

**HIPPOTHERAPY AS A THERAPY TREATMENT STRATEGY OR  
ADAPTIVE (THERAPEUTIC) RIDING  
WHICH IS THE APPROPRIATE CHOICE?**

| <b>HIPPOTHERAPY AS A THERAPY<br/>TREATMENT STRATEGY</b>   | <b>ADAPTIVE (THERAPEUTIC) RIDING<br/>OR DRIVING</b>   |
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| Physical, occupational or speech therapy that utilizes the movement of a horse as part of the plan of treatment. The movement of the horse is a therapy tool.   | Adapted recreational horseback riding lessons or carriage driving lessons.  |
| The hippotherapy treatment strategy is not a riding lesson. It is physical, occupational or speech therapy prescribed by a physician and implemented by a team that includes a licensed, credentialed therapist.  | Adaptive riding lessons are recreational horseback riding lessons adapted to individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities or injuries.                         |
| Therapy utilizing equine movement is implemented by a licensed therapist in conjunction with a competent horse handler, trained side walkers (who keep the patient safely on the horse) and a specially selected and trained horse.   | Adaptive riding is taught by a certified therapeutic horseback riding instructor in conjunction with a competent horse handler and one or two side walker volunteers. |
| In therapy sessions incorporating equine movement, there is direct, hands-on participation by the therapy team at all times.  | During adaptive riding lessons, side walkers have hands-on contact with riders as needed.   |
| The horse's movement is essential to assist in meeting therapy goals. Therapy horses are screened and trained to make sure they have the appropriate temperament for the work.  | Horses used for adaptive riding instruction have been screened and trained to make sure they have the appropriate temperament for this kind of work.                  |
| The goal of therapy that incorporates equine movement is to improve neurological functioning in cognition, body movement, organization and attention levels to improve function off the horse.  | In adaptive riding, emphasis is placed on proper riding position and reining skills rather than on functional therapeutic goals.                                      |
| Therapy utilizing equine movement is a one-on-one treatment and generally occurs until the client meets discharge criteria.   | In therapeutic riding, individuals are given riding lessons in either a one-on-one or group format.   |
| During therapy sessions, the treating therapist continually assesses and modifies therapy based on the patient's responses to the horse's movement.   | During adaptive riding sessions, the certified instructor continually assesses and modifies instruction based on the patient's responses.                             |
| The therapy plan of care is individualized to patients and progress is periodically reassessed to determine need for ongoing services   | Most adaptive riding students can graduate to more-traditional riding and schooling programs with riding becoming a lifelong recreational activity                    |
| In some cases, physical, occupational or speech therapy in which equine movement is utilized is reimbursable by medical insurance (third party). (Note: Patients pay NCEFT directly for services; NCEFT does not bill insurance but provides patients with a superbill that they can submit to insurance providers themselves.) | Because adaptive riding is an adaptive/recreational sports activity and is not therapy, it is not covered by insurance.   |