

Horse SenseAbility Participant Manual



**Wildstar Farm
16 Nason Hill Lane
Sherborn MA 01770
508-744-6774
www.horsesenseability.org**

Horse SenseAbility is a program of Wildstar Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapy, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization (EIN 82-2801705). Contributions to WEAAAT are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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Welcome

Thank you for becoming part of the Horse SenseAbility community! Our mission is to help underserved and at-risk youth and young adults develop life skills by engaging in therapeutic equine-assisted learning activities in a peaceful, rural setting.

This manual provides basic information about horses in general and our horses, in particular, our policies, safety practices and emergency procedures.

Before the first lesson or activity here at Horse SenseAbility, you or your guardian must review this manual in its entirety and either sign and return the acknowledgement at the end of this document, or sign the online [Participant Manual Statement of Completion](#).

Polly Kornblith

Polly Kornblith, Ed.M, PATH TRI & ESMHL
Founder & Executive Director
Horse SenseAbility

Emergency Equipment and Numbers

In an emergency, call 911. Tell the dispatcher that you are at 16 Nason Hill LANE(!) in Sherborn.

Fire Alarms and Extinguisher Locations

- Alarm and extinguisher just inside the entrance of the barn
- Alarm just inside the far exit of the barn
- Extinguisher at the bottom of the stairs in the indoor arena
- Extinguisher in the hay loft

First Aid Kits

- Human first aid kit is located on the wall to the left of the sink in the laundry area outside the bathroom. An AED (automated external defibrillator) is hanging next to it above the sink.
- Equine first aid kit is located on the floor to the left of the sink in the laundry area outside the bathroom. Diagrams that identify what supplies are stored and where in the equine first aid kit are posted above the kit.

Phone Numbers

Office	508-744-6774
Executive Director	
Polly Kornblith	617-504-5299
Equine Manager	
Samantha Bruha	508-631-3518
Wildstar Farm Owners	
Polly Kornblith	617-504-5299
Mike Newman	617-821-4608

Emergency numbers are posted in the main aisle of the barn, in the grain room and on the first aid kits.

COVID-19 Protocols

Horse SenseAbility has implemented preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and will be following all the guidelines provided by the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. However, Horse SenseAbility cannot guarantee that you will not become infected with COVID-19. Leaving your home and going anywhere increases your risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the contagious nature of the virus.

- Comply with current MA and CDC regulations regarding COVID protocols including out of state travel.
- When our mask mandate is in force, everyone must properly wear a face mask at all times and maintain a distance of at least 3 feet from others while outside your car
- Cancel if you are ill or have been in proximity to someone who is.
- Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands before and after every lesson.
- If you have your own personal helmet, put it on before exiting your car (participants only).
- Stay in the car until someone arrives at the barn doorway to escort you to your lessons (participants only).
- Stay out of the barn except to use the bathroom and minimize use of the bathroom except for handwashing.
- Remain in the car or sit at the outdoor picnic table during the lesson (parents, guardians, and siblings only).
- Leave the facility directly after the conclusion of the lesson, which will end on time even if the participant is late to arrive.
- Email, text or call with questions instead of entering the office except in the case of an emergency.

Volunteers or staff will sanitize equipment as appropriate after each lesson.

No Mask, No Lesson (when our mask mandate is in force)

If an instructor determines that they cannot accommodate a participant's needs while observing COVID-19 safety protocols, the participant will no longer be able to attend onsite, in-person activities. Horse SenseAbility reserves the right to terminate lessons for any participant unable to comply with our COVID protocol, in which case Horse SenseAbility will refund 50% of tuition on a pro-rated basis.

Instructors are not responsible for fitting masks on participants. If a participant wears a mask that does not properly cover the mouth and nose, or the participant removes their own mask during a lesson, the instructor may need to end the lesson early.

If a participant arrives and appears ill, the instructor will send the student home instead of conducting the lesson.

Benefits of Therapeutic Riding & Horsemanship

Our horses are invaluable educators and therapy partners. A horse doesn't care what we look like, if we can see, if we take medication, or what happened to us that day. We can tell a horse a secret and know they'll keep it safe.

Horses live in the moment. They respond to kindness and patience, not appearances or expectations. Gaining the trust and respect of a 1000-pound animal takes self-control and builds self-esteem.

Taking care of an animal, especially a large one, teaches you to accept responsibilities. Learning to work with and ride a horse requires determination, flexibility and perseverance.

The benefits of mounted and unmounted activities (otherwise known as "horsemanship") are many:

- **Behavioral** – You learn to regulate your own behavior, interpret the your own and the horse's body language, recognize changes in behavior and employ coping strategies.
- **Cognitive** – Riding and horsemanship lessons incorporate activities and games designed to achieve specific goals such as following multi-step directions and staying on task.
- **Emotional** – The relationships that develop among participants, volunteers, horses and staff are an integral part of a positive, emotional experience provided by a therapeutic riding and horsemanship program. Overcoming fear and anxiety as well as mastering riding and other skills help participants realize self-worth and increase self-confidence.
- **Physical** – The horse's movement has a dynamic effect on your body. It stimulates brain function, which can lead to significant gains in language, mobility, neurological organization and self-confidence.
- **Sensory** – The sights and sounds you encounter on a farm contribute to the overall sensory experience. Being in nature reduces stress, negative thinking, aggression, blood pressure and heart rate while increasing happiness, productivity and cognitive performance.¹
- **Social** – Equine-assisted activities provide an opportunity to interact with peers, volunteers and staff in a positive, enjoyable environment.
- **Spiritual** – The horse-human bond grounds individuals in the present and raises self-awareness.

