

FAQ's about using a horse as a treatment tool

★ What exactly do we do?

We provide specialized clinical Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech & Language Pathology by licensed therapists with advanced certifications. In our treatment sessions we utilize many treatment tools and strategies including the multidimensional movement of a horse. At Forward Stride, licensed physical, occupational and speech therapists use this treatment tool 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 therapy 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:

- ★Autism
- ★Cerebral Palsy
- ★Developmental Delay
- ★Sensory Integration Dysfunction
- ★Learning/Language Disabilities
- ★Scoliosis
- ★Down Syndrome
- ★Multiple Sclerosis
- ★Stroke
- ★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 S.L.P. 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 insurance billing. See Rehabilitation Services web page for updated pricing list. 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.



★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 website at www.forwardstride.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

★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.

Camille Robinson - Physical Therapist

Camille Robinson graduated with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Pacific University, OR. She has been a therapist for over 15 years specializing in pediatric and geriatric rehabilitation in various settings including hippotherapy, outpatient, home health and in the schools. She concurrently works for the Willamette ESD serving school age children (5-21 yrs) with orthopedic or neurological impairments. She is a member of the AHA and has completed the AHA Level 1 course. She is an APTA Certified Clinical Instructor and serves as an appointed representative for her region on the Regional and Statewide services for students with orthopedic impairments (RSOI) professional learning team. In her free-time, she enjoys spending time with family/friends, caring for and riding horses, boating, baking, traveling and reading.

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.

Rebecca Mahood- Occupational Therapist

Rebecca graduated from Western Michigan University in 1993 with a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Psychology and in 1997 with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy. Rebecca's focus has been in neuro-rehabilitation, although she has a broad range of experience in various settings including inpatient acute rehab, outpatient, home health care, and subacute rehab. Rebecca is a member of the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA, Inc.) and Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH, International) and has received the level 1 AHA Certification.



Hannah Burke- Occupational Therapist

Hannah received her MS in occupational therapy from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2015 and completed the AOTA Pediatric Fellowship through the OHSU Leadership and Education in Neurodevelopmental Disorders (LEND) program in 2018. She is currently working on a PhD in Occupation and Rehabilitation Science from Colorado State University to contribute to research in the field. Hannah's primary practice area is nature-based pediatric occupational therapy; she has completed the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) Level I course.