



**THE NEED OF INTERNATIONAL
CERTIFICATION FOR SCHOOLING AND
PRACTICE OF EQUITHERAPY
(AND OTHER AMAT MEASURES)**


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equithérapie (equine assisted therapy) and
therapeutic riding,
SHP-E(NL)



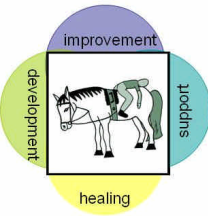
The horse seems to hold great appeal not just for clients but also for moderately well trained or self-proclaimed “helpers”. This means that an often great enthusiasm, combined with little previous information and knowledge, leads to unprofessional provisions that lack expertise – often despite best intentions. Furthermore there are unfortunately also providers who, with the help of clients and horses, seek to come to grips with their own problems and who - in this sense - misuse both for their own purposes. In the course of my work I am myself often confronted with victims of a variety of irresponsible “horse therapies” or “self-discovery-, “fear-, or “management-workshops”, who have been mentally or physically harmed. Fortunately this can mostly be reversed by expert use of the horse, but could have been prevented from the outset if the clients or workshop participants concerned had been better informed about the qualifications and working methods of the provider.

**WHY DO WE NEED CERTIFICATION
CRITERIA ?**


- ✗ What is Equithérapie, what is AMAT
- ✗ A confusion of tongues
 - + Different models
 - + Different trainings
 - + Different certifications
- ✗ The FATP quality criteria
- ✗ European cooperation within lifelong training



**AMAT
ANIMAL MEDIATED ASSISTANCE AND THERAPY**



- ✗ Animal Mediated includes measures for educational, social, therapeutical or rehabilitative activities being carried out by professionals with the help of the animal as subject within the triangular process (the client, the animal and the professional undergo a relation on which the process is based).The involvement of the animal is supposed to be a sort catalysator within the intended process.



SHP-E (NL)

- ✖ The Dutch Foundation:
- ✖ Helpen met Paarden – Equithérapie
- ✖
- ✖ A non profit organization promoting science-based equithérapie (equine assisted therapy) and therapeutic riding,



OBJECTIVES

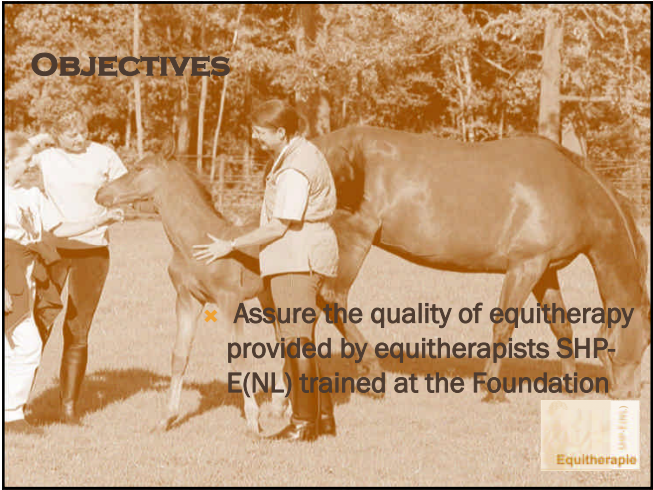
- ✖ Make therapeutic riding (equithérapie) better known in the Netherlands and Benelux



OBJECTIVES

- ✖ Offer comprehensive training and advanced training for equitherapists SHP-E(NL)









OBJECTIVES

- ✦ Conduct negotiations with insurance institutions, health insurance funds and government agencies regarding insurance cover of equitherapy provided by certified and registered equitherapists




OBJECTIVES

- ✦ Participate in international cooperation projects for assuring and enhancing the quality of equitherapy training (the Foundation is an associate member of FATP, an initiative of German-speaking countries and the Netherlands aimed at promoting equine-assisted therapy)



EQUITHERAPY

- ✦ “equine-assisted measures of educational and/or psychosocial rehabilitation and developmental enhancement”.



