

Pride Stables Volunteer Manual



Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program
Pride Stables
584 Pioneer Tower Road
Kitchener, Ontario
N2P 2H9

Office Telephone 519-653-4686
Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

info@pridestables.com
volunteering@pridestables.com

Revised June 2018

Important Information

Attendance: As a volunteer, regular attendance is vital to our program. If you are unable to attend a class, contacting us as early as possible will allow us the time to find another volunteer to take your place.

If you are unable to attend a class, please call the numbers below. Please do not email us as we may not receive your message within regular office working hours.

Office 519-653-4686

Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail message.

Barn 519-653-8736

Evenings & Weekends

If there is no answer, please call the office number and leave a voicemail message.

All general information can be found on our website

www.PrideStables.com

General Inquiries can be emailed to

info@pridestables.com

Volunteering Inquires can be emailed to

volunteering@pridestables.com

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THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH PRIDE STABLES!

Welcome to Pride Stables, home of Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program, a registered charity. Since 1974 Pride Stables has been providing therapeutic horseback riding to children and adults with special needs. We rely heavily on dedicated volunteers *like you* to assist us in fulfilling our goals and mission.

As a registered charity Pride Stables is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. In addition to the staff, approximately 350 volunteers donate over 14,000 hours of service annually! Volunteer opportunities within the program are plentiful. Primarily, we need individuals to lead our horses and side walk with our riders.

This handbook has been designed to help you become familiar with our program and your role as a volunteer. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact our office. We welcome your feedback.

We take Pride in our dedicated volunteers and community support. Thank you for choosing to be part of our program and our team. Your commitment is very much appreciated.

Many Thanks,

Pride Stables
Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program

Registered Charity #118843564 RR0001

ABOUT PRIDE STABLES

Over 200 riders from Kitchener, Waterloo and surrounding areas use the facility weekly, helped by more than 350 volunteers. Classes are held in 8- or 10-week sessions during the fall and spring, 6-week sessions during the winter, and 4-week sessions during the summer. Additionally, Camp Pride--a fully integrated day camp--is in full operation during July and August with 192 riders and just as many volunteers.

The benefit of riding is multidimensional. The instruction of classes is based on sequencing which enables each rider to learn at his or her own pace. Participating in weekly classes also builds special friendships between the rider, their horse, volunteers, and staff members.

Therapeutic horseback riding uses the horse as a medium of therapy. The combination of the horse's movement--which simulates the human walking motion--and its higher body temperature, serves to supply passive heat massage to the riders' muscles. This helps to either relax spastic muscles or stimulate lax muscles. Riders also participate in exercises improving their muscle strength, balance, and flexibility.

PARTICIPANTS

Pride Stables serves participants with a wide range of physical, mental, emotional, and learning disabilities. The participants range in age from 4 years to senior adults. Pride Stables currently serves 360 riders in the Waterloo Region. For enrollment information, contact the office at 519-653-4686.

HORSES

Most of Pride Stables' horses have been donated to the program. Our horses are composed of a variety of breeds, shapes, and sizes. Prior to acceptance into the program, all horses are extensively evaluated and screened before they are accepted. Pride Stables only accepts gentle horses with good dispositions that are sound and have appropriate movement for therapeutic riding. For more information on donating a horse, contact our Program Manager at 519-653-4686.

DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS

Financial donations are always welcomed. Here are ways you can help:

1. Gifts for others - Don't know what to get that person who has everything? Consider making a donation to Pride in their name! A card to the individual/family will be sent letting them know that a donation has been made in their honour and you will receive a tax receipt for your donation. Whether it is a special event such as a birthday, anniversary, wedding or in memoriam, a donation to Pride Stables is a great way to honour the people in your life.
2. Donate – Online donations can be made through CanadaHelps.org or donations can be made directly to the program by calling 519-653-4686 or emailing info@pridestables.com See our “How to Donate” page for more information on sponsorship & donor recognition www.pridestables.com
3. Be Creative – Host a fundraising event in support of Pride Stables. Garage sales, golf tournaments, bowling nights, fundraising dinners and other special events are all great ways to raise money for our therapeutic riding program.
4. Promote us with your employer. Find out about the community giving program of the corporation or organization you work for. Do they sponsor charity events or hold events where the proceeds go to a charity of choice? Do they have a community giving program or employee gift matching program? Do they have products or gifts to donate to a very worthy cause? We can always use silent auction, door and raffle prizes.

Tax Receipts are available for many donations.

