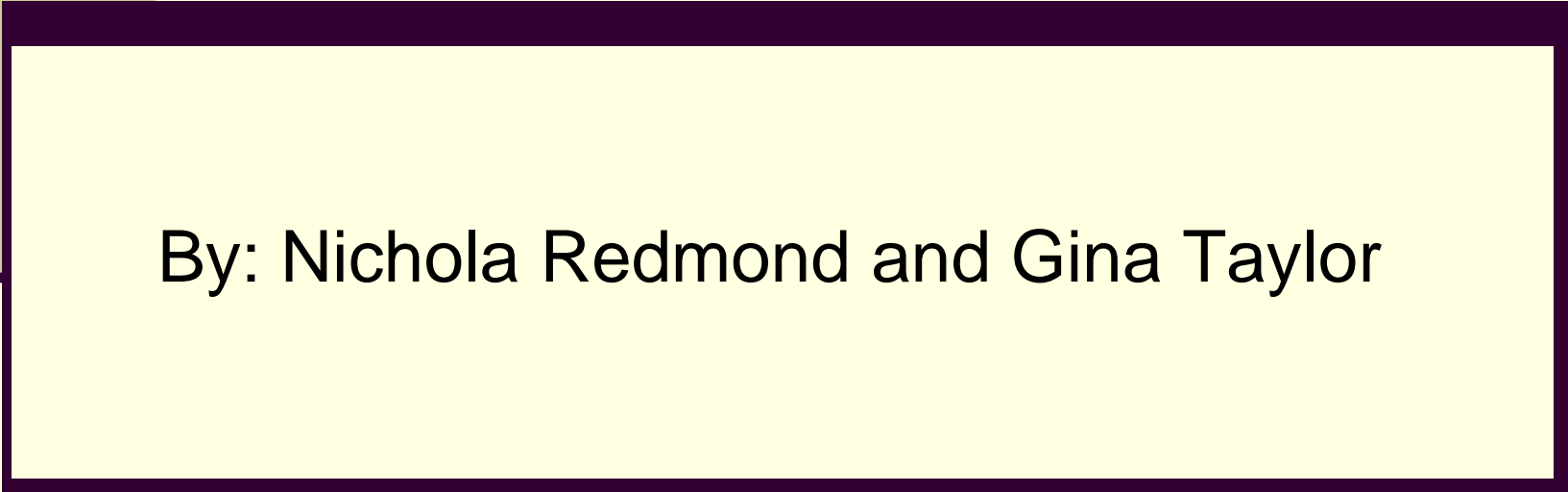




The Liability of Language



By: Nichola Redmond and Gina Taylor

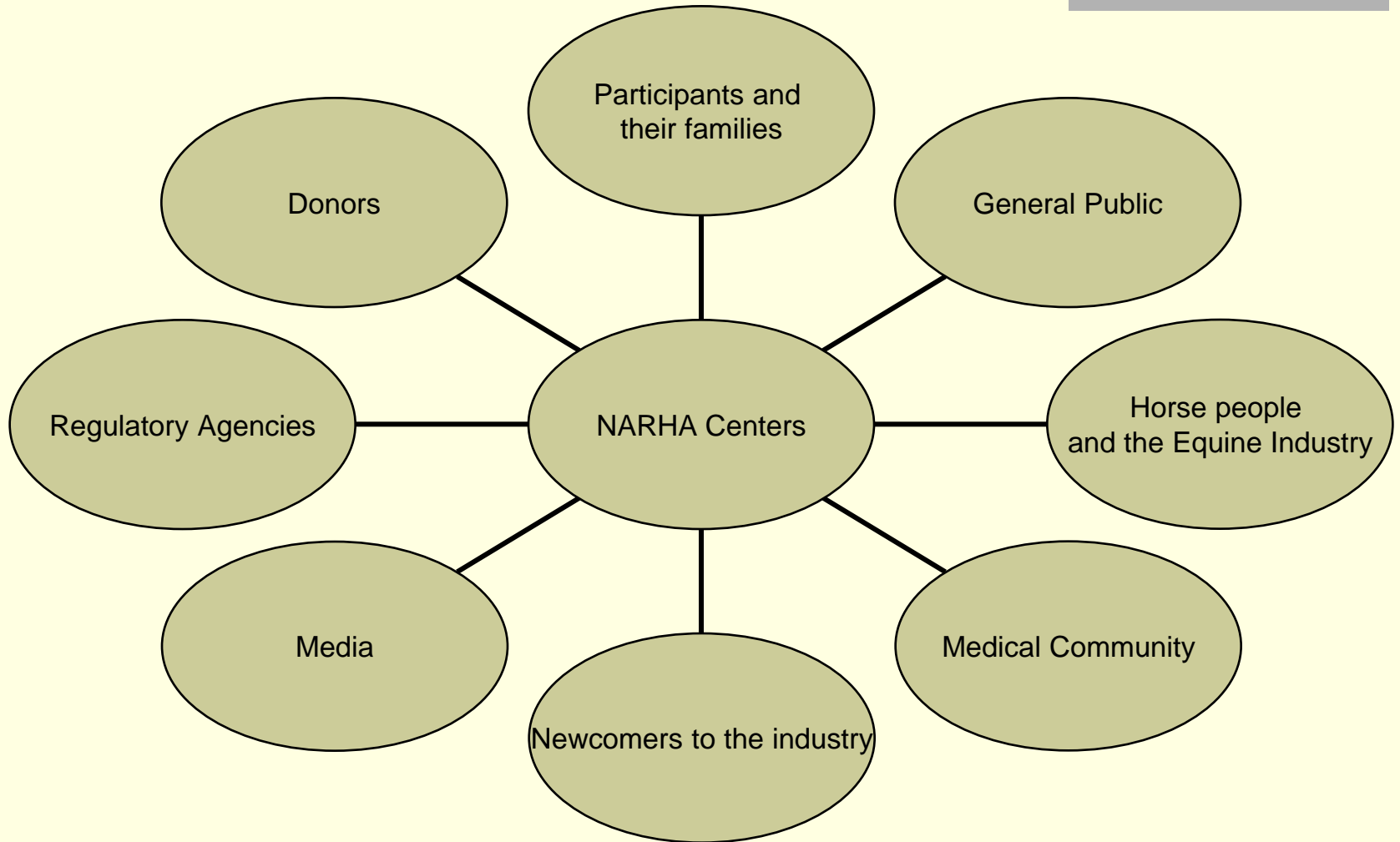
A lot has changed since the beginning of therapeutic riding in the United States. This industry has grown more skilled, more specialized and is impacted by a variety of other industries (insurance, media, medical). Describing what we do as professionals is a new horizon that must meet the needs of our participants, donors and sponsors and others such as volunteers, parents and the public.



Key Words

- Therapeutic riding
- Equine assisted activities
- Therapeutic sports riding
- Adaptive riding
- Therapeutic Driving
- Developmental Riding
- Interactive Vaulting
- Riding for the disabled
- Therapeutic Horsemanship
- Equine Facilitated Learning
- Equine Facilitated Experiential Learning
- Therapeutic Equestrian Activities
- Equine Assisted Therapy
- Hippotherapy
- Riding Therapy
- Equine Therapy
- Equine Facilitated Therapy
- Equestrian therapy
- Horseback Riding Therapy
- Horse Therapy
- Sports Riding Therapy
- Equine Assisted Psychotherapy
- Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy

Who is our language impacting?



Communication targets

■ INTERNAL

- Staff
- Board of Directors
- Donors/Supporters
- Participants
- Potential Participants
- Volunteers
- Potential Volunteers
- Other Stakeholders

■ EXTERNAL

- Peers
- Start up programs
- Affiliated agencies
- Affiliated professionals
- Liability Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Regulatory Officials
- Media
- Community
- General Public

“The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man.” Winston Churchill



Language: Cultural vs. technical

- rec•re•ation *n* fr. L *recreatio*, restoration to health: refreshment of strength and spirits after toil: a means of refreshment or diversion.
- ther•a•py: *n*: therapeutic treatment: as **a**: remedial treatment of bodily disorder **b**: PSYCHOTHERAPY
- ther •a •peu •tic- *adj*: of or relating to the treatment of disease of disorders by remedial agents or methods.
- treat *vt* 4: to care for or deal with medically or surgically.

Definition of terms

- **Therapeutic Riding:** Mounted activities including traditional riding disciplines or adaptive riding activities conducted by a NARHA certified instructor.
- **Hippotherapy:** Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational or speech therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement. This strategy is used as part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional outcomes.
- **Animal-assisted activities (AAA):** "AAA provides opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance quality of life. AAA are delivered in a variety of environments by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals, and/or volunteers, in association with animals that meet specific criteria."
- **Animal-assisted therapy (AAT):** "AAT is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is directed and/or delivered by a health/human service professional with specialized expertise, and within the scope of practice of his/her profession."