¹For more information on this research, see *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative* by Florence Williams.

What We Do

Mission

Horse SenseAbility helps at-risk youth and young adults develop life skills by engaging in therapeutic equine-assisted learning activities in a peaceful, rural setting.

We focus on working with young people who are or have been in the foster care system; have experienced trauma from emotional, physical or sexual abuse; struggle with mental illness; are on the autism spectrum; or are living in low-income, often stressful, situations.

Our Programs

We run seven major programs at Horse SenseAbility, each of which is described in more detail at www.HorseSenseAbility.org.

- **Stable Moments** is designed for children who are or have been in foster care. A trained volunteer mentor and a horse meet 1-on-1 weekly with the child for an entire school year to develop life skills such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, anger management and respect for boundaries.
- **City To Saddle** gives 6 to 13 year-olds from low-income families an opportunity to interact with a variety of farm animals, particularly horses, in a relaxing rural setting. This week-long, half-day summer program includes equestrian activities and other barnyard experiences for only a \$15 registration fee.
- **Horse Tales** is a reading and riding program for 4th and 5th graders who need extra practice with literacy skills. Like City to Saddle, this week-long, half-day summer program includes equestrian activities and other barnyard experiences.
- **Wildstar Wranglers** is a structured, supportive and supervised job-skill development program for young adults with autism spectrum disorder who are transitioning from school to adult employment. The experience builds and enhances the individual's ability to following directions, complete tasks in a timely manner, pay attention to detail, accept feedback, be a team player and communicate appropriately in a workplace setting.
- **Therapeutic riding and horsemanship lessons** are available for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder; emotional, behavioral, or mental health issues; experience with violence, abuse or trauma; or identified as at risk.
- **Community visits** by Hugo, our specially trained therapy pony, delight young people at local schools, after-school programs and social service organizations.
- **Physical/Occupational Therapy** incorporates equine movement as part of an individual's treatment plan.

Our Animals

Our animals are our partners and deserve our deepest gratitude and respect. Always be responsive and caring to our horses and other animals here on the farm. Be gentle yet firm to make sure the animals understand and comply with what you are asking of them.

Never kick or hit any of the animals! If you believe a reprimand or additional training is necessary, notify an instructor or a staff member.

Before You Begin

- ✓ Submit the [Participant Packet](#).
- ✓ Download, print and send the [Medical Provider Form](#) to your primary care physician to return to Horse SenseAbility.
- ✓ Schedule your lesson time or program.
- ✓ Pay in advance for your term or program.

Eligibility

Horse SenseAbility programs are based on an individual's ability to participate safely provided the necessary resources are available including: a certified instructor, horse, volunteers and a lesson that meets an individual's needs and goals.

Due to the nature of therapeutic riding and other equine-related activities, there are individuals for whom Horse SenseAbility programs may not be appropriate. As a PATH Intl. member center, Horse SenseAbility follows the Precautions and Contraindications recommended by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship Intl. (PATH). Horse SenseAbility reserves the right to deny services to any individual if there are concerns for the client's safety and/or the safety of the volunteers, instructors, staff or horses or for other reasons.

Before we can schedule lessons for you, we must receive a completed Horse SenseAbility [Participant Packet](#) for each participant. We also need a [Medical Provider Form](#) signed by your doctor.

Once your lessons are scheduled, payment for the first term is due in advance.

Age

The minimum age for therapeutic riding & horsemanship lessons at Horse SenseAbility is 4 years old. While there is no maximum age, a person must be able to physically and safely perform the activities required in the lessons.

Weight

Horse SenseAbility implements weight limits for each horse involved in our mounted program based on the advice of our veterinarians, best practice for the therapeutic horsemanship industry, and our professional judgement about what is safe for each horse/rider combination.

Each horse has an assigned maximum weight limit. In addition to weight, a rider's other characteristics (such as skill level, muscle tone, balance, or behavior) are taken into account when making horse/rider matches.

Weight limits ensure that our riders, volunteers and instructors are safe when assisting with mounts, dismounts, and emergency procedures. They also help keep our horses fit and healthy to continue this important work as long as they are able.

For those deemed too heavy for mounted lessons, we offer unmounted horsemanship lessons.

Non-Discrimination

Horse SenseAbility does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in its activities or operations.

Schedule

Lessons

Our therapeutic riding lessons incorporate essential horsemanship skills, such as grooming, tacking up, leading and cooling out the horse, as well as actual "time in the saddle." Participants should expect the total allotted lesson time to include both unmounted and mounted work.

We require all participants to take at least one unmounted horsemanship lessons before they take a riding lesson. This gives participants an opportunity to get to know us, the facility and, most importantly, the horses.

