

# **EAP & BOSENCE FARM EVALUATION**

Report and Service User Feedback on EAP (Equine Assisted Psychotherapy & Learning) provided by EQUUS Solutions for Bosence Farm Service Users.

## **Background**

Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) is an emerging intervention that utilises horses to help clients with personal growth and learning. In the addiction field it has had reported success with our service user group in the UK over some years. Apart from our service user group (Addictions) there are studies that also show its effectiveness with a wide range of presenting issues:

- Behavioural Issues
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Family and Relationship difficulties
- Communication problems
- Autism spectrum
- Service veterans / trauma issues

EAGALA is the most widely recognised professional body for those practising EAT. EAGALA provides a thorough training to skilled and qualified therapists and horse professionals who, along with the horse, comprise the therapeutic team. EQUUS SOLUTIONS are trained members of EAGALA.

Bosence Farm is in relative proximity to EQUUS SOLUTIONS, a local provider of EAT. We were able to have thorough discussions with and personal experience of the EQUUS teams' service provision before initiating EAT as an optional element to our service.

Programme Staff at Bosence Farm personally participated in EAT sessions before the decision was made to include it as an element within our programme. Prior to experiencing EAT for themselves staff views were varied from the outright sceptical to the very keen. Staff discussions following our personal sessions, led by the EQUUS team, resulted in a unanimous decision to include EAT sessions, delivered by EQUUS Solutions, as part of our optional programme.

## **Introduction**

This report covers the time period from the initial sessions commencing end of January 2010 to early January 2011.

Bosence staff accompanied all groups, observed sessions, and were present during feedback.

Bosence staff conducted post session groups with our service users reflecting on the EAP session and what each participant took away with them. This information was then available to incorporate in each service user's treatment plan and to enhance continuity.

## **Client Group**

The client group was mixed gender, adults 18 – 65 recovering from alcohol / drug addiction. All Service Users' were in residential treatment at Bosence Farm at the time of participating in the EAP programme. 20 individuals took part in the sessions 5 Females, 15 males overall.

In this report's timeframe we have completed 6 separate groups comprising 6 weekly sessions for each group.

EAP was offered as a voluntary option within the programme delivery. To date this option has had a 100% take up by the client group.

## **Method of Evaluation**

A 'Participants Feedback Form' was constructed to elicit both Qualitative and Quantitative data.

**The Quantitative scale** asked participants to rate their level of personal change experience from participation in EAP across a range of factors rating (0 = no change to 5 = high level of change):

- awareness of healthy, safe boundaries;
- awareness of safe team boundaries;
- increased self confidence;
- increase in self esteem;
- ability to face fears / challenges;
- ability to work as a team member;
- ability to work as an individual;
- sense of personal achievement / satisfaction;
- ability to communicate verbally;
- increase in understanding of non-verbal communication;
- increase in ability to be assertive;
- increased ability to accept and manage situations as they are;
- overall personal sense of growth in starting and completing tasks.

**The Qualitative data** asked for personal experiences of involvement in sessions:

- individual learning,
- experience of the EAP team,
- experience of process sessions,
- transferability of learning to general life situations,
- enjoyment,
- improvements to service delivery.

## **Results**

### **Mean Scores: Quantitative Results:**

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • awareness of healthy, safe boundaries;               | score – 4.20 |
| • awareness of safe team boundaries;                   | score – 4.05 |
| • increased self confidence;                           | score – 4.05 |
| • increase in self esteem;                             | score – 4.40 |
| • ability to face fears / challenges;                  | score – 4.45 |
| • ability to work as a team;                           | score – 4.00 |
| • ability to work as an individual;                    | score – 3.75 |
| • sense of personal achievement / satisfaction;        | score – 4.50 |
| • ability to communicate verbally;                     | score – 4.10 |
| • understanding of non-verbal communication;           | score – 4.45 |
| • increase in ability to be assertive;                 | score – 4.15 |
| • ability to accept and manage situations as they are; | score – 4.10 |
| • sense of growth in starting and completing tasks     | score – 4.45 |

## Qualitative

- **individual learning**

- *"To realise I **can** work as part of a team" " A better understanding of me"*
- *"made me look at my behaviour & old tools to reach goals"*
- *"Oh amazing self awareness – my attitudes & actions have SO much effect on my life & others"*
- *" aware of areas I need to work on : risks & the importance of asking for help"*
- *"better self awareness – body language, & can work well as team member"*
- *" I can take time to listen & ask more questions when unclear" " learned a lot about myself, my own frustration – a fantastic experience"*
- *"Greater understanding of my behaviours & how I am changing for the better, learning new life skills that benefit me now & for the future"*
- *" I can face my fears & verbalise my feelings in the moment"*
- *"that I need people" " An understanding I am not King of the World – obstacles will be a part of life"*
- *"My self esteem & confidence levels have been raised & I can be more open about feelings"*
- *"Trust – I can trust others, ask for help, & be in the here & now" " patience with people, trust & assertiveness"*
- *" A practical awareness of self will" " explore things from more angles"*

- **experience of the EAP team**

- *"clear" "all positive – patient, understanding, encouraging – gently pointed out alternatives – ways of seeing / acting"*
- *"completely different to anything I've ever done – especially how horses can help you" " friendly, patient, led to enjoyable learning experience"*
- *"patient, professional, understanding – a real pleasure to have worked with them"*
- *"brilliant I felt very comfortable with them from the start" " just enough direction – allowed me to reach my own conclusions"*