THE HORSE

★ The therapeutic quality of the horse is described as a systematic and central factor within the therapeutic process.



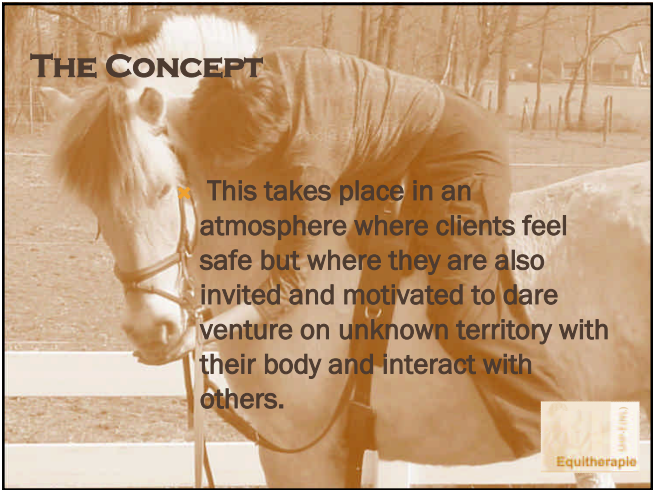
THE CONCEPT

★ Therapist, Client and Horse start a relationship with each other and within this triangular relationship a well structured dialogue in movement between client and horse is conducted by the therapist.



THE CONCEPT

★ This takes place in an atmosphere where clients feel safe but where they are also invited and motivated to dare venture on unknown territory with their body and interact with others.



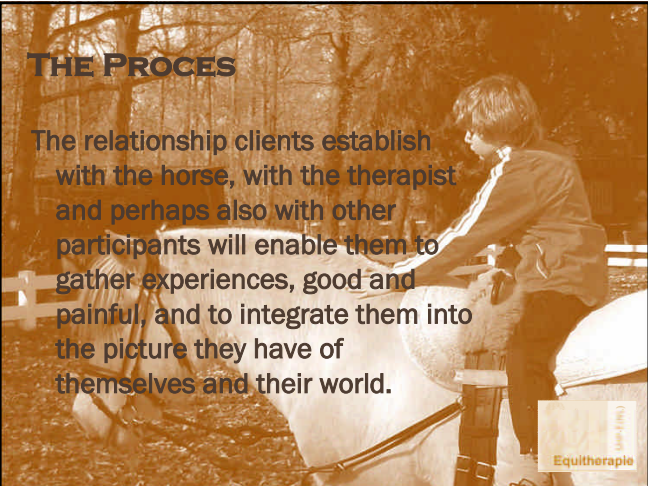
THE CONCEPT



▶ A possibility sphere is created – a state wherein they can discover possibilities.

Equithérapie

THE PROCES



The relationship clients establish with the horse, with the therapist and perhaps also with other participants will enable them to gather experiences, good and painful, and to integrate them into the picture they have of themselves and their world.

Equithérapie

THE PROCES


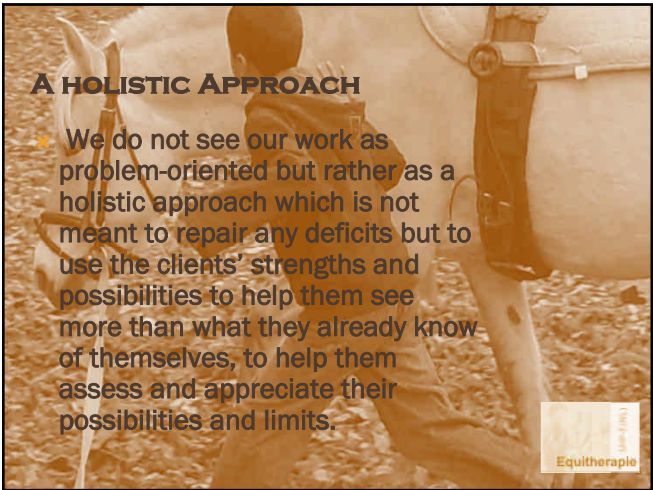


▶ This will lead to a redefinition of one's self in interaction with the world. How this world and one's own personality is now experienced will direct towards new avenues for action.

