

Horse Enhanced Psychotherapy and Learning (HELP) at Top Farm

SAFETY AGREEMENT

Safety Aspects of Horse-related Activities

SECTION A. Protective Attire

1. I understand that I should always wear hard-soled, fully enclosed shoes or boots and socks to protect feet, and long trousers to protect legs while working around or interacting with horses.

SECTION B. The Nature and Physical Character of the Horse

Domesticated, well-trained horses are usually obedient, docile and affectionate; however, it is important to understand that their survival instincts are what have allowed the horse to survive from prehistoric times to the present day, so the following information has been collated for your safety. Please do not be alarmed when you read this, it is only intended to give useful information for your session.

1. I am advised that horses are unpredictable by nature, with minds of their own, as are all animals both domestic and wild. The horse can be very responsive to your energy so be aware of how you are feeling.
2. I am advised that when a horse is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is the horse's instinct to move forward or sideways, to run away from danger or gallop to safety.
3. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from behind, the horse may kick. Please be aware of your distance.
4. I am advised that a human must always approach a horse calmly and quietly with caution, preferably to the horse's shoulder or lower neck.
5. I am advised that loud and/or sudden unexpected movements, such as dropping an object near a horse, can provoke a domesticated horse to react according to natural, protective instincts as described above.
6. I am advised that the first signs of anger or fear in a horse are the sudden tensing of the muscles of the body, possibly laying the ears flat back against the head, or quickly tossing or raising the head. I understand that the EFP practitioner, staff or helpers will manage any of these signs should they be evident.
7. I am advised that a horse can see independently with each eye, actually looking in one direction with one eye and another direction with the other eye. The horse can also focus both eyes on one object somewhere in front of him/her. Typically, the direction in which the ear is pointing will tell an observer where the eye is looking on the same side and what the horse is listening to.



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8. I am advised that a horse has two blind areas around which he/she cannot see. Those areas are directly behind the horse and directly in front. When a horse has his/her head lowered to the ground, the spot directly at the end of the nostrils is a blind area. This is the reason it is best to approach a horse close to the shoulder, and never to surprise a horse from the rear, or to reach first for the horse's mouth, muzzle area.

9. I am advised that while a horse is very sure-footed by nature, horses may accidentally step on an object such as a human's foot when they are balancing or turning around. When a horse is worked on unstable ground or slippery grass or footing, the horse could fall down and be injured.

I have read and understand the above concerning protective attire and the nature and physical character of the horse.

Participant or Parent/Guardian

Date

Witness (if under 18)

Date

