



***Building Resiliency:
Combining Social-Emotional Learning &
Equine Assisted Learning for Youth at Risk***

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What Will We Accomplish Today?

- **Brief History of the Program**
- **Partnering with Schools**
- **Defining the Population**
- **Creative Programming**
- **Tracking Outcomes**
- **Program Sustainability**
- **Preliminary Research Findings**



Hearts & Horses - Center Highlights



- **Founded in 1997**
- **23-acre ranch, 30 Equines**
- **Serving 200 participants**
- **250 volunteers per week**



Program Diversity



Veterans



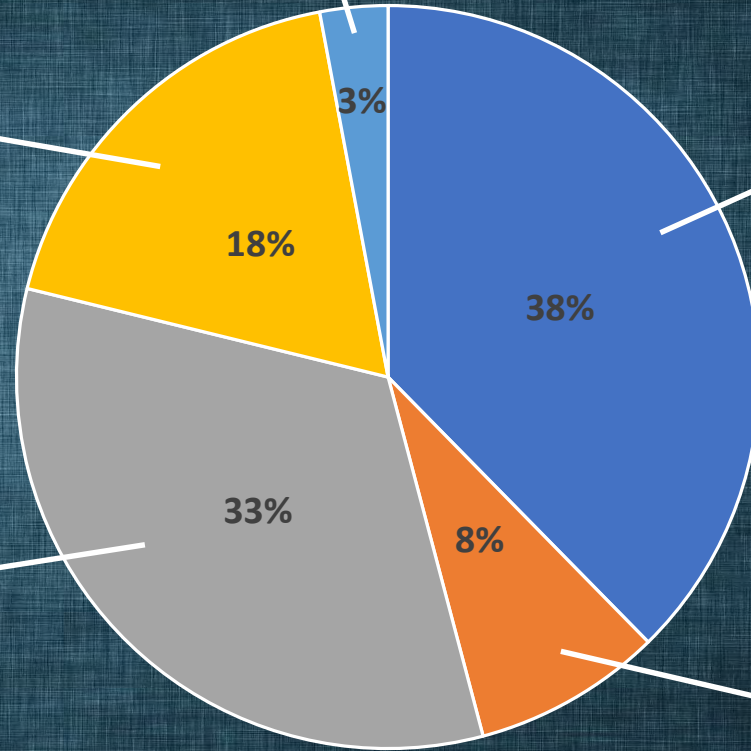
Riding in the Moment



Therapeutic Riding



Changing Leads



Therapy Services





History of Changing Leads

**Designed to help
youth-at-risk find friendship,
develop trust and form a deep
connection through
partnering with a horse.**



Full Day Program

Social Emotional Learning and Equine Assisted Learning to help youth THRIVE



- By exploring the themes of respect, empathy, self-respect and confidence, accountability, and conflict resolution the youth participating in our program are learning to navigate school and life with more success.
- These successes in turn radiate out to the greater community.



Partnering with the Schools



“Changing Leads has really been life changing for our students. They have learned to place their trust in their horses and adult volunteers, be real, and open-up their hearts to positive change. Thank you!”



Communication Through Weekly Newsletters



HEARTS & HORSES Changing Leads Newsletter

Week 2

Inspiring Empathy & Compassion
*How caring for our horses can teach us to
respond to emotions, and develop compassion
for ourselves and others*

What We Accomplished

This week we continued exploring emotional literacy, self-awareness, and empathy. Each day we begin and end our session with the "mood meter" in order to bring awareness to our emotions. This practice helps students to identify new words for emotions and also to gain perspective of how emotions may change throughout the day. In our activities with our horse herd today we focused on continuing to build a relationship with our horse through care and leadership. We learned about how horses communicate through body language, and how we can empathize with how they are feeling. We also learned The Masterson Method, a form of equine bodywork that builds trust with the horse. In addition to the Masterson Method, students further connected with their horse through grooming and spending one on one time together. Students were asked to find similarities between themselves and their horse, allowing them to practice empathy for themselves and others.

