

National Program for Training Therapeutic Horseback Riding Instructors in Israel

Submitted by the Professional Committee for Therapeutic Riding at the Israeli
Equestrian Federation (IEF) (2008-2019)

Committee Members:

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Prioritizing Equine Welfare in Training

Our training program emphasizes the importance of handling horses with care and respect, viewing them as true partners. The physical and emotional well-being of the horses is a core value integrated into every aspect of our curriculum. We believe that achieving high standards of equine welfare necessitates a solid foundation of knowledge, motivation, and experience; hence, prospective students must possess prior skills and experience in equestrianism.

Our training approach acknowledges several key factors influencing human interactions with horses:

- The desire for power and control
- The pursuit of adrenaline and excitement
- The quest for social status and belonging
- Genuine care, love, and a desire for connection (Beyond Welfarism: The Equine Future, 2025)

Moreover, responsible equine care must also consider environmental and economic stability. We advocate for a holistic approach to equine care that realistically addresses the needs of the animals, their environment, and the financial realities of horse ownership.

The importance of equine well-being encompasses physical health and emotional and social needs. Ethical considerations and the benefits of human interaction further enhance our understanding of the responsibilities involved in domestication.

Overview

Today, children and adults with disabilities can greatly benefit from horseback riding. The observable rehabilitative achievements of combat veterans, individuals with learning disabilities, and children with severe impairments leave no doubt about the effectiveness of therapeutic riding as a treatment model. It is deeply moving to witness riders experiencing mobility and independence, feeling connected to their environment, and gaining empowerment, dignity, success, and self-confidence.

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In Israel, nearly 20% of the population (Rudman, 2010) suffers from some form of disability. This group includes children and adults with physical, intellectual, social, or emotional impairments. Five percent of the Jewish sector and fourteen percent of the Arab sector are considered to have severe disabilities, and these figures grow every year.

Therapeutic horseback riding is based on an enjoyable and challenging activity that encourages the integration of children and adults with disabilities into a healthy and active society. Often, it increases motivation to act and function. With the guidance of the instructor, riding provides a sense of control and success, forming the basis for successful rehabilitation.

Currently, stakeholders, healthcare providers, and private clients seek to ensure that therapeutic riding instructors possess sufficient training to meet the needs of their riders. To ensure that instructors meet these demands, it is essential to establish curricula and a national monitoring system that guarantees the required professional standards.

Definitions and Terminology

The prevailing view is that therapeutic riding is a rehabilitative and supportive activity based on the relationship with the horse and horseback riding itself. The instructor's role is to mediate between the rider and the horse while maintaining safety throughout the session. The instructor is trained to guide the activity, adapt the equipment, and choose the appropriate horse so that the experience of riding helps achieve therapeutic and rehabilitative goals.

The horse's natural qualities — such as movement, rhythm, and non-verbal communication — provide a basis for improving various pathological conditions.

Therapeutic Riding

Therapeutic riding refers to horseback riding and activities with horses, with the goal of improving the quality of life for clients. It is intended for children and adults suffering from physical, cognitive, emotional, psychiatric, or behavioral impairments.

EAAT / EAS – Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy / Equine Assisted Services

In recent years, therapeutic riding has also been referred to as *EAS* to emphasize the broad range of equine-assisted activities that provide therapeutic benefits.

The main areas included in EAS:

- *Classic Therapeutic Riding*: Utilizing the horse's inherent qualities to improve functioning and quality of life for children and adults. This includes educational therapeutic riding.
- *Hippotherapy*: Para-medical treatment using horses, conducted by licensed medical professionals.
- *Sports for People with Disabilities*: Including adaptive sports, the Paralympic field, and Special Olympics activities.