Equithérapie


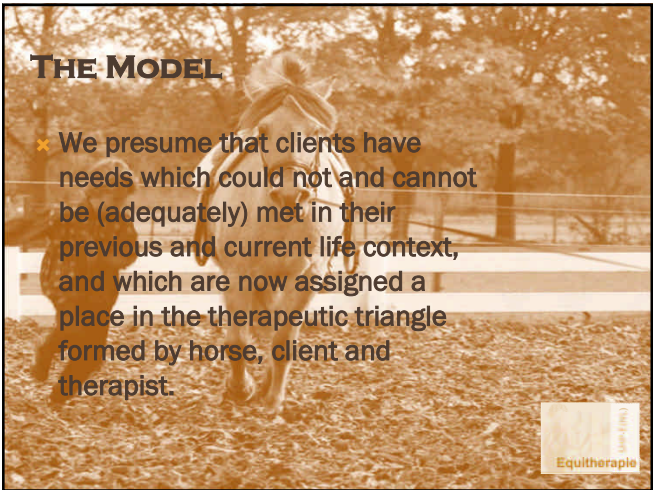
A HOLISTIC APPROACH

- ✦ We do not see our work as problem-oriented but rather as a holistic approach which is not meant to repair any deficits but to use the clients' strengths and possibilities to help them see more than what they already know of themselves, to help them assess and appreciate their possibilities and limits.



THE MODEL

- ✦ We presume that clients have needs which could not and cannot be (adequately) met in their previous and current life context, and which are now assigned a place in the therapeutic triangle formed by horse, client and therapist.



TRAINING EQUITHERAPISTS

SHP-E(NL) offers a two-year post graduate-training in Equitherapy for mental health specialists with basic psychotherapeutic, psychosocial or educational and/or remedial background and working experience .



TRAINING PROGRAM

- ✦ This course takes place at the HippoCampus Training Centre
- ✦ It involves process-based work with clients and horses, practical work, theory and self-experience within a groups process, intervision and supervision-techniques



EQUITHERAPIST SHP-E(NL)

- ✦ Therapists finish with certificate “Equitherapist SHP-E(NL) specialised in
 - remedial work
 - psychosocial work
 - revalidation and reintegration
 - developmental enhancement
 - equine-facilitated psychotherapy
 - rehabilitation and reintegration



REGISTRATION OBJECTIVES

- ✦ SHP-E(NL) asks for refresher courses and supervision sessions per 2 years if the Equitherapist wants to stay registered as Equitherapist SHP-E(NL).



CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

- ✦ The organisation has developed a training and certification system for Equitherapist SHP-E(NL)
- ✦ conforming to a system of training, supervision and quality standards and to the ethical code of SHP-E(NL).






WHY A EUROPEAN CERTIFICATION SYSTEM?



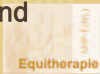
confusion of tongues

In recent years an almost Babylonian confusion of tongues has developed around the pedagogic and therapeutic use of the horse, enabled in particular by the possibilities which the easy and sometimes unfortunately also “uncensored” and uncritical dispersion of information via the internet affords (with or without reputable source citation). With such a multitude of descriptions, offerings and definitions it is not easy for the interested layperson to get a clear and discerning idea of the matter. A search on the internet leads to a myriad of terms which more or less relate to the catch-all phrase “the horse in the therapeutic context”. This label may relate to a range of different concepts, depending on the origin, expertise and reputability of the source. Here a small selection:

A CONFUSION OF TONGUES



- ✦ a multitude of descriptions, offerings and definitions it is not easy for the interested layperson to get a clear and discerning idea of the matter.



