

Equine Assisted Learning Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers:

- Focus is on teaching social, behavioral, and/or life skills.
- Student's do not learn how to ride.

Basic training requirements

- Attend a regular volunteer training
- Attend leader trainings as they are available

Confidentiality – can discuss sessions in general BUT MUST NOT use student's names. Be careful talking about individuals with Eatonville groups because we are in the community and the students are likely to be known. Again, talk up the program in general terms but do not say anything that will identify a student.

Typical Lesson (arrive 15 minutes before start)

1. Brief meeting before the group arrives to go over lesson plan and what horses will be needed for the activity.
2. Security Sweep
 - Twine, scissors, knives, thumb tacks put in office area
 - Tack room, Office, Medicine cabinet must be locked for Pearl Street
 - Lock garage and both lower doors in the house for Pearl Street
 - Lock cars always
3. Help get horses into their stalls, sign on entrance gate (only some groups), sweep teaching stall if needed.
4. Meet kids in parking lot. (We shake hands, smile, welcome them back, etc...)
5. Begin lesson—Julie usually gets things started, Sandra and Julie facilitate the group teaching and discussions.
 - Safety pledge
 - Recap of prior lesson concept or idea
 - Introduce activity with horses
 - Activity discussion
 - Grooming with staff
 - Wrap up discussion
6. When kids leave help put horses and materials away.
7. Staff meeting: We do a quick wrap up of what we observed with the students. We find out how grooming went; report any behaviors that should be noted. (Please email Julie, Julie@changingrein.org, if you think of something later that should be noted.)

Staff Guidelines:

- Be focused on the activity—help redirect students if they are not paying attention with a head nod or subtle gesture.
- Observe students/horses. Note interactions for wrap up meeting.
- Handle horses – bringing to or taking from the arena.
- During grooming—you will pair with a student and horse. Try to stay with that same student from week to week. Students groom, staff provide support as needed. Keep conversations to here and now (more on this below).
- If a horse seems to be having an issue, ask Sandra to check it.
- Do not leave students unattended at any time. You can leave a student who is grooming if there is another staff (CR staff or supervisor) nearby and you let them know you are leaving to get something.
- Check report that Julie emails out each week and report back with corrections.
- Do not photograph any of the kids in any of the sessions. –ASK Julie if you want a particular photo. Most of the kids have signed NO PHOTO statements.
- If you know a family/student in any of the groups let Julie know right away. For MOST groups it is beneficial for the students not to have someone helping who knows them (and their history).

Student Interactions:

- Treat students with respect – we may be the only ones who do!
- Keep joking/teasing to a minimum and always appropriate. We do not want to be “friends”, but mentors.
- Never be alone with a student, others should be in visual/hearing distance at all times. Be especially aware if you are grooming outside the barn.
- If you’re not sure about a situation, CHECK with Julie or Sandra, even if it is after the fact. We trust your best judgment, but check for next time.
- Do not offer to “keep in touch” or “get in touch” outside of CR. We give them CR business cards with our email addresses (Sandra or Julie) and the CR Facebook page if they ask. Always direct them to Sandra.
- If students share personal information or situations (my dog has been sick or grandma’s coming to visit), you can ask them about it the next week. However, if it is anything like “Dad’s been getting drunk and being horrid A LOT lately” –DO NOT ask if things are going better at home.

- Do NOT ask personal questions, or make “tell me more about that” type comments. Always redirect to the lessons we’re learning at CR or to the task of grooming. For ex: a student tells you about fighting in the family. You might respond with, “Well, being out here must be a refreshing break for you.” OR “I think [name of horse] can probably relate.”
- As students open up to you, do not make judgmental statements to students or try to counsel them in any way.

Here are some sample responses:

- *It’s good that you are able to be here, then. I’m sure you’ll be glad to be back next week. Take a good memory of [name of horse] with you.*
- *I understand. My grandmother was bipolar. It was hard.*
- *Do you think that [name of horse] can sense how you’re feeling?*
- *I can understand that. I can see why you like being with the horses.*
- *I’ve felt that way, too. I find grooming helps me to refocus on positive things.*
- *Wow. It’s a good thing you can change your future.*
- *Well, sometimes you just need a horse hug, don’t you? Horses help put me in a better frame of mind.*
- *I’m so sorry that happened to you. It’s nice to be with [name of horse] on days like today, isn’t it?*