In addition to teaching responsibility, research indicates that the human-animal bond has the potential to stimulate empathy. Considering how to keep a horse safe, healthy, and happy, can lead to new feelings of wanting to care for another being. Empathy is the ability to put oneself in another's shoes (whether horse or human!) and imagine how they feel. As students begin to build a bond with their horses and learn what it takes to care for their horse, their own capacity for empathy can begin to grow.

Reflections & Transferable Learning

- What does it mean to have empathy for someone?
- Do you know anyone in your life who could use a little empathy right now?
- How could you show empathy for this person?

Competencies Practiced

- Empathy
- Emotional Literacy
- Self-awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

Thought for the Week

Think of something you can do to take care of yourself or someone else this week. Notice when you are being mindful and feeling empathetic.

Nuts and Bolts of the Program



Our Population



- **Middle School Students**
- **Emerging Youth at Risk**
- **High Ace Scores**
- **Early Childhood Trauma**
- **Tier 2-3 kids**



The Team – Pairing horse, rider & volunteer



“Social, emotional and academic skills are all essential to success in school, careers, and in life, and they can be effectively learned in the context of trusted ties to caring and competent adults.”



Building Healthy Relationships



- Volunteer recruitment and training are critical
- Relationship between volunteer and rider
- Continuing relationship after program ends



CASEL

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning



Self-Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior.

- Identifying emotions
- Recognizing Strengths
- Self Confidence
- Self Efficacy



The Rock Check-In

Youth choose a rock from the center of the circle that best describes how they are feeling at this very moment.



Why is it important to tune into your feelings when working with the horses?



Name: _____

Date: 3/2/17

energy ↑

panicked	stressed	upbeat	exhilarated
furious	frustrated	hyper	motivated
frightened	angry	energized	enthusiastic
anxious	irritated	happy	focused
worried	uneasy	pleasant	proud
apprehensive	down	hopeful	playful
disgusted	glum	easygoing	content
disappointed	sad	calm	satisfied
discouraged	lonely	chill	restful
miserable	sullen	mellow	thoughtful
depressed	drained	sleepy	tranquil
			carefree

Pleasantness →

This Week

energy ↑

panicked	stressed	upbeat	exhilarated
furious	frustrated	hyper	motivated
frightened	angry	energized	enthusiastic
anxious	irritated	happy	focused
worried	uneasy	pleasant	proud
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Pleasantness →

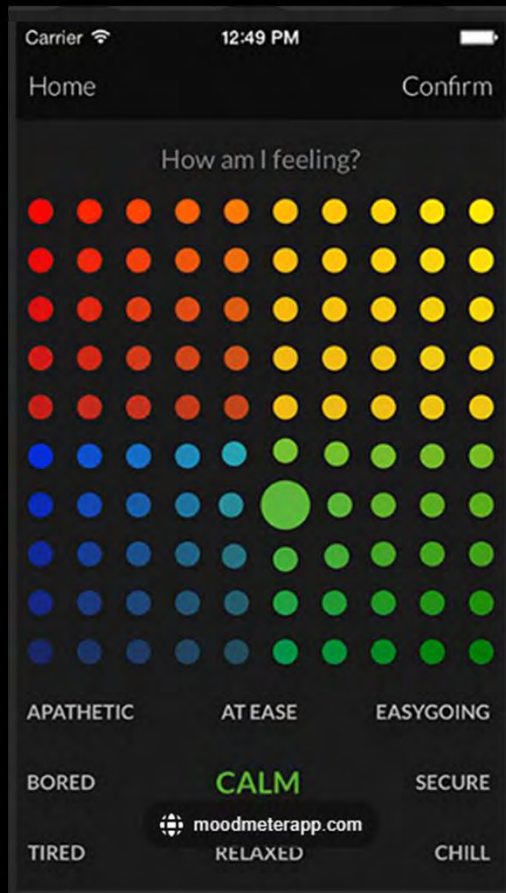
After H&H

Name It to Tame It Mood Meter



MOOD METER APP

BUILD EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THAT LASTS A LIFETIME



Build greater self-awareness to make more informed decisions

Increase your emotion vocabulary to communicate more accurately

Learn effective emotion regulation strategies to manage stress

Track your emotions over time to notice patterns at home and work

Developed by Researchers at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence www.ei.yale.edu

Self-Management

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations.