Therapeutic Riding as a Service Industry

- Therapeutic riding is a professional field.
- In Israel, it is partially funded by the healthcare funds (Kupot Holim), which require medical and para-medical referrals as a condition for reimbursement.
- Every client, whether eligible for funding from a healthcare provider or not, must present a medical approval for riding prior to starting their sessions. This medical approval is valid for one year only.
- The instructors' training includes topics such as psychology, anatomy, and other fields. However, this does not qualify them as para-medical professionals (such as occupational therapists or psychologists).
- Therapeutic riding may only take place at centers that meet proper safety and professional standards.
- The center must have appropriate insurance, and instructors must have professional liability insurance and a valid first aid certification.
- Treatments (sessions) are provided exclusively by certified instructors, supported by trained volunteers.
- Currently in Israel, there is no governmental body that regulates or supervises the field. The situation is similar abroad. However, this is gradually changing thanks to the efforts of the Professional Committee for Therapeutic Riding within the Israeli Equestrian Federation.

Student profile:

- Minimum 21 years of age
- Sports Riding Certification
- High-level interaction skills with both people and horses.
- Expertise in teaching riding skills.
- High ethical and moral standards.

The Therapeutic Riding Instructor

A therapeutic riding instructor must possess multi-disciplinary skills essential for leveraging the unique qualities of the horse and for understanding the limitations of riders with special needs. Their training also includes knowledge in areas such as pathology, functional anatomy, psychology, education, and therapeutic skills.

The instructor must:

- Be capable of teaching individuals with disabilities.
- Train horses for therapeutic riding.
- Be familiar with special equipment used both in Israel and worldwide in therapeutic riding.
- Be sensitive to the difficulties faced by the riders and knowledgeable about their disabilities.
- Be aware of the specific safety and ethical guidelines required in this profession.

Certification and Professional Development

Dr Anita Shkedi

Shkedi, Anita 2015. *Equine Assisted Activities or Therapy: Towards a Future Curriculum*. PhD Thesis <https://doi.org/10.48773/94700>

The therapeutic riding instructor certification grants the right to work under the supervision of a senior professional authority (referred to as a “mentor” according to the new Sports Law terminology). This means:

- The instructor may work independently only within a riding center that employs a certified “mentor” who can guide, supervise, and enrich the knowledge of the staff.
- The purpose of this requirement is to allow the instructor to gain experience within a supportive and professional framework.

After two years of work as a certified therapeutic riding instructor, and after accumulating at least 600 working hours, the instructor becomes eligible to enroll in an additional training program to be certified as a “mentor”.

Rationale and Objectives

The rationale behind developing a national curriculum for therapeutic riding instructors in Israel is:

- To officially validate the profession.
- To establish national standards for granting a Therapeutic Riding Instructor Certificate (TRDC).

Objectives of the Therapeutic Riding Instructor Training Program:

A. To establish and institutionalize a unified national standard for the certification of therapeutic riding instructors.

B. To improve the current level of both theoretical and practical knowledge in:

- Skills training
- Therapeutic principles
- Horse management within the therapeutic riding framework
- Educational theory
- Health paradigms

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C. To provide access to expert knowledge in the field by creating a comprehensive curriculum that fosters:

- Critical thinking skills
- Problem-solving abilities

D. To offer a framework for continuing education (clinics and workshops) that will further develop the skills of professionals in the field.

Building a National Curriculum for Universities and Colleges

To meet this need, it is essential to develop a national curriculum based on excellence.

This national curriculum evolved from existing models based on apprenticeship and mentorship, transitioning into new models designed to prepare the therapeutic riding instructor to meet the expectations of stakeholders.

The new curriculum will emphasize a shift:

- From a teacher-centered approach
- To a student-centered approach

Every therapeutic riding instructor has the right to receive the highest standards of education in order to provide the best possible riding instruction and therapeutic support for their clients, regardless of the type of disability.

