

FAQ's about using a horse as a treatment tool

★ What exactly do we do?

At Forward Stride we offer physical, occupational or speech therapy treatments that utilizes the multidimensional movement of a horse. Our licensed physical, occupational and speech therapists use this treatment to help clients with a wide variety of impairments. We do not teach riding skills, but use the movement of the horse to influence the client's posture, balance, speech, sensory processing and overall function. The therapist directs the movement of the horse, analyzes the client's responses, and adjusts the treatment accordingly. This powerful treatment tool is used as part of an integrated program to achieve functional outcomes.

★ Why use a horse?

The horse provides a unique multidimensional movement in the client that is variable, rhythmic, and repetitive. The horse's pelvis moves in the same three ways as a human pelvis thus creating a movement pattern similar to human ambulation. This unique movement cannot be replicated in the usual clinical setting or on a manufactured piece of equipment. The horse also provides a dynamic base of support making it an excellent tool for increasing trunk strength and control, improving balance and coordination, building overall postural strength and endurance, and improving ambulation. In addition, the horse's movement creates a multisensory experience that can be graded to enhance or decrease the rider's vestibular, tactile, and proprioceptive systems. When you consider changes in speed and gaits, each horse's distinct movement, and placing the client in different developmental positions on the horse, the physical inputs are unique and extraordinary. For some clients, it's the first time that they have been able to feel a normal walking pattern. Under the direction of our specially trained, licensed physical, occupational, and speech therapists the results are powerful.

★ Who could benefit from this therapy?

Using the horse as a treatment tool has been shown to improve: core trunk strength and postural control, joint mobility, muscle tone, balance, motor skills and coordination, sensory integration, symmetry, communication skills, and psychological, cognitive, and behavioral functioning. It is beneficial for a wide variety of diagnoses and impairments some of which include:

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| ★Autism | ★Scoliosis |
| ★Cerebral Palsy | ★Down Syndrome |
| ★Developmental Delay | ★Multiple Sclerosis |
| ★Sensory Integration Dysfunction | ★Stroke |
| ★Learning/Language Disabilities | ★Traumatic Brain Injury |

★ Will my insurance cover this therapy?

If your insurance includes physical, occupational or speech therapy you should be covered. This is a type of physical, occupational, and speech therapy and is billed under traditional P.T., O.T., and SLP diagnoses and treatment codes. Forward Stride is a fee for service program. This means that the client is responsible for paying for each service at the time the service is performed. Clients will be given a Superbill which contains all the information needed to submit to their insurance companies for reimbursement. Forward Stride does not do direct billing. An evaluation is \$160 and each subsequent 45 minute treatment session is \$120. Financial assistance may also be available to those clients who do not have insurance coverage or the financial means to pay out of pocket for services. Please contact our office for additional information.



★ **How does this differ from Therapeutic Riding?**

Many people are confused about the difference between Therapeutic Riding and therapy using a horse: Therapeutic riding is conducted in group sessions by a certified therapeutic riding instructor. Forward Stride's Riding program is recreational in nature and designed for individuals with disabilities who wish to learn equestrian and riding skills. There is a lot of therapeutic value to Therapeutic Riding; however, it is not considered therapy. As mentioned earlier, physical, occupational and speech therapy is a one-on-one session with a licensed therapist using the movement of an equine to achieve functional goals.

★ **Who are your therapists on staff?**

Sheila Stahl Butler – Director of Rehabilitation Services and Physical Therapist

Sheila graduated in 1986 from Marquette University and has a wide range of work experiences including acute care, adult rehabilitation, pediatrics, and intensive care. Sheila's main focus of her practice has been pediatrics. She has taken extensive continuing education courses both in the US and abroad. Sheila is a member of PATH and the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) and has completed both Level 1 and Level 2 AHA courses.

Gretchen Dumestre - Physical Therapist

Gretchen graduated with a MS in Physical Therapy from Pacific University in 1995. She also has a BS in Engineering-Physics from Pacific Lutheran University. She has completed the Level 1 AHA course and is a member of the APTA, OPTA, and AHA. Gretchen has worked primarily in pediatric rehabilitation and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. In the spring, she coaches Girls' Tennis at Tigard HS. She was excited and challenged to participate in an interactive vaulting class here at Forward Stride.

Valery Sampson – Occupational Therapist

Valery received her Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy at the University of Puget Sound in 1989. Over the past twenty four years she has worked primarily in outpatient pediatrics, hand therapy and in the NICU. Currently, Valery practices both through Providence Newberg Rehab and Forward Stride. She is a member both of the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) and PATH and has completed both Level 1 and Level 2 courses.

Julie Talcott-Fuller-Occupational Therapist

Julie graduated from Dominican University of California with her Masters in Occupational Therapy in 2011. She has worked in pediatrics since graduation, providing therapy in the school district and in-clinic settings. She has completed AHA Level 1 and Level 2 courses. Julie's interest in becoming an occupational therapist was sparked as a teenager when she attended a presentation on hippotherapy at a horse show. Julie regularly participates in professional development courses to further her skills and has additional training in Animal Assisted Therapy, Handwriting Without Tears®, and Therapeutic Listening®. Julie is a horse enthusiast and enjoys gardening, photography, birdwatching, yoga, canning jams and making preserves. When she was younger she worked in San Francisco, leading trail rides and driving carriages touring Golden Gate Park.

Heidii Roberts-Speech and Language Pathologist

Heidii specializes in oral motor and speech disorders as well as sensory language disorders. Her background includes 20+ years' experience working with children in both clinical and educational settings. She has a master's degree in speech and hearing science from Portland State University and has her Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). She is a member of ASHA, the Oregon Speech and Hearing Association, the International Association of Orofacial Myology and



the AHA. She has completed her AHA Level 1, Level 2, and Neurological Connection courses. She retired from to US Navy Reserves after 21 years of service. During her free time she enjoys backpacking with her husband and 2 dogs, quilting and spending time with her grown children.

★What days and times do you offer therapy?

Forward Stride offers a year-round program that is currently scheduled Monday through Friday. Please contact our office to make an appointment or for any further questions regarding our program. You can also visit our web site at www.forwardstride.org. We look forward to hearing from you!