We follow the Dover-Sherborn public schools (<https://www.doversherborn.org/>) schedule for weather closings, delays, holidays and vacations.

Lateness

Lessons begin promptly. If you arrive at the barn more than 10 minutes after your scheduled riding lesson, you may not be allowed to mount. At the discretion and availability of the instructor and staff, a horsemanship lesson may be substituted for the remaining time. There are no time extensions or make-ups offered for tardiness.

Payment Policy

- Lessons are prepaid on a term basis. Payment is due in full for each term 2 weeks prior to the first lesson. Payments are non-refundable once you are scheduled for a term.
- A late fee of \$50 will be added to an invoice if not paid by the established due dates or according to the pre-arranged and signed payment plan. Horse SenseAbility reserves the right to remove any client from the schedule who has a balance that is past due.
- If you sign up after the term starts, payment for the remainder of the term is due prior to the first lesson.
- Payments may be made by mailing a check to Horse SenseAbility at Wildstar Farm, 16 Nason Hill Lane, Sherborn MA 01770 or by credit card or cash in the office. You may also arrange to be invoiced via PayPal. Confirming the time for your lesson is contingent upon receipt of your payment. There is a \$35.00 fee for returned checks.
- If you need financial assistance, complete the [Horse SenseAbility Scholarship Application](#) at least 1 month prior to the payment deadline for the term.

Cancellation Policy

Weather Cancellation

No mounted lessons will occur if and when the daytime temperature is expected to be below 15° or above 90° in Sherborn MA.

In addition, no mounted lessons will occur if the heat index (a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature) exceeds 90 according to this table:

NWS Heat Index		Temperature (°F)															
		80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110
Relative Humidity (%)	40	80	81	83	85	88	91	94	97	101	105	109	114	119	124	130	136
	45	80	82	84	87	89	93	96	100	104	109	114	119	124	130	137	
	50	81	83	85	88	91	95	99	103	108	113	118	124	131	137		
	55	81	84	86	89	93	97	101	106	112	117	124	130	137			
	60	82	84	88	91	95	100	105	110	116	123	129	137				
	65	82	85	89	93	98	103	108	114	121	128	136					
	70	83	86	90	95	100	105	112	119	126	134						
	75	84	88	92	97	103	109	116	124	132							
	80	84	89	94	100	106	113	121	129								
	85	85	90	96	102	110	117	126	135								
	90	86	91	98	105	113	122	131									
95	86	93	100	108	117	127											
100	87	95	103	112	121	132											

Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
 Extreme Caution
 Danger
 Extreme Danger

THE HORSE HEAT INDEX ^{1,2}

EXAMPLE SCORE			
Temperature 88° F	+	Relative Humidity 45%	=
			Total 133
			Zone Medium Risk

TEMPERATURE (°F) + RELATIVE HUMIDITY (%) SCORE	RISK ZONE	RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY LEVEL	IMPACT ON THE HORSE
130 OR LESS	LOW RISK	NORMAL ACTIVITY LEVEL	The horse's cooling system should function normally. A typical horse should be able to cool themselves. Obese or heavily muscled horses may still have issues.
131 TO 150	MEDIUM RISK	NORMAL ACTIVITY LEVEL WITH BREAKS FOR REST AND COOL DOWN	Cooling efficiency is decreased. Horse may sweat up. Overheating is possible with prolonged activity.
151 TO 180	HIGH RISK	LIGHT WORK ONLY	Significant decrease in cooling efficiency. If humidity contributes over 50 percent of the total score, the ability to release heat through sweating is reduced. Watch for signs of heat stress and ensure a cool down afterwards.
GREATER THAN 180	DANGER	TAKE THE DAY OFF	The horse is no longer able to regulate body temperature – the horse's cooling system is ineffective. Risk of heat stroke is high.

We make every effort to offer horsemanship activities if the temperature or severe weather makes mounted lessons inadvisable.

We follow the Dover-Sherborn Public Schools (<https://www.doversherborn.org/>) for weather closings and delays.

Participant Cancellation

Horse SenseAbility expects consistent attendance by all participants. If you are unable to attend a regularly scheduled lesson, please notify us **48 hours in advance** by calling 508-744-6774, sending a text to 508-306-8954 or sending an email to info@horsesenseability.org.

No refunds or make-ups are provided for participant cancellations². Once you sign up for lesson, we reserve that spot specifically for you and cannot “fill” that spot even if you are absent.

Please understand that our fixed costs are the same whether or not you come to your lesson. Massachusetts wage laws require us to pay instructors who are scheduled to work. We also need to provide the best care for our horses so they are willing and happy partners in our programs.

² Refunds are only offered for a client cancellation due to a serious medical condition (i.e. not a common cold/flu) for which a doctor’s note is provided.

Horse SenseAbility Cancellation

In the rare event that Horse SenseAbility must cancel a lesson, all reasonable attempts will be made to notify you in a timely manner of the cancellation. Please make sure we have all your phone numbers on record.

In the case of such a cancellation, we will attempt to schedule a make-up lesson.

Illness

Participants with a cold or the flu should stay home from the barn until they have been without fever (under 100.4) for 24 hours without having taken Acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (i.e. Motrin) to avoid spreading illness to others.