Monthly Giving Moves Us Forward!

Did you know...

\$4,200 (\$350 per month)

* Sponsors one horse for a full year

\$420 (\$35 per month)

* Sponsors one rider for a full session

\$1,200 (\$100 per month)

* Maintains one paddock for one year

\$900 (\$75 per month)

* Maintains one stall for a full year

\$120 (\$10 per month)

* Buys 40 bales of hay

* Buys one safety helmet

* Buys 6 bags of grain for our horses



Hay: large round & square bales	Canadian Tire money	
Hay cubes - Timothy/Alfalfa mix	Lg. Salt Blocks - blue & brown	
Fence boards & posts	Shavings	Shade tents
10x10	Plain printer/copy paper	Wintec saddles
Shovels (metal & snow)	Push brooms & corn brooms	Road ice salt
for winter		
Gift cards (Walmart, Dollarama, Michaels)		

THE PRIDE STABLES TEAM

Each riding class centres on a team effort of people & horses working together to accomplish certain therapeutic riding goals. The Pride Stables Team consists of:

THE RIDER

The Pride of our team!

THE HORSE

whose job it is to carry the rider safely and smoothly during the lesson.
Their hoof beats often go unnoticed, but their impact is significant.

THE INSTRUCTOR

who is in charge of all volunteers, riders, and horses. The instructor's job is to set goals for the rider and through guidance, encouragement, and knowledge, help him/her to reach those goals.

THE LEADER

whose job it is to maintain constant awareness and control of the horse.

THE SIDEWALKER

whose job it is to greet the rider, pay constant attention to the rider, and give physical and motivational support as indicated by the instructor.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A CLASS

One, two, or three volunteers may work with each rider/horse in our enclosed indoor arena or outdoor sand ring during each class. The rider may learn special riding skills, play games on horseback, or go for a trail ride. Each rider has individual goals to work toward. As a volunteer you will be involved in every aspect of the class from grooming and tacking, greeting the rider, participating in the class itself, giving feedback to the instructor, and cleaning up following class.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

JOB DESCRIPTION: See Volunteer Manual under "Horse Leader" (pp 2.3-2.5) or "Sidewalker" (pp 2.6-2.7)

ELIGIBILITY: Volunteers must be at least 15 years old and physically able to jog for short distances (length of the arena) at the end of the class alongside a pony or horse that is trotting. Take into consideration conditions such as bad knees, recent surgery, asthma, etc. Volunteers should also have good English comprehension and communication skills.

TRAINING SESSION: Every prospective volunteer must attend one two-hour training session. Information about Pride Stables and its programs, volunteer roles, and key policies are addressed.

VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL FILE: Every active volunteer must have completed and returned these forms for their file:

- ◆ Volunteer Registration Form
- ◆ Volunteer Liability Release Agreement

All information in volunteer files is kept confidential and will not be released without consent of the volunteer.

NON-DISCRIMINATION: Pride Stables maintains a policy of non-discrimination and is fully committed to the principles of equality in volunteer employment and opportunity for all, without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age or handicap. Volunteers will likewise not discriminate against a client, other volunteers, or Pride Stables staff based upon the above mentioned parameters.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is vital to our program. We ask that a volunteer commit to a full session of their selected class(es) or full week of camp. In the event that you must be absent, please call the office 519-653-4686 as soon as possible so a substitute can be found. Office hours are Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm. During evenings or weekends please call the barn 519-653-8736, if no answer, please leave a message on the office line 519-653-4686. If you know well in advance that you will be away, you can email volunteering@pridestables.com. Emails are NOT monitored over the weekend (Friday 4:00pm to 9:00am Monday).

PUNCTUALITY: Volunteers should arrive at least 30 minutes before the class starts to groom and tack their assigned horse. Late arrivals are frustrating to everyone, especially a rider anticipating their weekly ride. Please call us if the unexpected should arise and you are running late. Office: 519-653-4686. **After 4:00pm please call the barn 519-653-8736.**

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS: Students are responsible for tracking their own volunteer hours. Please bring your school recording sheets at the end of the session for your instructor to sign off on.

DRESS: Wear sensible and comfortable clothing. Closed, covered shoes are a safety requirement. The weather can be unpredictable so come with a few layers of clothing. When it is hot, bring water bottles. During and following wet weather, bring boots and any appropriate raingear. Jewelry can get lost in the arena or in a stall. Anything that dangles may be an attraction to the rider – small children may grab or pull. Wear no or neutral perfumes and lotions. Certain scents may cause a reaction in some of the riders and it may attract bees or other bugs. Tie long hair up or back.

