

MEETING Mental Health Challenges in a POWERFUL WAY



EAGALA Model Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy

EAGALA Model equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) is experiencing rapid growth around the globe. Why? In two words:

STRONG OUTCOMES.



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The Global Standard for Equine Assisted Psychotherapy & Personal Development

The **REALITY** of unresolved challenges and traumas:



- In 2015, 4 million Australians report having a mental or behaviour disorder.
- People aged 15-64 with a mental or behavioural disorder are more than twice as likely to be unemployed.
- 11.2% of the Australian population – 2.6 million people – experience anxiety.
- 9.3% of the Australian population – 2.1 million people – are affected by mood disorders, including depression.
- One in twenty Australians report they experience both anxiety and a mood disorder.
- Around two-thirds of people with Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity, and other developmental disorders requiring assistance report to having an unmet need for formal assistance.

IT'S TIME FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE SOLUTION.



THE
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MODEL

The EAGALA Model delivers **LIFE-CHANGING** outcomes.



The EAGALA Model helps clients:

Translate emotional insights into action. The EAGALA Model is a solution-oriented modality leveraging the horse's universal language, size, and expressiveness to help clients recognise patterns of behaviour and learn experientially to affect change.

Foster resilience in times of high stress. The treatment sessions re-create life experiences, including those involving frustrations, high stress, and relationship problems. This provides opportunities to discover personal resources and strengths to overcome perceived obstacles to change.

Break through barriers to care. Clients challenge themselves in activities with horses that remove much of the perceived stigma associated with traditional talk therapy treatment methods. Horses don't have biases which helps clients of all populations and cultures feel emotionally safer in sessions.

Increase engagement. EAGALA Model sessions are about "doing." The process involves movement, physical activity, and relationship-building with the horses. This results in the process being more engaging, and engagement increases impact. Clients repeatedly report how quickly and deeply they get to the bottom of their issues, including clients who have been identified as treatment resistant.

Find real world solutions to life's toughest challenges. Clients find their own solutions to the struggles in their lives. Under the direction of a credentialed EAGALA treatment team, clients build on their resilience and learn through self-discovery the changes they need to make in order to be more successful in life.



The EAGALA Model in brief:

The EAGALA Model is a distinctive experiential framework designed to allow clients the latitude to discover, learn, and grow from the horse-human relationship.

Solution-oriented. The EAGALA Model utilizes horses as metaphors to help clients access their own solutions to life challenges.

A team approach. Under The EAGALA Model, all sessions are directed by a facilitating team certified in the Model. This two-person team includes a registered, credentialed mental health professional working with a credentialed equine specialist to assure the highest standard of care.

A strong code of ethics. EAGALA's standards outline professional requirements for both members of the credentialed facilitating team, ensuring the emotional health of the client.

The experience occurs on the ground. Clients engage with the horses on the ground. Riding is not part of The EAGALA Model.

Why Horses?

**The EAGALA Model harnesses
POWERFUL OPPORTUNITIES that come
from the horse-human dynamic.**



Horses evoke response and engagement.
No matter their background or experience, clients respond to horses. The horses' receptivity and response to clients, in turn, gives us information about the client. This dynamic, coupled with the natural, experiential settings of EAGALA programs, helps people move beyond the inherent restraints of talk-only therapy and office visits.

The unique qualities of the horse quicken emotional breakthroughs. This is especially true for those suffering from trauma. That's because horses are highly attuned animals that offer safe reflection and compelling feedback for fears and anxieties clients may be facing. In the hands of a skilled treatment team, the horses' unique sensitivity can help clients understand their own internal processes more readily than hours of talk.

Herd dynamics can help clients understand their own lives. Observing the dynamics within a herd of horses can help clients better understand the dynamics of their own family, team, and community, providing a positive model for collaboration, support, and trust. Horses are living, breathing metaphors and stand-ins for the client's greatest life challenges and their most important systems of support.



The Evidence:

"I have had many 'talk therapies' in my life but this was totally different and very powerful – I could step away from my usual intellectualising and just be and maybe it was this that enabled me to gain so much insight and to really 'cut through' stuff. This therapy has really changed things for me. I have noticed less fear and more inner stability."

(CLIENT WITH HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS, AFTER SIX ONE-HOUR EAGALA SESSIONS)

Clinical evidence and generations of human experience show that horses have a special ability to help people work through emotional barriers without shame or stigma. This is especially true and valuable for people who suffer the effects of trauma and other mental health or behaviour problems.