A RANGE OF DIFFERENT CONCEPTS, DEPENDING ON THE ORIGIN, EXPERTISE AND REPUTABILITY OF THE SOURCE



- ✗ therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, hippocoaching, hypotherapy, hypotherapy, equitherapy, equine assisted therapy, equine assisted learning, equine assisted training, equicoaching, pedagogy with horses, equotherapy, therapeutic vaulting, remedial vaulting, equine assisted psychotherapy, equine facilitated development, natural horse therapy, esoteric horse therapy, horse sense therapy, motor therapeutic riding, equine therapy, horse sense learning



THE HORSE ITSELF IS NOT A THERAPIST

.The revival of the horse in its function as "man's helper" unfortunately also leads to the horse being used in a manner ranging from inappropriate or dangerous to ethically unjustifiable. Alongside pure economic reasons there are also other causes for the inexpert or unprofessional "use of the horse" in this context.



DIFFERENT CONCEPTS

- ✗ Differences
- ✗ Therapeutic concept
- ✗ Therapy model
- ✗ The therapy horse
 - ✗ Selection of the therapy horse
 - ✗ Schooling of the therapy horse
 - ✗ Training of the therapy horse
 - ✗ Which of the horse's abilities are used
- ✗ Horse's function in the process
- ✗ Horse's role in the relationship triangle
- ✗ Is the relationship triangle used as the basis of work?
 - ✗ Moving on the horse
 - ✗ Moving with the horse
 - ✗ Relationship with the horse
- ✗ Therapy structure
- ✗ Therapy settings
- ✗ Transfer model from therapy to everyday life



A closer analysis of the relevant internet sites, and in particular the providers behind them, seems to show that equine assisted therapy, in its widest sense, currently enjoys considerable market value. This is due to an apparent need for alternative choices for psychosocial, pedagogic and therapeutic methods in the field of psychological-pedagogical and sociotherapeutic services and support provision. A real "hit" at present seem to be equine assisted courses for management training, the development of personal abilities in leadership, and esoteric self-discovery seminars. "Specialists for horses and people", sometimes professionally trained but sometimes also self-proclaimed, offer their services on numerous homepages. Horse therapy centres introduce themselves, while horse projects are springing up all over. It appears that the horse "as helper" has been discovered.

In the Netherlands an article with the headline "Doctor Horse" appeared in a daily newspaper just a few months ago. It compared various "equine therapists" and their qualifications and methods. Among them were so-called "empirical experts", who have neither therapeutic nor equestrian qualifications, but who have more or less trained themselves with much enthusiasm (for example via the internet). *The horse itself is not a therapist*

As gratifying as this development may be for the specialist (who has got to know and appreciate the value of the horse within the therapeutic process both from a scientific perspective and from personal experience as a therapist), it also gives justifiable cause for concern. This revival of the horse in its function as "man's helper" unfortunately also leads to the horse being used in a manner ranging from inappropriate or dangerous to ethically unjustifiable. Alongside pure economic reasons there are also other causes for the inexpert or unprofessional "use of the horse" in this context.

THE HORSE

- ✦ Within different approaches of equine assisted therapy or activities the horse plays different roles. Therefore the education of the horse differs according these different approaches.



Equithérapie

SHP-E(NL) prefers the classical training of a horse in which the nature and individual personality of the horse in question is respected its resources are addressed and its abilities are developed in a joyful way.

Next to training the treatment and housing of the horse as well as a good balance between „professional activities as therapy horse and leisure and other activities are essential to enable him to be open to the therapeutical triangle between client, therapist and himself.



- ✦ Only a happy and well-balanced horse literally and symbolically can stand and enjoy his profession as co therapist with his own responsibilities and tasks. Next to physical training and education being experienced together therapist and horse develop a deep and dynamic relationship being a fundamental factor during the therapeutic process.



