral palsy may have to make a great effort to do even the simplest movements, so that life is a struggle and the smallest skill is a great achievement.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - If a good position in the saddle can be maintained with the assistance of the helper, the rider's control of his head, arms and back muscles may be made easier. Foot position in the stirrup is important. In some cases, the helper may grasp the back of the ankle to help keep the heel down. The rider should be encouraged to look where he is going, as control of the head facilitates the use of the arms. Muscle control for riders with cerebral palsy is hard work, but worthwhile.
- ❖ **Multiple Sclerosis**

This is a disease that generally affects adults. Nerve transmissions are interrupted on their way to muscles, which results in varying levels of disability. Chief among the many symptoms are difficulty in walking, weakness and clumsiness of the legs and arms and visual problems. Speech is often affected.

 - **Hints for Helpers** - It is important for the helper to understand the functional abilities of this rider. The instructor will be aware, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, of what the rider is able to do and with what he will need help. Unlike the rider with cerebral palsy rider, where every day is much the same, the rider with multiple sclerosis will have good days and no-so-good days. MS patients are mostly adults and can often offer valuable input as to their comfort level and the best way to assist them.
- ❖ **Infectious Diseases** - Controlling the spread of viruses and infectious diseases is an important concern in any situation where the general public is dealt with. Infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B and the HIV/aides virus are transmitted when blood, semen and vaginal secretions of an infected person enter through the skin or mucus membrane of a non-infected person. Following simple safety precautions will help prevent the spread of these diseases.
 - **Hints for Helpers** - Hand washing is the most effective measure in the prevention of the spread of disease. Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after you leave the barn. Wash your hands again when you get home. Also follow these safety procedures: Ask the adult who has accompanied the student to the barn to take him/her to the bathroom facilities if the need arises. Ask the adult who is with the student to attend to any open wounds or bleeding that might occur while a student is at the barn. Make sure any open wounds that you may have are properly covered.

When You Meet a Person with a Disability

Be yourself when you meet a person who has a disability. Be a friend and treat him or her as an equal. At the same time, though, be aware of the disability.

One of the hardest aspects of volunteering is standing back and letting the student do things for himself. Lend a hand if asked, or if you see a dangerous situation arising. Be patient. Also, try not to predetermine your student's abilities. They will always surprise you.

Don't talk about the student in front of him/her. Talk to the student. Information about students and their disabilities is **CONFIDENTIAL**. Details are shared on a need-to-know basis. If you have a question about a student please ask your instructor.

Unhandicapping Our Language

Language reflects and reinforces our perceptions and misperceptions of others. All too frequently the terms used for people with disabilities perpetuate stereotypes and false ideas. This guide is offered as one means to “unhandicap” our language and thinking. It is selective, not exhaustive. It is intended as a suggestion, not censorship.

Objectionable		Preferable
(the) disabled	Sees people only in terms of their disabilities.	People with disabilities.
(the) mentally retarded	Robs us of individuality by lumping people into one undifferentiated category.	Persons with mental retardation
(the) deaf	Humanizing nouns emphasize the person.	Deaf Citizens
(The) blind, etc. (the) handicapped		Blind People People with disabilities.
abnormal	Sees people with disabilities as less human than others.	None is needed.
(birth) defected	Describes an object, dehumanizes a person.	Congenital disability
Mrs. Kelly is an arthritic patient	Sees someone as an object of medical care.	Mrs. Kelly has arthritis.
Bill Cullen was: afflicted with, stricken with, or suffers from polio.	Connotes helplessness, dependency, defeat. Denies other aspects of the person.	Bill Cullen had polio.
victim FDR was a polio victim.	Connotes pitiful helplessness.	State the facts. FDR had polio.
invalid	(From the same root as invalid.) Inaccurate, most people with disabilities are not sickly.	None is needed.
deaf and dumb deaf-mute dummy	Implies mental incapacitation occurs with hearing loss and/or speech impairment.	Deaf Hearing Impaired Speech Impaired
sightless four eyes blind as a bat	Inaccurate, demeaning.	Blind Partially Sighted Vision Impaired
cripple crippled crip	No epithet is more offensive to people with physical disabilities (From Old English “to creep”). A second meaning of this adjective is “inferior”.	FDR had a physical disability FDR had polio.
confined to a wheelchair wheelchair-bound wheel-chaired	Creates a false impression: wheelchairs liberate, not confine or bind; they are mobility tools from which people transfer to sleep, sit in chairs, drive cars, etc.	Wheelchair User Uses a wheelchair. Wheelchair using.
Handel was epileptic. Renoir was arthritic. Geri Jewell is cerebral	These usages see people as their disabilities. Inaccurate reference; a person is not a condition.	Handel had epilepsy. Renoir had arthritis. Geri Jewell has cerebral

palsied.		palsy.
midget, dwarf	Mythical, denies reality. Infantilizing, patronizing.	Short-Statured Person
deformed misshapen hunchbacked	Connotes repulsive oddity. Demeaning.	Has a physical disability. Has a spinal curvature.
lame paralytic gimp, gimp withered	Demeaning.	Walks with a cane. Uses crutches. Senator Dole has a disabled hand.
monster vegetable creature freak	Robs people with genetic disabilities of their humanity.	The child has multiple or severe disabilities.
mentally ill crazy, insane psycho, nut, maniac former mental patient	Outdated and stigmatizing.	Mental Disability Behavior Disorder Emotional Disability Mentally Restored
retard, slow, simple- minded, idiot, mongoloid	Demeaning	People with mental retardation.
spastic, spazz has fits	Demeaning	Has Seizures. Has cerebral palsy. Has epilepsy.
“special”	Distancing and inappropriate, patronizing. Describes that which is different about any person.	Do not use.
physically challenged handi-capable inconvenienced differently-abled	Euphemisms avoid reality and rob people of dignity.	A person has a physical sensory or mental disability.
inspirational, courageous	People with disabilities are not collectively inspirational or courageous.	Acknowledge the person’s abilities and individuality.
Isn’t it wonderful how he has overcome his disability?	Inaccurate: People live with a disability; they have to overcome attitudinal, social, architectural, educational, transportation and employment barriers.	Accept people for who they are, including that they have a disability.