Experiential Learning Principles

1. Effective experiential learning will affect the learner’s cognitive structures (action theories), attitudes, values, perceptions and behavioral patterns.

2. People believe more in knowledge discovered themselves than in knowledge presented by others.

3. Learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process.

4. Acceptance of new action theories, attitudes and behavioral patterns cannot be brought about piecemeal; one’s whole cognitive-affective-behavioral system must change.

5. It takes more than just information to change actions, thoughts, attitudes and behavior patterns.

6. It takes more than first hand experience to generate valid knowledge. A theoretical system is required.

7. Behavior changes will be temporary unless the action theories and attitudes underlying them are changed.

8. Changes in perception of oneself and one’s social environment are necessary before changes in actions, thoughts, attitudes and behavior take place.

9. The more supportive, accepting and caring the social environment, the freer we are to experiment with new behaviors, attitudes, actions and thoughts.

10. Both the person and social environment must change for other changes to be permanent.

11. It is easier to change in a group than when alone.

12. We accept new systems of action, thought, attitude and behavior patterns when we accept membership in a new group.
**Experiential learning** refers to a style of learning that occurs when a person is interacting with the environment, including the people, animals and situations involved. It is learning by doing and may take place during a short period of time, such as during a workshop, or during regularly scheduled sessions. It promotes personal exploration of feelings and behaviors in an educational format. During experiential learning, one tries out strategies and procedures of an action theory, gets results and feedback, and then organizes present information and experiences into an action theory.

**Carl Rogers:** Experiential Learning (EL) addresses the needs and wants of the learner. The qualities of EL include: personal involvement, self-initiated, evaluated by the learner and pervasive effects on the learner. Rogers believes that experiential learning is equivalent to personal change and growth. He believes that all human beings have a natural propensity to learn. His principles of experiential learning are:

1. Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is relevant to the personal interests of the student.
2. Learning which is threatening to the self (e.g., new attitudes or perspectives) is more easily assimilated when external threats are at a minimum.
3. Learning proceeds faster when the threat to the self is low.
4. Self-initiated learning is the most lasting and pervasive.

**Advantages of Experiential Learning:**

1. Use of multiple senses can increase retention of what is learned.
2. Multiple teaching/learning methods can be integrated to maximize creativity and flexibility.
3. Client-centered learning becomes the focus.
4. The process of discovery of knowledge and solutions builds competence and confidence.
5. Learning is more fun for both students and teachers.
6. If clients are more actively engaged in learning, they have a greater stake in the outcome of what they learn and are less likely to become discipline problems.
7. Students can learn life skills that will be used over and over.

**Disadvantages of Experiential Learning:**

1. A decentralized approach can seem less orderly, and it may be less comfortable to an authoritarian-style teacher.
2. It requires more preparation by the leader/teacher and may require more time for processing.
3. It requires patience and guidance by the instructor/facilitator.
4. There is often no single “right” answer.
CANTER's HAND, Nov. 13, 2010

Complete paperwork as needed

10:30 - Noon  Introductions
   A. All participants introduced
   B. Final paperwork, initial evaluations
      1. balance
      2. helmet fit
      3. program goals and expectations
      4. CANTER'S HAND policies
   C. Safety agreement:
      My name is __________, and I agree to be responsible for
      myself today, and thus contribute to the safety of the
      group. Brief discussion of what this might mean.
   D. Introduction to equine behavior.
   E. Meet and observe the CANTER horses.
   F. Re-group and discuss observations

Noon - 12:45 PM Lunch

12:45 - 2:30 PM  Interactions with Horses
   A. How to Approach a horse safely
      1. Con su permiso
      2. Each person to do this when comfortable.
   B. Choosing a horse for the afternoon
   C. Grooming and hand's on time with your horse
   D. Being with and breathing with your horse
   E. Horses put away
   F. Back to opening circle to discuss observations
   G. Final feedback from the group and questions
CANTER's HAND, Nov. 20, 2010

Complete paperwork if needed

10:30 - 11:00 AM  Review of first week
   A. Everyone introduced again
   B. Safety agreement:
      1. My name is ______, and I agree to be responsible for myself today, and thus contribute to the safety of the group. Brief discussion of what this might mean.
   C. Helmet fit
   D. Goals and expectations for today

11:00 - 11:30 PM  Building relationship through:
   A. understanding equine behavior.
   B. approaching a horse safely
   C. choosing a horse for the day
   D. grooming and tacking

11:30 - 12:00 PM  Lunch

12:00 - 1:30 PM  Interactions with Horses
   A. Groom and tack horses
      1. one horse with a saddle, one with a High Handle Natural Ride
   B. Mounted and/or unmounted work
   C. Horses put away
   D. Back to opening circle to discuss observations
   E. Final feedback from the group and questions

HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVERYONE!

