



Horses Helping People with Dementia and their Caregivers

"The horse-human connection helps improve confidence, reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. Patients reported that they felt significantly better by the end of the workshop"

Goals

- Improve quality of life,
- May help with three specific areas: (1) psychological (e.g., relaxation, motivation); (2) physiological (e.g., improvement of vital signs through neuroendocrine modulation), and (3) social (e.g., stimulation of communication among patients and caregivers),
- Specifically for older persons with dementia, the presence of therapy animals has been useful in reducing agitated behavior,
- Decreasing episodes of verbal aggression and anxiety, and increasing social interaction,
- Reduce agitation, irritability, anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances in persons with dementia.

Activities

- Learning to groom a horse,
- Observation of horse to horse interactions as well as allowing the participant to seek interaction with the horse. Horses will be turned loose in the indoor arena and participants are free to interact with them or watch the horses interact with each other,
- Learn about horse anatomy. Provide explanation about use of a halter and how to place it on the horse,
- Option of leading the horse around the arena and when finished, removing the halter. This activity has been shown to improve confidence. Also may photograph the horses during this period,
- Can paint the horse with symbols reflective of their thoughts and feelings for the animal. Non-irritating, biodegradable finger paint will be used.

All activities take place on the ground and no horse experience is required

For workshop dates and fees, contact Anne Porteous.

Thank you for contacting Sierra Acres Equine Assisted Healing Centre

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