

THERAPEUTIC RIDING AND HIPPO THERAPY —RELATED YET STILL DIFFERENT

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In 2006 CanTRA formed the Hippotherapy-Canada Committee to educate individuals and to promote this specialized field. Below is an article outlining the differences between Hippotherapy and Therapeutic Riding.

Confusion often arises between the terms hippotherapy and therapeutic riding. The purpose of this article is to clarify the differences between the two.

Therapeutic Horse Riding is a global term which embraces all horse-related activities for people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding is a method which permits teaching riding skills to riders with special needs.

The term **Hippotherapy** literally means "treatment with the help of the horse" from the Greek word "hippo" meaning horse. Hippotherapy is a rehabilitation strategy using the horse's movement in order to influence the motor and postural control of the rider. The horse's movement is the tool the therapist will use and modulate in order to promote the goals identified in the previous assessment. The client passively interacts with, and responds to, the horse's movement. The therapist is responsible for analyzing the client's response and grading the type of movement appropriate for that client. It can be used exclusively by Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, or Speech-Language Pathologists who add their own specialization in their treatment.

A medical professional and a horse professional should work with the rider, determining a specific program to answer the rider's needs. The horse is a precious partner in helping the rider to attain his objectives. The therapist should be involved in the therapeutic riding programs on horse selection and in the program exercises according to the clients' assessments.

An accredited therapist can treat in a hippotherapy setting. But like any new treatment method, we recommend that therapists follow the educational level system currently set by the American Hippotherapy Association, including equine skills and treatment principles up to the level of

clinical specialist. We are aware that it is difficult to get in touch with therapists. CanTRA's Hippotherapy-Canada Committee wants to promote interest for hippotherapy among therapists. If you would like to learn more and would be happy to be contacted by a representative from the CanTRA Hippotherapy-Canada Committee please contact the CanTRA office by telephone (519) 767-0700 or by email to ctra@golden.net. Please also visit the CanTRA website at www.cantra.ca.

Hopefully in the near future, there will be more therapists interested in this field and a Canadian curriculum will be offered to them.

The chart below summarizes the differences between the two fields.

Therapeutic Riding	Hippotherapy
Adapted teaching for riding skills with possible progression towards independent or competitive riding goals.	A medical treatment.
Educational and recreational with possible improvement.	Specific treatment goals with outcome measures and reassessments.
Group or individual sessions.	Individual session.
Horse is led, lunged or ridden independently.	Horse is led or long-lined.
Usually, but not exclusively, a saddle.	Sheepskin or flat pads, occasionally a saddle.
Horse is chosen for height, width, gait and temperament matched to the rider.	Horse is chosen for its appropriate gait and conformation.
The rider or leader influences the horse.	Horse facilitates the movement of the rider who has no control of the horse.
Practiced by CanTRA CTRAI (Assistant Instructor), CTRII (Intermediate Instructor), CTRI (Instructor) or CanTRA Coach with the help of therapist/specialist to set the rider's goals which include: Selected exercises and equipment for rider Choice of horse Advice on mounting/dismounting	Practiced by Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or Speech-Language Pathologist with specific training in hippotherapy.

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