



Trigger Alley

Goal:

To identify and recognize triggers, process triggers and introduce coping skills for when triggering happens

Rationale:

Identifying triggers brings an awareness to the veteran that may help him/her choose their reactions to situations and/or allow them to analyze situations for triggers before they go in

Objectives:

- Identify triggers both conscious and subconscious
- Process triggers with Mental Health Professional
- Introduce coping methods for dealing with triggers
- Decrease reaction to triggers through mindfulness, relaxation and coping

Materials:

- 2 sensitive horses with halters & leads
- Props from the prop area in the arena
- Self-stick labels
- Marker
- Yarn

Activity:

- Clients build an alley with props from the prop area (standards, poles, etc.), must have clear boundaries
- Clients fill up the alley with other props (cones, rings, balls, etc), usually 4-5 per veteran
- Label the middle props with triggers the veterans identify
- Two veterans, one on each side (outside of the alley), each with a lead line attached to one horse, take the horse through the alley slowly and with little pressure on the lead lines – if the horse stops at, kicks, smells, knocks over or brushes an object, record those triggers and keep going
- Once through, process the triggers identified by the horse with the Mental Health Professional
- Second time through: two veterans with yarn instead of lead ropes, repeat activity
- Third time through: single veteran (may be inside the alley) with loose lead, repeat activity
- If there is time, the 4th time through: single veteran, switch horse and repeat activity

Process:

- Was this easy or hard? Why?
- Did the horse pick up on the triggers you wrote down or others?



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- Were you surprised at the triggers the horse identified?
- Do the triggers identified by the horse relate to you?