

Presenter's name: Amy Dearlove

Degree, affiliation: FdSc Animal Behaviour and Psychology Cornwall (University of Plymouth)

Curriculum vitae:

Amy Dearlove – Equine Support Lead for the Mare and Foal Sanctuary
Enthusiastic and attentive animal welfare aficionado with 10+ years of animal experience working with a variety of animals, specialising in equine behaviour and welfare within the Equine Assisted Services (EAS) sector. A thirst for chasing the most up to date equine research with recent experience in presenting at a Sociology Review Seminar regarding equine welfare principles in equine assisted services, which later was published in a digital booklet.

Equine Assisted Services Equine Support Lead (2020 to Present)

- Act as advocate for and support the welfare of equines throughout delivery of EAS and events.
- Support the development of the human-equine bond through EAS.
- Promote the safety and welfare of equines staff and participants during assessment, training, and delivery of EAS.
- Ensure modern, ethical, evidence-based training methods are practiced and embedded in our delivery and culture.

Category: Poster

Topic: Horse Related Topics: Equine Welfare

Authors:

Anna Haines BSc (Hons) MSc CAB - Equine Behaviour Consultant Equine Behaviourist for the Mare and Foal Sanctuary

Title: AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP? CONSIDERING WELFARE OF EQUINES IN EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICE

Keyword 1: Welfare

Keyword 2: Equine Assisted Services

Keyword 3: Equine

Abstract:

Objective: Equine assisted services (EAS) is rapidly growing with recognised benefits for human wellbeing. The Mare and Foal Sanctuary is the largest equine welfare charity in Southwest England delivering EAS focusing on the psychological health of both equine and human participants. Meeting equines' needs is imperative to ensure optimal mental and physical welfare.

Design: Equines are initially assessed for suitability, evaluating physical and mental health, history of human interaction, training level and individual needs. Prospective equines are evaluated in simulated sessions with experienced handlers. Suitable equines progress into further training before participating in sessions. The weekly equine schedule includes a maximum of 3, 90-minute sessions, frequent breaks and at least 2 types of session. During sessions, equine behaviour is monitored and recorded on a behavioural observation sheet by an equine support person who is trained in equine ethology. Signs of stress, over-arousal, or pain that compromise equine welfare, or potential escalation of unsafe behaviours result in removal of the equine from the session. Equines displaying undesired

behaviours are removed from the scheme. Equally, positive behavioural signs are also recorded. All equines are regularly reviewed for continued participation.

Results: Early indications suggest advantages to this approach with increased positive equine behaviours exhibited in sessions. This has improved equine longevity in EAS, contributed to enhanced equine welfare and increased participant's knowledge of equine welfare.

Conclusion: Those offering EAS have a responsibility to optimise equine welfare, a lack of and ambiguity in guidance has led to a variety of management practices which may challenge equine welfare. To date, many EAS studies have focused on humans and not equines. Further research is much needed to bring about positive change to work towards a more equal partnership.