If you're coughing or sneezing, please do so into your elbow or a tissue. Also, please wash your hands with soap and warm water regularly and dry them thoroughly.

Participants who have uncontrolled, severe, or bloody diarrhea and fever or vomiting, should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the program.

If a participant has pediculosis (head lice), please notify staff immediately particularly if the person has used one of the Horse SenseAbility helmets.

Attire

Clothing

Always wear long pants at the barn. Jeans are OK but riding britches are more comfortable if you're going to be riding.

Dress appropriately for weather conditions. In the summer months, the barn and arena stay relatively cool. During the winter months, wear layers, gloves and hats. We also recommend Hot Hands™ Insole Foot Warmers (available at Amazon).

Footwear

Comfortable boots or sturdy close-toed shoes with a heel are recommended at all times in the barn, arena and within 20 feet of an equine. While sneakers are acceptable, they are not ideal when working around a large animal. High heels, open-toed shoes and sandals are **never** allowed.

Also, **do not** wear shoes or work boots with steel toes around horses; your toes could be crushed if a horse steps on your foot.

Horse SenseAbility always uses safety stirrups for mounted lessons.

Hair & Accessories

If your hair is long enough to put in a pony tail, please do so when you're around the horses. Do not wear dangling earrings or bracelets when working with the horses.

Helmets

All participants, volunteers, instructors and staff are required to wear an ASTM-approved helmet when mounted. Horse SenseAbility helmets are inspected and sanitized on a regular basis. They are located in the black benches in the observation/tack room.

Scents

Avoid strong perfumes and colognes because they may irritate the horses as well as individuals with allergies or sensory issues.

Other Policies and Procedures

Accidents & Occurrences

If you witness or are involved in an accident on the property, report it immediately to an instructor or staff member. Once the situation is under control, a staff member must prepare an incident report and may need to speak with you about what happened.

Alcohol & Illegal Substances

The consumption of alcohol or illegal substances prior to being or while at Wildstar Farm is prohibited. A violation of this policy will result in immediate and permanent dismissal.

Cell Phones

Turn off or silence your cell phone and car alarm when you're on the property; they can startle both participants and horses. **Never** use a phone during a lesson except in the case of an emergency.

Conduct & Behavior

Inappropriate language, disruptive behavior, loud noises, screaming, running or any other activity by participants, their parents or other caregivers that threatens the well-being of others, including animals, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If you are subject to or observe inappropriate behavior by persons or horses (biting, kicking, etc.), please notify staff immediately.

After a first attempt to correct behavior on the part of humans, offenders will be asked to leave the premises by a staff member and dismissal will be immediate.

Possible reasons for dismissal or removal include but are not limited to:

- Failure to obey safety regulations
- Creating a disturbance during a lesson
- Breach of confidentiality
- Disregard for program policies
- Use of alcohol or illegal substances before or while at Horse SenseAbility
- Aggressive or abusive behavior or language directed at oneself, other participants, volunteers, staff, instructors or our horses and other animals

Confidentiality

We are diligent in protecting the confidentiality of our participants, staff and volunteers. Confidential information includes all personally identifiable information, such as last names (particularly for children in DCF custody), telephone numbers, mailing and email addresses, diagnoses and medications.

Discharge Guidelines

A participant may be discharged from the riding or horsemanship program for the following reasons:

- Threatening or becoming excessively disruptive or uncontrollable to the point of harming themselves, the horses, other clients, volunteers, staff or facility.
- Uncontrolled and/or recent seizure activity that is accompanied by uncontrollable motor activity or atonic (drop) seizures may preclude mounted lessons but horsemanship lessons will be offered.

- Change in condition that results in participation being contraindicated according to PATH Intl. standards.
- Falsification of information on the Participant Packet or other forms.
- Absence for more than 3 lessons in any given term for non-medical reasons.
- Tardiness by more than 15 minutes for more than 3 sessions in any given term without prior notice.
- Failure to pay fees by payment due date.
- Failure to complete annual paperwork.

Driving & Parking

Observe the 5 mph speed limit at all times and park only in designated areas.

First Aid

Alert staff or an instructor in the case of any emergency or unusual behavior by a participant or horse.

- The first aid kits for humans and for horses are located in the laundry area just outside the bathroom.
- A landline phone is located in the main aisle of the barn.
- Emergency numbers are posted in the main aisle of the barn, in the grain room and on the first aid kits.
- Fire extinguishers are located in the main aisle of the barn, in the arena, and in the hayloft.

Note that all staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR/AED. Please do not hesitate to ask for help! (See “Emergency Procedures” on page 19.)

Food

Participants

Please eat before you arrive. **Never** offer food to other participants because they may have allergies, diabetes or other medical conditions.

Horses

Always ask a staff member whether it is OK to feed a treat to a horse. Some of our horses are on special diets; others may already have had enough that day.

If you get permission to feed a treat to a horse, put it in one of the blue treat buckets and then hold it out to him. Handfeeding horses is strictly **prohibited**.

