

Equine Facilitated Learning Programs for Enhancing the Home-Education Experience



"The horse will teach you, if you'll listen." ~ Ray Hunt

What is Equine Facilitated Learning?



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Equine facilitated learning (EFL) is an experiential approach that integrates equine-human interaction that promotes the development of life skills for educational, professional and personal goals. Interaction with horses also provides opportunities for learning to be in a relationship with horses, thus helping humans to be in relationship with themselves and with others and helping humans to develop socially and emotionally.

There are no prerequisites and no previous horse experience is necessary. All exercises are completed safely from the ground.

Horses and Experiential Learning

While EFL has the ability to take an individual through a powerful journey of learning and understanding, the most asked question is "Why horses?" The intuitive and sensitive nature of the horses provides an additional, unique dimension to the learning as they react to and reflect behaviours that the participants exhibit to really drive the learning home.

Here are some of the reasons horses are so suited to this work:

- Horses are sensitive, aware of their surroundings and quick to react. They watch for the slightest movement and look for threatening body posture. Horses know how to discern the difference between a calm, non-threatening approach and anxious, nervous energy. However, every horse is different just as each person is unique.



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- In a horse's world, the boundaries are clear and easy to understand. Horses look for strong leadership and are willing to follow after they find respect and trust. If we provide contradictory behaviour they start to question and challenge our authority to lead.
- In a horse's world, team work is expected and respected. Horses respect fair consequences. Horses cannot lie or overthink a situation (i.e. they are honest and non-judgemental). Learning to listen to what horses have to say is powerful and can sometimes be the catalyst to individual change.
- By their intuitive nature and reaction to stimulus, horses can provide facilitators with a window into the participant's personality. Through the discovery of how sensitive horses are and how kind and forgiving they can be, we can guide participants to becoming better individuals through identifying specific horse behaviours.

Development of Transferable Skills

Our programs brings people together with horses to work through a number of carefully designed experiential learning exercises that focus on key learning objectives, while promoting teamwork in a fun and engaging format.

Our trained EAL facilitators are able to observe non-verbal communication of the horses and be a translator, as well as a guide, to encourage the learner to attain the outcome of each exercise. This hands on approach to learning has proven to greatly multiply the participants retention and understanding of skills learned. As participants learn how to communicate, lead and work effectively with a horse, they build confidence and learn valuable skills that they can apply to all relationships.

Transferable skills learned while working with horses in EFL:

- relationship building (social skills)
- trust and respect (relationship skills)



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- success over obstacles (resilience)
- appreciation for & understanding of others (empathy)
- confidence & self-esteem
- self-awareness (intrapersonal skills) & awareness of others (interpersonal skills)
- teamwork (social skills)
- responsibility
- appropriate assertiveness (self-regulation)
- communication skills (verbal & non-verbal): clear articulation, active listening, reading body language
- choice making & goal setting skills (motivation)
- negotiation skills
- creativity
- group decision making and problem solving skills
- leadership skills

Emotional Intelligence and EFL

The skills learned in EFL can help develop an individual's emotional intelligence. According to Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist who helped to popularise emotional intelligence, there are five key elements to emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills

We can also think of emotional intelligence as having four competencies:

1. Self-awareness

This is the ability to recognise and understand your mood, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others. Development of this skill is through paying attention to how others influence your emotional state. These observations improve your self-awareness of your emotional state and how your behaviour impacts others. Looking inward and focusing on 'Who I am' promotes self-confidence particularly when dealing with difficult people or situations.



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2. Self-management

This is the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, the propensity to suspend judgement – to think before acting. Regulation of your emotions and responses to situations improves relationships. Self-management skills allow you to express your ideas and handle conflict constructively and openly; improves your ability to get along with others.

3. Social awareness

This is the capacity to understand the emotional makeup of other people, treating people according to their emotional reactions and expressing empathy towards others, utilising sensitivity to other's feelings and showing sincere concern, understanding and empathy cultivate positive relationships.

4. Relationship management

This is proficiency in managing relationships and building networks and an ability to find common ground and build rapport. Getting along well with others is imperative in all aspects of our lives. Truly understanding the needs of others, without jeopardising your needs, assists in maintaining relationships within your personal and professional life. Social skills and relationship building improves your ability to collaborate effectively with groups and teams.

How can working with horses develop our emotional intelligence?

We can translate our learning from the horse easily into our human social environments of family, friends and work. Horses show similarity to humans in their emotional (limbic) brain and in their need for socialisation. In emotional and social aspects, relating to horses can serve as a model for participants to use in their relationships with others. Horses provide honest and immediate feedback about the person's underlying emotional state. Horses provide us with a way to see our internal landscape and how we operate in the world. This provides humans the opportunity to learn self-regulation.



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Being prey animals they need to organise themselves without attracting predators, so horses most often communicate visually, using body language. This use of body language can help participants to better understand and learn how their own non-verbal communication might be impacting or influencing others in their lives.

Horses are very aware of their herd members and environment and ask people to be aware of their surroundings at all times. It is through interactions with the horses that participants learn about self-awareness, which helps reveal behaviour patterns and gives participants the opportunity to change their thinking and actions. Working together as a team with the horses and other participants, requires an individual to be self-aware, as well as have an awareness of others, which includes peers and the horses.

