

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 WEAAT are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

© 2025 Horse SenseAbility
Rev. 3/29/2025

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	3
Emergency Equipment and Numbers	3
Benefits of Therapeutic Riding & Horsemanship	4
What We Do	4
Before You Begin.....	5
Eligibility.....	5
Schedule	6
Payment Policy	6
Cancellation Policy	7
Attire.....	8
Other Policies and Procedures.....	8
Safety Around Horses	11
Emergency Procedures	12
Arena Etiquette	13
Horse Safety Rules for Children.....	15
.....	15
Grooming Tools & Procedure	16
Equine Senses & Communication	17
Barn Layout.....	19
Site Map	20
Statement of Completion	21

Welcome

Thank you for becoming part of the Horse SenseAbility community! This manual provides basic information about horses, 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

Note that reviewing this manual is a requirement of participating at 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 at the far end of 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 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.

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 energy level, interpret the your own and the horse's bodylanguage, 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 the positive 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 experience. Being in nature reduces stress, negative thinking, aggression, blood pressure and heartrate 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.

What We Do

Mission

Horse SenseAbility's mission is to help children and young adults who are underserved, at risk or have special needs develop life skills by learning about, caring for and being with in a peaceful, rural setting. Our vision is a world in which any child who might benefit from interacting with horses has the opportunity to do so regardless of their capabilities or economic circumstances.

Our Programs

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

- **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 at no charge.

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

- **Horse Tales** is a reading and riding program for children entering 4th, 5th and 6th grades who may 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 age 4+ with autism spectrum disorder; emotional, behavioral, or mental health issues; experience with violence, neglect, abuse or trauma; or physical challenges such as genetic disorders, vision or hearing impairment, cerebral palsy or congenital birth defects.
- **Occupational therapy on horseback** incorporates equine movement into a person's treatment plan.
- **Hugo's Pony Club for Preschoolers** gives 2 to 5 year olds an introduction to horses by working with our small Shetland pony Hugo.

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](#).
- ✓ Review this manual and sign the Participant Manual Statement of Completion at the end of this document or [online](#).
- ✓ Download, print and send our [Physician Statement](#) to you primary care provider 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. 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 our [Physician Statement](#) signed by your doctor. In subsequent years, you must submit a standard school/camp physical on an annual basis.

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. The minimum age for occupational therapy sessions at Horse SenseAbility is 2 years old.

Weight

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

If a horse has had a recent medical procedure or injury or for any other reason cannot be ridden, we will conduct an unmounted horsemanship lesson with your child instead of riding.

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.
- If you sign up after the term starts, payment for the remainder of the term is due prior to the first lesson.
- You will be invoiced via PayPal so you can also pay with a credit card. Confirming the time for your lesson is contingent upon receipt of your payment. Payments may be made by mailing a check to Horse SenseAbility at Wildstar Farm, 16 Nason Hill Lane, Sherborn MA 01770 or by cash in the office.
- If you need financial assistance, please contact the Executive Director to discuss eligibility.

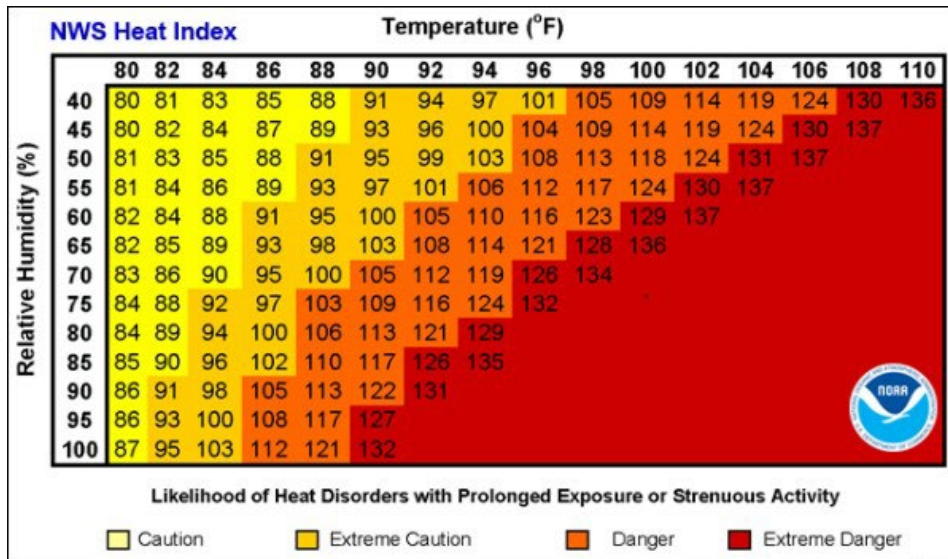
Cancellation Policy

Weather Cancellation

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

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

In the event of harsh weather, riders will participate in horsemanship activities in the barn instead of having mounted lessons in the arena.



