



Innovative Therapeutic Riding Program

Volunteer Training Manual

Dear Volunteer:

We are looking forward to working with you and we appreciate your contribution. In order to make your volunteer experience pleasant, safe, and productive, here are some things you need to know.

Attendance:

- **Crucial !!! If you don't show when you say you will, the client may not ride!**
- Contact us as early as possible if you can't attend. (Volunteer Coordinator - 208-539-7910 or giddyupgirl_10@hotmail.com)

If you need a sub:

Let the Volunteer Coordinator know any dates you will be absent from class so she can find a substitute for your slot. If you need a sub after signing up, but more than 24 hours in advance, please contact the Coordinator.

Emergency Cancellations:

If you have a last-minute emergency (illness, family issue etc) and can't make your class time, call 208-539-7910 ASAP and leave a message.

Arrival:

Interns - 1 hour before class

Sidewalkers - 30 minutes before class

- If you are going to be late please call the Coordinator 208-539-7910

Sign- in:

- Please sign in and out (logging your time is important to the program when applying for grants and recognizing volunteer contributions)
- Please wear a name tag - they will be provided
- Keep track of your miles driven to and from for your tax returns
- Interns need to work at least TBD hours to receive credit for their internship, (determined by their University Professor)

Cell Phones:

We ask that you **turn off** your cell phone during classes. Please have cell phone conversations outside to limit distractions in the arena.

Attire:

- Shoes - **Comfortable, closed toed and supportive** (boots, tennis shoes etc)
- No noisy bracelets, dangling earrings, or other objects that may distract the clients
- No no low-cut tops or short-shorts,
- No excessively baggy clothes - they can get caught on things
- Long Hair - **should be tied back**
- Sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, hat or visor - if outdoors
- If it's cold outside, it's cold in the arena, if it's hot outside it's hot in the arena- dress accordingly - layers are good!

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Children:

Not allowed while volunteering - you must have full attention on your client

Pets:

Not allowed at the center

First Aid:

- Human first-aid kits are located in the office
- Equine first-aid kits are located in the tack trailer
- Instructors are certified in First Aid and CPR and will administer if needed
- In case of emergency, use the instructors phone

Gates:

All gates **MUST** be kept closed and latched during classes or any time a horse is in the arena. If you see an open gate, **PLEASE** close and latch it.

Smoking and Alcohol:

Is prohibited during all Innovative Therapeutic Riding Program hours.

Spectators/Visitors:

Family members and friends are encouraged to visit and observe quietly. Guests are required to remain in designated areas and should always enter and exit through designated areas.

All activities shall be conducted so as to afford maximum safety to people and horses

- All children must be under adult supervision at all times
- No one is allowed in pastures, paddocks or stalls with loose horses except qualified horse personnel.
- All people must wear helmets at all times while mounted.
- Only instructors and students are allowed on the mounting ramp

THANK YOU FOR OBSERVING ALL OF THE ABOVE GUIDELINES!!

THE TEAM

Definition: The team consists of the client, horse, instructor, therapist (if present), sidewalker(s) and horse leader.

Goal: To help each client ride as independently as possible to the best of their ability. The team is a whole, with no one part being more important than the other.

The team's focus is on the client's goals. It is vital that each member of the team take ownership of it and be an active member.

Consistency: is the most important. The client will count on you. You will get to know the client and will be able to spot any changes from week to week, whether in ability or attitude.

Communication: is vital between team members. Information concerning moods of horse and rider, timing, direction, progress, problems etc., is vital for the whole team to know.

DUTIES:

- Instructor - Director of the team. Develops curriculum and directs the lesson and

is ultimately responsible for the class.

- Horse Leader - Responsible for the horse. The leader is there as a safety net. It is important to let the client make mistakes (**within the limits of safety**).
- Sidewalkers - Responsible for the student. Safety is the primary concern, followed by riding properly. Sidewalkers should be aware of where all the riders' body parts are, i.e., foot in stirrup, hands holding reins, trunk straight.

Sidewalker requirements:

- Sidewalkers must be able to walk beside a horse, assisting the rider as needed for the duration of the class
- Sidewalkers may occasionally be asked to trot with the horse and rider
- Sidewalkers must be capable of performing an emergency dismount if needed.

