



Dusty Boots Barn Equine Services - Who are we?

Dusty Boots Barn Equine Services is a collaborative team of licensed mental health therapists, equine professionals, life coaches, and trained volunteers who come together to provide a variety of services in the mental health field. Our work is rooted in connection, consistency, and a shared commitment to personal and professional growth.

As a team, we dedicate consistent weekly time to working together and with our horses to become embodied in the work and enhance our own skills. In this time, we engage in personal and professional growth—both individually and as a team—and remain in an ongoing, intentional relationship with our horses and each other. We do the same work we ask of our clients and participants. We believe this approach allows us to truly create and hold an environment that supports both physical and emotional safety for everyone who participates in our services. Thus, clients and participants can experience what healthy community and attuned relationships look and feel like in real time.

Horses are integral to our work, but they are still animals. Thus, partnering with horses we know well and have trusting relationships with significantly enhances safety within therapeutic settings.

Our strong horsemanship skills, clear communication, and deep familiarity with each horse cultivates a strong environment of physical and emotional safety for all involved. Rather than relying solely on observable behavior when pairing clients with unfamiliar horses, we consider each horse's individual personality, history, and unique tendencies.



Why Horses?



Horses offer a unique opportunity for growth and healing because they respond honestly and immediately to the present moment. As highly sensitive herd animals, they communicate primarily through body language and subtle cues. Thus, they naturally attune to our nervous systems, emotions, and behaviors, offering clear, nonjudgmental feedback. They also respond not only to what we say, but to what we bring—our presence, congruence and internal state. From our experience, you can't hide or fake anything with horses, making it a powerful opportunity to learn how to slow down, get to know ourselves and become embodied in our true self.

Horses are also herd animals, so they are capable of forming meaningful relationships and attachments with both humans and other horses. Because horses require respect, trust, boundaries and intentional communication, relationships with horses can become deeply reparative—especially for individuals impacted by trauma or attachment wounds.



Attuned, consistent connection with a horse offers a powerful experience of safety, trust, and partnership that often reaches beyond words. Horses allow us to also be a part of their herd, providing us an opportunity to experience what a connected community feels like.

Workshops/Trainings/Group Sessions

We offer workshops, trainings and group sessions for clients, organizations, and businesses that focus on mental health, personal development, and connected horsemanship. These sessions are open to the public and may include topics such as communication, team building, resilience, problem-solving, critical thinking, relationship building, conflict resolution, mindfulness, attunement, nervous system regulation and co-regulation, self-awareness, self-esteem, and relational horsemanship skills, with additional topics available upon request. All workshops and trainings are experientially based and utilize equine-assisted learning and connected horsemanship to support embodied practice, reflection, and integration of skills.



Some of our workshops and trainings are designed to support professional development across mental health, healthcare, and school-based systems. These workshops and trainings are approved for CEUs, supporting professionals in meeting their continuing education requirements. They teach providers how to strengthen therapeutic relationships while building practical, trauma-informed skills that address the brain, body, and nervous system.

Because our work is grounded in the research and understanding that healing and personal growth also occur within community, our sessions, trainings and workshops intentionally aim to incorporate these elements as well.

Trauma-Focused Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (TF-EAP)

Trauma-Focused Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, often referred to as TF-EAP, involves partnering with horses under the guidance of a mental health professional and a qualified equine professional. This innovative approach has been used to address a variety of mental health conditions and places the foundation of healing on the power of safety, rhythm and relationship. A major benefit of Trauma-Focused Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (TF-EAP) and group experiences removes the pressure of having to “talk” about any trauma and share details of adverse and negative experiences; though a client can certainly share if they choose to.

The TF-EAP model is rooted in the science of relationships and the brain/body/nervous system. It incorporates the research based on Attachment Theory, Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), Somatic Experiencing, the Polyvagal Theory, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), among other evidence based modalities.

In TF-EAP, we can shift our entire nervous system and brain by experiencing increasingly secure, authentic and safe relationships. Knowing or talking about something is an important step, but it doesn't change a deeply ingrained nervous system pattern, trauma experience(s) or attachment style. Engaging in new patterns/corrective experiences and releasing emotions through the body can be transformational.

In our TF-EAP sessions, clients can experience ground work, experiential activities and rhythmic riding as part of their therapy experience, all which support re-organization of the brain, body and nervous system. It also builds life skills, relational skills and executive functioning capacities as well as enhances self-esteem, self-awareness, emotional regulation, communication, and self-mastery. Within the relationship of the horse(s), therapist, and equine professional, clients learn to stay present in the moment, set boundaries, make requests, communicate their needs, and when there are ruptures, learn healthy repair.



Payment/Insurance

We accept BCBS, Wellmark, United Healthcare and self-pay options to cover TF-EAP services. Depending on the type of group, workshop, or training, insurance coverage might be an option, but is usually self-pay.

So why should you consider Dusty Boots Barn for TF-EAP, equine group experiences, training and/or workshops?

Equine-assisted and experiential programs have grown rapidly across Iowa and the United States. As this field expands, it is important to clearly understand the qualifications of the professionals involved, the services being offered, and how equine activities are integrated into therapeutic or coaching work.

While Dusty Boots has been together for only two years, we bring decades of combined experience in mental health, horsemanship, and equine-assisted work. Our team is staffed by therapists, coaches, and equine professionals who are professionally trained within their respective disciplines and experienced in equine-assisted and experiential approaches, integrating clinical knowledge, coaching frameworks, and established horsemanship practices (see bios below). Each of us practices within our defined scope of training and credentialing, and services are delivered in accordance with applicable professional and ethical standards.

