



# THERAPY SERVICES INFORMATION MANUAL

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## THE THERAPY SERVICES PROGRAM INFORMATION

Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services (TS) offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy that incorporates equine movement as a treatment strategy. Our therapists skillfully direct the movement of the horse to challenge and engage the client's neuromuscular and sensorimotor systems to address the client's challenges, such as deficits in balance, endurance, coordination, communication, speech, and attention. Therapy Services treats clients as young as 2 years old.

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services offer a year round program where children with disabilities as young as 2 can participate in a weekly physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech-language therapy appointment. Each appointment utilizes equine movement as a part of the treatment strategy. Appointments are led by a Saddle Up! Physical, Occupational, or Speech-Language Therapist who have received specialized training through the American Hippotherapy Association and are supported by a PATH International Certified Instructor. Therapy Service appointment durations are scheduled based on assessments completed by the therapist. A typical appointment is 45 minutes and takes place on the back of a horse, in our on-site treatment room, and in the dynamic environment of the barn. Appointments are scheduled during the day (no evening or weekend appointments available) Monday through Friday.

### HORSE PARTNERSHIP

Our licensed therapists partner with the horse because their movement creates a multi-sensory experience that can be purposefully manipulated by the horse handler under the direction of the therapist to challenge the client to produce functional change. The three-dimensional movement imparted to the client creates a pattern similar to typical walking, which cannot be duplicated in a traditional clinic setting. Clients learn to react and respond to the movement of the horse, leading to improvements in balance, strength, coordination, and postural control. Therapists can adjust the movement of the horse to provide specific input to the neuro motor and sensorimotor systems. With these systems regulated, clients are able to interact optimally with their environment showing improvements in attention, sensory regulation, communication, muscle engagement, and postural control. The dynamic movement of the horse combined with the dynamic environment can help promote functional change, resulting in increased independence in mobility, activities of daily living, and increased participation in family, school, and community life.

### PROGRESS & GOALS

Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services goals are individualized to the specific needs of each client. These goals are aimed at creating functional change with independence in mobility, activities of daily living, and increased participation in family, school, and community life. This program does not address horsemanship skills as in our Adaptive Riding program. Progress notes are completed following each appointment to assess functional change towards goals and guide further plan of care. The therapist will continue to assess progress on a regular basis to determine further plan of care or transition into the adaptive riding program or another community-based recreational activity.

## ELIGIBILITY

- Participants must be between the age of 2 and 19 years old and have a documented disability.
- Participants must have appropriate head, neck, and trunk control to sit upright on the horse.
- Depending on the child's diagnosis, other factors that are considered for participation in therapy include:
  - Potential for measurable progress with therapy services
  - Sitting balance
  - Height and weight
  - Mobility and alignment of joints, including spine
  - Significant allergies
  - Behavior
- Participants must be eligible for Physical, Occupational, or Speech Therapy services and receive a prescription/referral from their health care provider prior to participation.
- Saddle Up! follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for determining eligibility for our programs.
- Eligibility and program placement will be determined by reviewing the participant's medical history, conducting a parent interview, and completing a therapy evaluation (if needed). There is a \$175 charge for a therapy evaluation.
- The therapist will continue to assess progress on a regular basis to determine further plan of care or transition into the adaptive riding program or another community-based recreational activity.

## PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS

- Paperwork must be completed prior to beginning a program or interacting with a horse.
- All participants are required to have a completed Physician Referral and Participant Release annually.
- All participants are required to have an updated Physician's Statement form every two years.

## PROPER ATTIRE

If your child arrives for therapy without the proper attire we reserve the right to not allow him/her in the barn and/or on a horse for their safety.

- ASTM-SEI Riding Helmet – Please purchase one that fits your child according to the Helmet Fit Guidelines in the Parent Information Manual. If an Alternative Helmet is deemed necessary by the therapists then please review our Alternative Helmet procedure.
- Comfortable clothing that allows the client full range of motion.
- Pants are recommended – such as yoga or sweat pants. However, shorts may be appropriate in warmer months as long as the therapist approves it. Certain equipment can cause rubs on the clients' thighs and legs.
- Closed toe shoe – such as boots or tennis shoes.
- Cold Weather Gear (when appropriate) – such as gloves, jacket, etc. Jackets/coats must be zipped up or fastened.
- No loose or dangling clothing or jewelry (i.e. scarves, necklaces, bangle earrings, etc.).

## PROGRAM COST & FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### PROGRAM COST

- Therapy sessions are billed at \$40 per unit (15 minutes of billable time). A typical session is 45 minutes long and costs \$120.00.
- Cost for a therapy evaluation is \$175.00.
- One-hour appointments for \$160 and 30 minute appointments for \$80 are available if deemed appropriate by the therapist.
- Records of payment are provided to clients on a monthly basis (if requested).
- It is the responsibility of the client/family to submit for insurance reimbursement as an Out of Network Benefit based on their individual coverage.

### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Payments for the Therapy Services program are expected at the time of service.
- Cash, check, and credit card are acceptable forms of payment.