The new curriculum must be:

- Integrative
- Experiential
- Social
- Critical
- Open to discussion
- Based on problem-solving learning methods

It should also:

- Foster motivation for learning
- Address the needs of the instructors
- Provide opportunities for deep reflection and assessment
- Offer ongoing learning opportunities, even after graduation and integration into the workforce

The Theory Behind the Curriculum

There are several models for curriculum development. In order for the new national curriculum for therapeutic riding to succeed, it must combine three models:

1. The Product Model

- Views education as a technical practice.
- "Goals are set, plans are outlined and implemented, and outcomes are measured" (Smith, 2000).
- This model is suitable for teaching core subjects such as:
 - Safety
 - Riding skills and control of the horse
 - Principles and practice of therapeutic riding
 - Basic human anatomy and physiology
 - Requirements of the therapeutic riding center
 - Standards, rules, and guidelines
 - Ethics, Human and Horses, (<https://hetifederation.org/resources/ethical-guidelines/>)

2. The Process Model

- Sees the curriculum not just as a physical plan but also as an interaction between teachers, students, and knowledge.
- Focuses on authentic work — what actually happens in practice — and what students must do to prepare and be evaluated.
- Emphasizes finding patterns and relationships between ideas (O'Neill, 2010).

3. The Praxis Model

- An extension of the process model, emphasizing the meaning of action.
- It is not only about informing the student about actions but also engaging them in committed practice.
- This form of *critical pedagogy* moves beyond student experience to a process where both student and teacher confront real problems through dialogue and reflection (Grund, cited in Smith, 1987).

Practical Implications of the Curriculum

- Requires educators to share a personal and collaborative commitment to their students.

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- Encourages critical thinking and a clear understanding of their role in practical settings.
- The educator creates a guiding plan and develops a dialogue with students that evolves into engaged, reflective, and action-oriented learning.

Curriculum Methodology

The methodology of the Therapeutic Riding Instructor Training Program is based on a structured curriculum built on social and cognitive data. It is designed to ensure a meaningful learning experience, completed in stages, with its own internal reliability.

This approach ensures that the core knowledge, skills, and values continue to serve as the foundation for the learning experience, even at advanced stages of training. This guarantees that all trainee therapeutic riding instructors will acquire similar basic knowledge and skills, which will serve as the foundation for their professional work.

The Curriculum Model Must Clearly Define:

- The role and form of assessments
- The types of resources required
- The infrastructure needed for learning (Toohey, cited in Burgess, 2007)

Methods Used in the Program:

- Problem-Based Learning (PBL)
- Critical, rational, experiential, and social approaches
- Clearly defined and structured goals within a discipline-based approach
- Organization of content to indicate required resources
- Personalized learning, focusing on performance- or systems-based approaches
- Training graduates to perform tasks, solve problems, and live more effectively (Toohey, 2011, citing Knowles et al., 1984)

Spiral Curriculum Model

The national curriculum will be built using a *spiral* structure — a well-established teaching method known for supporting personal growth and effective learning.

Origin of the Spiral Curriculum:

- Developed by Jerome Bruner (1915-), who argued that a constructivist model presented as a spiral curriculum is the most effective way to learn.
- According to Bruner (1960), "The best way to ensure that current learning will be useful in the future is to learn the basic structure of the subject at hand."

This approach allows learners to revisit core concepts repeatedly, deepening understanding each time, and connecting knowledge across different contexts.

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Ongoing Assessment

Another inspiring and innovative aspect is the use of *ongoing assessment*. This process provides students with clear feedback on their performance, helping them improve future performance in a spiral, developmental way.

Ongoing assessment:

- Offers students opportunities to develop thinking and understanding skills
- Combines performance with periodic formal feedback
- Personalizes the curriculum to the student through guidance and constructive feedback
- Encourages deeper understanding of topics or ideas

Here is the next section translated into English:

Practical Experience

John Weston (2007) stated:

"Practical skills are essential in every field of work; the performance of organizations — whether in industry, education, or the private or public sector — completely depends on the performance of the individual working within them."

The Practical Training Program Will Include:

- Excellent instructors who understand the real-world challenges and unpredictability of their work.
- Instructors who will teach from their rich experience general behaviors that ensure the professional future of their students and help them become part of the professional workforce.

Since the therapeutic riding curriculum provides only limited exposure to theoretical and practical content, it is essential that hands-on experience with real clients becomes an unforgettable experience.

This will allow students to internalize their learning and develop intuitive behavior and long-term thinking skills that will support their future career.