Hydration

No matter what the temperature is, make sure you drink enough water when you’re at the barn! The exertion of riding and the presence of dust in the barn can cause you to become dehydrated. Feel free to fill a water container at the tap or purchase a bottled water from the refrigerator.

Noise

As prey animals, horses can spook easily when they hear loud, unexpected noises. Always use a quiet “inside” voice around the horses and remind others to do the same.

Off-Limits Areas

No one should be in the barn with the horses without an instructor, volunteer or staff member.

Obeys signs indicating areas of the barn that are not open to the public. Similarly, respect the privacy of our equine manager, who lives in the upstairs apartment.

Pets

Dogs and other animals who don't live on the property are not permitted on the grounds. Please leave them at home where they will be safe.

Photographs & Videos

Always ask permission before taking any pictures or videos of other participants or volunteers. This is particularly important because some of our participants are in state custody.

Restroom

An accessible bathroom is located on the right side of the main aisle behind the laundry room.

Smoking

Wildstar Farm is a non-smoking facility. For the safety, health and pleasure of all the people and animals who spend time here, smoking is **never** allowed on the premises.

Supervision in Barn & Arena

Participants are only allowed in the barn and arena when a staff member is present.

Only participants, instructor, and volunteers are allowed in the barn aisle and arena during lessons unless otherwise instructed.

Safety Around Horses

As wonderful as our equine partners are, they are still 1000-pound beings with minds of their own. For your safety and that of others, please review and abide by the following safety precautions.

Always...

- Approach a horse from the side, avoid quick movements and speak in a quiet voice.
- Open the stall door completely when bringing a horse out to the aisle.
- Use a lead rope and halter to bring a horse from the stall to the crossties and vice versa.
- Use a rope with a clip when leading horses. Hold the lead with your right hand and fold the excess in your left (see photo below).
- Walk next to the horse between its ear and shoulder (not ahead or behind it) when leading.
- Respect the horses' personal space and reinforce good manners.
- Be alert. Horses have a fright/flight instinct and can move quickly if startled.
- Call "ramp" in a loud voice before starting down the ramp or "door" if you're entering or passing by one of the sides door of the arena.
- When leading or riding, keep at least 2 horse lengths between horses.
- If you need to walk behind a horse, talk calmly and stroke its rump on approach. Keep your body close to the horse so you don't get kicked.
- Remove halters from horses in stalls and turnout.
- Ask questions—staff members are happy to help!

Never...

- Let horses sniff each other.
- Leave a horse standing on the cross ties or bridled in a stall.
- Leave a horse unattended when it's not in a stall or a paddock.
- Run, make sudden movements, shout or scream around horses. Always speak firmly and calmly so the horse has confidence in you.
- Wrap the lead rope around your hand, wrist or body.



Dangerous

Safe

- Leave grooming tools or other equipment lying around. Whenever you get equipment out, it is your responsibility to put it back in its proper place.

- Walk under a horse, duck under its neck or walk under or over a tied lead rope.
- Sit or kneel on the ground next to the horse; bending at your waist is the safest way to work on a horse's legs.
- Hit, yell or yank on a horse's lead to correct it.
- Play with a horse's mouth.
- Hand feed treats. Instead, put treats in a blue bucket or a bucket in the stall.
- Let reins or lead lines hang to the ground.
- Offer food to participants or horses without permission from staff.

Emergency Procedures

Despite following every safety precaution, a horse can spook, branches can break, snow can slide off the arena roof, and so on. It's important to work quickly and as a team to keep everyone as safe and secure as possible under such circumstances.

In an emergency, the instructor or a staff member is in charge. Listen carefully for directions—do **not** try to handle the situation by yourself.

If instructed, exit the facility, go to the tennis court and await further information.

Emergency Supplies

- The first aid kits for humans and for horses are located in the laundry room on the right just in front of the bathroom.
- Emergency numbers are posted in the main aisle of the barn, in the grain room and on the first aid kits.
- A landline phone is also located in the main aisle.
- Fire extinguishers are located in the main aisle, the hayloft and the arena.

Fire

The facility is equipped with a fire alarm that automatically sounds throughout the building and notifies the fire department. The Sherborn Fire Department is trained and equipped to handle equine as well as human emergencies.

If a fire breaks out during a mounted riding lesson, dismount. **Do not** interfere with or attempt to assist staff members who are evacuating horses from the barn.

Medical Emergency

If another participant is injured or has an emergency during a lesson, halt immediately and wait for instructions. The instructor is responsible for managing the incident, including performing first aid.

If the rider is in serious condition, the instructor will create a safe space around the participant and make sure the rider is **not moved** in any way until medical personnel arrives. Move to a safe location to clear the way for the emergency vehicle.

Loose Horse

If a horse gets away in the ring, immediately halt your horse and dismount.

If the horse is running loose on the property, yell "loose horse" and get a staff member. **Do not** try to approach or catch the horse—let the instructor and staff members handle the situation. If the horse leaves the premises, call 911.

Excited or Spooked Horse

If a horse spooks during a riding lesson, immediately halt your horse. Dismount only if instructed to do so.

Thunderstorms

If it starts to thunder and lightning, dismount and wait for further instructions.