ALLERGIES: If you have a serious allergy that we need to be aware of (e.g. bees, wasps) please inform your instructor.

BAD WEATHER: Classes will only be cancelled in the event of dangerous or threatening weather. The voicemail message at the office will be changed as quickly as possible when classes are cancelled due to bad weather. Please call 519-653-4686. If possible, volunteers will be contacted by the office. Cancelled classes will be made up at the end of the session.

PARKING: Parking is located outside the barn before you enter the white fencing in the graveled area. Additional parking is located between the trees lining the driveway facing the front paddock. **DO NOT DRIVE UP TO THE ARENA** as horses and children may be walking in this area.

CHILDREN & PETS: Due to safety concerns, **unsupervised children and pets are not allowed.** Please make other arrangements for your children on days that you volunteer with Pride Stables. **Only authorized service dogs are allowed on the property. Please keep your dogs at home.**

CONDUCT AT PRIDE STABLES: It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted **safety rules.** Abide by all posted **off-limit areas.** Pride Stables is a **non-smoking** facility and the use of **drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden.** No mistreatment or abuse of any animal will be tolerated.

VOLUNTEER AND/OR GUEST DISMISSAL: In the event of misconduct by a volunteer, the volunteer's direct supervisor will counsel the volunteer in order to provide the opportunity for corrective action. A written record of any actions or suggestions will be maintained.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION - LEADER

Important: For the safety of our riders and our volunteers, you will need the ability to understand and carry out direct instructions. Both the leader and sidewalker positions require physical endurance and good verbal communication skills.

Primary Responsibility of a Horse Leader:

The horse leader is directly responsible for the horse.

Leader Responsibilities

- Please arrive half an hour prior to class start time
- Upon arrival, consult the white board or check with the instructor to see which horse you will be volunteering with in class
- Get the horse's grooming box
- Speak to your horse as you approach in the stall
- Slide the halter over his/her head
- **Always use a lead rope when leading a horse from the stall**
- Hold the lead rope with two hands (right hand close to halter, excess rope in your left hand)
- You are the first one through the stall door and the horse follows
- Leave the lead rope secured and attach the halter to the crossties, then drape the lead rope over the horse's neck

NEVER LEAVE YOUR HORSE UNATTENDED IN THE CROSSTIES

Grooming/Tacking

- Pick the horse's hooves
- Use the curry glove, then the hard brush, and finish off with the soft brush
- Tack your horse making sure the girth is snug but not too tight at this stage as the instructor will tighten it before the class begins
- If you have reins, attach them to the halter
- *Please be ready to go into the arena 10 minutes prior to class*

NEVER LEAVE YOUR HORSE UNATTENDED IN THE CROSSTIES

During Class

- Call "door" when you enter the arena
- Line up facing the ramp with your horse until the instructor has come to tighten the horse's girth
- When called, lead the horse along the ramp: at the half way point, turn your body to face the horse and put one hand on each side of the halter
- You will be walking backwards and guiding the horse in slowly
- Keep the horse still while the rider mounts. *Remember, this is the time when it is most important for the horse to be calm and quiet.*
- **While at the ramp, stand facing the horse, not off to the side**

- On the instructor's or rider's command, walk the horse ahead and halt when clear of the ramp
- The instructor will adjust the stirrups
- Once the rider is ready, walk the horse to the far end of the arena and circle until all the riders have mounted
- It is the leader's job to assist the rider in completing instructions while giving the rider a chance to do as much as they can on their own
- As you walk, remain in the leading position between the horse's head and shoulder unless otherwise instructed
- Walk at a steady pace to allow the rider to receive the full benefit of the horse's movement
- At the end of class, you will be instructed to line up
- Make sure the student waits for the instructor to assist with the dismount
- The instructor will then let you know whether your horse is staying in the barn or going to the paddock

Figure A depicts a few faults common among leaders. In the picture the leader is grimly marching along. Her head is down--one hand on the lead snap, the other one on the hanging lead rope--and she's dragging a strung-out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk alongside the horse about even with his eye. This position helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

Talk to the horse; most of them know "whoa", "walk on", and "trot". Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. **Do not** walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where they are going.