Ethics, Theory, and Practice in the Curriculum Professional Ethics

Professional ethics include the actions that a professional should and should not take in the workplace, covering most aspects of their professional life.

As part of the curriculum process, professional ethics must be designed in a way that preserves the rights of learners, ensuring that they have clear expectations and indications of the program's standards.

The Curriculum: Therapeutic Riding Instructor Certificate for Universities and Colleges

Introduction

"We need the company of animals. Their role is to remind us that we are part of nature. Many people who do not interact with animals lose essential aspects of intimacy and curiosity. People who live with animals tend to live longer, experience less stress, and generally maintain more stable neuro-psychological health."

(Anita Shkedi, 1990, and again in 2012)

The national curriculum represents the vision of:

- The Ministry of Health
- The Ministry of Education and Sports
- The Ministry of Defense
- The Israeli Equestrian Federation
- The Ministry of Agriculture

This program was designed to develop the therapeutic riding instructor as a safety-oriented professional who uses therapeutic riding to meet the needs of clients and stakeholders.

Therapeutic riding is an activity that enhances professional development and adds numerous opportunities for students in academic settings. It is a methodology that promotes professional competence through the development of:

- Communication skills
- Knowledge
- Technical abilities
- Medical reasoning
- Emotional values
- Reflection on daily practice — for the benefit of both the individual and the community

Background of the Program's Development

The idea of developing a national academic curriculum for therapeutic riding arose alongside the growing popularity of therapeutic riding in Israel, following requests from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Today, there is a huge demand from the public and the equestrian community for certified therapeutic riding instructors in Israel.

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Currently, demand is so high that advanced training programs in therapeutic riding can create even more job opportunities within the equestrian sector.

The Rationale of the Program

The rationale is to create a diverse and informative therapeutic riding instructor training program, rich in knowledge, that provides skills in the following areas:

- Psychology
- Physiology
- Normative human development
- Functional and neurological anatomy
- Pathology and diseases
- Practical experience in therapeutic riding and working with horses

Additionally, the goal is to build a program that teaches:

- The principles and methods of therapeutic riding
- All relevant knowledge and activities related to riding and horses
- Familiarity with new learning theories and paradigms
- Riding models
- Ethical issues relating to both humans and horses

What Makes This Program Unique?

This program is special because it is the first unified basic program common to all therapeutic riding instructor certification courses in Israel.

This uniformity ensures the establishment of national standards for therapeutic riding instructor training programs.

It will provide students with a broad and practical basic knowledge of the profession, safely prepare them for advanced studies, and open a wide range of job opportunities in both the local and international equestrian sectors.

Goals and Objectives of the National Therapeutic Riding Instructor Training Program:

- To provide a training program that includes all equine-assisted activities
- To impart both theoretical and practical skills
- To train instructors with the highest professional and ethical standards
- To teach instructors to select and train horses suitable for therapeutic riding

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- To create a national certification system recognized by all stakeholders: families, insurance companies, healthcare providers, academic institutions, government ministries, and the public

To develop motivating skills that foster:

- Meta-communication and meta-cognitive abilities through positive interaction with horse and classical riding techniques
- Self-control and self-management, giving students patience, practicality, focus, and communication skills
- Riding skills and horse-handling abilities enhance students' cognitive performance, concentration, attention, communication skills, and human-horse connections.
- The ability to teach others through self-regulation and self-management
- The ability to construct new ideas and paradigms based on current or past learning
- Increased ability for anticipation, planning, analysis, synthesis of exercises, and evaluating both theoretical and practical learning
- A sense of achievement and success when helping clients deal with change and motivation

The Overall Goal of the Therapeutic Riding Instructor Program:

Using a modern curriculum design to provide an effective and efficient learning experience related to horses.

Here is the next section translated into English:

Program Content

1. Theoretical Studies:

1.1. Anatomy and Physiology

- Functional anatomy and physiology related to movement, the nervous, sensory-motor, and cardiovascular systems.