Sidewalkers can also help the instructor in many other ways; keeping the riders attention on the lesson, assisting in right/left directions, and understanding the instructor's directions.

Since the sidewalker is always very close to the rider, they may want to talk to you. Do not ignore direct questions, but emphasize paying attention to the instructor. You may help by reinforcing directions.

When "reminding" riders, use positive words. Use Do phrases not don't phrases

DO Phrases: Sit up tall, Eyes up, Listen to what (instructor's name) is saying, Hold your hands up

DON'T Phrases: Don't slouch, Stop looking down, be quiet, you are talking too much. Don't rest your hands on the saddle.

When students arrive:

- Greet rider and family
- Assist student with helmet
- Find out how the rider is that day: ask rider/parents if it was a good/bad day, anything the instructor should know. Report any significant findings to the instructor (privately)
- Assist with grooming the horse

During class:

- Safety is number one, riding position is secondary
- Allow the rider time to process the information and act; don't expect an immediate response
- Be aware of body part positions; feet in stirrups, hands holding reins, trunk straight
- May need to interpret instructor's commands
- Focus on the rider at all times
- Keep chatter to a minimum: rider can only listen to one person at a time

After class:

- Stay with the rider until you exit the arena
- Assist rider with helmet - helmet must stay on the rider until student is out of the arena
- Help the instructor clean up the barn and arena

If a rider's behavior is in any way harming any person or horse, **immediately** call the instructor's attention to the situation.

PHYSICAL SUPPORT DURING CLASS

Mounting:

When using a ramp the sidewalker will stand on the right side of the horse as the rider mounts the horse as a safety precaution. The sidewalker will hold onto the rider as the horse leader moves the horse away from the ramp and stops, allowing the rider to put their feet into the stirrups.

During Class-Holds:

- Instructors determine the appropriate hold for each rider
- Always ask if you have a question about what hold to use
- Once a hold is applied, the sidewalker should not let go of the hold without checking with the instructor. The rider needs you for physical support to stay on the horse.

Thigh Hold: Arm nearest to the rider goes across the thigh with hand gripped on saddle or saddle pad. (This arm should be level and apply even light pressure) This stabilizes the rider's side-to-side movement.

Ankle Hold: Hand closest to the rider holds ankle of the rider. This stabilizes the rider's forward-backward movement.

Dismounting: Most dismounts will be done in the arena.

- Riders are lined up for dismount in center of the arena
- Riders are instructed to put reins on the horse's neck, take their feet out of the

stirrups, wiggle their toes, and thank their team

- Sidewalkers **NEED TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION** because some riders may attempt to dismount by themselves
- Instructors dismount each rider individually
- Sidewalkers accompany riders out of the arena and help with removing their helmet (if needed)
- Riders must keep helmets on until out of the arena

Types of Dismount:

Croup: (leg over the horse's back)

- Rider leans forward
- Rider swings right leg over the horse's back
- Rider slides to ground
- Sidewalker assists rider in bringing leg over the back of the horse if needed.

Crest: (leg over horse's neck)

- Rider brings right leg over crest (horse's neck)
- Sidewalker on right side assists with leg and supporting the rider's back
- Rider is facing instructor and either turns so stomach is against horse and slides to the ground or continues facing instructor, places hands on instructor's shoulders and slides to the ground

Emergency Dismount: (used when rider needs to dismount quickly or, if possible, to prevent a fall)

- Sidewalker determines that the rider is falling or needs to come off quickly
- Sidewalker wraps arms around the rider's trunk (do not pull on arms)
- Sidewalker sets into position to receive the weight of the rider (one foot forward, slightly bent; one leg back with foot at an angle for support)
- Sidewalker stands still- as the horse continues to moving, the rider slides off the horse into the sidewalkers arms
- Horse leader turns riderless horse to face rider and sidewalker and stops
- Instructor will assist at this point
- All teams remain stopped until instructor gives the okay
- **Safety concerning the horses;**
- Always approach a horse at the shoulder, talking to him
- When changing sides, always go around the front of the horse, if possible
- Do not walk under a horse's neck or lead rope
- When you pet a horse, pet his neck and shoulder.
- Do not pet or lean on the horse during class

SAFETY IS THE FIRST PRIORITY!!!!