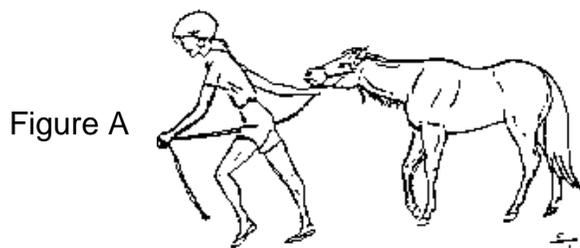
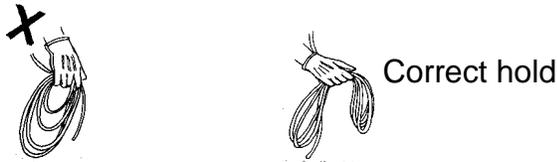


Figure B shows the correct position for leaders.



The lead rope is held with the right hand, 6-12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This position is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse. The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. **Never coil the rope around your hand.** A sudden pull could crush or amputate your fingers.



Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. When halting, remember to wait for the “whoa” signal from the rider. Always leave two horse lengths between you and the horse in front of you. If passing is necessary, pass toward the inside of the arena, leaving lots of space, and communicate your movements with the other volunteers.

After Class

- Untack your horse and, as directed by your instructor, return the horse to his/her stall or turn them out into their paddock

In Case of an Accident

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse as far from the fallen rider as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

Goal

The goal of a good horse leader is to control the horse, to be a good aide to the rider, and to be a valuable assistant to the instructor. You can provide real therapeutic input to the rider, as well as make it safe for him/her to have fun riding.

PLEASE NOTE: Cell phones and Ipods/MP3 players may only be used before or after class and must be turned off during the class.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION - SIDEWALKER

Important: For the safety of our riders and our volunteers, you will need the ability to understand and carry out direct instructions. Both the leader and sidewalker positions require physical endurance and good verbal communication skills.

Primary Responsibility of a Sidewalker:

The sidewalker is responsible for the rider and gives physical support to the rider or assists the rider with the instructor's directions.

Sidewalker Responsibilities

- Please arrive half an hour prior to class start time
- Upon arrival, consult the white board or check with the instructor for the horse you will be paired with in class
- Assist Leader with grooming and tacking

Grooming/Tacking

- Pick the horse's hooves
- Use the curry glove, then the hard brush, and finish off with the soft brush
- Tack your horse making sure the girth is snug but not too tight at this stage as the instructor will tighten it before class begins
- If you have reins, attach them to the halter
- *Please be ready to go into the arena 10 minutes prior to class*

NEVER LEAVE YOUR HORSE UNATTENDED IN THE CROSSTIES

During Class

- Your role will vary depending on the needs of each rider
- Some riders will require physical support ranging from holding the rider's ankle to completely supporting the rider with the use of a transfer belt
- The instructor will explain the support method best suited for your rider
- Other riders may only require help with instructions
- Stay forward and avoid the horse's back end
- Remain aware of your surroundings at all times
- Some riders require the "over the thigh" hold (see **Figure C** next page)
- DO NOT rest your elbows on the horse's back. This is where their kidneys are located and it is a sensitive area.
- If your arms become tired, let your leader and instructor know. Walk to the centre of the arena with the horse so you can switch sides.
- Once the horse is stopped, switch sides by walking in front of the horse, one sidewalker at a time. Do not both let go of the rider; one person must secure them. If there is only one sidewalker, go into the centre and ask the instructor for help

Figure C



Do not wrap an arm around the rider's waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer uneven support. At times, it can even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Some riders do not require any "hands on" assistance.

After Class

- Assist with untacking the horse and returning the horse to his/her stall or turning them out into their paddock

Goal

The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch, grow, and develop to his/her fullest potential. Your job by the rider's side is to help the instructor challenge him/her to the best of his/her ability.

PLEASE NOTE: Cell phones and Ipods/MP3 players may only be used before or after class and must be turned off during the class.

GROOMING & TACKING GUIDELINES

1. Grooming bins and tools, halters and bridles

All are labeled with horse's name and special instructions if applicable

2. Overview of Tack Room:

Saddles - English and Western

Bridles are labeled with horse's name

Riser (white foam pad)

Saddle Pads - Western, Navajo, square English, white English Pad, gel pads

Surcingles

Bareback Pads

Stirrups, stirrup leathers and extra reins

Girths

First Aid - human & horse

3. Stall Safety:

ALWAYS close the gate/stall door behind you!!!

ALWAYS put halter on horse for grooming

Never go under a horse's neck while tied up!

Walk closely around the horse's rear end with a hand on the horse.