Equithérapie

Many who would like to work with people and horses feel a calling to become an equitherapist. Because of this training schemes for equitherapists appear to be a very sellable item. Some want to become an equitherapist even though their primary profession does not qualify them to support clients through therapeutic processes, and regardless of the fact that they not have enough equine knowledge and experience to involve the horse in this activity in a meaningful manner. As a result there are also many unprofessional training providers on the free market, with new ones developing continually while others disappear. Just as for clients, it is not easy for those seeking a qualification to sort the wheat from the chaff, and to critically examine the offers of training and further education.

DIFFERENT TRAINING

- ✦ **Duration of training**
 - ✦ (days/hours) Period (years/months)
- ✦ **Basic profession**
- ✦ **Equestrian qualification**
- ✦ **Therapeutic assistance during therapy**
- ✦ **Equestrian assistance during therapy**
- ✦ **Training**
 - ✦ Supervision yes/no
 - ✦ Group process yes/no
 - ✦ Practical project yes/no
 - ✦ Theory exam yes/no
 - ✦ Practical exam yes/no
- ✦ **Code of ethics yes/no**
- ✦ **Personal relationship between therapist and horse yes/no**
- ✦ **Personal development, feedback yes/no**
- ✦ **Supervised work placement**



Equithérapie

| Differences in duration and period of training | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | Equitherapist SHP | Riding therapist FÖRDERKREIS | Riding therapist, visiting therapist ÖKTR | Riding therapist, visiting therapist SGTR | Riding therapist, visiting therapist DKThR |
| | Dutch foundation promoting science-based equitherapy Nederlandse Stichting Helpen met Paarden Equitherapie/HippoCampus training Centre Netherlands | Society for the Promotion of Therapeutic Riding | ÖKTR (Austrian Board of Trainers for Therapeutic Riding) Therapeutic riding/riding section | SGTR (Swiss Group for Therapeutic Riding) | German Board of Trainers for therapeutic riding |
| Organization | Nederlandse Stichting Helpen met Paarden-Equitherapie | Deutscher Förderkreis für therapeutisches Reiten | Österreichisches Kuratorium für therapeutisches Reiten | Schweizer Gruppe für therapeutisches Reiten | Deutsches Kuratorium für therapeutisches Reiten |
| Duration of training (days/weeks) Period (years/months) | 600 hours of training 48 course days Distributed over 2 years | 475 training units x 45 min. at least two and a half years. At total of ten seminars each lasting several days, a guided work placement | 250 training units x 50 min (not including sports training); 2 x 6 day courses 7 weekends, work placement (supervised) approx. 15 hours Sports training (approx. 10 - 14 days) Possible within approx. 2 years | 550 training units x 45 min Period of 2 years | 190 UE training units/units, guided work placement Period of 1 year |
| Description | EAT Equine Assisted Therapy | EAP Equine Assisted Psychotherapy | EAC Equine Assisted Coaching | EAA Equine Assisted Activities | EAL Equine Assisted Learning |
| Organization | REGABUS Arelwille-Hogeschool Gent, Belgium | EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association) USA, Europe | Equicoaching/ Belgen | Indiana Horse Council (USA) | Center Equine Learning Center, Canada |
| Duration of training (days/weeks) Period (years/months) | 105 hours of training 12 - 15 course days Distributed over 2 years | 2 levels lasting 3 course days each | 9 training days | No information available | First level lasts 7 weeks. No information available about hours of training. Levels 2 and 3 are advanced courses. |



The original founding associations

- Deutsches Kuratorium für Therapeutisches Reiten (DKThR) (D) (German board for therapeutic riding)
- Förderkreis für Therapeutisches Reiten e.V. (D) (Society for the promotion of therapeutic riding)
- Österreichisches Kuratorium für Therapeutisches Reiten (ÖKThR) (A) (Austrian board for therapeutic riding)
- Schweizer Gruppe für Therapeutisches Reiten (SG-TR) (CH) (Swiss group for therapeutic riding)
- Nederlandse Stichting Helpen met Paarden – Equitherapie (SHP-E) (NL) (Dutch national foundation promoting science-based equitherapy and therapeutic riding)

