Texas Tech University Therapeutic Riding and Therapy Center (TRTC)
Equine-Assisted Counseling and Wellness Programs

Client Intake Packet

Mailing Address
Texas Tech Therapeutic Riding Center
Texas Tech University
Box 42141
Lubbock, TX 79409

Physical Address
Texas Tech Equestrian Center
5712 CR 1500
Lubbock, TX 79407

Equine-Assisted Counseling and Wellness Programs
Phone: 806-742-1193
Email: eacwp@ttu.edu

TTRC Main Office
Phone: 806-792-4683
Email: ttrc@ttu.edu
Fax: 806-784-0338
Equine-Assisted Counseling and Wellness Programs
Informed Consent and Service Agreement

Introduction

Please read the intake packet carefully. Your counselor will review this document with you during the first appointment and answer any questions you may have about our services and policies.

Equine-assisted counseling and wellness (EACW) programs are offered through the Therapeutic Riding and Therapy Center (TRTC) located at the Texas Tech University Equestrian Center. TRTC is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) center governed by Texas Tech University and the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. Some of the staff are paid employees while others are volunteers. We rely on private donations, grants, special events, fundraisers and session fees to keep our center running. Our programs allow TTU students to receive supervised training. We also conduct research to assess and improve programs.

The Equine-Assisted Counseling and Wellness (EACW) clinic provides Equine-Assisted Mental Health (EAMH) services at TRTC. EAMH services involve horses helping humans accomplish their mental health and wellness goals with the guidance of a qualified mental healthcare professional. Therapists use a variety of methods to incorporate equine-assisted activities into treatment. Sessions generally involve ground-based interactions with horses, and are often provided as a brief intervention, or in time-limited format.

We follow the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH, Intl.) safety standards and guidelines for Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies. This means that clients enrolled in our EACW programs can expect that a treatment team consisting of a credentialed mental/behavioral healthcare provider and a certified equine specialist in mental health and learning (ESMHL), or a dually trained provider, will facilitate equine-assisted activities. For group sessions, trained assistants may also be on-hand to support clients during equine-assisted activities. We are also an internship site, which means appropriately supervised interns may provide or assist with therapeutic services.

Treatment plans and approaches, as well as frequency and duration of treatment, will vary according to the individual client or group. Services provided may include assessment, counseling, psychotherapy, expressive modalities, consultation, client education and support, crisis intervention, and referral. If determined appropriate, your counselor may conduct some sessions without an equine-assisted activity.

Our clinic uses a brief model to delivery equine-assisted mental health services. Your counselor will collaborate with you to identify a problem and measurable goals for addressing the problem. The counselor, according to your needs and input, will determine the overall number of sessions. Typically, EAMH is delivered as a brief intervention, lasting anywhere from 6 to 20 sessions. If a different type of services is needed, or deemed more appropriate, your counselor will provide referrals to other mental health services on campus, or in the Lubbock community.
Examples of when brief therapy might not be appropriate:

- When a client prefers or requires an open-ended, long-term treatment approach.
- When a client presents with a chronic, ongoing risk of harm to themselves or others.
- When client’s symptoms do not respond to outpatient crisis interventions.
- When a client’s behaviors indicate a progressive deterioration requiring intensive treatment.

**Risks and Benefits**

Counseling can be a challenging process, and has both benefits and risks. Regardless of the reason for seeking services, it is possible for a client’s problems to worsen. Possible risks include experiencing uncomfortable or distressing feelings from talking about unpleasant aspects of your life. For instance, you may remember unpleasant or distressing experiences that potentially bother you while at work, during school, or at home. It is also important to know that equine-assisted mental health is considered an emerging treatment approach that has a limited amount of research evidence.

In general, we cannot make guarantees regarding the outcomes of counseling or equine-assisted interventions; however, counseling often leads to reduction in distress, new self-awareness, new coping skills, better relationships, and increased clarity for resolving specific problems. It is important to come to sessions ready to work on your issues. You have the right to decline any session activity or counselor suggestion. Should you decide our services are not a good fit for you, you have the right to stop counseling at any time. If our services are not a good fit for you, or we determine the scope of our services cannot address your concerns, we will work with you to find another mental health professional or agency.

**Confidentiality**

Information you share with your counselor is confidential; however, there are important exceptions. Please read our *Notice of Privacy Policies* for a detailed description of how your medical information may be used or disclosed. Please also note the following exceptions to confidentiality:

**Duty to Warn and Protect**
If it is determined that you are at imminent risk of harming yourself or others, your counselor will take reasonable action to inform the appropriate law enforcement or medical personnel. This may involve contacting the police, or helping you access other emergency services.

**Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults**
If your counselor has reason to suspect a child, elderly, or disabled person has been, or may be, physically or sexually abused, or neglected; a report must be made within 48 hours to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, The Texas Youth Commission, or to any local or state law enforcement agency.

**Court of Law**
If a counselor’s records are subpoenaed by the court, they shall be surrendered.

**Misconduct by another Mental Health Professional**
If you tell your counselor about the misconduct of another mental health professional, counselors are required to report this information to the proper regulatory agencies.
Minors/Guardianship
Parents or legal guardians of non-emancipated minor clients have the right to access the clients’ records.

Supervision, Consultation, and Service Delivery
Limited information may be disclosed for the purposes of graduate-level training and post-graduate intern supervision, for professional consultation, or to coordinate service delivery with TRTC personnel (e.g., Equine Specialists). Only information that is necessary for, and directly related to, training, consultation, or for service delivery, will be disclosed.