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

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 refund you.

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.

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).

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.

- If you or your child is 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), do not come to the barn and please notify staff immediately particularly if you've had any contact with 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. During the winter months, wear layers, gloves and hats. We also recommend disposable hand, toe and insole warmers and usually have some available for our participants.

Footwear

Comfortable boots or sturdy close-toed shoes with a heel are required 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, Crocs 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. **Caretakers need to comply with this rule, too, for their safety.**

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 or their 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.

Dismissal Policy

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.
- 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 required 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!

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 special blue treat buckets and then hold it out to them. Do not feed a treat to a horse on the crossties in the grooming area—only in the horse’s stall. Handfeeding horses is strictly **prohibited**. It can lead to aggressive behavior and injury.

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.

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.

Obey 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

A fully accessible bathroom is located through the first door on the right side of the main aisle.

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 inside the first door on the right in the aisle.
- 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 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

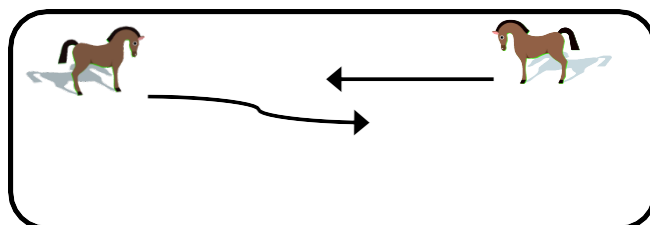
- Yell “ramp” in a loud voice when entering or exiting the arena from the ramp. Yell “door” when entering or passing by one of the arena doors to the outside.
- Close all gates when entering and exiting the arena.
- Make wide turns and large circles unless you are specifically directed otherwise. Tight 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

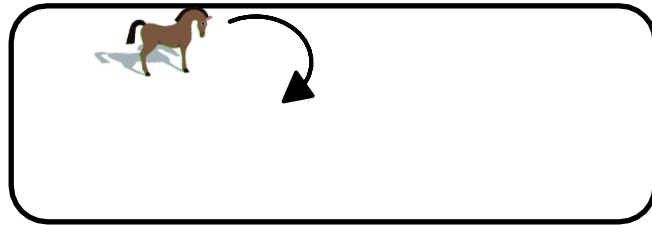
If you are riding or leading a horse in the arena, always leave at least:

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

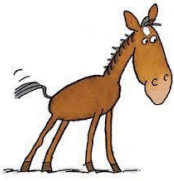
When approaching another horse, pass “left to left” just like you would if driving.



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



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.

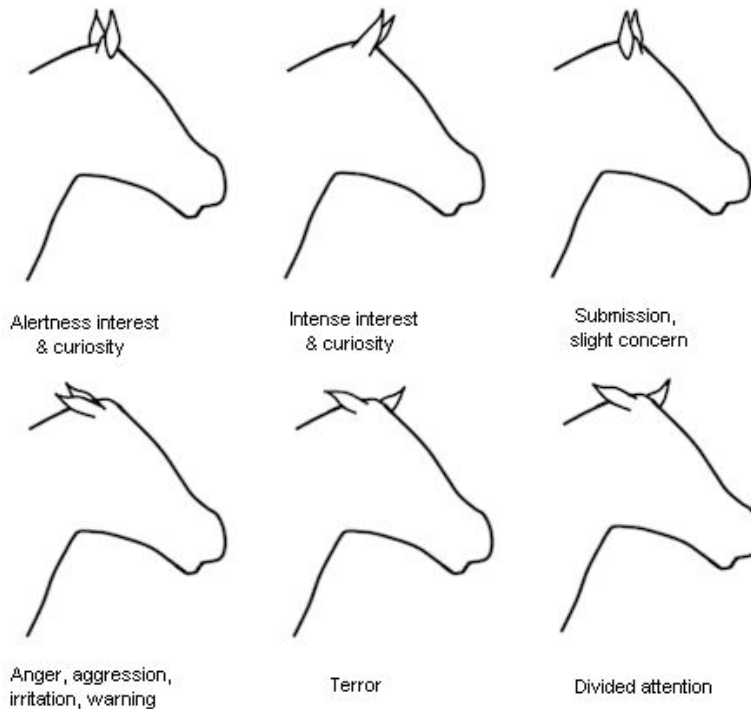
If you don't have experience or are uncomfortable picking hooves, ask an instructor, staff member or volunteer to do it for you.

