

# EQUINE THERAPIST



ANIMAL CAREER PROFILES

## DESCRIPTION

Horse therapy, also known as equine therapy, equine assisted therapy (EAT) or equine assisted psychotherapy, is the practice of using horses for emotional development in humans. Patients in this type of therapy use emotions, behavior, and patterns to better develop an understand of the horse and themselves. The process consists of an experimental session, focusing on the interaction between the patient and the horse. The horse therapist is in charge of supervising activities such as grooming, feeding, and handling the horse, while observing how the patient interacts with the animal to identify patterns of behavior and emotions.

As an equine therapist, you connect patients with horses who may be struggling with multiple addictions, behavioral disorders, eating disorders, learning difficulties, hyperactivity, autism, Asperger syndrome, grief/loss, bipolarity, depression, and other conditions. After working with the horses, the therapist can hold sessions with the patient to observe how their mental health is evolving. The therapist can identify and address a variety of emotional and behavioral challenges, as well as help with certain qualities such as empathy, stress tolerance, impulse control, problem-solving skills, social responsibility, and more.

## EDUCATION

After completing your undergraduate degree in a related field, it is crucial to become specialized in equine therapy, either through the certification board for equine interaction professionals, or going into an equine therapy master's program at university. Throughout these programs, you will be trained in applied relational horsemanship, equine therapy, horse assisted learning, and the fundamentals of assisted therapies and professional practice. The most well known certification training is obtained through the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGLA).

## SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

**Non-verbal Communication Skills** - horses, like other animals, communicate non-verbally, so to be able to analyze the communication between the animal and patient is crucial for a successful session

**Confidence Around Animals** - being at ease around horses will lead a patient to be able to do the same and result in the most progress for a patient

**Problem Solving** - it is essential to know how to solve problems in an effective and creative way that your patient will benefit from

**Empathy** - understanding feelings and emotions in an objective and rational way is essential to assure a good patient-therapist relationship

TYPICAL  
SALARY  
**\$43K-**  
**\$88K**