



Healing Steps- Equine Centered Therapy
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Mission: Healing Steps is dedicated to improving success in daily life through the skillful partnership of occupational therapy and horse related activities.

FAQ:

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy promotes optimal engagement in life, promoting health and participation in meaningful-daily activities for individuals with injury, illness, or disability. Occupational therapists utilize many treatment strategies and tools to help improve function for clients with a vast range of impairments including use of the movement of the horse, and other equine related activities to influence balance, posture, executive functioning, sensory processing, and the overall function of the individual.

Why use a horse?

Horses promote multiple unique experiences that cannot be replicated or manufactured in a typical clinic. The horse provides a multidimensional movement that is variable, rhythmic and repetitive creating a pelvic movement that mirrors that of the human pelvis during ambulation. Likewise, the horse provides a dynamic

and motivating environment enabling itself to be a fantastic tool for improving trunk strength, postural control and endurance, balance, coordination, and engagement. Horse related activities also create natural demands and motivation for cognitive and social skill development and improvement. Lastly, the movement of the horse creates a multisensory environment that can be adjusted to impact the rider's vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile sensory experiences. The variability and flexibility of the horse's gaits paired with skilled and purposeful activities planned by the occupational therapist promote the just right challenge for the rider, and yield powerful, multifaceted treatments and results.

Who could benefit from using the horse as a treatment tool?

Occupational therapy in the barn environment, as well as the physical use of the horse as a tool is beneficial to individuals a wide variety of diagnosis and impairments including (but not limited to):

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Developmental delays
- Sensory Integration and Sensory Processing dysfunction
- Learning disabilities
- Down Syndrome
- Stroke
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Will my insurance cover this type of occupational therapy?

If your insurance includes OT services, AND you have out of network benefits, you should have coverage. Using the horse as a tool during treatment does not change the service from being billed under the traditional OT treatment and diagnostic codes. Healing Steps is a fee for service program meaning the client is responsible for each service at the time the service is performed. Additional information below.

Who is the occupational therapist?

Dr. Kelsey Herman, OTD, OTR/L

Dr. Kelsey Herman is the owner of Healing Steps, and the President of the 501(c)3 non-profit entity, Healing Opportunities Foundation, and is excited to show Southwest Washington the value of pairing equine and occupational therapy! Dr. Herman received her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Pacific University in 2019 with experience in both pediatric and adult rehabilitation, with the majority of her professional experience in outpatient pediatrics with an emphasis in Sensory Processing Disorder, Autism, ADHD, and behavioral concerns. Kelsey is a lifelong equestrian who enjoys riding, training, and rehabilitating rescue horses as well as educating people about horses. Dr. Herman is thrilled for the opportunity to

blend her expertise in equine and occupational therapy to improve the lives of her patients.

Dr. Riley Smetzler OTD, OTR/L

Dr. Riley Smetzler received her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Baylor University in 2022. Born and raised in Ridgefield, Washington, Dr. Smetzler has grown up around horses, and is so excited to combine her knowledge of equine and occupational therapy. Dr. Smetzler has experience in both pediatric and adult rehabilitation, with a specialized interest in Sensory Processing, Autism, neuro-rehabilitation, and musculoskeletal impairments. Riley places an emphasis on holistic, client-centered care for each of her patients, and is eager to educate and provide therapy services to those in her community that can benefit from a non-traditional approach to occupational therapy!

Breanne Davis- Shoemaker, OTD, OTR/L

Dr. Bre Davis-Shoemaker graduated from the school of Occupational Therapy in 2019 from Pacific University, Oregon, with owner, Dr. Kelsey Herman. She has experience in pediatrics (birth-18) specifically surrounding movement development, sensory processing, ASD, ADHD, and other behavior concerns. She also has experience in adult rehabilitation and lifestyle redesign, and adolescent transition to adulthood with life skills. She finds so much joy working with children, families, and adults, helping them target challenges, as well as discover and foster their successes. She grew up riding horses and living on a farm, and is so excited to be a part of a unique and passionate team that is striving to help our community to thrive!

Fee's and Payment Policy

Healing Steps is a fee for service program paid at the time of visit. This means the client is responsible for paying for each service at the time the treatment is performed. All clients will be given a superbill upon request, containing all the information necessary to submit to insurance companies for reimbursement.

