

The Listening Heart: The Limbic Path Beyond Office Therapy – A Manual for the HEAL Model for Equine-facilitated Psychotherapy and Learning.

by Leigh Shambo

This is a “how to” manual for a well-researched and tested model of psychotherapy involving horses. But it is much more besides with touching and thought provoking personal accounts and a useful outline of the inter-relationship and differences between office-based and horse habitat psychotherapy. It is a technical, yet highly readable book, directed at practitioners. As such it adds a much needed contribution to the growing volume of horse and health literature.

But this book is not aimed primarily at the equine market. Its target audience is the health and social work practitioners and it certainly belongs on the bookshelves and desks of innovative professional psychological therapists.

Shambo’s model includes a six part sequential process for partnering with horses to facilitate psychological and emotional healing with people, particularly those suffering from PTSD. The format is simple, easy to follow and interesting reading with good illustrations and personal accounts. It would however, present quite a challenge for the therapist unfamiliar with horses. One would hope that in due course Shambo might produce a companion video illustrating the equine-related terms and her examples of exercises used in HEAL’s 6 keys to psychological work involving horses.

The book will I am sure be of interest and value to equine specialists also, particularly those engaged in therapeutic work and/or interested in the human-horse relationship issues. However, as Shambo cautions equine specialists could not undertake this work alone with clients, they would need to combine with a qualified psychotherapist or social worker familiar with psycho/social illness.

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