



Pegasus Riding for the Disabled

Individual/Group Mounted Program

Fact Sheet

This is a mounted horse-facilitated therapy program provided by nationally qualified coaches that teaches horse skills to people and children with a disability.

For ages three years and up, these classes are delivered in a social class setting or individually. Classes are structured on the basis of the participant's ability. Our emphasis is on assessing the abilities and needs of each rider, through consultation with relevant people (riders, teachers, occupational and speech therapists, psychologists, parents and carers), and developing an individualised program for each rider to enhance their abilities.

Outcomes and Benefits

Physical and Sensory:

- Increased endurance and low-level cardiovascular conditioning.
- Improved overall fitness and physical capacity from participation in weekly exercise to improve motion, balance, muscle strength and coordination.
- Increased muscular and postural control. Core muscles are strengthened from learning to sit comfortably and ride with the movement of the horse.
- Reduction of abnormal movement patterns and decreased spasticity through the warmth and movement of the horse and stretching tight or spastic muscles.
- Stimulation of sensory processing, especially vestibular (balance) and proprioceptive (spatial orientation of the body in regards to position, motion and equilibrium) sensory systems.
- Helps integration of sensory systems, sight, vision, movement, hearing, touch, vestibular.
- Improvement in gross and fine motor skills.

Psychological:

- Enriched confidence, trust and self-esteem.

- Improved wellbeing, perception of quality of life and life satisfaction that comes from being active and engaging with your community.
- Increased interest in one's own life and the larger world through a greater variety of experiences.
- Improved emotional control and self-discipline from developing the patience and focus of attention that comes from working with a large animal.
- A sense of achievement from being able to master the skills necessary to participate.

Social and Communication:

- Participants share a common love of horses and the experience of riding, which helps build socialization and interpersonal skills.
- Improved communication through providing feedback, following instructions, direction and communication to the horse and staff. For example, moving from visuals to verbal commands in order to better influence the horse to follow rider's instructions.
- Development of respect and a love for animals.
- Experience of outdoor recreation, enjoyment and fun.

Educational:

- Increased technical competence in horse riding and equestrian skills.
- Applied equestrian knowledge and practiced safe behaviours for riding.
- Demonstrated improvement in multitasking and executive functioning capacity.
- Improved sequencing, patterning and motor planning through skills games played while on horseback e.g. Obstacle courses, pole bending.
- Improved eye-hand coordination and visual and spatial perception.
- Increased ability to differentiate significant from less significant stimuli in the environment e.g. Attend to the horse and those things that influence the horse and not the environment in general.