Continued definitions

- **ed·u·cate**: *v* To develop the innate capacities of, especially by schooling or instruction. See synonyms at **teach**.
 - To provide with knowledge or training in a particular area or for a particular purpose: *decided to educate herself in foreign languages; entered a seminary to be educated for the priesthood.*
 - To provide with information; inform: *a campaign that educated the public about the dangers of smoking.*
 - To bring to an understanding or acceptance: *hoped to educate the voters to the need for increased spending on public schools.*
 - To stimulate or develop the mental or moral growth of.
 - To develop or refine
- **in·struc·tor**: *n* One who teaches or trains.

Educational Model thinking

- We teach riding and horsemanship skills
- We instruct students, riders, competitors, athletes or participant
- Our riders benefit from the learning process
- Education broadens knowledge through experience and learning
- Education develops the “whole” person
- A collaborative expression with active participation from both the instructor and student

Communication Models

Equine Assisted Activities

Equine Assisted Therapy

Therapeutic riding

Therapeutic Driving

Equine Facilitated Learning

Hippotherapy

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy



Why be clear?



- To protect your organization and your staff
 - Liability
 - Licensure laws
- To enhance the image and professionalism of our industry
- To assist our participant in gaining insurance coverage for therapy services provided by health professionals

Why be clear?

- Imagine this scenario:
 - A mother calls your center to find information about riding therapy for her 15 month old son. Her child's physician suggested that she begin riding therapy to improve trunk control, muscle tone and balance for her son. The mother looks online and reads the following statement, "Horseback riding has proven to be one of the most effective forms of physical therapy used." She is a longtime horseperson and begins the search for the perfect therapy horse.

Terms used, issues raised

- Riding therapy
- Physical therapy
- Hippotherapy
- Benefits of therapeutic riding vs. hippotherapy
- Qualifications, education and experience

Second Scenario

- A mother sees this ad:
- Back in the Saddle!

HIJ Recreation's Inclusive Horseback Riding Program was developed by high school senior JL and HIJ Department of Parks and Recreation. The ponies and their trainers are provided by STU horse people. The program is staffed by student volunteer mentors.

~ Approx. 10 minutes (depending on child) of Therapeutic Riding on a pony around a trail. Concentration is on building balance, improving posture, muscle tone, and flexibility while providing the child with cognitive and sensory stimulation. Each pony is led by a trainer and sidewalked by two mentors.

~ Balance of each class concentrates on Equine-Assisted Therapy which includes bonding with a pony; grooming, petting, brushing, decorating ponies, and more!

Terms Used, Issues raised

- Inclusive Therapeutic Riding
- Therapeutic Riding
- Equine Assisted Therapy
- Medical Model Language
- Qualifications, education and experience



Final Senario

- A horseperson attends a workshop by a nationally recognized organization that promotes incorporating horses into mental health counseling and coaching. The horseperson is enthusiastic about her equine specialist credentials and wants to start an equine facilitated life coaching program. She is confident in her abilities as a horseperson and with her new training and chooses not to partner with a licensed mental health professional. She receives a grant from a county agency to provide services for children with mental health diagnosis (depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar, schizophrenia). Her proposal indicates that she intends to “coach” the children in life skills, behavioral management, impulse control, social skills and exploration of emotional experiences.

Terms Used, Issues raised

- Equine specialist
- Life coaching
- External communication
- Qualifications, education and experience

Reasons to clean up our language:

- The above mentioned scenarios are based on real life. They clearly demonstrate the confusion that exists regarding our industry. We must be clear on what services are being provided, who provides them and the goals and objective in order to cultivate legitimacy of EAA/T as perceived by the outside world.

Who, What, How

- We must keep in mind the qualifications and credentials that apply to each job or position. Therapists provide medical treatment. Instructors provide learning experiences. Those who possess both credentials must be conscious in emphasizing only those credentials relevant to the services being provided.



Insurance fraud

- **Therapy** – Claims of providing therapy or treatment, or billing for services with a third party may be done only by a licensed/ credentialed professional such as a PT, OT, SLP, psychologist, social worker, MD, among others. Laws differ by state. If non-licensed/credentialed personnel claim to be doing therapy or providing treatment, this is often considered fraudulent.