Arena Etiquette

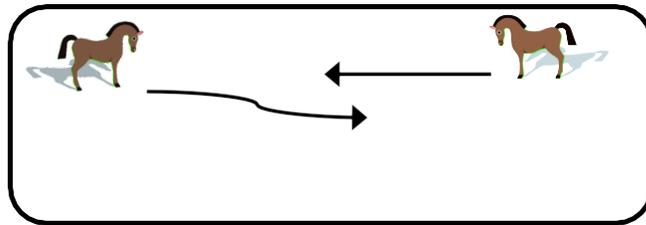
- Yell “ramp” in a loud voice when entering or exiting the arena from the ramp. Yell “door” when entering or passing by one of the arena doors to the outside.
- Close all gates when entering and exiting the arena.
- Make wide turns and large circles unless you are specifically directed otherwise. Tight turns can be uncomfortable for the horse.
- Someone taking a lesson always has the right of way.
- Cell phones should be on vibrate/silent or off; they shouldn’t be answered in the arena under any circumstances.
- **Never** leave manure in the arena—pick it up and place it in a muck bucket to preserve our riding surface!

Rules of the Rail

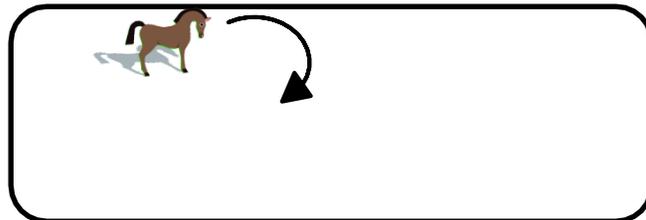
If you are riding or leading a horse in the arena, always leave at least:

- 2 horse lengths between your horse and the next one
- 6 feet between your horse and another if you’re passing

When approaching another horse, pass “left to left” just like you would if driving.



When circling or changing direction, always turn away from the wall and circle to the inside.



Our Horses



Calli

Calli is a stunning dark bay Thoroughbred who raced for 3 years on the Eastern seaboard. She's 20 years old and 16 hands tall. Calli is the princess of Wildstar. She relishes being pampered in every way—grooming, muzzle trimming, glitter pedicures, massages, braiding—you name it, she loves it!



Cecil

At 28, Cecil aka Chubby Checker is an older gentleman. Our barn manager Sarah has ridden Cecil since her teenage years. Cecil is very eager to please. He joins us with many years of experience as a therapeutic partner.



Dazzle

Dazzle is our dazzling 14-year old, 16 hand American Warmblood mare. She's had a career in show jumping before joining the herd at Wildstar Farm. Dazzle is sweet as can be and just wants to be "in your pocket."



Diesel

Diesel is a big boy with a big heart. He's 11 and a Gypsy Drum, which is a cross between a Gypsy Cob and a Shire draft horse. He's our "steady Eddie" gelding and loves everyone and everything!



Glory

Morning Glory is our "glorious" Gypsy Cob mare who has a heart of gold. Glory is 20 years old and the mother of Pippin (see below). Glory is the perfect mount for anyone aged 2 to 102! Glory's bountiful hair is only surpassed by her son's. And don't let Glory's small size (14.1 hands) fool you—she's a mighty girl who's bodacious from behind!



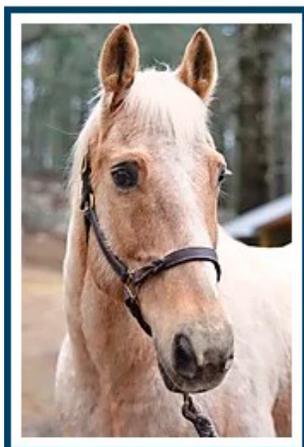
Hailey

Hailey is a Fjord, a type of pony that originally came from Norway, with a classic two-color mane and subtly striped legs. Hailey is 8 years old and LOVES people.



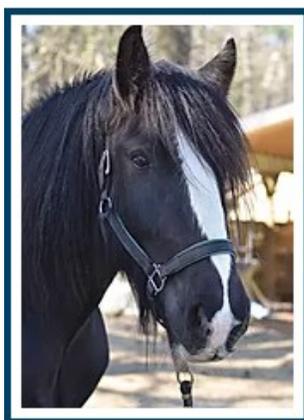
Hugo

Hugo is a purebred UK Shetland Pony and is on long-term loan to Horse SenseAbility from [Personal Ponies](#) specifically for visiting people who might benefit from animal-assisted therapy. Although Hugo is small—he's only 32" at the shoulder—he has a huge personality and lots of love and comfort to give. Polly and Hugo are a registered therapy team with [Pet Partners](#) and visit schools and organizations in the local area.



Patrick

At 25+, Patrick is the patriarch of the herd. Standing 16.1 hands, Patrick has a graceful, large stride suitable for both beginners and advanced riders. In addition to being an all-round good guy, Patrick's schedule includes hunting regularly with the [Norfolk Hunt Club](#).



Pippin

Pippin, aka Wildstar Eclipse, is the home-grown baby of the farm. Born on Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) in 2014, Pippin is now in training under saddle. It's hard to keep Pippin away because all he wants to do is snuggle. At 5, Pippin is still too young for mounted work in our programs but perfect for horsemanship on the ground. Like his mother Glory, Pippin is a Gypsy Cob.



