



# PTSD and EAP

**Competences** and **Limits** of Horse Assisted  
Work with Mental Disorders –  
Viewpoint of an Equine Assisted  
Psychotherapist

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MASTERING THE ART OF LEADERSHIP

# What is PTSD?

- What is trauma?
- **PTSD**: postponed late answer for a specifically threatening situation / disaster, without considering its duration
- **SYMPTOMS** - from DSM-V:
  - **Intrusion symptoms**: nightmares, dissociative reactions, recurrent involuntary and intrusive memories, intense- or prolonged distress, marked psychologic reactivity
  - **Avoidance**: from feelings, thoughts, reminders (places, peoples, objects)
  - **Negative alternations in cognitions and mood**: dissociative amnesia, persistent negative beliefs and expectations, blames, negative emotions, etc.
  - **Alternations in arousal and reactivity**: irritable or aggressive behavior, self destruction (suicide), exaggerated startle response, concentration- and sleep problems

# What happens inside?

- **FEELINGS** - after severe psychological trauma eight typical topics arise /Horowitz; 1976/
  1. **Sorrow, mourning**
  2. **Survivor's guilt** because of their destructive impulses of anger
  3. Survivors **fear** of becoming destructive
  4. Guilt because of staying alive
  5. Fear of identification with the victims
  6. Fear of trauma recurrence
  7. **Shame** of unableness and emptiness
  8. **Anger** for the artificer of the trauma
  
- **REASONS**: loss of beloved person, violence (abuse), war cases

**70% of people experiences trauma**  
→ 10-15% turns into PTSD

PTSD is a **hard, complicated mental disorder**, because of the **complex symptoms**, and the **difficult psychodynamical processes** which are in the background.

It is one of those disorders which could **immediately badly fail** till the psychosis state.



**HIGH - RISK**

**working with mental disorders (inc. PTSD) without any appropriate professional licenses**

# Appropriate Therapy for PTSD

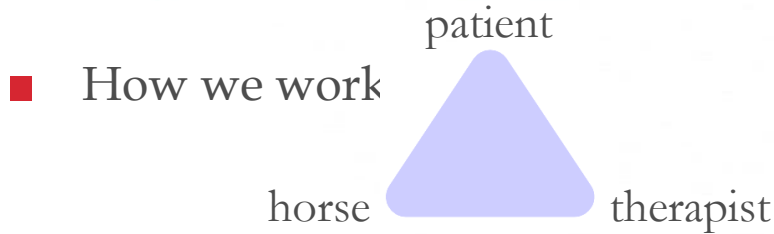
- Psychoanalytical therapies,
- Cognitive-Behavior therapies,
- Screen therapy,
- EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing)

...**EAP** (Equine Assisted Psychotherapy)  $\neq$  HAE, HAT, HAC



most of the cases need a medical support too

# What is EAP?



- Mental experiences when people meet a horses
  - immediate feedbacks
  - harmony & relaxation    broadening limits
  - reactions from moment to moment
  - responsibility



OR



**NOTE!** meeting and working with a horse recalls archetypical fears, people getting archaically involved, goes easily deeper than a could be controlled by an unintegrated personality »

# Conclusion – Competences & Limits

**!**MENTAL DISORDERS (as PTSD) REQUIRE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIC  
BACKGROUNDED, CUSTOMIZED PSYCHOTHERAPY!

- **What to do** if you recognize/assume mental disorder on a client?
  - **Ask for professional supportive help...**  
(clinical/psychiatric background, clinical supervision)
    - Pay attention for all the essential CRITERIA:
      - » Experienced with traumatized people
      - » Expert in specialized factors of PTSD

...and a **HORSE** :)





Thank you for your attention!



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