A word about equines



- The very use of the words “therapy horses” implies that therapy is being performed. If horses are not used in equine assisted therapy, then another, more appropriate term should be used:
 - Equine Staff
 - Program horses, lesson horses
 - Helper Horses or Assistance Horses

Talking with the media and others

- When addressing media it is important to clearly define EAA/T services, who is providing services and use language appropriate to the service model
- Presenters must be conscious of who their audience is (educational background, role or perspective and purpose of attendance). Be clear when presenting to distinguish between educational information and instruction for “hand-on” application

Medical Model thinking includes:

- Uses of the words: therapy, treatment, remediation, rehabilitation, recovery, intervention
- Medical model terms- sensory integration, muscle tone, bilateral coordination, visual-spatial awareness, postural control
- Participation in EAA to fix, change, improve
- All persons with disabilities need therapy or would benefit from therapy

“whether or not they have a disability, everyone needs the recreative experience of the unspoiled out-of-doors.”

~ William Penn Mott Jr.

Positive Language

- Organized activities
- Safety
- Fun learning environment
- Social learning environment
- Integrated or specialized programs
- Accreditation and certification
- TR improves balance.... Life balance!

Language for recreational programs

- According to the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities, recreational activities contribute to an individual's quality of life by:
 - promoting physical activity as part of an active lifestyle,
 - developing fundamental motor skills necessary for participating in individual and team sports
 - increasing physical independence and/or mobility,
 - enhancing self-esteem and self-image, and
 - establishing friendships with peers of all abilities (NCPERID, n.d.).

Physically

- Same benefits of any physical exercise
 - Fostering a healthy lifestyle
 - Building strength and endurance
 - Lowers blood pressure
 - Effective in weight management
 - Reduces risk for diseases associated with sedentary lifestyle (diabetes, heart disease)
 - “Use it or lose it”

Cognitive



- Aerobic exercise training can significantly improve mental capacity (PRFO, 1992).
- Cognitive function is expanded through exposure to stimulating environments and experiences
- Equine-Assisted Activities are education based experiences

Social and Emotional

- physical activity and social opportunities, reduces the risk for depression, isolation and abuse of drugs and alcohol
- promotes independence as well as physical and psychological health
- benefits include meeting and talking with people their own age, developing new friends, and problem solving with peers in comparable life situations
- increased frequency of social interactions, meaningful relationships with peers with/without disabilities, facilitates skill development, and enhances perceptions of community membership (Mahon et al., 2000).

Social and Emotional continued

- Recreation provides opportunities for self-expression and self-development. It fosters a sense of freedom and independence.
- reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, improves mood, and promotes a general feeling of well being
- helps to establish healthy communication, understanding and form lasting relationships
- Physical fitness and aerobic activities had a much more profound impact on self-esteem among children with disabilities than did curriculum activities as found in an analysis of 24 controlled studies (PRFO, 1992).

Other

- Participants without disabilities also benefit from recreation that includes individuals with disabilities, encouraging them to focus less on individual differences and more on their shared interests in recreation (Mahon et al., 2000).
- positive attitudes towards the disabled, increased tolerance and sensitivity were some of the confirmed benefits of participating in integrated outdoor experiences (McAvoy, 2001)
- By participating in re-socialization activities, individuals with disabilities enhance their interpersonal skills, experience a revitalized interest in life events and activities and an increased concern for the quality of life for others (Heintzman, 1997).

Resources

- www.NARHA.org
 - See EFMHA section and glossary
- www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org
- www.EAGALA.org Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association
- www.deltasociety.org
- www.CHA-AHSE.org Certified Horsemanship Association
- www.ndsaonline.org National disability sports alliance
- www.specialolympics.org Special Olympics
- The health and social benefits of recreation at www.parks.ca.gov/planning
- www.ncpad.org National center on physical activity and disability
- www.NSCD.org National Sports Center for the Disabled
- www.SVASP.org Sun Valley Adaptive Sports Program
- www.palaestra.com Palaestra: Forum of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation for those with disabilities

Where do we go from here

- Do a risk assessment
- Vet your external communication documents, media kits for questionable or confusing language
- Communicate with staff and volunteers regarding consistency of language use
- Support NARHA's effort to standardize language

Are you at risk for:

- Allegations of fraud
- Insurance fraud
- Liability Exposure
- Sanction by professional regulatory agencies
- Alienation of Stakeholders



Questions