- *"good at enabling me to see the relevance to everyday life" "helped to explore risks to my recovery"*
- *"provided friendly gentle non-judgemental place to explore myself"*
- *"Lovely – always a warm enthusiastic welcome & a concise & relevant programme of tasks / activities" " calm, helpful, experienced people"*
- *" I felt understood by them" " encouraged me to acknowledge my achievements" "non-judgemental, warm, helped me push through my fears"*
- *"guided rather than directed, gently encouraged me to talk"*
- *"I thoroughly enjoyed every session, amazing, friendly, felt comfortable"*
- *"asked open questions – led me to be honest – the team was a pleasure to work with"*
- **experience of process sessions**
- *"beneficial, discovered lots of new things about myself" "real chance to voice my feelings & emotions as they came up for me"*
- *"allowed me to reflect on my session, gain insight, learn" " learned a lot about me"*
- *"open & relaxed, useful to me" " helped me clarify my experience & reflect" "informal & relaxed allowed me to be myself"*
- *" gave me plenty to think about - always came away with something to think about – these sessions dovetailed where I am within my step programme"*
- *"excellent – really right for me – horses really important in all the sessions"*
- *"last session was really important to me – valuable – took me 5 / 6 days to get to bottom of it – lots of emotions false pride, anger, frustration, all made an appearance wasn't nice – was a huge lesson for me & one that I really value ( around taking risks with personal recovery)"*
- *"my real process came later – afterwards found solving problems was getting easier & happening quicker for me"*
- *"helped me become more aware of myself, my world, & other people"*

- **transferability of learning to general life situations**

- *" communication was big for me"*
- *" the realization that I need to act & take action to resolve issues"*
- *"I can transfer all of what I've learned to some extent.... Patience, tolerance, being honest, & boundaries"*
- *" ability now to see a bigger picture – not go along with the crowd, question – changed my thinking"*
- *" I've learned to take time to respond, that things aren't always as they seem, can look at life from more angles today – I related sessions to many parts of my life"*
- *"Yes" " some personal uncomfortable moments, some pleasant surprises seeing my assets & my abilities"*
- *"Yes Yes Yes!!!!"*
- *" I can transfer everything to my life – boundaries, assertiveness skills, overcoming fear, working as a team, and on my own, being the leader, not being the leader, and lots more"*

- **enjoyment**

- *" I adored it"*
- *" Yes, enjoyed the sessions immensely, would definitely go again"*
- *" It was great experience – learn from working with horses into general life"*
- *" It was fulfilling, challenging, fun, interesting, a safe place to make mistakes and learn"*
- *" I did 90% of the time – I felt uncomfortable sometimes"*
- *Completely enjoyed it - different way of being, could feel myself coming alive over the six weeks, built on every session. I went with no expectations & probably a little cynical but learnt So much & how to enjoy myself"*
- *" I love EAP. Absolutely brilliant, learnt so much – look at my recovery from all angles – Like to describe EAP as I do my recovery – sometimes hard-work, sometimes frustrating, sometimes scary but with trust, communication, the tools I am picking up daily – it is rewarding, fun, & well worth living!"*
- *"A truly wonderful experience, interact with horses and staff alike, gaining much more knowledge and understanding through a format – probably the most unique & pleasurable thing I've done in my life today."*
- *Yes – very much...A spiritual experience the feeling I had when we left.... (the sessions) and it is invaluable"*
- *Yes – if you get the chance – do it!"*
- *" I loved doing EAP – it was an eye opener – need to get involved – don't have to be right all the time – knowing this feels good – I can just be myself"*

- **improvements to service delivery**

- *" More sessions please – it was great – thank you very much – love to the horses"*
- *" none that I can think of"*
- *No – I wouldn't know how to improve something I really enjoyed"*
- *"Maybe a deeper intro would have helped me see the significance earlier on"*

- *"To move around more when its cold – more active tasks maybe when the weathers cold"*
- *"No – thank you for the opportunity"*
- *"No – the whole thing was great"*
- *"Can't think of any"*
- *"No"*
- *"Yes – a minimum of 12 sessions would be good"*
- *"Longer sessions – a really joy full experience"*
- *"Only that I need more lines on this form – I could write an essay on How excellent the experience was – thanks to all the staff, & all the horses (especially Floosie)"*
- *"Just More Please. I would like a longer process at the end of the 6 weeks"*
- *" \* MORE SESSIONS PLEASE\*\* I wouldn't change a thing"*
- *"More sessions & longer Bosence process sessions – I find it easy to forget what I learn & want to discuss it more"*
- *" Want to repeat it in my last 2 weeks at Bosence & compare"*
- *"How about 8 weeks, not six"*

## **Conclusion**

EAP, as provided by the EQUUS team, has certainly proved a very positive learning experience for our clients and has been greatly enjoyed.

The quantitative data indicate positive levels of change across all parameters for the clients involved. The qualitative data brings alive the levels of change for clients in their own words.

The staff team have commented that the inclusion of EAP has been beneficial in identifying and engaging clients in their individual areas of work at an earlier stage. EAP has also helped our service users to gain personal insight and create on-going action plans with staff - addressing attitudes, behaviours, interactions, and positive self regard. The staff team are committed to continuing our joint programme as an optional choice.

We look forward to continuing our current evaluations with groups in the future. We also hope to develop a staff measure to further our knowledge, gain further insight into EAP and its impact on the recovery process and indicators for treatment.

Cara Beeson, Manager  
Bosence