



Dusty Boots Barn Equine Services - Who are we?

Dusty Boots Barn, LLC Equine Services

Dusty Boots Barn, LLC Equine Services is a place where a collaborative team of licensed mental health therapists, equine professional and trained volunteers are contracted to provide a variety of services in the mental health field. The work that takes place here is rooted in connection, consistency, and a shared commitment to providing high level mental health based services, training and workshops for our clients and community.

Providers here are contracted and 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, our providers 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. Our providers do the same work we ask of our clients and participants. Dusty Boots Barn believes this approach creates 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 the services we provide here. However, they are still animals. Thus, partnering with horses we know well and have trusting relationships with significantly enhances safety within therapeutic settings. Our horses have been carefully vetted and trained by our experienced equine professionals to be of service to our community. Dusty Boots Barn chooses horses that also “choose” this work, so that each horse shows up presently to assist us in helping our clients/participants experience opportunities to enhance their well-being.

Our contracted providers also demonstrate strong horsemanship skills, clear communication, and deep familiarity with each horse, which 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

Dusty Boots Barn, LLC contracts providers who 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 services 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)

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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.

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. Dusty Boots Barn, LLC holds providers to the highest standards. These professionals are appropriately trained within their respective disciplines and are experienced in equine-assisted and experiential approaches, integrating clinical knowledge and established horsemanship practices. Each provider contracted provides practices within their defined scope of training and credentialing. Services are delivered in accordance with applicable professional and ethical standards.

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

The modality that our team uses to train and partner with horses is just as important as the professionals’ training and credentials. Providers use principals from the Natural Lifemanship (NL) and O.K. Corral models for our equine services. All of our providers are trained or credentialed in one of these modalities, and some are trained in both. We strive to continue to learn different modalities within the equine therapy field to remain knowledgeable and provide the highest standard of equine based services.

The NL modality allows our horses a voice to give consent and have choice whenever possible.

Partnering with our horses in this way allows our clients/participants 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/participants 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.

The O.K. Corral Series (O.K. Corral) modality 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.

Further, 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.

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.

Contact

Please contact Meagan Hruska to explore scheduling or engaging in any of the services provided: mental health therapy sessions, groups, trainings or workshop. You can contact her at infodustybootsbarn@gmail.com or 515-639-0183.

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.

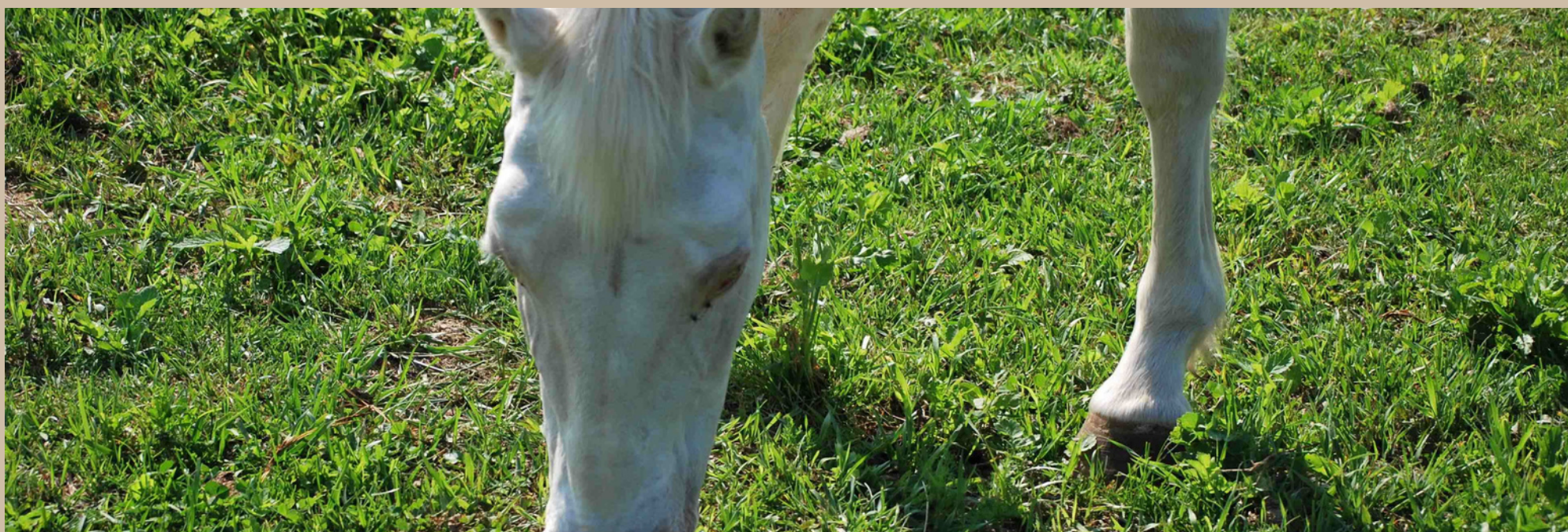
In addition to professional training, our team actively engages in ongoing education, consultation, and reflective practice. This commitment supports consistency, integrity, and risk-aware services.

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.





Therapist

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.

Contact

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