STRUCTURE OF THE ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN THERAPEUTIC VAULTING AND RIDING

The aim of the course modules is to bring specific topics together with the trainee’s knowledge and abilities stemming from their primary profession and their equestrian training. This prepares the course participants for independent work in the field of equine assisted therapy. All training providers expect the participants to complete some periods of practical training during the course. This practical training takes place before and in between the study modules of the training course, under the guidance of qualified equitherapists. The main aim of the periods of practical training is the actual implementation of the acquired theoretical knowledge into working practice. Furthermore critical reflection on the practical work is expected. All training providers ask for a written seminar paper or thesis. The subject matter varies from the discussion of set questions or issues to the exposition of the trainee’s own practical work. The extent of the complete training depends on the respective admission requirements of the training providers and their curricula.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT OF THE FATP MEMBERS

In recognition of the internationalization of qualifications in a unified Europe and of the growing mobility of people with a qualification in therapeutic riding the FATP members have decided in favour of a comprehensive cooperation. They reciprocally recognize qualifications of other training providers in therapeutic riding in their own country, subject to indication of the specific individual training conditions. As a joint cooperation arrangement the FATP provides its own universal labelling on the basis of the qualification provided by the respective association.

This has also led to a joint provision of training. What all FATP members have in common is that the therapist is at the same time also the equine expert. They all emphasize the triangular relationship and the movement dialogue with and on the horse as a holistic humanist concept that binds together psychomotor, sociomotor and cognitive elements. Within this framework the horse should have a central role as an individual within the relationship triangle. Providing horses with appropriate habitation and training is seen as a requisite. The therapist furthermore has a duty to conform to an ethical code in relation to the client, the horse and his or her own training. The training for “equine assisted therapist” is seen as an additional qualification on top of the therapist’s supporting primary profession and equine qualification. The equitherapist trains his therapy horse, keeps it fit and maintains a relationship to it. The therapist’s holistic humanist approach forms the backbone of the therapy concept, with continuous attention being paid to the progression of the therapy, the function of the horse and the equitherapist’s own function. Within this approach the relationship between (the individual) horse and the (individual) person, supported by the pedagogue or therapist, is an essential factor in all the training models. The differences lay in the directional focus and the equine technique being used. Today the FATP has shared ethical standards, definitions of the therapeutic models, and of the function of the horse in the context of these models, as well as minimal quality criteria for the training courses. open to other organizations that offer training, provided they meet the required standards for quality, ethics, content and organization.

THE SHARED FATP - QUALIFICATIONS



✖ The forum of training providers of an equine assisted therapy (FATP) encompasses the associations named below. These associations offer additional qualifications for an equine assisted therapy, in differing forms and with different priorities. The additional qualifications awarded by members of the FATP are seen as “a tool for equine assisted pedagogical and/or psychosocial and/or neurophysiological rehabilitation and/or equine assisted developmental support and/or psychotherapy”.



In 2009 the forum was established as a corporate body with all the associated legal and organizational consequences. The FATP is also open to other organizations that offer training, provided they meet the required standards for quality, ethics, content and organization.

THE FATP DEFINITION

✖ Equitherapy is defined by the ideals of a humanist holistic approach and by the methodical and process oriented manner in which the work is undertaken. The therapist has a vital responsibility towards his clients and the therapy horse, which is awarded a special role in the process

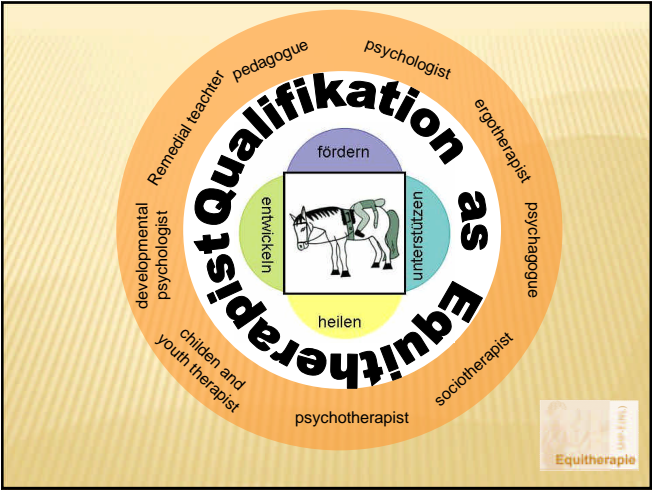


THE SHARED REQUIREMENTS :