1.2. Normative Human Development, Developmental and Cognitive Psychology

- Providing knowledge of normative development, developmental psychology, and cognitive psychology, so that tasks and skills can be directed to improve the health and well-being of the rider.

1.3. Pathology

- Providing knowledge and understanding of pathology, normative development, functional anatomy, and cognitive psychology to:
 - Identify gaps or malfunctions in the rider's abilities.

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- Plan sessions aimed at cultivating skills that promote normative development.
- Design tasks that provide skills enabling individuals with disabilities to function in various life environments.

1.4. Principles and Practices of Therapeutic Riding

- Understanding and applying principles of therapeutic riding practice to ensure rider safety.
 - Knowledge of client intake, session planning, and assessment.
 - Writing progress and follow-up reports for each client.
 - Understanding the instructor's role in the arena, including:
 - Selecting the most suitable tasks for each client based on their limitations.
 - Selecting the appropriate horse and equipment.
 - Ensuring the safest riding experience for the client.
 - Helping the client experience change or improvement.
-

Additional Competencies Developed:

- Communication skills
- General knowledge of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T)
- Technical proficiency
- Therapeutic thinking
- Emotional values expressed in daily practice for the benefit of individuals and the community
- Understanding management theories to open a therapeutic riding center in Israel
- Recognizing developments and innovations in equine-assisted activities past and present
- Understanding standards of practice and how to adapt a riding facility to meet therapeutic riding requirements
- Awareness of contemporary issues, ethical considerations in equine programs, and facility management
- Internalizing the importance of research and development

Here is the next section translated into English:

2. Practical Training

A. Gaining Experience Working with Clients

- During the supervised practical training period, students will apply all advanced professional skills learned in the program while working with real clients.

B. Developing Riding and Horse Handling Skills

- The ability to control a horse properly and safely in an arena.

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- Acting as a side-walker or leader in sessions.

C. Working with Volunteers

- Understanding the role of volunteers and the ability to train them for participation in therapeutic riding sessions.

D. Leading Sessions

- Developing the ability to conduct sessions for individual clients with disabilities or for groups of clients with various needs.

Detailed Program Content (Theory & Practice)

Functional and Neurological Anatomy & Sensory-Motor Development — 38 Hours

- Functional anatomy of the human body.
 - Neurological anatomy — understanding the nervous system and its role in movement and function.
 - Sensory-motor system — development from primitive reflexes to advanced voluntary movements, and its relevance to disabilities.
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Normative Child Development — 18 Hours

- Human development from birth to age six.
 - Physical, motor, social, behavioral, and emotional development.
 - Understanding the child's needs in the therapeutic riding environment and beyond.
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Developmental and Cognitive Psychology — 28 Hours

- Introduction to psychology.
- Developmental psychology — focusing on key theories (e.g., Piaget, Vygotsky, Freud) and developmental milestones.
- Cognitive psychology — understanding mental processes like thinking, perception, memory, and learning.
- Relating psychological theories to real-life experiences in the riding arena.

3. Therapeutic Skills and Techniques — 18 Hours

This course includes the following content:

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- The role of the therapeutic riding instructor
- Communication skills with clients
- Gathering therapeutic information — reading professional reports
- Conducting intake interviews, building a therapeutic process, and setting goals
- Planning a therapeutic riding program
- Performing assessments and re-assessments
- Writing follow-up and summary reports
- Ending therapy and managing separation processes with clients
- Creating a therapeutic environment
- Instructional techniques for therapeutic riding
- The ethical code of therapeutic riding

4. Relevant Physical and Psychological Pathologies for Therapeutic Riding — 45 Hours

Covered Topics:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- ADD/ADHD
- Psychiatric disorders: Schizophrenia, PTSD, Clinical Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Eating Disorders, Anxiety, and Phobias
- Social, emotional, and behavioral disorders
- Nervous system and spinal disorders: Paralysis, Diplegia, Hemiplegia
- Cognitive disabilities: Intellectual Disabilities
- Brain injuries: TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), CVA (Stroke), CP (Cerebral Palsy)
- Epilepsy
- DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Degenerative diseases (including Muscular Dystrophy)
- Rett Syndrome
- Down Syndrome
- Tourette Syndrome