4. Grooming Tools:



Curry glove/curry comb - small circular motion; dislodges dirt & hair. Be careful around bony areas. Never use on the face.



Dandy brush/hard brush – stiff bristled brush; the motion for this brush is like the same motion you use when sweeping a floor. You “flick” the brush away and up from the coat in the direction of hair growth.



Body brush/soft brush – soft bristled brush; quick strokes; removes dirt & hair. Smooth it flat over the coat in the direction of hair growth.



Mane comb/brush – use gently to remove dirt. Tails should not be combed. Debris should be picked out by hand to minimize knots and tail hair loss.



Hoof Pick - clean frog & pad; both front & rear hooves.

5. Cleaning Hooves:

When checking or cleaning hooves, do it from the side, and face the rear of the horse. Bend at the waist--never squat or kneel down. Stay on both feet. Scrape away from you. Thoroughly clean out the hollow areas on both sides of the frog and around the sole of the foot.

6. Tacking Horse:

Tack will be placed by your horse's stall by the instructor.

Take brush box and place it against wall away from horse's feet.

Utilize horse safety procedures.

Placement of pads on horse's back: forward over the withers with equal amounts on each side. Square pads always go first, followed by a white saddle pad, then a gel pad, unless otherwise directed.

Make sure the pad is raised a bit over the withers as the saddle is placed on horse.

Attach girth to saddle (right side first with the elastic on left [the side you are saddling on]).

Saddling a Horse:

(a) When saddling, have the horse properly secured in the crossties so he/she will stand quietly.

(b) *Tighten the girth or cinch **SLOWLY*** - do not pull up abruptly nor over-tighten. Adjust the saddle carefully with girth tight enough so the saddle will not shift. Horses often swell up when first saddled, and failure to re-tighten the girth just prior to and after mounting can result in serious accident. **Re-tightening of the girth will be done by the instructor only.**

Bridle – bridles are only used if instructed for the given class

Exit from stall or barn with horse - announce "door" so that others know you are coming through

6. After Class: Return horse to barn to untack.

Attach horse to the furthest set of crossties available so that all horses can come in from the area/ring.

Remove girth - remove from both sides; lay over saddle.

Lift saddle and pads together from horse's back.

Take all tack back to the tack room and put away in the correct place.

** If horse is to be used in the next class, loosen girth, take off reins and return horse to their stall

** Instructor will direct leaders to put horse in the stall or pasture. Make sure horse is going into correct pasture. Return halter to horse's stall.

7. Return Tack to Tack Room:

Hang girths on appropriate hook (small, medium, large)

Place pads (**sweaty side up**) in appropriate place.

Place saddle on saddle rack – do not cross stirrups over seat.

If used, rinse bit in water/sponge & hang bridle on correct hook.

If you are uncertain, at any time, about tack or procedures, please ask.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

All participants, volunteers, and staff must comply with all posted safety rules. The Pride Stables staff requests that all volunteers help enforce these rules as safety **MUST** be a top priority.

1. **NO SMOKING** anywhere on the property. If you want to smoke, you must go out to traffic circle. Being under the influence of (or the use of) drugs or alcohol is strictly forbidden.
2. Restricted Areas (must have instructor/volunteer present):
 - ❖ Pastures
 - ❖ Arena mounting area
 - ❖ Feed room
 - ❖ Back Tack Room
3. Off limits areas: Machine storage areas, equipment storage, tool shed, any posted “Authorized Personnel Only” areas
4. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children **at all times**.
5. In order to avoid distracting riders during class, everyone is asked to refrain from leaning or climbing on all fences.
6. Horse treats are allowed to be brought, however due to health reasons and restricted diets, all treats must be put in the “Treat Bucket” located in the arena or handed to the instructor to distribute to the horses. **Due to safety reasons hand feeding is strictly prohibited.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP OUR FACILITY CLEAN BY
DISPOSING OF GARBAGE & RECYCLABLES PROPERLY**

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer for Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program/Pride Stables, I will

- ✓ Represent Pride Stables with professionalism, dignity and pride, and be responsible for conducting myself with courtesy & appropriate behaviour.
- ✓ Follow through and complete accepted tasks.
- ✓ Conduct myself in a respectful manner, exhibit fair conduct, and be a positive role model.
- ✓ Display respect and courtesy for Pride Stables employees, other volunteers, program participants, visitors, clients and property.
- ✓ Respect the privacy of persons served by the organization and hold in confidence sensitive, private and personal information.
- ✓ Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Pride Stables shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program.
- Volunteers are encouraged to share their experiences associated with Pride Stables, however leaving out specific details such as names, ages and any personal information about the participants.
- No one associated with Pride Stables will reveal any medical, social, referral, personal or financial information regarding any participant or any other person associated with Pride Stables to anyone unless required by court order.