✖ As a rule the professional requirement for admission to the additional qualification is a completed professional training in a pedagogical, psychosocial and/or rehabilitation-related field. Furthermore, the additional qualification is tied to hippological and equestrian qualifications in theory and practice, which are defined by the associations.

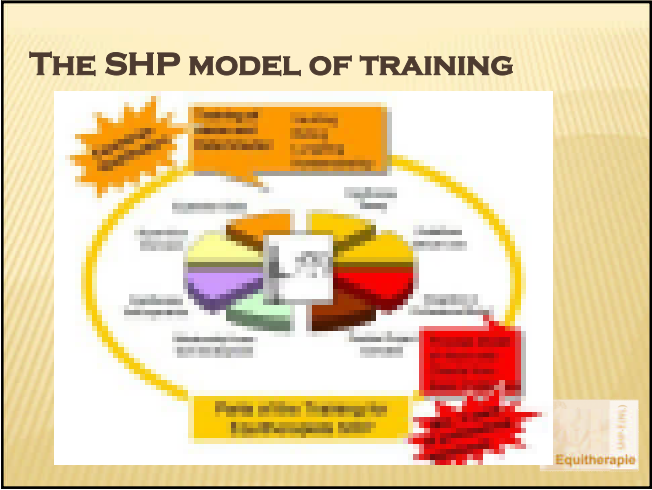




THE TOPICS TAUGHT IN THE TRAINING COURSES OF THE FATP ORGANIZATIONS:

- Relationship building human - horse
- Self-awareness with and on the horse
- Planning, execution of and reflection on practical work
- Introduction to target groups of therapeutic riding
- Reflection on pedagogue / therapist conduct
- Selecting, training and maintaining the health of the therapy horse
- Purpose and role of the therapy horse
- Accident prevention and insurance matters
- Continuing education opportunities
- The aim is mutual understanding, collaboration and the opportunity for exchange of speakers in the respective training and further education courses.

Equithérapie



THE SHP PROFILE OF THE EQUITHERAPIST

THE ASPECTS AND THE PRIMARY AIMS OF THE FATP SHARED AGREEMENT

- the professional ethics
- the extent and content of the training
- the professional and hippological conditions
- the shared public image
- cooperation, collaboration and mutual support
- the quality criteria and quality assurance
- continuing education and certification
- the continuing development of the training courses
- the documentation of the training courses
- the admission criteria for training courses
- the contact to groups with a similar outlook
- the cross-border standards and recognition

MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT OF THE FATP MEMBERS

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PLANNED EU PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Our objectives are to build a multi-dimensional framework of contents, legal and organizational aspects of quality criteria . So we will also assist mental health organizations by giving them tools to compare different forms and competences in Animal Mediated Assistance (AMA) in the different European countries.



According to the outcomes of the former Pegasus project dating from 2003 to 2005 and other studies there is no discussion about the efficiency of AMAT, if properly done according to well defined quality criteria. But because of the lack of an official framework for teaching an practice of AMAT in European countries and means of official quality control we cannot exploit those opportunities efficiently. Furthermore this deficiency disables the upcoming generation of well educated specialists in AMAT to establish themselves as professionals and to enable cooperation between specialists in practice, training and quality control within Europe. On the other side the outcomes of this project could be profit to the financial deciders an clients themselves making them able to distinguish between the different offers of practice in AMAT.

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Thank you for your attention