Each topic includes:

- A general lecture on the physical or psychological pathology
- A practical lecture on planning a therapeutic riding session adapted to that specific condition
- Methods for mounting and dismounting riders and working with equipment

Course Requirements:

- Access to study materials
- Reading required materials
- Submission of assignments

- Final written exam (2 academic hours)

Here is the next section translated into English:

5. Theory and Rules of Therapeutic Riding — 50 Hours

The content includes:

5.1. Introduction to Therapeutic Riding — 5 Hours

- Historical perspective of therapeutic riding and equine-assisted activities
- What is therapeutic riding? What are its various areas of specialization?
- National and international standards for therapeutic riding practice
- Rules and guidelines specific to Israel

5.2. Understanding Client Needs in Therapeutic Riding — 4 Hours

- What is it like to be a rider with a disability or challenge? Thoughts, feelings, dreams
- Experiencing the transition from able-bodied to disabled
- What is it like to ride a horse for the first time with a disability?
- Understanding the human-horse relationship

5.3. Goals of Therapeutic Riding — 2 Hours

- Safe therapeutic riding practices within a therapeutic riding center
- Exercises that support client needs
- Ethical practice of therapeutic riding

5.4. Elements of a Therapeutic Riding Session — 8 Hours

- Principles and practices of a structured therapeutic riding session
- Client intake, session planning, observation, and assessment
- Planning a basic session according to specific therapeutic goals
- Choosing appropriate equipment based on types of riding and specific disabilities
- Theory of mounting, dismounting, leading, and side-walking techniques
- Use of groundwork techniques with a therapy horse to support the rider's needs
- Understanding the benefits and contraindications of therapeutic riding

5.5. Managing a Therapeutic Riding Center — 4 Hours

- Designing a safe therapeutic riding center
- Understanding volunteer needs
- Training and preparing volunteers
- Legal requirements regarding volunteers.

5.6. Knowledge of Horse-Human Relationships — 6 Hours

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- How the rhythmic movement of the horse influences the rider's movement and functional skills
- Adapting the horse's movement style and complexity to the rider's needs

5.7. Horse Knowledge and Management — 7 Hours

- Choosing a suitable horse for therapeutic riding
- Training a horse for therapeutic riding
- Understanding horse psychology and sensitivity for therapeutic use
- Basic knowledge of horse anatomy, muscles, and movements
- Full understanding of horse care and management
- Identifying lameness and balance issues
- Recognizing basic medical requirements and minor injuries

5.8. Instructional and Therapeutic Skills — 6 Hours

- Acquiring therapeutic skills as a central part of becoming a therapeutic riding instructor
- Understanding the therapeutic relationship and communication strategies that encourage clients to express emotions and ideas
- Developing awareness of personal motivations for becoming an instructor
- Setting personal goals within the arena
- Building a therapeutic environment
- Observation and assessment skills
- How to teach learning techniques and design interventions

6. Understanding the Role of Therapeutic Riding in Education — 6 Hours

Therapeutic riding plays a unique role in education. It supports the inclusion of special needs students within mainstream classrooms by using teaching techniques that involve:

- The unique characteristics of the horse
- Classical riding skills
- Development of necessary functional and social skills in students with disabilities

The Horse as a Motivating Educator

The horse serves as an independent and motivating educational tool because of its non-verbal communication abilities, its capacity to develop meta-communication, body awareness, and physical skills.

Therapeutic riding provides a learning environment built within the student's meta-cognition and sense of control. This control can later be transferred into the classroom environment, facilitating the learning process.