- **Impulse control**
- **Self- management**
- **Self-discipline**



Self-Management - Mindfulness



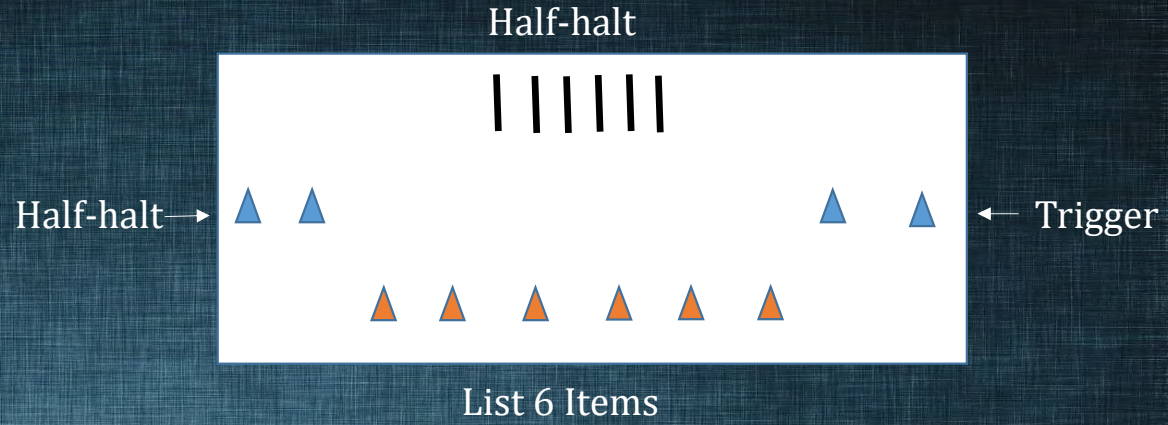
Self-Management

Brain Science and the Six Second Pause

*“It takes six seconds to manage anger.
It takes six seconds to create compassion.”*

~ Six Second Emotional Intelligence Network ~





Responsible Decision Making

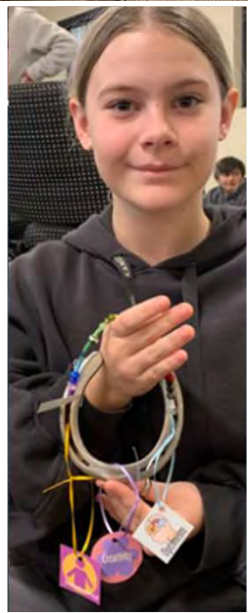
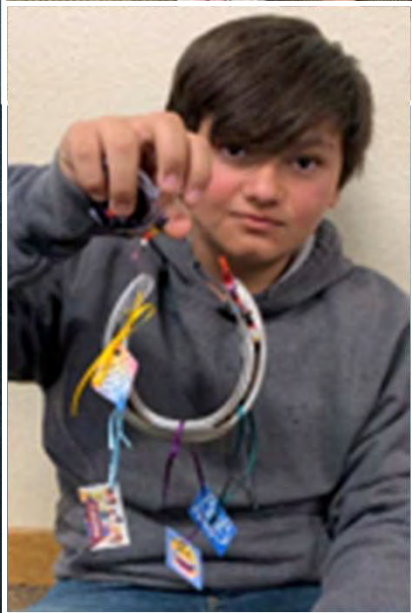
The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions.



- Identify Problem
- Solve Problem
- Analyze Situations



What Do We Value?



Pick three VALUES that help you be your best self.