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 they are "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.

A horse's visual memory is extremely accurate. 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 fly on its body. Each horse has sensitive areas, such as the flank and belly so it is important to be familiar with and respectful of them.

Touch is a means of communication between horses and other horses and with people. Horses may also use touch to examine strange objects. They look, sniff and feel an object with their muzzle. The tongue, lips, and gums of the mouth are particularly sensitive.

Smell

A horse's sense of smell is very acute and allows it to recognize other horses and people. Smell also helps the horse to evaluate new 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 a 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.

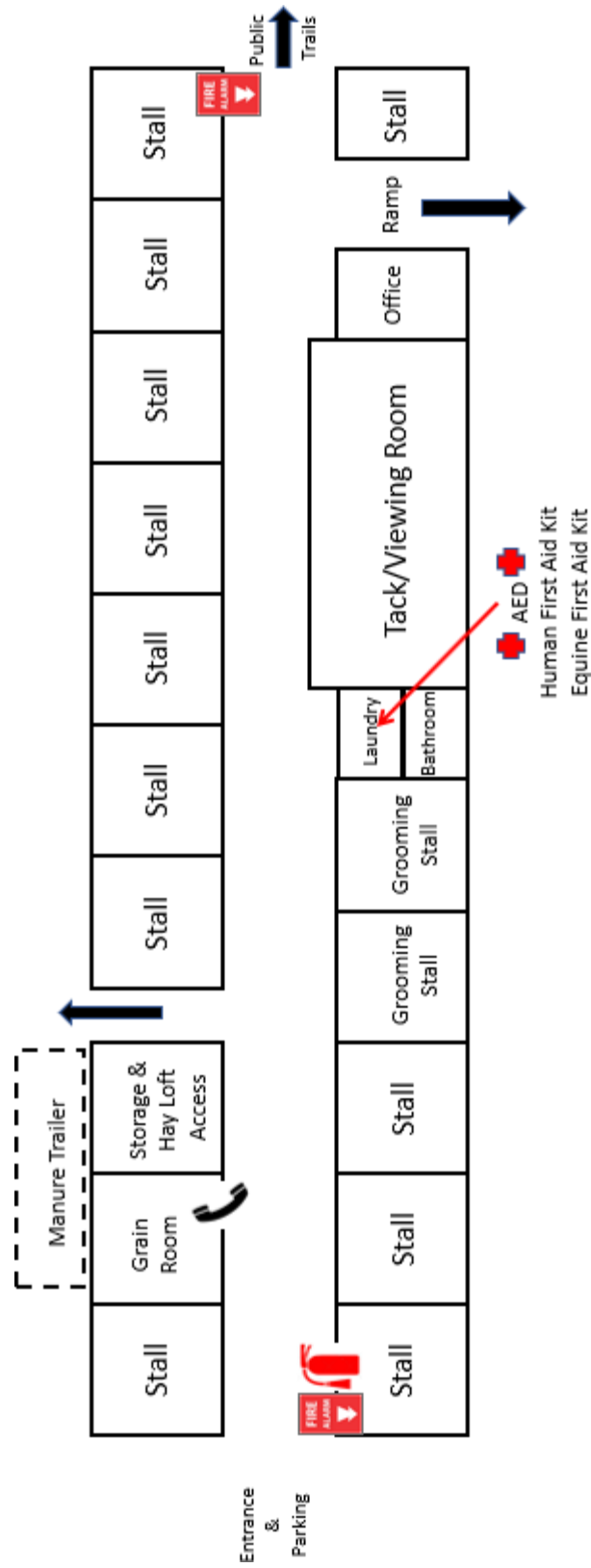
Sixth Sense

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

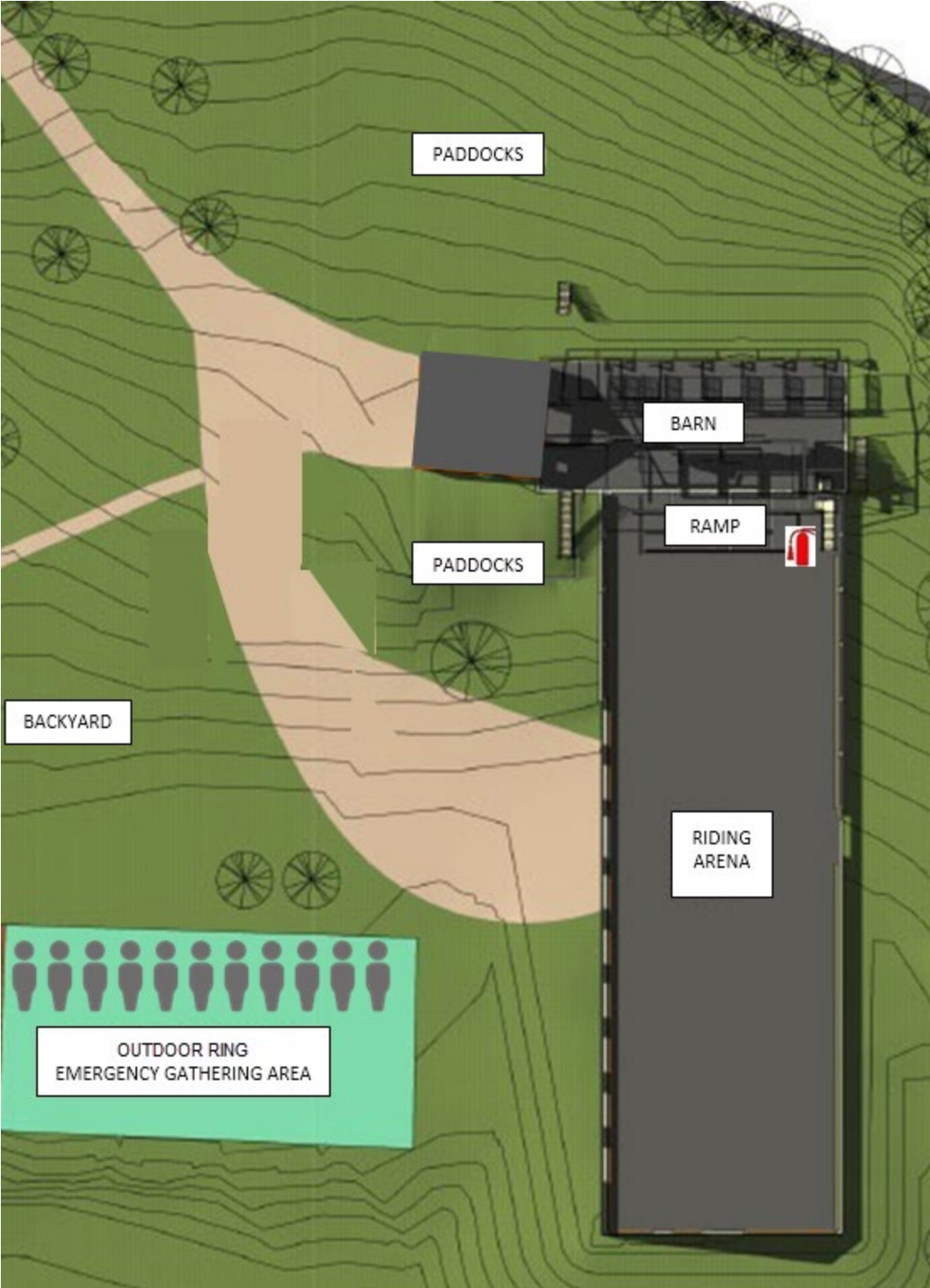
Prey Mentality

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.

Barn Layout



Site Map



Statement of Completion

I have read the Horse SenseAbility Participant Manual in its entirety. 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.

Note: You may sign the [Participant Manual Statement of Completion](#) online if you prefer.

Participant's or guardian's
signature:

Participant's name:

Date:
