

CanTRA's Equine Facilitated Wellness – Canada Certification Program

What is Equine Facilitated Wellness?

The term **Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW)** is intended to encompass all of the following terms: Equine Facilitated Counselling, Equine Experiential Learning, Equine Assisted/Facilitated Psychotherapy, Equine Assisted Professional Development, Equine Guided Education and Equine Assisted Personal Development. The **Mental Health/Educational Practitioner (MH/EDP)** is a term encompassing all of the human services professions included within the EFW program. The **Equine Practitioner (EP)** refers to the horse professional member of the team.

EFW incorporates a range of counselling, education and personal development approaches, strategies and techniques that bring humans and equines together in healing and learning environments. In EFW, clients will typically work towards therapeutic healing; self-awareness and personal growth which will be facilitated by Certified CanTRA Equine Facilitated Wellness Practitioners in carefully planned interactions with specially selected horses.

Underlying Principles of EFW – Canada

The CanTRA EFW certification program will prepare practitioners to specialize in Equine Facilitated Wellness as a profession that expands their existing equine and mental health/education skills. The certification and training process to become a CanTRA EFW Practitioner is a journey of deep experience rather than a series of goal focused achievements, where candidates create their own learning program with mentoring support from experienced EFW Practitioners.

The training program supports participants in gaining the skills to begin working in the field while they are continuing their learning. By the time the CanTRA EFW practitioner completes the certification process, they will have experience working in the field. They will have a wide range of training and will have explored a number of approaches.

The Role of the Horse

The horse is a sentient being, partner and co-counsellor in the EFW relationship and process, who both experiences his/her own emotions and perceives the inner emotional state of others. Horses working in EFW must be treated respectfully and ethically. Awareness needs to be given to the impact emotional work has on horses. Horses have a need and a right to respond spontaneously and safely when expressing their feelings and opinions, and their physical, mental and emotional needs must be met.

The Role of the Equine Facilitated Wellness Team

An Equine Practitioner will work with a Mental Health/Education Practitioner who shares the same ethics, morals and understanding of EFW. The horse is an equal partner in the therapy team. The team creates the opportunity for people and horses to come together in ways that are mutually beneficial.

There is a need for specialized training and certification in EFW for both MH/EDP and EP, beyond what they bring from their own professional backgrounds. The EP must understand the approach the MH/EDP takes in their work and the MH/EDP must observe and understand how the EP works with horses. The EP will bring selected horses with them to join the EFW team and each horse will have their own personality, strengths, weaknesses and gifts to offer to the process.

A team that works seamlessly together with a coordinated approach will be able to offer their clients a wonderful opportunity to experience the healing and wisdom that horses have to offer. Whenever possible it is suggested that a potential EFW team take trainings and workshops together to develop this relationship and learn how to develop their working partnership with their herd, to understand and experience the dynamics of their unique therapy team.

Certification

Completion of the CanTRA EFW certification program will result in a candidate achieving the designation of ***Certified Equine Facilitated Wellness Practitioner***.

There will also be the designations of ***Certified Equine Facilitated Wellness Mentor*** for those who have met the certification requirements and also have additional skills and an EFW philosophy compatible for mentoring others. ***Certified Equine Facilitated Wellness Trainer*** will be granted to those who have met the above requirements, also possess the necessary additional skills to become a trainer/educator and have been approved to act as a CanTRA EFW trainer.

The type of work a person will be able to do in the EFW field will be determined by the scope of practice in their own field, as determined, assessed and regulated by their pre-existing certifying professional organization. The CanTRA EFW-Canada training process will focus upon the EFW specialty area for both EP and MH/EDP. The partnership that the MH/EDP develops with their EP and their horses will determine the population of people they will work with and what their approach will be, depending on the education, training, experience and interests of "The Team" including the horses.

To Enter the Certification Process

The process of certification will vary in length depending on each person's skills, experience and knowledge. Prior learning will be considered. The certification process is administered by the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA). To enter the Certification Process you must:

- Be a member of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association with an additional CanTRA/EFW membership.
- Have a current Standard First Aid Certificate.
- Be a minimum of age 21 at the completion of the certification program.

To officially begin the EFW Certification Process candidates must first attend the Explorations Workshop.