VOLUNTEER AND/OR GUEST DISMISSAL

Conditions that may lead to dismissal:

- Failure to comply with the Pride Stables confidentiality guidelines
- Repeated violation of safety rules including smoking on the property
- Using or being under the influence of drugs/alcohol on the property
- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior, theft, or violence
- Threat of violence or mistreatment to any person or animal

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURE

1. The Instructor will be the person in charge of directing actions to be taken any time an emergency occurs.
 - a) In case of an emergency outside the arena or when the instructor is with a class, any staff on site will be in charge.

2. Actions to be taken in case of a major occurrence are:
 - a) Horse Leaders leading a horse at the time will take the steps below unless directed otherwise by the person in charge.
 - I. Horses are to be stopped as soon as possible.
 - II. Horse Leader is to stand in front of the horse's head, facing the horse.
 - III. When it is safe to do so, horses will be taken to the end of the arena opposite the incident, or removed from the arena.
 - b) Sidewalkers are to remain with their riders and follow the directions of the Instructor.
 - c) Staff or other volunteers familiar with horses will remove any horses not under the control of a Horse Leader from the immediate area as soon as possible. **Do not** run at a loose horse.
 - d) Person in charge will evaluate the situation and direct the others to take any or all of the following actions, as needed.
 - I. Call EMS, Fire Department, or Police by dialing 911. Emergency information is posted by every phone.
 - II. Send one person to the traffic circle and one person outside of the barn to wait for and direct emergency personnel to the scene.
 - III. Summon others with medical training to assist in evaluating and treating injured person.
 - IV. Bring first aid kit from barn.
 - V. Bring rider's medical form(s) from office.

NATURAL DISASTER PROCEDURES

THUNDERSTORMS:

Before Lightning Strikes...

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.

When a Storm Approaches...

Riding Outside the Arena

- If you can hear thunder, all riders will be dismounted by the instructor and will head into the arena and stand on the ramp away from the horses
- Horses will also be brought into the arena and stand lined up facing the ramp, then wait for instructions from the instructor

Riding Inside the Arena

- If you can hear thunder and you are inside the arena, all riders will be dismounted by the instructor and will go and stand on the ramp away from the horses
- Horses will stand lined up facing the ramp, then wait for instructions from the instructor

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS:

Riding Outside the Arena and Inside the Arena

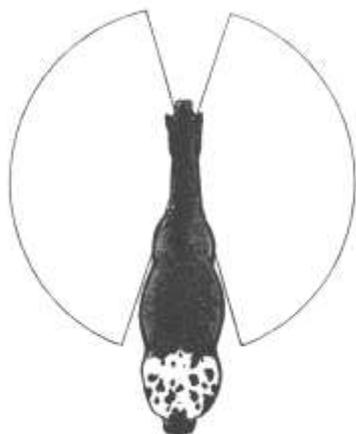
- All riders will be dismounted by the instructor and brought into the barn, riders without parents will be brought into the tack room until the storm passes
- Horses will be brought into the barn and placed into the closest stall with reins removed
- Wait for instructions from the instructor

FIRE:

- If you hear the smoke alarm, or hear someone shouting “fire”, immediately evacuate. Assist those who need help in evacuating.
- Go to the designated meeting place: The office (the white house close to the road)
- Do not re-enter a burning building.

SAFETY RULES FOR WORKING AROUND HORSES

1. **Approaching a Horse:** Speak to the horse in a low, calm voice before approaching to avoid startling him. Approach a horse from the side, never the rear, so that the horse can see you. Keep a hand on the horse's body when walking around him. Always walk around a tied horse--**NEVER WALK UNDER OR OVER A LEAD ROPE OR TRAILER TIE!**



