

**Presenter's name:** Anita Shkedi

**Degree, affiliation:** DR

**Curriculum vitae:**

Dr. Shkedi has a para-medical background working as a Registered Nurse and then Health Visitor in the UK. She holds a Doctorate in Education, specializing in curriculum building for EAA/T. She has authored two books: "Traumatic Brain Injury and Therapeutic Riding" (2012) and "Horses Heal PTSD: Walking New Paths" (2021). She has also written numerous articles to advance practitioners' knowledge in the field. She lectures and consults worldwide in the areas of equine-assisted activities and therapies, PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries. Dr. Shkedi provides clinics and workshops, as well as a British CPD certificate for practitioners seeking to expand their knowledge for clients with PTSD. In 2015, she received an Award of Excellence from Israel's prestigious Wingate Institute. She is in the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame for her contribution to therapeutic horseback riding activities and therapies, PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries. She was a competitive horse rider.

**Category:** Oral presentation

**Topic:** Treatment and methods of equine assisted: somatic experiencing

**Title:** TRANSCENDING TRAUMA

**Keyword 1:** trauma, resilience, post traumatic growth

**Keyword 2:** EAS, human horse bonding, somatic experiences

**Keyword 3:** Post traumatic Stress Disorder

**Abstract:**

The Equine Assisted Services (EAS) initiative in South Korea and Israel has proven to be a highly effective intervention for individuals dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By utilizing a human-horse bonding approach, the programs addressed the immediate needs of trauma survivors, guiding them through the various stages of recovery and fostering resilience and post-traumatic growth. A key achievement of the EAS initiative lies in its capacity to guide individuals away from the trauma vortex by offering positive post-event experiences. Central to this process is the human-horse bonding method, which plays a pivotal role in triggering somatic experiences and fostering body awareness. This is particularly significant as trauma often triggers the autonomic nervous system, leading to a fight, flight, or freeze response, causing stress on the body and deregulation of brain activity. The chosen methodology re-engaged executive functions, reworked cognitive processes, and shifted individuals from survival mode to a regulated state. Trust-building, structure, purpose, goals, and achievement were the primary focuses of the program. The human-horse bonding method re-established essential elements such as attachment communication, commitment, body awareness, coordination, and rhythm. These components contributed significantly to the overall success of the intervention by promoting a holistic approach to healing. The positive results of the EAS initiative were evident in the life-changing effects reported by clients. The program facilitated the development of resilience, mental and emotional flexibility, and the ability to adapt to internal and external demands. Clients transitioned from the vortex of trauma to a window of tolerance, showcasing the effectiveness of EAS in promoting post-traumatic growth. The EAS initiative significantly improved the lives of individuals with PTSD through human-horse bonding, providing them with positive experiences.