Belonging	Diversity	Health	Optimism
Caring	Excellence	Honesty	Peace
Collaboration	Fairness	Hope	Perserverance
Community	Faith	Humor	Respect
Compassion	Family	Independence	Risk Taking
Confidence	Friendship	Kindness	Self-expression
Connection	Generosity	Learning	Sportsmanship
Courage	Giving Back	Love	Teamwork
Creativity	Gratitude	Loyalty	Well-being
Curiosity	Harmony	Nature	Wisdom



*Responsible Decision Making
~ Building a Challenge Course ~*



Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

- **Communication**
- **Teamwork**
- **Relationship Building**





Relationship Skills - Horse Hook

Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds.

- Empathy
- Perspective Taking
- Respect for Others



*Social Awareness through the
Masterson Method*



Riding Boot to Boot



Walk The Line

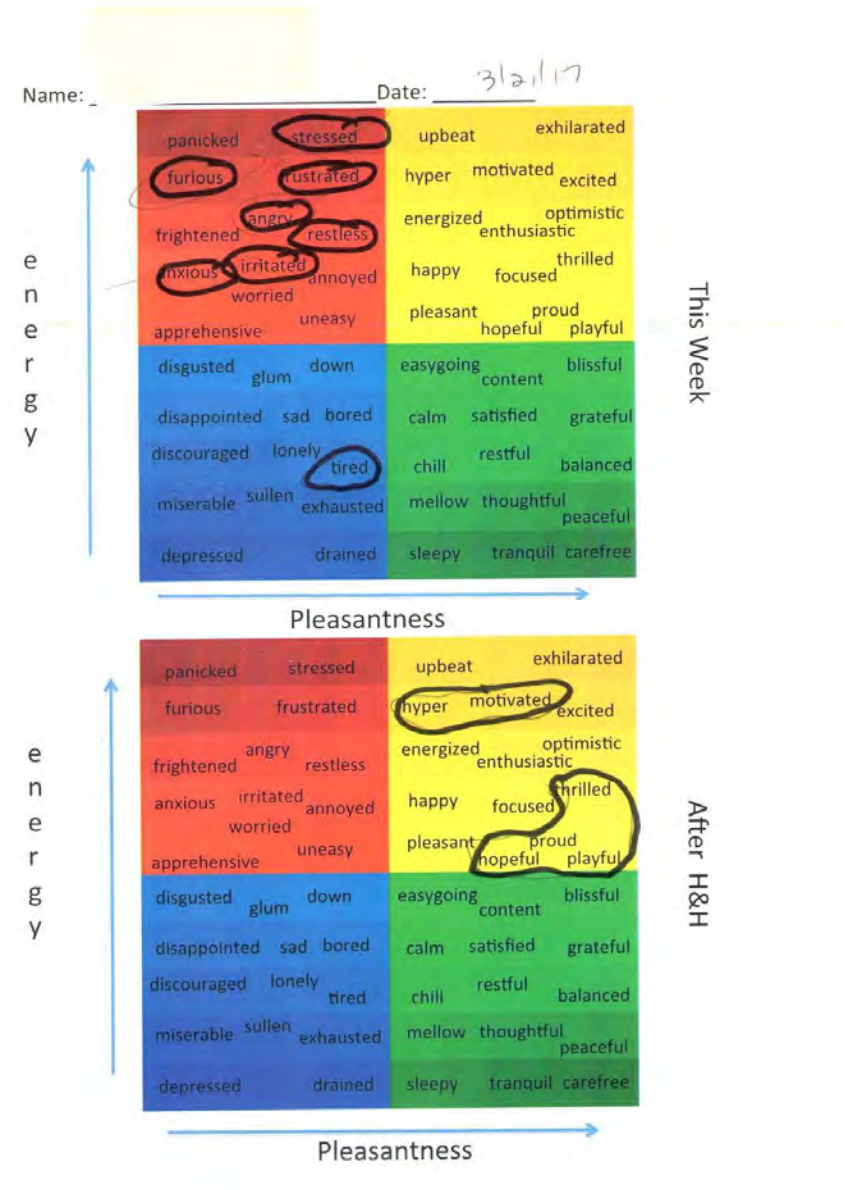
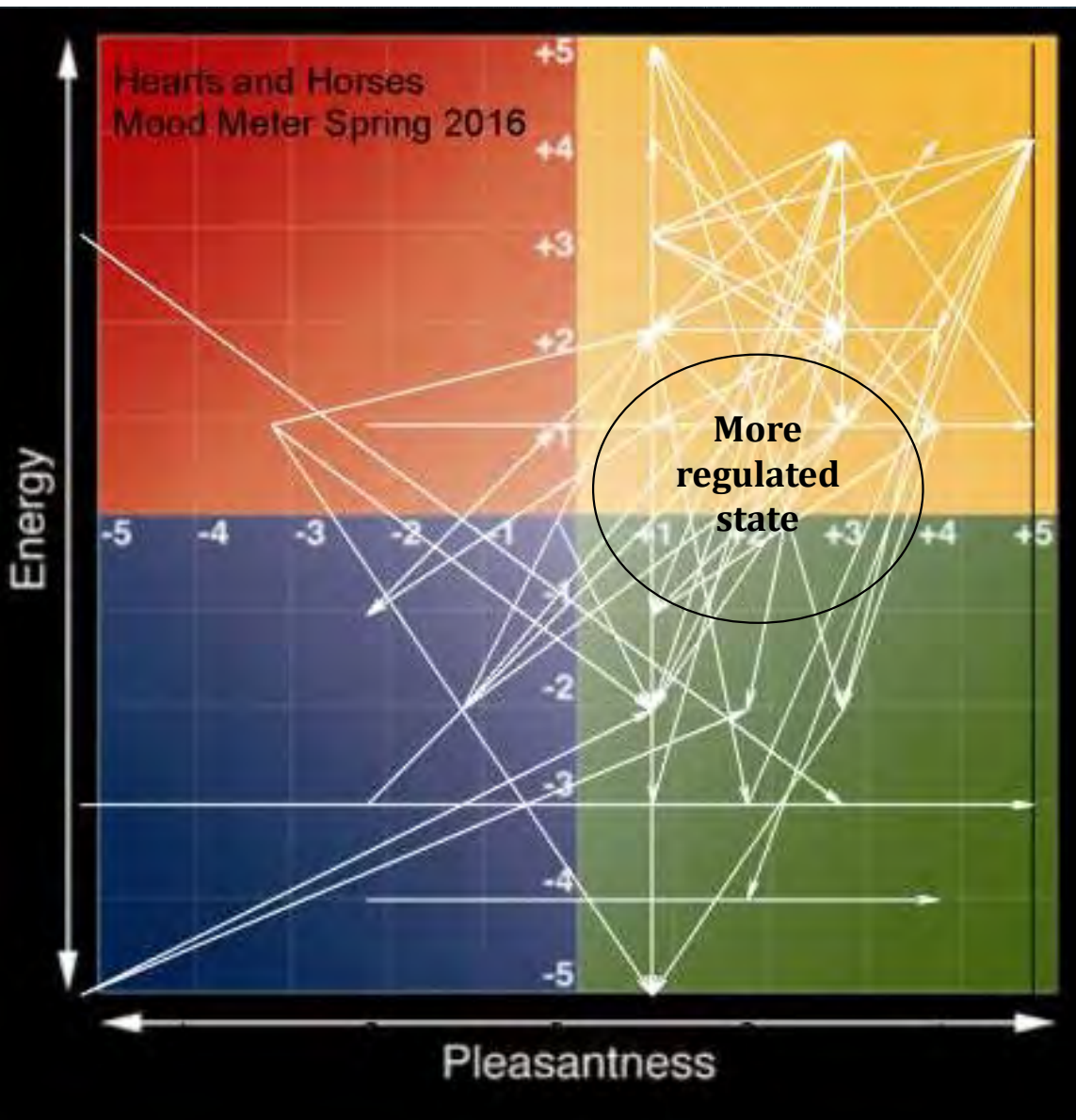
Shared Humanity – Realizing we are not alone