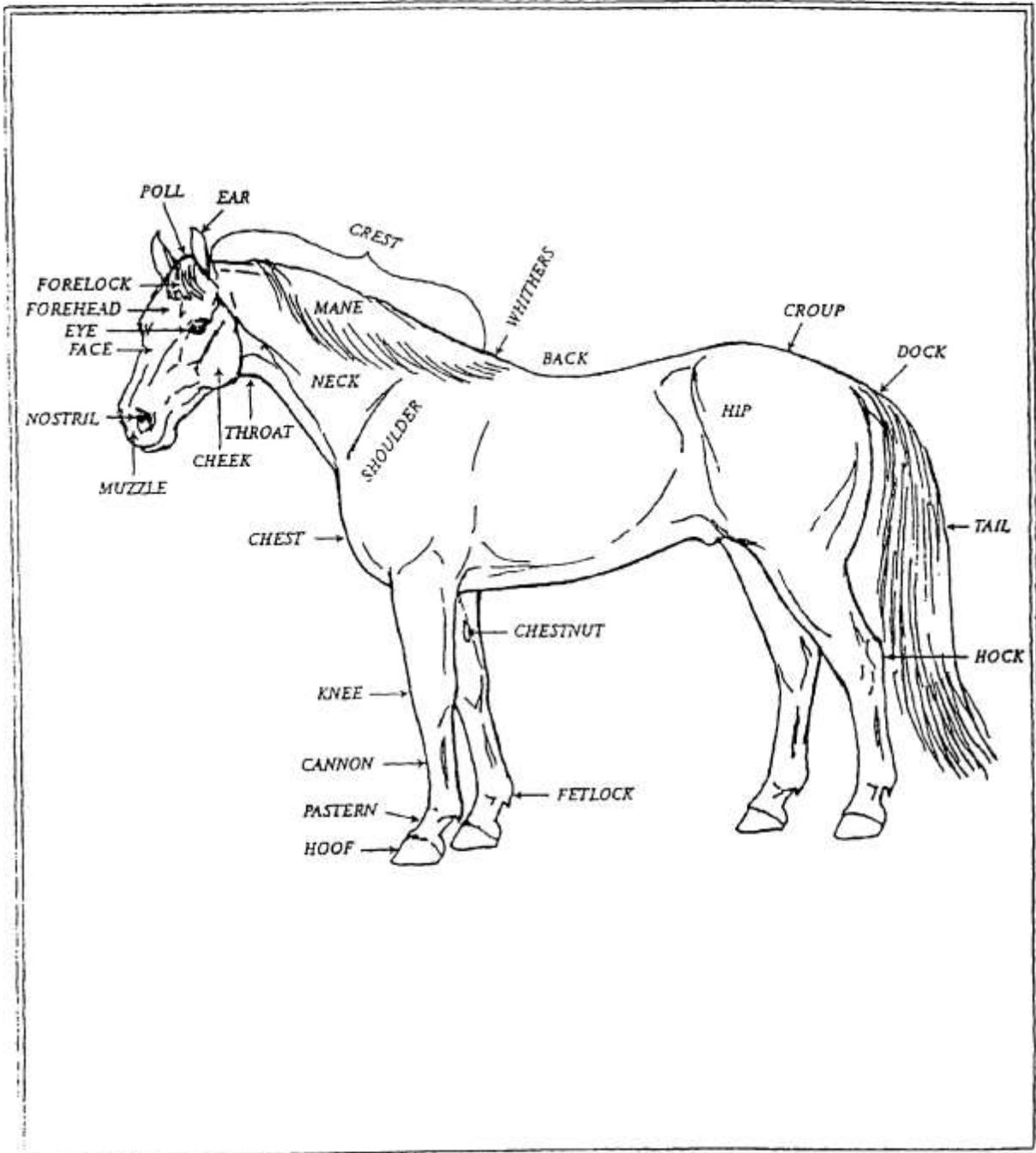
◀ A horse can see this much when facing straight ahead.

One of the horse's blind spots is directly behind, so you should never approach a horse from the back unless the horse already knows you're there.

2. **Petting a Horse:** Pet a horse by placing a hand on his shoulder or neck not on the nose. The horse's nose is a sensitive spot.
3. **When a Horse Startles:** People weigh a lot less than any equine. If a horse balks, do not try to out-pull him. A quick tug on the lead rope will generally move him forward. If a horse rears up, release the hand closest to the halter to avoid being pulled off the ground.
4. **Loose Horse:** Never chase a loose horse. Move slowly and speak calmly when approaching.
 - * Don't panic: Stay calm and shout "loose horse!"
 - * If the escapee is not your charge, but you are leading or standing next to your horse when another horse gets loose, be aware that your horse is probably going to react with excitement.
 - * If a horse you are handling gets away from you, DO NOT chase him. Chasing the horse only makes him run away with increasing speed.
5.
 - * Walk slowly in the direction the horse ran; Most don't go far.
 - * If he has stopped to eat, speak softly and walk up to him slowly.
 - * If the loose horse has stopped to eat, but takes off again when he sees you approaching, you'll need the help of one or two other people to catch him.
6. **Returning a Horse to Pasture or Stall:** After leading a horse into a stall or pasture, turn the horse so that he faces the door/gate. Close the door/gate, leaving enough space for the volunteer (not the horse) to exit before removing the halter.