Payment is due at the time of service. Payment by cash or check is preferred. We are able to take all major credit and debit cards, as well as HSA and FSA account cards. If you require a superbill for insurance purposes, please email Kelsey at Kelsey.healingsteps@gmail.com. If payment is not received at the time of service, Healing Steps may add a \$25.00 charge per therapy session.

Evaluation: \$175 for a 45-90 minute evaluation

Treatment: \$130 for 45 minute OT treatment session.

Sessions are one-on-one with a licensed occupational therapist utilizing the best treatment tools and strategies available to meet the goals set by the evaluating therapist, and family.

Cancellation policy and weather related cancellations

Please notify your therapist if you need to cancel a session. Healing Steps has a 24 hour cancellation policy. Please be respectful to your therapist, volunteers and horses by notifying them as soon as possible if you need to cancel so that time is not wasted preparing the horse and other necessary materials for your session. If less than 24 hour notice has been given, or you do not show for a session, you will be charged a **\$50 cancellation fee**. We also have a no-show policy. We respect your time and ask that you respect ours and our volunteers. If you cancel less than 1 hour before the start time of your session, you will be charged for the entire cost of your session.

Healing steps takes every possible measure to ensure the safety of our clients, volunteers, and horses. There are times when sessions may be cancelled due to unsafe weather conditions. We follow the Battle Ground School District- South schools in regards to winter closures during snowy/icy weather. Sessions in the summer will also be modified if the temperature in the arena is 90 degrees or above at the time of your session. Healing Steps also monitors air quality reports and may cancel or modify sessions when conditions are unhealthy for clients, staff, and equines.

Discharge Policy

Clients will be eventually discharged from treatment at some point based on their growth and success. Reasons for discharge include meeting goals, a plateau in improvement for extended duration of time, inappropriate or unsafe behavior that is a safety risk to client, volunteer, and/or staff, and a change in medical/cognitive status making therapy inappropriate.

Recommended Attire

***Clients arriving without the required attire will not be allowed to interact with the horses during their treatment session**

1. All clients must wear a properly fitted riding helmet if they are to be placed on a horse. Clients may purchase their own helmet or use the helmets on site.
2. All participants, personnel and parents must be wearing appropriate footwear on site: Closed-toed, and closed-heel shoes are considered to be appropriate.
3. Full length pants are recommended for therapy sessions. Pants with slick surfaces are discouraged.

General Barn Safety Guidelines

1. No smoking anywhere on the property
2. All riders must wear a helmet at all times when interacting with the horses. For riders under 18, this includes while riding, and while interacting on the ground.
3. Non-independent individuals, including children under the age of 16, and those requiring other types of supervision to be safe are to be attended by a parent/guardian or other designated adult at all times.
4. No running or screaming on the property during treatment sessions.
5. All siblings/guests of clients must be under adult supervision at all times.
6. Everyone in the barn **MUST** have proper footwear

7. No hand feeding the horses unless given permission by staff.
8. No loose jewelry (hoop earrings/necklaces)

Non-Discrimination Policy

Healing Steps and Grace Therapeutic Horse Program do not discriminate in it's staff, volunteers, or clients on the basis of a person's race, religion, gender identify, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, or mental/physical disability, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.

Site Specific Hazards

1. Ladders and haystacks are off limits
2. Only staff and trained personnel are allowed to operate the tractor.
3. Horses will frequent the parking lot area on occasion. We must insist on a **5mph speed limit on site.**

Hazards Specific to the Use of Equines

Injuries can be inflicted by a horse in many different ways including but not limited to: biting, kicking, bucking, stepping on a person, and spooking.

In the event of an accident/injury during a therapy session;

- Therapist stops the session or emergency dismounts the client, if needed
- If applicable, therapist begins CPR and first aide and a designated volunteer directs other personnel and participants
- If needed, 911 will be called by volunteer
- Therapist will complete Incident Report Form

Equine Management Philosophy and Horse Care Standards

Horses used on the property will be cared for to the highest of standards. Horses will be fed quality food with proper nutrition proportions to best support their health. Measures will be taken to protect not only the horse's physical health, but emotional health as well ensuring their needs are addressed on a daily basis.

Horses are regularly exercised and ridden outside of therapy sessions to keep their bodies fit and minds fresh. Horses are limited to no more than 3 consecutive hours of therapy/riding, and a maximum of 4 hours of use per day (of walking/trotting). Horse use will be tracked to ensure no horse is being overused. Horse usage is planned and determined based upon the needs of the clients and the horse.