“Riding horses is the highlight of my week... it’s what I look forward to doing.”

“The only time I don’t feel pain is when I’m riding in the saddle.”

— Chris Petrone
LSCW, Program Manager, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Veterans Administration, White City, OR
quoting two veterans

“Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies for Veterans and Military Personnel

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PHYSICAL
Veterans with mobility impairments, including spinal cord injuries and amputations, and physiological dysregulation may benefit from the horse’s simulated gait, which improves balance, posture, core strength, flexibility and confidence.

SOCIAL
The equine environment provides a safe space for veterans to come together to share triumphs and challenges. Veterans often report feeling a loss of community after leaving the service so the opportunity to bond with fellow veterans, staff and volunteers, as well as the horses, breaks patterns of isolation and disconnection associated with trauma.

COGNITIVE
Order and direction required while learning proper horsemanship are familiar skills to veterans and military personnel. Focus, organization, reasoning and attention are applied during EAAT sessions.

EMOTIONAL
Bonding with a large animal can be emotionally satisfying and comforting. EAAT provides veterans with opportunities to learn and practice emotional regulation, distress tolerance and resilience. These new skills can lead to increased self-confidence and self-worth resulting in hope and healing.