

A Horse-Riding Group as Potential Space

Tal-li Cohen and Shoshi Lifshitz

This article presents group work using horse-riding. This different type of therapeutic group therapy opens up a unique possibility of working with youngsters suffering from attention deficit and concentration disorders.

The field of therapeutic riding is currently directed at a range of populations having special needs in three fields: medical, educational, and sports. This paper presents another therapeutic method that places emphasis on the emotional side of the rider.

Group therapy was conducted with a group of children suffering from ADHD and demonstrated the potential advantages of group work using horses for these children. It appears that the use of a horse succeeds in establishing an alliance with the strengths of the patient and with the healthy parts of his 'soul.' In addition, work with a horse permits the rider to provide himself with external feedback that engenders a process of internal reinforcement of the rider, leading to a significant change that the patient internalizes.

Tal-li Cohen, an educational and clinical psychologist, the King David Riding Ranch in Moshav Shores, and is Coordinator of a program in Animal Assisted Therapy, Michlalah Jerusalem College, Bayit Vegan. She also has a private practice.

Shoshi Lifshitz, an occupational therapist, the King David Riding Ranch in Moshav Shores, the Mental Health Center, Ramat Chen, Tel Aviv, and Horses and People College, Carkur.