Written Consent for Release of Confidential Information
Information requested by a third party such as another healthcare provider, will only be released after your written authorization for a Release of Information has been obtained.

Client Feedback and Assessments
We may request that you complete pre-post assessments and feedback surveys related to your counseling services. This information will help us evaluate and improve our programs, as well as provide necessary information for funding sources. No personal identifying data will be linked to this information.

Notice about Privacy and Confidentiality at TRTC
There are special considerations related to confidentiality and privacy at the Texas Tech Therapeutic Riding and Therapy Center. The follow information is intended to help you make an informed decision about utilizing our services:

The Texas Tech Therapeutic Riding and Therapy Center is located at the Texas Tech University’s Equestrian Center, which means other TRTC clients, students, equine professionals (e.g., veterinarians), TTU faculty, equestrian center staff, or visitors may be on the equestrian center premises. There is potential that you might recognize someone, or someone recognizes you, when you are on the premises. We will make every effort to minimize the potential for distractions, and individuals not directly involved in your sessions will be restricted from areas where your equine activities are in progress. An important exception is if a human or animal is in need of immediate medical attention. Please feel free to ask questions if you would like to know more about the program setting.

Multiple Relationships
Although Lubbock is a large city, you may encounter your counselor, TRTC staff, or volunteers in other settings, such as the grocery store, place of worship, restaurant, school, etc. Your counselor will talk to you about how you prefer to handle chance encounters that occur in public. Our policy is that your counselor, or other TRTC personnel, will not acknowledge you outside of sessions, without your permission.
Fees

15-minute initial phone consultation: Free
90-minute initial intake interview: $25.00
60-minute individual session: $85.00*
Group Counseling: Please contact us directly regarding specialized group offering and rates

*Current rates, reduced fee options, and waivers of fees are subject to change depending upon the status of our grant funding and other sources of charitable giving.

You are responsible for paying your session fees and keeping your account current. Session fees are due at the beginning of the session. We accept cash or check payments. Please make checks payable to: "TTRC" or "Texas Tech Therapeutic Riding Center"

We do not bill insurance. If you have health insurance coverage, our policy is that you pay our fee directly and personally arrange for reimbursement by your insurance company. In general, you will want to call your insurance company and check if: (1) if you insurance covers mental health services, (2) if coverage applies to outpatient care, (3) if you will be reimbursed for services provided by a LPC Intern under the supervision of a LPC.

*Please be aware that most insurance companies require mental health professionals to submit a diagnosis as part of the reimbursement process.

Appointments and Cancellation Policy

Please call 806-742-1193, or email: eacwp@ttu.edu for general inquiries, appointment scheduling, or to leave a message for your counselor.

We ask that you provide us with 24-hour notice of cancellation. You will be charged the full session fee if there is no notice of cancellation given. Services will be suspended until the missed session is paid in full. If you arrive late to your session, you are still responsible for paying the full session fee, and the session cannot be extended to accommodate a late arrival.

**If TRTC cancels sessions (for more information, refer to the general policies document) you will not be charged a session fee.

Please initial here to indicate you agree to our fees and understand our policies regarding payments, appointments, and cancellations: ___________ Date: ___________

Emergencies

Our clinic does not offer after-hours counseling or crisis services. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, and need immediate support, or emergency services outside regularly scheduled appointments, please go to your nearest emergency room or contact Emergency 9-1-1.
Additional Crisis Resources:

- **24/7 StarCare Crisis Line:**
  In the Lubbock area, call (806) 740-1414, Or toll-free (800) 687-7581

- **The Texas Tech Crisis HelpLine (806-742-5555)** is a 24-hour service to assist students experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. Crisis counselors are familiar with TTU and Lubbock community resources and will be able to direct the caller to appropriate resources.

- **24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255**

**Electronic Communication**

When a call is made to your counselor, and you choose to leave a message, the counselor may receive an email with voice message attached. Your name and phone number will appear in the body of the email they receive. TTU computer servers are secure. However, we cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality of messages received in email form that may be read by the counselor on their phone, I-Pad, etc. We will make every effort to return phone calls or email promptly. Phone calls or emails received after hours, or on weekends and holidays, will be answered the following business day.

*Please note: Electronic communication is never completely secure. We do not provide treatment information or counseling sessions via electronic communication. In addition, counselors will not communicate with, contact, or connect with clients, or former clients, through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. This is to protect your confidential and to maintain the professional boundaries of the counseling relationship.

**Questions or Concerns**

If you have a question, complaint, or concern about your services that cannot be resolved with your counselor, please contact the program director at the Texas Tech Therapeutic Riding and Therapy Center: (806) 792-4683. You may also contact the Texas State Board of Examiner of Professional Counselors:

**Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors**
**Compliance Management and Investigation Section**
**Texas Department of State Health Services**
Mail Code 1982
P.O. Box 141369
Austin, Texas 78714-1369

E-mail: lpc@dshs.texas.gov
Telephone: 1-800-942-5540
Fax: (512)834-6677
Website: http://www.dshs.texas.gov/counselor/
Statement of Agreement

I have read the Informed Consent and Service Agreement, and the Texas Tech University Consent to Treatment/Health Care Agreement carefully, understand what I have read, and voluntarily and knowingly agree to the provisions. I have also received a copy of my counselor’s professional disclosure statement and Texas Tech University’s Notice of Privacy Practices.

Client Signature and Date: ________________________________

Signature and Date of Parent/Guardian if Client is a Minor: ________________________________