

#### **Psychological and Emotional Effects of Equine Assisted Activities among Military Veterans with PTSD**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has become an increasingly common diagnosis among U.S. military veterans. One potential alternative intervention is Therapeutic Horseback Riding (THR).

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION:**

• To what extent is participating in the program associated with improvements in psychosocial and physical outcomes among U.S. veterans?



#### **RESULTS:**

		Week	<b>RG (n=9)</b>	<b>CG (n=9)</b>	<b>CG</b> converted
					to RG (n=8)
		0	59.56 (13.50)	55.13 (20.49)	58.29 (18.15)
PTSD Checklist-	Mean (SD)		42-79	21-74	31-76
Military	Range	3	55.43 (17.99)	57.38 (14.83)	47.20 (16.15)
(PCL-M)			35-82	31-73	28-70
Decrease desired		6	51.67 (26.01)	58.29 (18.15)	Still
			26-78	31-76	Riding
		0	105.56 (19.27)	110.63 (35.63)	107.57 (39.10)
Difficulties in	Mean (SD)		75-134	58-149	43-142
Emotion	Range	3	93.14 (28.13)	108.88 (27.49)	110.60 (10.59)
Regulation			61-147	58-147	93-120
(DERS)		6	105.00 (14.79)	107.57 (39.10)	Still
Decrease desired			95-122	43-142	Riding
		0	91.67 (53.35)	135.75 (63.86)	122.43 (59.39)
Coping Self-	Mean (SD)		20-171	46-255	61-236
Efficacy Scale	Range	3	117.00 (64.07)	115.50 (66.84)	130.20 (52.57)
(CSES)			51-209	35-255	49-192
Increase desired		6	95.33 (14.57)	122.43 (59.39)	Still
			80-109	61-236	Riding
		0	58.11 (12.93)	54.63 (17.47)	61.71 (21.69)
Social/Emotional	Mean (SD)		41-82	33-85	18-81
Loneliness Scale	Range	3	54.86 (10.61)	60.86 (19.57)	57.20 (23.53)
for Adults (SELSA)			45-76	38-88	26-88
Decrease desired		6	60.67 (9.50)	61.71 (21.69)	Still
			51-70	18-81	Riding

• What are the veterans' perceptions of a six week THR program?

# **HYPOTHESIS:**

• Veterans randomized to participate in the six week THR program will have improved self-efficacy, emotion regulation, and social engagement than veterans randomized to a wait-list control group.

### **METHODS:**

- Collaboration with Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) accredited THR centers.
- Randomized design consisting of a Riding Group (RG) and wait-list Control Group (CG).
- A one hour weekly intervention for six weeks.
- Data collection at baseline, week 3, and week 6.
- Collected weekly riding diary from participants.





## **QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS:**

- Current trend for the PTSD symptoms supports hypothesis.
- Self-efficacy and loneliness show improvements between the baseline and week 3.



- Demographic Questionnaire & Health History
- PTSD Checklist- Military Version
- Coping Self Efficacy Scale
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale
- Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults- Short Version
- Weekly Riding Diary

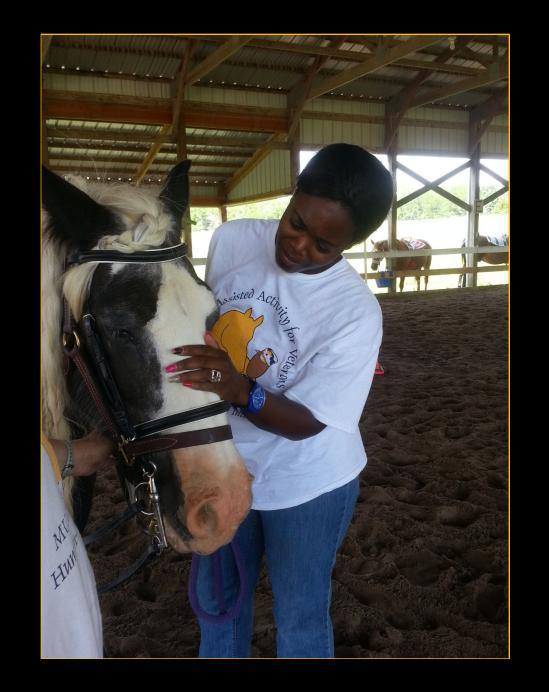
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• Data collection is ongoing.







# **QUALITATIVE FINDINGS:**

*"I am more empathetic around animals and it has helped me be more empathetic with my new born daughter."* 

"I have been reminded of some very pleasant memories of my past. It felt good to be close to the horse. I better remember being a little boy. There are tears in my eyes right now."