See you Saturday, Nov. 27th for our final session.
CANTER's HAND, Nov. 27, 2010

9:30 - 10:15 AM  Review of first 2 weeks

A. Safety agreement:
   1. My name is ______, and I agree to be responsible for myself today, and thus contribute to the safety of the group. Brief discussion of what this might mean.
B. Sissy, grief and loss, ceremony
C. Goals and expectations for today
D. Observer role

10:15 - 11:30 PM  Building relationship through:

A. Review safety around horses, equine behavior
B. choosing a horse for the day
C. grooming and tacking

11:30 - 12:30 PM  Interactions with Horses

A. Assign horses, select tack and team members
B. Mounted and/or unmounted work
C. Horses put away
D. Back to opening circle to discuss observations
E. Final feedback from the group

HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE!
**Cochise Community Foundation**  
**Grant Report**

Organization: C.A.N.T.E.R. (Cochise Area Network of Therapeutic Equestrian Resources)  
Project Name: H.A.N.D. (Helping America’s National Defenders)  
Amount Awarded: $893 plus $2,387.

Project Start Date: 13 Nov 2010  
End Date: 27 Nov. 2010  
Check if Ongoing: X (we hope)  
Community(s) Served: Veterans & families of the Armed Services

Target Audience: Veterans & families of the Armed Services  
Number Served: 9  
Percentage of Project Completed as Proposed: 100%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was done?</th>
<th>How was it done? (steps/process)</th>
<th>Who completed it?</th>
<th>What was accomplished?</th>
<th>What will/has changed as a result?</th>
<th>How much was spent on each activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Activity #1 2 hours | 13 Nov AM session  
Introductions  
Safety Agreement  
Intro to equine behavior  
Meet/observe horses in arena  
Discuss observations and share lunch provided | • Final paperwork  
• Complete expectation questionnaire  
• Fit helmets  
• Discuss participants expectations  
• Discuss horse behavior  
• Regroup and share what they’ve learned  
• Share lunch and get to know each other | NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces | Team formed a therapeutic group and began the trust process with fellow group members, expectations voiced along with why each participant chose to participate  
Team learned about horse behavior and their own fear  
Team got to know each other better over the provided lunch | The provided group lunch was provided by one of the staff. It was a good idea and one that we should continue as we provide H.A.N.D. sessions in the future.  
We need to put that expense into our planning budget | Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company  
Lunch was $80.00  
Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors, psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67 |
| Activity #2 2 hours | 13 Nov PM session  
Interactions with horses  
Grooming and hands-on time with horse  
Breathing with horse  
Horses put away  
Discuss observations | • Con su permiso  
• Having a horse choose their partner  
• Grooming supervised by CANTER instructors/therapist | NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some | We followed the protocol “con su permiso” to meet and interact with the horses, each veteran learned to groom a horse with the direct supervision of CANTER personnel, the | This was a good session, we plan to use this lesson plan for future CANTER HAND sessions | Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company  
Lunch was $80.00  
Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final feedback from group and questions</th>
<th>psychiatrist</th>
<th>with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces</th>
<th>veterans participated in learning to breath with the horse to “link-up” Group formed for end of day discussion and sharing</th>
<th>psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity #3 2 hours Nov 20, 2010 Group introductions, safety agreement, helmets Goals and expectations for day Building relationship through process</td>
<td>Group reconnected Safety agreement voiced by all Helmets fitted Discussion about how to build a relationship through understanding equine behavior/approaching a horse safely/choosing a horse to interact with/grooming and tacking</td>
<td>NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces</td>
<td>Team discussed and voiced the safety agreement, fitted helmets to each one, learned about equine behavior and how a horse chooses you and you choose a horse to partner with. Learned safety behavior around the horses</td>
<td>This was a good session, we plan to use this lesson plan for future CANTER HAND sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company Lunch was $80.00 Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors, psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity#4 2 hours Nov. 20, 2010 Interactions with horses Mounted and unmounted work Put horses away (procedures/participate) Gather in circle to discuss feelings, observations, experiences</td>
<td>Grooming with supervision of CANTER staff Mounted work for those who could ride Unmounted work for those who were unable to ride Each participant assisted in putting horses away Regroup to discuss</td>
<td>NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces</td>