## ATTENDANCE AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Consistent attendance in any therapy program is critical to maximize the benefit to the patient. Due to the cost to run a session and the number of team members involved, Saddle Up! enforces a strict attendance policy:

- Saddle Up! requires a 12-hour notice for cancellation of a therapy appointment. If less than 12-hour notice is given, a \$40.00 cancellation charge will be billed.
- If a patient misses a scheduled appointment without notification, a \$80.00 no-show fee will be assessed.
- Cancellation of more than 3 therapy appointments during a treatment course may result in the patient being removed from the therapy schedule.
- Please alert Saddle Up! if you will be more than 15 minute late for an appointment. If notification is not received, the therapy appointment will be considered a no-show and the \$80.00 fee will apply.
- For absences, please email us at [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org). If the absence is less than 2 hours' notice from the program time you MUST also CALL the lesson hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 and leave a message.
- For tardies, please call the office at (615) 794-1150 and talk with a staff person or leave a message on the lesson hotline at extension 290.

## INCORPORATION OF MIRACOLT INTO THERAPY PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce the addition of the MiraColt mechanical rider to our therapy program. The MiraColt is a simulated rider that provides, as closely as possible, the same rhythmical, repetitive and 3 dimensional movement that our horses provide. This valuable piece of equipment will enhance our therapy program by providing the following:

- An opportunity for new clients who are initially fearful of getting on an actual horse to feel the movement and acclimate before trying the "real thing".
- A means of continuing to experience the benefits of the horse's movement for those clients who are otherwise unable to safely continue riding on a horse.
- A tool for clients who have undergone surgery and are not able to immediately resume riding on the horse, but would benefit from the movement in the early stages of their recovery until they are able to resume riding.
- An alternative during inclement weather to still incorporate equine movement into a therapy visit.

## PARENT SUPERVISION & VOLUNTEER TRAINING

### PARENT SUPERVISION

- Parents/guardians must remain on site at all times while their child is participating in our Therapy Services program.
- Parents/guardians are to remain in the family area, therapy room, or outdoor family courtyard during the appointment, unless they comply with the Volunteer Training requirements below. Feel free to take a stroll down the driveway or enjoy a snack on one of our picnic tables while you are waiting.

### VOLUNTEER TRAINING FOR PARENTS ACCOMPANYING A CHILD IN THERAPY

When it is deemed appropriate by the therapist, we allow participation by our therapy parents to meet the therapy needs of our clients. During therapy sessions, it is sometimes important for the parent to accompany their child to assist with communication, alleviate fear, or receive information from the therapist about their child's progress in real time.

In order to meet safety needs of the organization and the needs of our therapy clients, we have determined that all parents who would like to accompany their child on the property during therapy (except if a parent is observing from the rail of the indoor or outdoor arenas), must complete the New Volunteer Training. This would ensure that parents are knowledgeable in Saddle Up! policy and procedure with regards to monitoring the environment and horse behavior, and have a solid understanding of emergency procedures. An added benefit to completing the New Volunteer Training is that you can step into your child's therapy session as a supporter if a volunteer cancels at the last minute. You can also participate in other volunteer activities periodically while your child is participating in therapy if you would like.

In order to schedule a time to attend the New Volunteer Training, reach out to our Volunteer Services Director. If you prefer to remain in the lobby during your child's therapy time on the horse, you are not required to complete volunteer training.

## ALTERNATIVE HELMET PROCEDURE

It is recommended that any individual participating in mounted activities on an equine utilize an ASTM-SEI approved helmet.

Alternative helmets (helmets not ASTM-SEI approved for equestrian activities) may be acceptable under very specific circumstances, which may include:

- very small or very large head size
- extreme asymmetries in head shape
- significantly poor head control
- alternative riding positions for very physically dependent riders
- very significant sensory integrative dysfunction

If the use of an ASTM-SEI equestrian helmet has been tried and is not appropriate, then a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) approved helmet for bicycle riding or an ASTM-SEI approved helmet for other sports may be considered if it provides adequate coverage over the back of the head. In extreme circumstances, when no ASTM-SEI or CPSC certified helmet is adequate, a non-ASTM-SEI or CPSC helmet may be considered. These helmets can be made of rigid or soft flexible foam and usually are found in therapeutic equipment catalogs, custom made or available for other sports. Because they are not standardized or tested for sport impact or equestrian activities, they are to be used only with extreme caution.

PATH Intl. Centers may consider alternative helmets according to the following guidelines:

- Participants who use alternative helmets (helmets not ASTM-SEI approved for equestrian activities) MUST have a written evaluation/justification by an appropriate licensed/credentialed health professional (PT, OT, SLP or MD) that specifically addresses the risk of equine activities to determine whether the use of this helmet is necessary AND to recommend which type to use.
- A non-ASTM-SEI approved helmet may be used ONLY when there are a leader and two sidewalkers with the participant as minimum safety requirements.
- The equine-assisted activities and therapies must be confined to an enclosed and safe arena.
- The equine-assisted activities and therapies must be directly supervised by an occupational, physical or speech-language therapist.
- There are no state or local laws requiring ASTM helmet use.

By signing the Alternative Helmet Form, you are acknowledging the above rules regarding helmet use and are in agreement with proceeding with mounted equine therapy with the use of an alternative helmet. The therapist will determine if an alternative adaptive helmet is necessary for your child.