PARTS OF THE HORSE

When working around horses, there are some special words and terms that you will need to know. Some parts of the horse are shown below.



UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOUR

EQUINE SENSES

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviours, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

SMELL: The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

Implications:

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling
- Treats may be brought for the horses but must be placed in the horse's feed bucket or in the "Treat Bucket" in the arena. Hand feeding is strictly prohibited.

HEARING: The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. *Hearing but not seeing* is often the cause of the fright/flight response. Note the position of the horse's ears in **Figure D** on the next page. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicates that the horse is upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person.

Implications:

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. (See **Figure D**, next page). Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion, or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat, or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

Figure D

READING HIS EARS

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.



Ears forward but relaxed
interested in what's
in front of him.



Ears turned back but relaxed
listening to his rider
or what's behind him.



Ears pointed stiffly forward
alarmed or nervous about what's
ahead. Looking for danger.



Ears pointed left and right
relaxed, paying attention
to the scenery on both sides.



Ears stiffly back
annoyed or worried about what's
behind him: might kick if annoyed.



Droopy ears
calm and resting,
horse may be dozing.



Ears flattened against neck
violently angry, in a fighting mood.
May fight, bite or kick.

OTHER SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOTICE ARE:

- Tucking the tail down tightly.
Danger to the rear.
Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
Watch out if ears are flattened, too!
- Switching the tail.
Annoyance and irritation:
at biting flies, stinging insects or
tickling bothersome actions of a rider or another horse.
- Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.
Calm and resting, horse may be dozing.
Don't wake him up by startling him!
- Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.
Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
Watch out for biting or kicking.

Information and illustrations provided by RDA.

SIGHT: A horse's eyes are set on either side of the head. They have good peripheral (lateral/sideways) vision, but poorer frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in colour.

Implications:

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or on a trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The horse has better peripheral vision; Consider a slightly looser rein/lead rope, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects as he moves.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is by his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area which is a safety consideration when hand feeding.

TOUCH: Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

Implications:

- Handlers should treat horses gently but firmly
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas)
- Watch rider's leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor what the best handling technique is.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or a ground pole before crossing over it.

TASTE: Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps a horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications:

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch. Therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible nipping/biting.

SIXTH SENSE: Horses do have a "sixth sense" when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handler and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor know if you're having a difficult time relating to or getting along with a particular horse.

THE HORSE'S LIFESTYLE

In addition to understanding the horse's six senses, we need to appreciate and increase our awareness of a horse's lifestyle and history. This will assist us in responding appropriately to his reactions to situations.

FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT: Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face and fight it.

Implications:

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working around the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears, see **Figure D**, page 4.4), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse handler to lead the horse.

HERD ANIMAL: Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant and a pecking order among the rest.

Implications:

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one to two horse lengths between horses when riding within a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

WHEN YOU MEET A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

1. **Be yourself.** Relate to a person with a disability the same way you relate to other people. Use conversation and social behaviour that you might use in any new situation.
2. **Allow the person with a disability to be himself/herself.** With or without disabilities, each of us is a unique individual.
3. **Appreciate what a person with a disability can do.** Once you get to know him/her, his/her interests and his/her abilities may surprise you.
4. **Explore mutual interest in a friendly way.** Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't try. Develop a friendship by showing an interest in the person, not his/her disability. Most people prefer to have someone ask them about their disability rather than receiving stares.
5. **Be patient.** Let the person with the disability set the pace for walking, talking and other activities. Be considerate of the extra time it might take to accomplish something or respond to something.
6. **Do not separate a person with a disability from a wheelchair, crutches or other aids unless he/she asks.** These aids may need to be nearby.
7. **Offer encouragement but not pity.** The person with the disability wants to be treated as an equal in all things. Give him/her a chance to prove himself/herself.
8. **Respect a person's independence.** He/She may prefer to do things for himself/herself. Wait until help is needed or requested. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when he/she is managing alone.
9. **Enjoy yourself.** Do not be afraid to laugh and have fun. You will be developing a friendship with a person from whom you may learn a great deal about life and how to live it.