<td>Most veterans were able to ride their horse. If they were physically unable to ride, unmounted ground work was completed. All veterans were able to learn the procedures and put their horses away. Feelings were freely shared</td>
<td>This was a good session, we plan to use this lesson plan for future CANTER HAND sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company Lunch was $80.00 Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors, psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Activity # 5 2 hours  
Nov 27, 2010  
Review safety agreement  
Grief/loss/ceremony  
Goals and expectations for today  
Observer role | Gather into group, each re-state safety agreement  
Discuss loss of CANTER horse  
Grief-loss group session lead by our psychiatrist  
Discussion of goals and expectations each participant has for date and role of observers | NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces | We had to put one of the horses down on 26 Nov. due to a broken leg. This changed the group work to grief and loss. The horse death brought an avenue to address the grief and loss in battle, of loved ones and of pets. It was a very emotional group meeting facilitated by our psychiatrist  
Goals and expectations for the afternoon session were discussed | The loss of the horse was traumatic for everyone and we used the loss to help the group process other losses in their lives. We don’t plan to lose any horses in future HAND sessions, but we will not shy away from this subject in the future. | Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company  
Lunch was $80.00  
Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors, psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity # 6 2 hours  
Nov 27, 2010  
Horses assigned, tack selected, team members formed  
Mounted and unmounted work  
Horses put away  
Reform circle to discuss feelings, observations and provide final feedback to the group | Horses paired up with riders to provide maximum therapeutic interaction  
Participants tack horses under supervision of staff  
Mounted and unmounted time, depending on individual’s needs and precautions  
Put horses back into their stalls | NARHA instructors (2), psychiatrist, occupational therapist, specially trained and selected volunteers, some with military service, and selected veterans of the armed forces | Veterans learned to read which horse had picked them for this session. They continued to learn about tacking under the supervision of CANTER staff, the mounted lesson focused on independent riding skills, the unmounted participants learned to observe horse communication and rider skills | This was a good session, we plan to use this lesson plan for future CANTER HAND sessions  
Drinks were donated by the local Pepsi company  
Lunch was $80.00  
Each activity was structured to be of equal cost: NARHA instructors, psychiatrist, and occupational therapist plus CANTER use of horses and facility so the total grant was divided by the number of activities which is $546.67 |
- Re-join circle for group discussion about feelings, observations, and final feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional project funding received? If so, how much and from who?</th>
<th>Other than the donation of drinks and food, no other donations were received for this HAND session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships formed as a result of project? If so with who?</td>
<td>The local Veteran’s Administration Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please send any project related press releases, articles, photos, digital stories, and project evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any additional comments/challenges/stories?</td>
<td>We asked the participants to complete a pre-program and post-program assessment questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of comments received stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they received physical, cognitive, psycho-social and personal goal benefits. Some written comments included: “benefitted from talking about things, sharing stories, experiences” “it helped the effects of my M.S. (multiple sclerosis) and mental illness to decrease some. I love horses and all other animals, so it helped to be able to focus on what I was doing with them” “it would be nice to have the program continue” was mentioned by 2 “it really helped stretch my legs, better than other therapies since his surgery” “since we (husband and wife) started attending HAND, our marriage is better, we’ve only had one fight in the last month, and he’s finally talking about issues” One veteran was able to get released from the hospital in time to attend the second session, since s/he didn’t want to miss it. One veteran has made contact to see if we were going to be able to offer more CANTER’s HAND sessions in the future. The VA psychiatrist visited one session and was really impressed to see one of her patients fully participate. The patient suffers from anxiety and had a hard time accepting complements from the group. She was able to acknowledge this and worked on it the last session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This report was prepared by: (Please print name and email address) Gretchen Lamberth MS OTR/L gretchenlamberth@hotmail.com