SEL Goals

- Communication and social skills to interact effectively
- Awareness and understanding of our own emotions
- Skills to manage and express emotions, thoughts and stress in more effective ways
- Empathy for others
- Awareness of external supports
- More engaged citizenship



Monitoring Change: DESSA Assessment (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment)

In conjunction with the school district, we are now using the DESSA to measure program outcomes.

Item #	During the past 4 weeks, how often did the child...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very frequently	Item #	During the past 4 weeks, how often did the child...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very frequently
1	carry herself/himself with confidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	compliment or congratulate somebody?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	keep trying when unsuccessful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	accept responsibility for what she/he did?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	handle his/her belongings with care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	show good judgment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	say good things about herself/himself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	pay attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	speak about positive things?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25	focus on a task despite a problem or distraction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	get along with different types of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	show an awareness of her/his personal strengths?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	seek out additional knowledge or information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	think before he/she acted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	take an active role in learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	express concern for another person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	act respectfully in a game or competition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29	ask questions to clarify what he/she did not understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	respect another person's opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	follow the advice of a trusted adult?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31	ask somebody for feedback?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	do routine tasks or chores without being reminded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32	stay calm when faced with a challenge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	resolve a disagreement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	33	describe how he/she was feeling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	get things done in a timely fashion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	34	give an opinion when asked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Standardized social & emotional competence assessment for students in grades K-12.
- Assesses eight domains of social-emotional wellness: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, goal-directed behavior, personal responsibility, decision making, optimistic thinking.
- Completed by teachers, parents or staff members pre and post session.
- Strength-based assessment of 72 questions.



Monitoring Change: Assessments

Our program is currently using the following assessments to monitor change.

These surveys are completed by the students pre and post session.

Participant Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

9 question survey

Survey topics: interest/pleasure in doing things, feeling depressed, trouble sleeping, feeling tired, appetite issues, trouble concentrating, and thoughts of harming yourself.

General Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7)

7 question survey

Survey topics: feeling nervous/anxious, worrying, trouble relaxing, being restless, irritability, and feeling afraid.

