

# Ananda Ranch

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## Exploring Sensory Intervention

A child's innocence should endow them with a safeguard against the ravages of fate; unfortunately, traumatic injuries and noxious experiences that occur in childhood have the capacity to modify neural structures and generate adverse behavioral and mental health changes that can, in some cases, be irreversible. Researchers who have examined the impact of traumatic stress on young children have associated exposure to severe stressors with alterations that affect the child's biological, emotional, social, and cognitive functioning (Chu & Lieberman, 2010).

## TRAUMA SOLUTIONS

Younger children, especially girls, who have unique needs when it comes to trauma recovery might benefit to a greater degree and more rapidly if animal-assisted therapy was incorporating into the sensory-motor activities.

## EQUINE ASSISTED INTERVENTION

Exchanges between humans and horses have been shown to have neurobiological applications that can mediate an anti-depressant reaction with children who have experienced trauma; the success of human-animal intervention is in the power of the child to build a safe relationship along with the animal's ability to be approachable (York, 2010).

## Exploring Sensory Intervention

### Continued

Alterations that are brought on by trauma can lead individuals toward the development of acute stress disorder (ASD) and subsequently posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), especially in the absence of treatment (Gibson, 2011). Although cognitive-based rehabilitation practices are the primary methods of treatment, cognitive rehabilitation therapy has not provided strong evidence for improvements in real-life functioning even though enhancements are seen on testing outcomes (Wilson, 2008). Unfortunately, being able to score well on a standardized test is not going to enable the individual to manage the environmental cues that may spark physiological processes which pose a neurological threat to achieving psychological and psychosocial functioning. Major neuropsychological changes generate multiple issues, which is why rehabilitation and intervention practices should incorporate a broad perspective that can address individual issues, rather than trying to improve the various conditions with a single approach. Therefore, holistic applications may be a better alternative treatment method for individuals who have experienced traumatic events. Interventions that provide patterned, repetitive sensory neural input to the brainstem and other neural networks provide assistance in the organizational and regulation input process, and are effective in reducing anxiety, impulsivity, and other trauma-related symptoms (Perry, 2009). Sensory intervention relates to the reactivation, on a motor sensory level, of the experience of trauma in a safe and controlled environment that will allow the individual to develop positive responses and reduce the amount of sensitivity to the activity in order to alleviate trauma induced sensations of fear, terror, alarm, vigilance, threat, and helplessness (Steele & Raider, 2009). These types of therapeutic programs may effectively assist trauma survivors by targeting the neural processes and changes that correlate to early traumatic stress responses in order to safeguard against the behavioral and cognitive symptoms that can translate into ASD and PTSD. Within this type of framework, survivors would be given the opportunity to regain function of their everyday activities in their own environments.



### Younger Children and Trauma

Very young children (below the age of five) who are survivors of traumatic stress may be more at risk for developing negative repercussions than their older peers as the consequences associated with traumatic exposure activate the body's stress response system and set into motion numerous physiological coping responses that have the capability to adapt brain maturation in regions that are still developing and organizing; these processes often lead to psychological conditions such as PTSD (Wolf et al., 2009).



## Consciousness

The more we divorce ourselves from the land and the animals, the more separated from ourselves we become.

When we feel disconnected from the spiritual world, we can turn to horses, just as we can turn to the land, to bring this awareness back to our consciousness.

If we learn to listen, with patience and reverence, the earth and all its creatures can motivate us to reconnect with our innate wisdom – the part that is most attuned to the rhythms of life.

The formula to finding one's Bliss is the equation: P3

Persistence – Patience – Perception

Persistence to follow your vision

Patience to let events and people take their place

Perception to be aware of opportunities when they arise.

## Dropping Keys

The small man

Builds cages for everyone

He

Knows.

While the sage,

Who has to duck his head

When the moon is low,

Keeps dropping keys all night

long

For the

Beautiful

Rowdy

Prisoners.

*Hafiz*

## Question and Answers

**Q: Why do you think horses are better for therapeutic practices?**

**A:** Horses provide safety and acceptance, which are critical elements in achieving therapeutic effectiveness. Along with providing body to body contact and allowing for emotional connectedness, the application of horses allocates the mastery of working with a large animal, which can boost perceptions of the self and gain benefits of engaging in a challenging interaction within an enriched rural environment, fostering a child's developmental plasticity (York, 2010).



## Upcoming Events

No scheduled events at this time.

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*Ananda Ranch*

*Horses Heal the Scars Time Can't Take Away*

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