Romeo

Romeo, Romeo, where art thou Romeo? At Wildstar Farm, of course! Romeo is the newest addition to the Horse SenseAbility herd. He is a Fell pony, which is the same type of pony that Queen Elizabeth rides.



Ruby

At 11 years old and only 13.1 hands, Ruby is the perfect mount for our smallest riders. Like Glory and Pippin, Ruby is a Gypsy Cob with a super sweet temperament.



Horse Safety Rules for Children



- 🐾 Always walk—don't run—around horses.
- 🐾 Don't make loud noises or sudden movements around a horse.
- 🐾 Approach a horse from the side, not the front or the back.
- 🐾 Never stand or walk around the back of a horse.
- 🐾 Talk to the horse as you get near it.
- 🐾 Pat the horse on the neck, not the face.
- 🐾 Beware of your feet—it hurts to get stepped on by a 1000-pound animal!
- 🐾 Hold your hand flat if it's near the horse's mouth. Fingers can feel like carrots to a horse!

Grooming Tools & Procedure



Use the curry comb in a circular motion to loosen dirt and hair from a horse's coat.

Do **not** use the curry comb on the horse's head or legs—use a soft brush instead.



Flick the hard brush in the direction of the hair to remove surface hair and dirt.



Make long smooth strokes with the soft brush to put the finishing touches on the grooming,



Softly use the face brush to clean sensitive areas of the horse.



Spray detangler on the horse's mane, tail and leg feathers. Then use the mane and tail brush to remove any shavings and dirt.

Tightly squeeze the tail just above the area you're brushing to avoid hurting the horse and pulling out the hair.

Divide a thick tail into sections and brush each until your fingers can glide smoothly through the hair.



Use the hoof pick to clean dirt and stones out of the horse's hooves before and after each lesson.

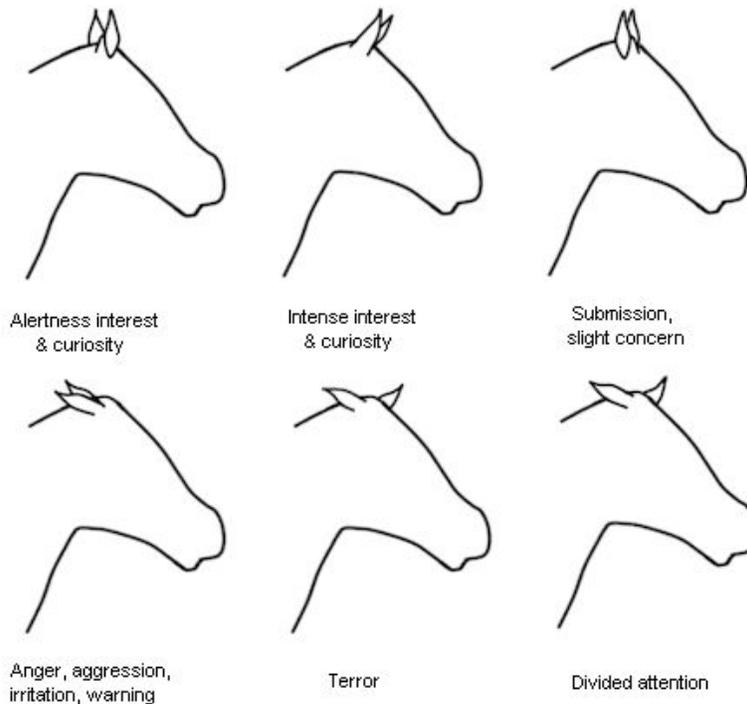
If you don't have experience or are uncomfortable picking hooves, ask an instructor, staff member or volunteer to do it for you.

Equine Senses & Communication

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. Understanding their senses, instincts and implications is the first step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and building positive relationships.

Hearing

Watch your horse's ears to better understand what he or she is "saying." Ears facing forward or flicking back and forth communicate attentiveness and interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (i.e., can be easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.



A horse's sense of hearing is very acute. "Hearing but not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response.

Sight

Because they are prey animals, horses are always scanning the environment for signs of danger. Horses don't have very accurate vision close up but they can detect even a tiny movement at a distance. Horses' eyes are set on either side of the head so they have good peripheral (lateral) vision but poorer frontal vision.

The lens of a horse's eye doesn't change shape as human eyes do. Instead, horses focus on objects by turning, raising and lowering their head. Horses see quite well in the dark because they have the largest eyes of any mammal. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

A horse's visual memory is very sharp. A horse may notice if the slightest thing in the arena or on a trail is different. Always give a horse an opportunity to stop and look at a new object.

The best way to approach a horse is at its shoulder. Although a horse has good peripheral vision, it may startle if you approach from behind or directly in front. A horse is also unable to see around the mouth area, which is why we don't allow handfeeding.

Touch

Horses are very sensitive to touch and pressure. Although they are large, horses can detect a single fly on its body. Each horse has sensitive areas, such as the flank and belly, and it is important to be familiar with them.