In The EAGALA Model, horses serve as metaphors and powerful stand-ins for the people, issues, and challenges in the client's life. A highly trained mental health professional puts the horses' unique sensitivities to work, where the horses' special capacity to read and respond to peoples' non-verbal signals and cues often lead to powerful emotional breakthroughs and life-changing insights.

With over sixteen years in the field, The EAGALA Model is tested and subject to ongoing study and development, with a growing body of evidence supporting its quality of practice, outcomes, and efficacy. EAGALA has an ongoing commitment to building the body of evidence based on peer-reviewed research.

Research highlights include:

- A program evaluation study found the EAGALA Model is an effective approach when working to alleviate trauma symptoms for children and adolescents who have been sexually abused, resulting in a significant reduction in undesirable behaviors and symptoms of depression and anxiety.¹
- A clinical study revealed the EAGALA Model of equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) reduced violent behaviour in chronic psychiatric inpatients and had significant improvement when compared to the canine therapy group and the psychoeducation group. The study further verified the reduction in violent behaviour sustained for several months after treatment and concluded EAP may be an effective therapeutic modality for long-term psychiatric patients at risk of violence.²
- A clear improvement in dementia-related behaviour was found with dementia participants. Normally withdrawn, they smiled, laughed, and talked to the horses. Others pushed past mobility limitations to be assisted to stand to interact with the horse more closely.³
- Youth offenders repetition of offences were reduced after equine-assisted therapy.⁴
- A clinically significant increase of 82% improvement in mood conduct and psychotic disorder was found in adolescents participating in equine-assisted family therapy.⁴
- An evaluation on Veterans participating in an EAGALA program revealed a 72% reduction in symptoms of PTSD. The program further revealed 50% of veterans with PTSD experienced reduction in symptoms that were clinically significant.⁵
- Children who spent time with horses had significantly lower stress hormone measures over 12 weeks than those in the waitlist group.⁶
- Children with ADD have been reported to focus for longer periods of time when leading or grooming horses.⁴
- Confidence and self-esteem increased through successful completion of the horse-oriented task.⁴

References:

1. Trauma – Kemp, K. et al (2013). “Equine Facilitated Therapy with children and adolescents who have been sexually abused: A program evaluation study.” Journal of Child and Family Studies.
2. Violence – Nurenberg, J.R. et al (2014). “Animal-Assisted Therapy With Chronic Psychiatric Inpatients: Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy and Aggressive Behavior.” Psychiatric Services in Advance, Oct. 1, 2014.
3. Alzheimer’s Dementia – 5 May 2014: The Ohio State University News Room “Caring for Horses Eases Symptoms of Dementia” by Pam Frost Gorder.
4. Review of EAP – Frewin, K. & Gardiner, B. (2005). “New age or old sage? A review of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy.” The Australian Journal of Counselling Psychology, 6, pp13-17.
5. Veterans with PTSD – PEACE Ranch, Equine Assisted Veterans Services (EAVS) December 2013 Report, www.eagala.org.
6. Stress – “Why horning around is good for you: Spending time around stables proven to reduce stress,” Daily Mail Online by Emma Innes, published 25 April 2014, updated 25 April 2014, accessed 21 February 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2613211/Spending-time-horses-make-teenagers-stressed-study-reveals>.





THE GLOBAL
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NETWORK



EAGALA was the first to advance professionalized standards for equine-assisted psychotherapy, developing its certification program into the industry's global standard. EAGALA is now the world's largest and most professionally respected association for equine-assisted psychotherapy.

- Over 4,500 members across 50 countries
- More than 700 credentialed programs worldwide with 90 local and regional networking groups
- The leading training and certifying organization serving registered mental health professionals offering equine-assisted psychotherapy
- Only members of The EAGALA Network can provide the exclusive evidence-driven EAGALA Model of treatment
- Continuing professional development hours required to maintain the EAGALA credential, ensuring ongoing education and up-to-date knowledge in the industry



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The Global Standard for Equine Assisted Psychotherapy & Personal Development

EAGALA is a nonprofit professional organization with over 4,500 members in 50 countries.

EAGALA is committed to setting the standard of professional excellence in how horses and people work together to improve the quality of life and mental health for individuals, families, and groups worldwide.

To learn about EAGALA in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Pacific, contact:

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