Building Accountability and Credibility in Therapeutic Riding

The TRAIN Approach to Measuring Impact
Presentation by Cathy Hybels, Ph.D. and the TRAIN Instructor Panel
November 2015 PATH Intl. Conference and Annual Meeting
We want to help

CHANGE

the Conversation

in TR
From success defined as “how much we do”...

# Participants
  # New Participants
  # Volunteers
# Volunteer Hours
# Lessons
$ value of volunteer time

Types of EAAT programs
...to also include “how well we perform” and to answer “is anyone better off?”

How much we do

Is Anyone Better Off?

How well we perform

Impact on the Community
Results-Based Accountability
Evidence-Based Practices
Research on EAAT Effectiveness
We want to help advance accountability at each of these levels.
Therapeutic Riding Assessment of Impact Network
TRAIN Milestones

- **High Horses TR center’s first pilot study using GAS to assess participant outcomes**
  - May 2012

- **Initial meeting of the TRAIN collaborative involving 4 PATH Intl. Region One TR centers**
  - June 2013

- **TRAIN expands to include 4 additional NH-based TR centers**
  - March 2014

- **High Horses completes 2 more GAS feasibility studies**
  - March 2014

- **Feasibility study completed for evaluation of the TRAIN collaborative approach**
  - January 2015

- **TRAIN expands to include 4 additional NH-based TR centers**
  - Summer 2015

- **Feb-August 2015 results released for 5 TRAIN centers**
  - August 2015
4 Original TRAIN Centers
4 NH TRAIN Centers (joined summer of 2015)

- Full Circle Farm
- Miracles In Motion
- Touchstone
- University of NH
What Do We Mean by Outcomes Evaluation?

Outcomes are the changes in individuals, groups, organizations, and/or communities that can be logically linked to program activities.

Evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding.
What is Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)?

✓ A participant-centered approach to OE
✓ Focuses on measuring observable gains in skills
✓ Allows for measurement of gains (big and small)
✓ Low cost to implement and maintain
✓ Low training requirements for staff and volunteers
✓ Offers summary scores of overall program effectiveness
✓ OE method with longevity and established credibility & validity that is widely used
✓ Builds capacity for future research projects
✓ Flexibility fits well with EAAT
Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Cycle

Set Goals

• At the beginning of each TR session

Deliver Instruction

• Provide opportunities to practice targeted skills

Measure Performance

• Independent rater observes lesson and assesses goal attainment
Decisions For Each TRAIN Center

- When to start using GAS?
- How many participants to involve?
- How many goals per participant?
- How many TR Instructors to involve?
How much did we do?

Therapeutic riding participants

232 received GAS session goals

194 obtained independent assessments of their session progress

On average, each participant had 1.3 TR goals per session

Therapeutic riding instructors

Wrote 312 GAS goals

18 utilized GAS in TR lessons

6 instructors first started using GAS during this time period

Wrote 10 goals per session on average

Represented 5 TR centers

Data came from 9 TR sessions
How well are we doing it?

**Therapeutic riding participants**

- **85%** of those with GAS goals had their performance assessed by an independent rater.
- **40%** of those who participated in TR lessons at the participating centers were involved in OE efforts.
- On **27%** of the goals, extenuating circumstances at the time of evaluation may have had an influence on goal attainment.

**Therapeutic riding instructors**

- **75%** who taught during Feb-August utilized GAS.
- **63%** of the goals included the participant’s own session goal (or that provided by family members or care providers).
- For **78%** of the goals, instructors provided some written instructions for leaders & side walkers on how best to support goal attainment.
- For **62%** of the goals, instructors offered ideas on how gains in targeted skills might potentially benefit the participant beyond horseback riding.
Is anyone better off?

92% of participants showed progress beyond their baseline performance in at least one skill area.

Assessments of participant performance in the targeted skill areas by independent raters indicated:

On 13% of the goals, the participants demonstrated no progress beyond baseline in the targeted skill area.

On 16% of the goals, there was some progress in the targeted skill, but less than was expected.

On 38% of the goals, the expected amount of progress in the targeted skill area was demonstrated.

On 18% of the goals, participants demonstrated better than expected progress in the targeted skill area.

On 15% of the goals, raters observed much better than expected progress in the targeted skill area.
On 27% of the goals, raters reported that participants’ performances may have been negatively affected by extenuating circumstances.
GAS Results Reveal Factors That May Have Potentially Limited Goal Attainment

Support team issues
(12 goals)

Lesson horse behaviors
(27 goals)

P well-being
(4 goals)

Other issues
(34 goals)
TRAIN GAS Goal Horsemanship Skill Focus

Number of GAS Goals

- Mount
- Dismount
- Uses Natural Aids
- Halt
- Back Up
- Walk--overall
- Walk--half seat
- Walk-post
- Trot/jog--sit
- Trot/jog--half seat
- Trot/jog--post
- Canter/lope
- Jump
- Horse Safety
- Tack
- Un-tack
- Groom
- Lead
- Other

20
TRAIN Centers Reported Conversations Changed with...

- Participants
- Families & Care Providers
  - TR Instructors
  - TR Volunteers
- Board Members & Donors
TRAIN Instructor Panel

Liz Adams, High Hopes
Sue Miller, High Horses
Kristen McGraw, UpReach
Thank you!

For more information, contact:

**Cathy Smith Hybels, Ph.D.**
Therapeutic Riding Assessment of Impact Network (TRAIN)
chybels@sover.net

Previous project reports and TRAIN forms can be found on the [High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program](http://www.highhorses.org) website ([www.highhorses.org](http://www.highhorses.org)) or by following the links below:

- [Measuring Outcomes at High Horses: Pilot Study Results](#)
- [Measuring Outcomes at High Horses: 2013 Feasibility Study Results](#)
- [Getting WISE at High Horses and Measuring the Outcomes: 2013 Pilot Study Results](#)
- [Building Capacity for Evaluating Outcomes in Therapeutic Riding: A Collaborative Approach](#)
- [Building Capacity for Evaluating Outcomes in Therapeutic Riding Using GAS and a Collaborative Approach: A Summary of the Lessons Learned](#)