Touch is a means of communication between horses, and between horses and people. Horses also use touch to examine strange objects. Because they don't have hands, horses look, sniff and feel an object with their muzzle.

Because the tongue, lips, and gums of the mouth are particularly sensitive, it's important to be extra careful when horses have a bit in their mouth.

Smell

Horse's sense of smell is very acute and allows them to recognize other horses and people. Smell also helps the horse evaluate situations. Give horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.

Do **not** carry treats in your pocket because horses may try to go after them.

Taste

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Horses may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with new objects and people. They may also lick and chew when they're relaxed. Remember to always keep your hand flat or in a fist when it's near a horse's mouth.

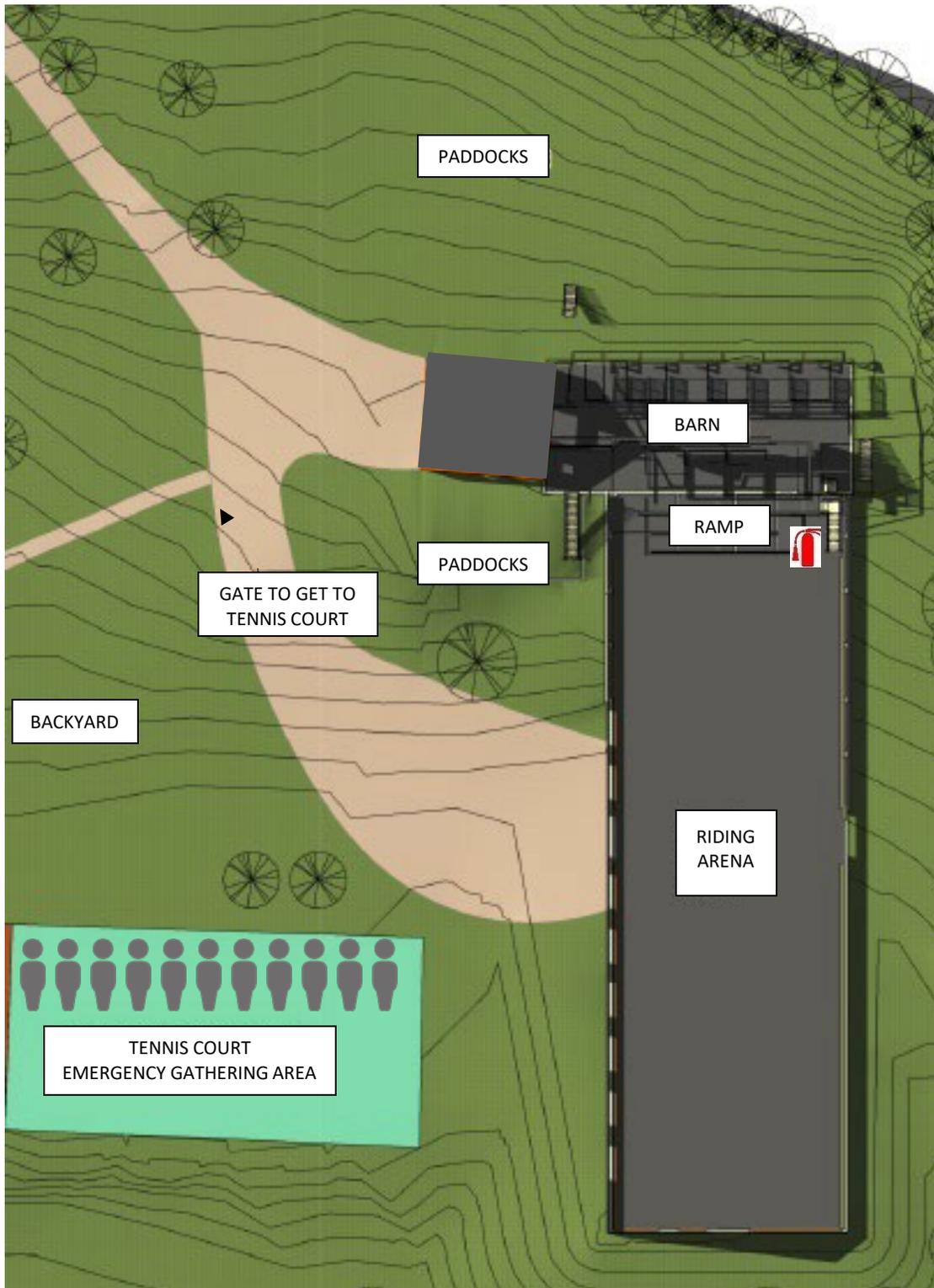
Sixth Sense

Horses have a "sixth sense" that detects the disposition of those around him. Horses are alert to the moods of their leaders and riders.

Prey Mentality

Keep in mind that horses are prey animals. They are always on high alert in case of danger and want to be in a group for protection.

Site Map



Statement of Completion

I have read the Horse SenseAbility Participant Manual in its entirety.³ I have asked any questions I had about the content and am confident that I now fully understand it. I am prepared to start participating at Horse SenseAbility and have signed this document in the presence of a staff person.

Participant's or guardian's
signature:

Participant's name:

Date:

³ You may sign this [Participant Manual Statement of Completion](#) online if you prefer.