Self-Efficacy

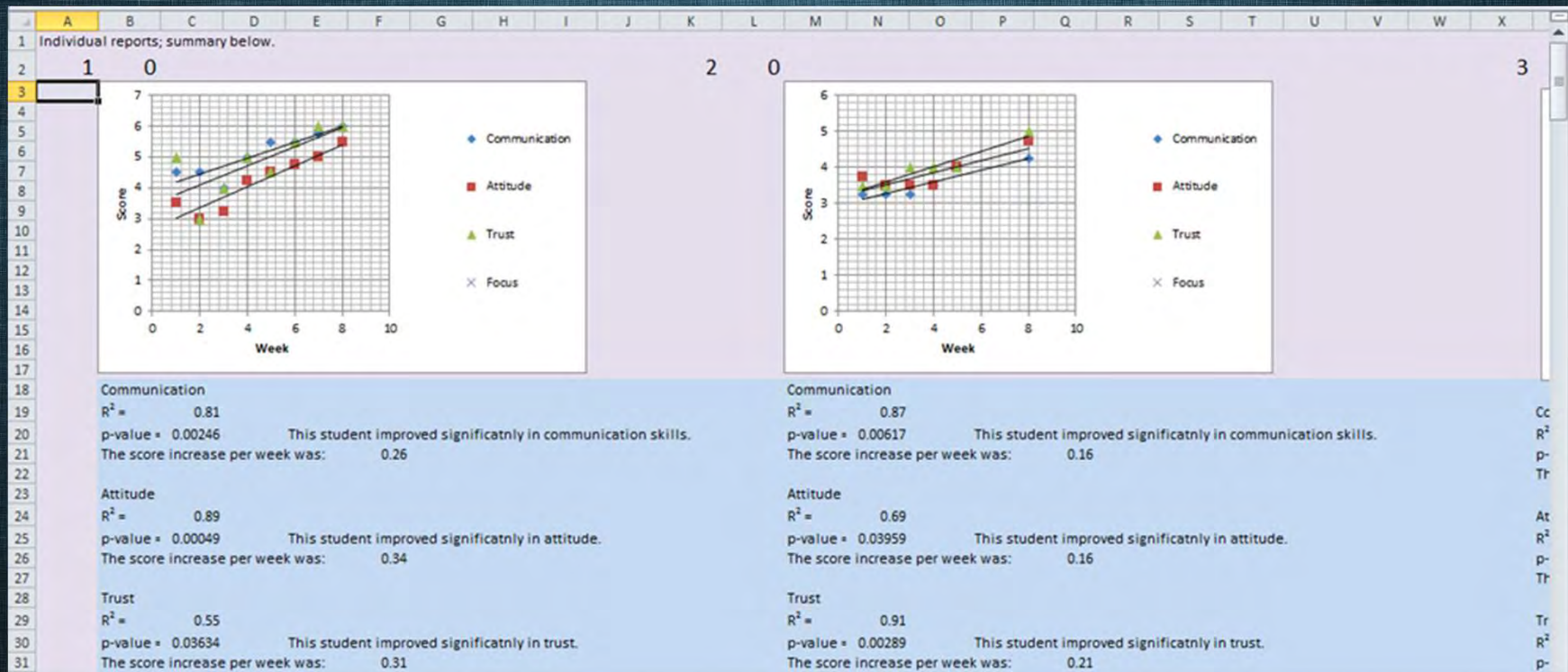
10 question survey

Survey topics: problem solving, goals, doing a good job, staying calm when faced with difficult tasks, and finding different solutions.



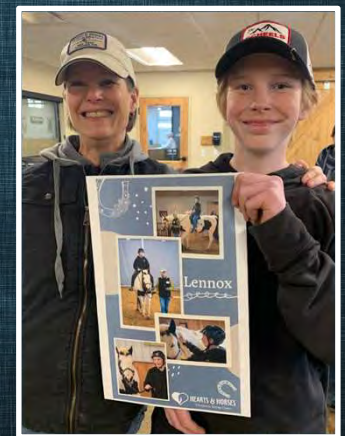
Hearts & Horses - Volunteer Assessment Tool

Significant Improvements in Communication, Trust & Attitude



Marking the Moment in Time

~ Graduation Celebration ~



The Importance of Healthy Closure

Curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.

~ Walt Disney ~



HEARTS & HORSES
Therapeutic Riding Center



April 2022



"Where the wisdom of the horse moves us to develop and deepen our greatest potential."



Funding the Program





*"My horse
makes me feel
like a somebody
on a day when I
feel like a
nobody."*

Resource Information

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**January 2024:
Changing Leads Curriculum
& Implementation Manuals**



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COLLEGE OF
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The Study

Evaluating the efficacy of an equine-assisted social-emotional learning program for youth with a history of trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences.



CASEL, 2022

SEL is one of the most universally adopted, evidence-based approaches to address student well-being (Cook et al., 2015) across five domains.

The Study

This study explored the impacts of a social-emotional learning program in an equine setting on the following measures:

1. Social-Emotional Competencies (Parent & Teacher DESSA)
2. Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression (GAD-7 and PHQ-9)
3. Self-Efficacy (GSE)



<https://www.heartsandhorses.org/>



THE COLLEGE of AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES



Equine Behavior and Welfare

Behavioral indicators can be the **FIRST** sign of mental and/or physical stress.



The Physiology

Physiological measures can confirm what we might see.

Salivary Cortisol

- Acute Stress
- Minimally Invasive



Thermal Imaging

- Sympathetic Activation
- Non-Invasive



Work Cited

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