Website Hippotherapy page

# Hippotherapy in RDA NSW

Hippotherapy is a treatment strategy provided by specially trained physiotherapists and occupational therapists utilising equine movement.

The horse used for hippotherapy is carefully selected and trained to behave in a consistently calm manner and to produce quality movement to deliver a variety of treatment plans.

## Classic Hippotherapy

Traditional or classic hippotherapy was developed after the German model of hippotherapy practiced widely throughout Europe since the 1960's. In traditional hippotherapy the client passively responds to and interacts with the horse’s movement making it purely the horse's movement that influences the client. The client may be positioned astride the horse facing forward, backward, prone or supine. The therapist's responsibility is to constantly analyse the client's responses and adjust accordingly. The primary focus of classic hippotherapy is the clients’ posture and movement responses yet other effects may occur in respiration, cognition and speech production. Hippotherapy as practised in Australia aims to achieve the specific functional goals of the particular client.

## Unique contribution of horse to treatment

The horse provides a dynamic base to work on that is constantly changing. Different horses can influence the client with rhythmical movement that can have a variety of three planes of movement to the pelvis –rotation, backwards and forwards and side to side (get correct terminology here). The movement is symmetrical, repetitive and reciprocal. A subjective benefit is that often a bond is created between horse and client that makes the client a very willing to participate in therapy, without the risk of therapy burnout.

# Hippotherapy &Therapeutic riding - Differences

The above programmes both use the horse to improve the lives of people with disabilities. To clarify the differences between the two programmes and remove any confusion.

**Therapeutic Riding**  is a general term which covers all horse-related activities for people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding is a method which encourages teaching riding skills to people wth special needs, for fun, independence, trail riding and to learn skills to enable participation in competition up to Paralympic level for some riders.

**Hippotherapy** literally means “treatment with the help of the horse” (from the Greek word hippos for horse) The horse’s movement is the tool used by the Hippotherapist to achieve the goals identified in the clients assessment. The client, supported by 2 side-walkers, passively interacts with and responds to the graded horse movements as the horse is controlled by the HH handler carrying out the hipppotherapist’s directions. The hippotherapist then analyses and documents the clients response and adjusts treatment accordingly.

# Hippotherapy Team Roles

## Therapist trained to perform Hippotherapy

The therapist integrates the treatment principles of their particular health profession into the hippotherapy treatment, directs the movement of the horse, analyses the clients responses and adjusts the movement of the horse accordingly, to achieve functional outcomes

Hippotherapy Horse Handler (HHH)

To train, condition and care for Hippotherapy horses to fulfil their role, in consultation with the team Coach.

To execute the horse movements and paces required to deliver specific treatment as determined by the Therapist. .

## Sidewalker/s

### Walk beside the horse in a position to be able to follow the instructions of the therapist to give maximum support and encouragement to the client to achieve specific hippotherapy outcomes.

## RDANSW Coach Is an active part of the hippotherapy team to provide interaction between the centre committee and hippotherapy team especially in relation to centre activities outside hippotherapy programme.

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