Certification Process for the Equine Practitioner

Training and certification in an appropriate equine field is essential for a horse professional to work in the area of EFW, but it is not by itself sufficient. The majority of EFW is done on the ground; so riding skills are not the main focus of the EP's experience. Additional skills include herd behaviour, horse psychology, non-verbal communication and groundwork, but basic skills in communication are also required. All of these skills then have to be integrated in to the field of EFW.

Experience from a broad spectrum of equine professions will be recognized as pre-requisites and will be included in CanTRA's EFW-Canada Certification process.

EFW Certification Components for the EP

The candidate is required to work towards obtaining the required hours of practical experience and education in the following equine and related fields for the EFW Certification process:

- **Experience in your field:** 6000 hours of experience is required in the equine field including 5500 hours gaining certification and experience in your field and 500 hours of groundwork and equine behaviour study.

- **CanTRA Approved Trainings:** 105 hours of workshops by a CanTRA approved trainer to include: Explorations in EFW Workshop (30 hours) - this four day will give you an overview of the field and the tools to plan and accomplish your training for certification in EFW. EFW Focus Training (75 hours) – a small group intensive and interactive training opportunity for people who have already completed the Exploration Workshop. Generally offered as two one-week workshops. Participants will learn more about EFW practices and will have practical hands on experience with the horses and MH/EDP's.
- **Cross Training:** 100 hours. The EP will have experience, training, taking workshops or qualifications in the field of communications, counselling, leadership, team building, volunteering at a crisis centre etc.
- **Personal Development:** 35 hours. An opportunity to explore the equine facilitated wellness field as a *participant*, to sample other training approaches and to develop and build on skills identified in the Explorations workshop.
- **Internship/mentorship:** 450 hours, 150 of which is direct client time in a pre-approved EFW setting where the EP is partnering with a MH/EDP and conducting EFW. 300 hours will be indirect client time for planning, preparation, recording and developing programs.

Certification Process for the Mental Health/Education Practitioner

Experience from a broad spectrum of human services professions will be recognised as pre-requisites and will be included in the CanTRA EFW-Canada process. The choice of the name EFW intentionally allows for the scope to be broader than the mental health field.

We are seeking the highest professional standards of accountability in the EFW – Canada program. The professions initially included in the MH/EDP half of the EFW-Canada certification are all established human services professions that have their own professional standards and regulation. The list of initially approved professions is available on the website www.cantra.ca.

EFW Certification Components for the MH/EDP

The candidate is required to work towards obtaining the required hours of practical experience and education in the related fields for the EFW Certification process.

- **Experience in your field:** 6000 hours; (or three years full time equivalent) of experience in your mental health/education field.
- **CanTRA Approved Trainings:** 105 hours of workshops by a CanTRA approved trainer to include: Explorations in EFW Workshop (30 hours) - this four day will give you an overview of the field and the tools to plan and accomplish your training for certification in EFW. EFW Focus Training (75 hours) – a small group intensive and interactive training opportunity for people who have already completed the Exploration Workshop. Generally offered as two one-week workshops. Participants will learn more about EFW practices and will have practical hands on experience with the horses and EP's.
- **Cross Training:** 100 hours experience with horses is important for MH/EDP. The MH/EDP will have training in the equine field including groundwork, herd dynamics and horse psychology suited to EFW work. The focus is not on riding.
- **Personal Development:** 75 hours. An opportunity to explore the equine facilitated wellness field as a *participant*, to sample other training approaches and to develop and build on skills identified in the Explorations workshop.
- **Internship/mentorship:** 900 hours, 300 of which is direct client time in a pre-approved EFW setting where the MH/EDP is partnering with an EP and conducting EFW. 600 hours will be indirect client time for planning, preparation, recording and developing programs

Continuing Education for EP and MH/EDP

In order to maintain your EFW Certification and to stay active on the CanTRA website list of EFW Practitioners you will be required to:

- take 20 hours of continued education related to EFW every three years and submit them to the CanTRA office
- maintain your Standard First Aid Certification
- maintain pre-existing professional credentials and memberships
- maintain CanTRA/EFW membership
- demonstrate proof of insurance.

For more detailed information on CanTRA's EFW – Canada certification program, please visit the CanTRA website at www.cantra.ca