In addition to professional training, our team actively engages in ongoing education, consultation, and reflective practice. This commitment supports consistency, integrity, and risk-aware services.

The modality that our team trains and partners with horses is just as important as the professionals' training and credentials. We primarily use the Natural Lifemanship (NL) model for our equine services. We are all trained in this modality. You can learn more about Natural Lifemanship here: <https://naturallifemanship.com/horsemanship/>.

The NL modality is foundational in our approach because it allows our horses a voice to give consent and have choice whenever possible. Partnering with our horses in this way allows our clients to experience healthy relationships, sometimes for the first time. Not using dominance and control but allowing our horses to have choice and work in true partnership, our clients and horses experience the give and take of a healthy relationship. We do not see our horses as mirrors or "reflections" of us. Rather, we see them as their own beings, with their own personalities and personal histories.

In addition to NL, we use the O.K. Corral Series (O.K. Corral) modality. O.K. Corral also respects and integrates natural horse and herd dynamics into the therapeutic process and experiential activities. O.K. Corral is based on the work of the credited Founder of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Greg Kersten.

Equine activities under both modalities are used purposefully and ethically to support therapeutic and developmental goals with careful attention to consent, horse welfare, participant safety, and appropriate supervision.





Team Bios

Therapists

Lynn Moore

Lynn Moore, MA, LMHC has a Masters in Counseling, is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) in Iowa; is Natural Lifemanship level 2 trained; and has been working in the mental health field for over 40 years. She is engaged in ongoing training with Natural Lifemanship and is in her fifth year of providing Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. Lynn believes we are never done learning, and her forty years in the field have brought years of academic learning, as well as continuous training to maintain her Iowa licensure. Her continuing education focus is on eating disorders, trauma, expressive arts, and Equine Assisted Psychotherapy.

Lynn has owned her own private practice since 1991, where she sees clients with issues such as eating disorders, depression, anxiety, grief and relationship issues. Lynn loves utilizing multiple modalities in her work with clients including Sandtray, Expressive Arts, Guided Drawing and Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. Prior to opening her own practice, she worked in multiple settings such as drug and alcohol treatment centers for adolescents and adults, inpatient for youth sex offenders, youth shelters, group homes and hospital inpatient psychiatric units for children and adolescents.

Meagan Hruska

Meagan Hruska, MS, LMHC has a Masters in Clinical Counseling, is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) in Iowa, Natural Lifemanship level 1 trained, and O.K. Corral certified, having trained under the Equine Assisted Psychotherapy founder. She is engaged in ongoing training with Natural Lifemanship and is in her tenth year of providing in office therapy and Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. Meagan also completed a clinical supervision course under the University of Minnesota to enhance her understanding of ethically and effectively training other professionals in the field.

Meagan currently owns her own private practice and sees a wide range of clients and families with a number of different mental health concerns. Previously, Meagan was an Adjunct Professor and worked in university counseling centers treating and advising students, faculty and staff. She also worked in residential and inpatient treatment centers, outpatient treatment, federal probation, state prison, county jail, education and research. Meagan implemented an anger management program for incarcerated individuals in collaboration with a level two state prison, where she was honored for outstanding work by South Carolina Department of Corrections.

Lynn and Meagan both have a partnership with Missouri Valley Journeyman Apprentice Training College (JATC), the training center for electrical lineworkers for the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. Together, they work with Missouri Valley JATC in expanding mental health awareness and assistance to their journeyman, lineman and apprentices. Meagan and Lynn previously presented on mental health to the top apprentice instructors in the country at the 2nd Annual Outside Industry Training Summit in 2025.

Equine Professionals (E.P.)

Nita Chaplin

Nita Chaplin is Natural Lifemanship level 2 trained and is engaged in ongoing training with Natural Lifemanship. Nita has experience working with therapists in Equine Assisted Psychotherapy teams for the past 6 years. She is also a Certified Professional Life Coach with Master Diplomas in Mental Health and Youth Mental Health through a trauma-informed lens. Nita teaches connected horsemanship lessons in addition to co-facilitating workshops and personal development sessions.

Nita previously worked for 6 years at the Barnum Equestrian Center; Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center, and was a barn manager for 2 years, managing a herd of anywhere from 27 to 50 horses. Roles included facilitating and developing summer camp programs for kids, teens, and adults, as well as coordinating volunteer experience. She trained and worked with horses utilizing her training with NL principals to ensure that all participants and horses related safely and with connection, whether EAP therapy services, camps, rhythmic riding, or trail rides. Further, Nita facilitated the Exceptional Persons groups at the same camp for 15 years.

Diana Dhabolt

Diana Dhabolt, BA, AS is Natural Lifemanship Level 2 trained and is engaged in ongoing training with Natural Lifemanship. She brings a lifelong dedication to animal care and relationship-based work. She holds an Associate of Science in Exotic Animal Training and Management from America's Teaching Zoo, where she received training in animal behavior, nutrition, and veterinary fundamentals.

Diana has worked with a wide range of species, including horses, farm animals, zebras, bald eagles, giraffes, mountain lions, and many others. She spent five years as a volunteer animal caretaker for a herd of 27 horses at Barnum Equestrian Center, where she also assisted with summer camp programs. She currently volunteers at Blank Park Zoo and serves as the primary animal caretaker for Dusty Boots Barn and Steens Acres.



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