Presenter's name: Helena Costa

Degree, affiliation: Degree in Equine Science and Master`s degree in Behaviour and Animal Welfare; Affiliation: Member of The KidsFellows Association and board member of SPSAE Association (Portugal)

Curriculum vitae:

Helena Costa: I'm horse trainer and Coach level II, specialized in Horse behaviour and in Equine Assisted Services. I`ve been working in a Project on Equine Assisted Services, named: Odivelas Hippotherapy Project, since 2009 and last year I set up with my husband our own Equestrian Center in Pinhal Novo named CostaAmorim stables. I am also a co-author in some publications about horse behaviour and Horse training.
Lina Šarkienė: I have equine business worker education, over 15 years horse riding experience (showjumping). I have been working for 4 years in the field of Hippotherapy (physical therapy) in my family Equestrian club. Between 2020 and 2023, I was the Lithuanian administrator of ERASMUS+ project 2020-1-CZ01-KA204-078277. I participated in the Lithuanian Health Care Ministry qualification evaluation commission in the transition period recognizing the qualifications of alternative and complementary health care specialists, cooperated with the Ministry of Health in developing horse evaluation methodology.

Category: Oral presentation

Topic: Special Program/ Projects

Author:

Lina Šarkienė: Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation - Physical therapy and Master's degree in public health care management, member of horse riding association of people with disabilities (Lithuania), European equine assisted therapy network

Title: EVALUTION SYSTEM OF EQUINES TAKING PART IN EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES (EvaSE) – INTELECTUAL OUTPUTS ERASMUS+2020-1-CZ01-KA204-078277

Keyword 1: equine
Keyword 2: evaluation
Keyword 3: EAS

Abstract:

Objective: Standardised criteria and guidelines for selecting equines in EAS in the EU. Six European partner organisations developed EvaSE through the Erasmus+ project with the intention of helping to establish consistent standards across EAS programs and organisations, ensuring a reliable and uniform approach to equine selection and preparation.

Design: In Europe, there is no uniform (or generally identical) system of preparation and evaluation of equines participating in Equine Assisted Services (EAS). The project thus responds to a current need for ensuring the safe training and welfare of equines included in EAS, including methods of evaluating their suitability. In the EU, there is a need for more specialists to carry out special training and preparation of equines for this purpose. Equines are currently being trained in various ways, which may lead to welfare problems and variety in the quality of the EAS. We aimed to share knowledge and experiences of partner organisations and develop a document that all partners have approved.

Results: EAS's effectiveness relies on the equines' suitability. An evaluation system can help to identify equines with the desired attributes, such as adequate temperament, suitable size, and appropriate preparation, which are crucial for facilitating positive interactions and achieving goals. Proper evaluation allows us to select the most suitable equines and enhance the programs' quality and efficacy, leading to better participant outcomes.

Conclusion: The creation of EvaSE improved our competencies in the selection and preparation of the equines. It represents a significant milestone in the advancement of EAS standardisation. It can be applied as a comprehensive guide for EAS centres and practitioners, providing the necessary tools to create evaluation procedures that prioritise equine welfare, safety, and the promotion of best practices.