

Equine-Assisted Palliative Care Therapy

Renate hosted a HETI Live meeting on palliative care for horses, donkeys, and equines. She presented on the topic, explaining how equine-assisted therapy supports patients' quality of life in palliative care settings, including through contact therapy and various interactions with horses. The discussion covered important considerations for implementing equine therapy in hospice settings, including animal welfare, horse training for specific environments, and handler skills. The meeting included plans for participants to share their experiences and ideas for implementing equine-assisted therapy in palliative care.

International Equine Therapy Experiences

The meeting featured presentations from international participants sharing their experiences with equine-assisted therapies. Valeriia from Ukraine expressed gratitude for being connected to the center and shared her personal journey with horse therapy. Maria from Greece discussed using "contact" therapy as a non-verbal communication tool, while Xenia from the Czech Republic outlined the development of contact therapy services in her country, including new training programs and horse licensing initiatives. Sarah from the UK described their program's approach of building relationships with animals before introducing contact, and Simone from Switzerland shared a compelling story about a client who regained speech after three days of horse therapy. The conversation ended with Margaret from Newfoundland discussing the potential for incorporating contact therapy into Canadian therapeutic programs.

Equine Therapy Safety and Ethics

The group discussed challenges and best practices in equine therapy for patients, particularly focusing on safety and ethical considerations. Valeriia shared her experience from Ukraine regarding children recovering from cancer treatment and the challenges of managing horse visits for those with weak immune systems. Renate described her approach to accommodating patients in hospital settings through videos and phone calls when direct interactions aren't possible. The discussion highlighted the importance of considering both human and horse welfare, with participants noting the difficulty of creating universal safety guidelines due to varying situations and the need for experienced practitioners to assess horse behavior accurately.