

THE FOLLOWING ARE
QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK
ABOUT THE PROGRAM IN
GENERAL.

- How long has the program been in existence?
- How is the program governed?
If it is run by a Board of Directors, what is their involvement in the program and what are their contributions? Is it run by a school, university, community service organization or camp?
- Does the program have insurance?
What type and who is covered?
- How are volunteers recruited and how are they trained?
- How are the horses chosen and what special training do they receive?
- Does the program have written policies and procedures regarding all operational aspects?

Remember, it is the people involved in the program that determines its' quality and safety. Take the opportunity meet the staff, observe classes and even volunteer your time. By following the above guidelines, you will be able to effectively choose a safe and beneficial therapeutic riding program.

STRIDE



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Evaluating A

Therapeutic Riding Program

*HELPING EXCEPTIONAL ALASKANS DISCOVER
NEW ABILITIES AND ACHIEVE NEW HEIGHTS
SINCE 1995.*

*INSTRUCTORS CERTIFIED BY NORTH
AMERICAN RIDING/OR THE HANDICAPPED,
NARHA.
NARHA IS COMMITTED TO SAFE, ETHICAL AND
PROFESSIONAL EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY.*

THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Therapeutic riding is becoming increasingly recognized in Alaska as a popular means for providing recreation and contributing to the physical and emotional development of people with disabilities and special needs. Numerous groups and individuals seek to offer this service and it is important for parents, care providers and health care professionals to understand how to make responsible choices among programs. Before discussing elements of a meaningful therapeutic riding program, it is important to understand what we mean by 'therapeutic riding'.

WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC RIDING?

Therapeutic riding uses horse-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to cognitive, physical, emotional and social well being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding provides benefits in the areas of therapy, education, sport, recreation and leisure. There are no state or federal regulatory bodies to govern these activities. Instead, the field is self-governed. The best known national organization is the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). Their mission is to foster safe, professional, ethical and therapeutic activities through education. Adherence to their standards is an important step in a commitment to quality and excellence. The development of such standards clearly indicates that today's therapeutic riding community is willing to monitor its own activities in a professional manner.

WHAT ELEMENTS SHOULD BE PRESENT IN A THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM?

There are many components to a well-run program. Quality activities for the riders should be planned. The facilities should be safe and well maintained. The health and welfare of the horses involved should be a prerequisite. A commitment to safety for riders, volunteers, health care providers and instructors should be a prime consideration.

HERE IS A LIST OF QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK ABOUT THE RIDING SESSIONS.

- ✓ Does every rider wear approved, protective headgear?
- ✓ Are the horses quiet, sensible and a match for their rider?
- ✓ Are the instructors certified as therapeutic riding instructors and by what agency?
- ✓ Are the activities safe and do they provide challenging goals in a setting that is positive and encouraging?
- ✓ Is the environment safe and free of hazards, with a closed arena and safe fencing and footing?
- ✓ Are the volunteers well trained and enthusiastic? How does one qualify to become a volunteer?
- ✓ Is an adult trained in first aid and CPR on the site?
- ✓ Is the tack used in good condition and suitable for the rider's needs?
- ✓ Are there well defined emergency procedures? This includes a telephone or cell phone readily available.
- ✓ What other professionals help with the program? Is there a therapist present or available for evaluations and consultations?