The National Curriculum and EFL

Equine facilitated learning can support the National Curriculum for Language and Literacy in the following areas:

1. Spoken Language

The National Curriculum states that “pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication.”

There are a number of exercises we work through with the horses and team members that require team members to: clearly communicate to convey ideas and opinions; formulate a plan by evaluating the ideas and building on the ideas of others; ask questions to check understanding and negotiation among team members to execute the plan.

2. Writing



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The National Curriculum states that “pupils should build on what they have been taught to expand the range of their writing and the variety of the grammar they use. The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.”

Each EFL exercise has a written worksheet or journal page that requires participants to reflect on their learning and answer questions or write about their experience. Here are some sample questions/reflections:

- Share a story about how you felt in the horse program
- What skills did you learn today and how can they help you with the horses?
- Explain how your team worked together
- What communication skills were required to complete the exercise?
- Give an example of a win/win negotiation that you used

3. Vocabulary Development

The National Curriculum states that teachers “should increase pupils’ store of words, build on pupils’ current knowledge, make links between known and new vocabulary and induct pupils into the language which defines each subject...such as accurate mathematical and scientific language.”

There is a vocabulary bank that we use in our programs, discussing what each word means as part of the EFL exercises:



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honesty teamwork negotiation attitude choices patience body language self esteem compassion love	courage respect articulation leadership active listening perseverance integrity focus empathy communication	trust motivation accountable responsibility evaluation confidence humour common sense planning calm	boundaries self-reflection relationship building team player consequences problem solving appropriate assertiveness kindness pressure & release
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Our programs can be customised to align with your current areas of study, bringing an experiential learning element to your curriculum to enhance learning. For example, our programs can be tailored to make links to mathematics and science by including learning about horses’:

- Anatomy, physiology and behaviour
- Habitat and management of their environment
- Height and weight measurements
- Nutritional content of feed and how much to feed
- Care and health management

EFL Program Options and Fees

The foundation of our programs is our outcome driven experiential Equine Assisted Learning curriculum. Some of the outcomes are:

1. Introducing how individuals impact teams and relationships
2. Understanding the negotiation process and working towards finding a resolution
3. Respecting the power of body language
4. Recognising that trust is directly linked to the act of listening



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5. Understanding the importance of clear articulation/clear communication
6. Appropriate assertiveness begins with self-evaluation
7. Leadership is earned
8. Understanding how common sense influences change
9. Discovering how to influence others while improving communication skills
10. Effectively working together within a group structure

We offer various formats to suit your schedule and budget including full- and half-day workshops and weekly sessions. Below are details of our different program options.

Pricing is per person:

Weekly sessions	Half & Full Day Workshops
Package of 4 weekly sessions £100 Package of 8 weekly sessions £175 Package of 12 weekly sessions £275 (each session 1.5 hrs)	Half-day (3 hours) £50 – 2 EFL exercises Full-day (6 hours) £100 – 4 EFL exercises

Our sessions run with a minimum of 6 participants to a maximum of 12.

What is Included?

- Professionally facilitated Equine Facilitated Learning sessions focused on skills development using our proven Building Block approach
- Qualified Psychotherapist, Qualified Teacher and Certified EFL Instructors
- Instruction in basic skills for handling horses safely from the ground
- Use of horses and all equipment
- Certificate of Completion for 8 and 12 week programs, plus a graduation
- Programs tailored to the needs of your child, student or group
- A unique environment away from the traditional classroom in which to learn



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Our Facilitators

The sessions are facilitated by Irma Peters and Nancy Winton, who are the co-founders of 2Connections Equine Facilitated Human Development.

Irma is an Integrative Psychotherapist/Counsellor and practitioner within the field of Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy and Learning with over 40 years of horse experience working and training with a variety of horses. In addition, she is the founder of EquiStep.

Nancy brings over 15 years combined experience in education and equine assisted activities, as a qualified teacher, special educational needs support worker, therapeutic riding instructor and equine assisted learning facilitator. In addition, she is the founder of Dance with Equus.

What Others Have to Say

"I love to watch his confidence grow each week and see him learning new skills. It's great to see him working with the horses and how he relaxes himself to them. A very positive experience for both of us." ~ C.C. (mother of a young person with ASD)

"I look forward to Monday every week and really enjoy the tasks we do with the horses."
~ A young person with ASD

"This session has really made me think about how my energy affects those around me - the children in my school, the team of staff in my school (even family at home and animals). I will carry this with me from now on - this small window of time with two small horses will probably be a turning point in my life and work." ~ Headteacher, Suffolk Council School



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"I am very interested in energy and how we use it and listen to it. I wasn't expecting to learn more about it with horses! A really insightful day that has led to infinite potential with learning with children and staff. Loved it!" ~ SENCO, Suffolk Council School

"The delivery is applicable to commercial and educational sectors and enables both outcome-based learning, peer to peer and experiential learning for positive outcomes targeted and not realised until post activity." ~ Business Development Mentor

The Next Step



Please contact us to discuss the needs of your child, student or group:

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"To learn from their experience, teams must create a conversational space where members can reflect on and talk about their experience together." ~ David Kolb

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it." ~ David Kolb

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." ~ Confucius

"Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." ~ Viktor Frankl

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