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Benefits for Students

- Achieving self-regulation and self-management
- Transferring skills learned in the arena to other life contexts
- Enhancing learning skills and independent functioning

Course Methodology

Students in the therapeutic riding instructor program will engage in:

- Problem-Based Learning (PBL): A student-centered instructional strategy where students collaboratively solve problems and reflect deeply on their experiences
- Active Learning (AL): Teaching models that place responsibility for learning on the student

Course Content:

- Setting goals for the therapeutic rider (1 hour)
- Designing and adapting tasks for riders with learning, behavioral, and developmental difficulties (1 hour)
- Teaching various tasks that improve academic outcomes both in the arena and beyond; building transferable skills (1 hour)
- Teaching riding skills to therapeutic riders (1 hour)
- Teaching therapeutic client horse-care and management skills (1 hour)
- Teaching and managing behavioral strategies specifically designed for therapeutic riders (1 hour)

Course Requirements:

- Mastery of classroom materials
- Reading required texts
- Submitting assignments
- Final theoretical exam — 2 academic hours

Here is the next section translated into English:

7. Guided Practical Training — 180 Hours

The guided practical training provides students with experiential learning opportunities — a chance to observe, ask questions, and handle real-life situations in a therapeutic riding center.

This hands-on experience allows future instructors to understand:

- Their influence on both horse and rider
- How they are perceived by both
- How to practically apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in the program

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Goals of Practical Training:

- Bridging theory and practice
- Preparing students for a professional career in therapeutic riding
- Building intuitive and long-term skills essential for work in the field

Components of Guided Practical Training:

Training Component	Hours	Description
Supervised Practical Training	120	Observing and leading sessions with real clients under the supervision of a certified instructor. Includes both individual and group sessions. Students will submit session plans and written summaries for feedback.
Mounting and Dismounting Techniques	10	Learning and practicing safe methods for helping clients mount and dismount the horse.
Leading Horses and Side-Walking Techniques	5	Techniques for leading a horse and walking alongside the rider.
Working with Volunteers	5	Understanding volunteer roles and preparing them for therapeutic sessions.
Longeing Techniques with and without Riders	20	Teaching and practicing longeing techniques, both for horses alone and with riders.
English Riding Skills for Therapeutic Riding Instruction	10	Arena management, markers (A, K, E, H, C, M, B, F), basic riding skills instruction focusing on planning movements and sequential learning.
Horse Handling Skills from the Ground	10	Developing control over horses from the ground in various settings.

Safety Emphasis:

Safety is integrated into every aspect of practical training and will be a continuous focus throughout the hands-on learning period.

Course Requirements:

- Access to study materials
- Reading required texts
- Submission of assignments

Note: Only instructors who completed the June 2014 training course with Ms. Kitty Stalsberg are authorized to supervise this part of the program (Guided Practical Training).

8. The Impact of Horse Movement on the Therapeutic Rider — 10 Hours

Course Content:

- Analysis of human gait patterns
- Analysis of horse movement in its three gaits: walk, trot, and canter
- The influence of the horse's movement on the rider

This part of the course will combine theoretical lectures with practical demonstrations to help students understand:

- How the movement of the horse affects the posture, balance, and motor function of the therapeutic rider
- How to analyze both human and horse movement patterns
- How to use the horse's natural movement intentionally to support therapeutic goals

Here is the next section translated into English:

9. Supervised Internship— 70 Hours

The supervised internship is an official, evaluated, and assessed clinical experience, approved by the Therapeutic Riding Management Committee as part of the national curriculum.

Purpose:

- To support the trainee instructor in developing skills and improving their knowledge and abilities.
- To allow the trainees to demonstrate their practical suitability for certification.
- To provide access to and support from relevant professional mentors alongside academic supervision.

Responsibility of Academic Institutions:

Colleges and universities are responsible for ensuring that their staff supervising the students during the internship verify that the trainees meet the necessary professional standards for certification.

Each institution will support its trainees by sending qualified supervisors to therapeutic riding centers.

Internship Structure (70 Hours Total):

Component	Hours	Description
Observations and Assisting in Sessions	20	The student will start by observing therapeutic riding sessions and gradually assist the instructor.

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Component	Hours	Description
Supervised Instruction	50	After gaining experience, the student will begin leading parts of sessions and eventually entire sessions, under the supervision and discretion of the internship mentor.

10. First Aid — 28 Hours

Purpose:

To provide therapeutic riding instructors with basic knowledge and skills in first aid, as required by general regulations (Articles 1234 A, B, C) and the Israeli Sports Law (1997), Ministry of Education and Sports.

Course Content:

- First aid is the initial care provided for illness or injury.
- It can be administered by non-experts and serves as immediate assistance for minor injuries or as temporary aid for serious injuries until professional medical care arrives.
- First aid usually includes simple techniques that can, in some cases, save lives, and can be taught to individuals using minimal equipment.

Certification Requirement:

- First aid certification must be renewed every two years.
- The renewal includes a 6-hour refresher course focused on life-saving techniques.

11. Program Completion Requirements and Evaluation

To complete the Therapeutic Riding Instructor Training Program, students must fulfill the following requirements:

General Requirements:

- Full participation in all theoretical and practical lessons
- Completion of all required assignments
- Successful completion of all written and practical exams
- Participation in the guided practical training (180 hours)
- Completion of the supervised internship (Staj) (70 hours)
- Valid first aid certification (28 hours)

Evaluation Methods:

- Theoretical Exams: Covering anatomy, physiology, psychology, pathology, and therapeutic riding theory.

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- Practical Exams: Assessing riding skills, horse handling, session planning, therapeutic techniques, and safety procedures.
- Ongoing Assessment: Evaluation of student progress throughout the course based on participation, assignments, practical performance, and supervisor feedback.
- Final Assessment: Comprehensive written and practical evaluations at the end of the program.

Summary of the Therapeutic Riding Instructor Training Program

Theoretical Studies — Total: 235 Academic Hours

Subject	Hours	Content
Functional Anatomy	38	Movement system, Central and Peripheral Nervous System, Sensory-Motor System, Cardiovascular System, Final Exam
Normative Human Development	18	Ages 0-6: Physical, Motor, Social, Behavioral, and Emotional Development
Psychology	28	Introduction to Psychology, Developmental Psychology (including adolescence), Cognitive Psychology, Final Exam
Therapeutic Skills and Techniques	18	Therapist's role, Ethical code, Communication skills, Treatment planning, gathering therapeutic information, Intake process, Evaluation and follow-up, writing progress and summary reports, Ending therapy, Creating therapeutic environment, Instructional techniques
Physical and Psychological Pathologies	45	Autism Spectrum (ASD), ADD/ADHD, Psychiatric disorders (Schizophrenia, PTSD, Clinical Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Eating Disorders, Anxiety, Phobias), Social/Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, Nervous System and Spinal Injuries (Paralysis, Diplegia, Hemiplegia), Cognitive Impairments (Intellectual Disabilities), TBI, CVA, CP, Epilepsy, DCD, Multiple Sclerosis, Degenerative diseases (Muscular Dystrophy), Rett Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, Final Exam
Theory and Rules of Therapeutic Riding	50	Introduction, History, Benefits, Rules & Guidelines (TRCOM), Instructor's role, Suitable horse, Horse care & management, Designing therapeutic riding centers, Equipment, Volunteer management & training, Safety, Contraindications, Planning private and group sessions, Educational therapeutic riding
Impact of Horse Movement on Rider	10	Human gait analysis, Horse movement analysis, Impact on the rider, Practical demonstrations
First Aid	28	Certified first aid course in compliance with Israeli sports regulations

**Therapeutic Riding National Professional Committee
At Israel National Equestrian Federation
2008-2019**

Guided Practical Training — Total: 180 Hours

Activity	Hours
Supervised Practical Training	120
Mounting & Dismounting Techniques	10
Horse Leading & Side-Walking Techniques	5
Working with Volunteers	5
Longeing Techniques (with & without rider)	20
English Riding Skills for Therapeutic Instruction	10
Horse Handling from the Ground	10

Total Study Hours (Theory & Practical, excluding Internship): 415 Academic Hours.

Supervised Internship — Total: 70 Hours

Activity	Hours
Observation & Assisting in Sessions	20
Supervised Instruction	50