

OPEN MY WORLD THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER



Where we partner
humans with horses;
improving their physical
and mental health,
developing their basic life
skills, and opening them
up to the world
around them.

Open My World Therapeutic Riding Center (OMW) is a 501(c)(3) organization, established in 2008 by Donna Roland, a Special Education teacher and lifelong lover of horses. We rely solely on private donations, grants and client session fees. All instructors at OMW are certified or in the process of becoming certified by PATH International, the Professional Association of Therapeutic Riding. Volunteer Horse Handlers and Side Walkers are specially trained to help provide our participants with the safest and most beneficial experience possible.

Since we opened the gates, OMW, we has served over 500 participants and conducted over 30,000 personalized sessions.

OMW's instructors work with each participant to establish specific goals and set them up for success! From our incredible Sensory Trail to the round pen to the enclosed arena and outside trails, OMW pride ourselves in offering a diverse setting to accommodate a range of participants' needs. We have seen those that couldn't speak, speak; those that couldn't walk, walk; and those that couldn't accomplish the impossible, achieve the impossible. We look forward to helping you open YOUR world!



What is Equine Therapy?

Open My World Therapeutic Riding Center provides personalized Equine Assisted Activities and Adaptive Horseback Riding services to children and adults with physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities and mental health challenges. Horses have a natural gait that closely mimics human walking, making them a perfect choice for individuals with physical disabilities or limitations. Consistent sessions can help to improve balance, strengthen muscles, and improve coordination.

Equine Assisted Activities and Learning have also been shown to improve mental health and emotional well-being. Horses have a calming effect on people, which can help reduce anxiety, stress, and depression. The act of caring for a horse also teaches responsibility and can help build confidence and self-esteem. Participants with PTSD or addiction, for example, can benefit from equine therapy by learning coping skills and developing a sense of trust and connection with their therapy horse.

Horses provide a non-judgmental and despite their size, a non-threatening environment. This can benefit children and adults with mental illness, behavioral issues and learning disabilities by improving communication, relieving anxiety, increasing focus and so much more in an alternative environment.

Our sessions at Open My World are tailored to the individual after a thorough evaluation and consultation to discuss what goals and expectations. Our specially trained and certified therapeutic riding instructors guide participants through a variety of mounted and un-mounted activities, obstacles, and general horsemanship. We encourage participants to be as involved in our program, off the horse, as they would like. We have several riders who have become some of our best volunteers, which has opened up new opportunities in their lives outside of the barn that they may not have pursued in the past.

Benefits of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies may include:

- Improving muscle tone and coordination
- Improving gross and fine motor skills
- Experiencing the 3-dimensional walking movements of the horse, which is similar to a person's normal walking gait, and cannot be duplicated in a clinical setting.
- Enhancing balance and posture
- Stimulating the cardiovascular system and promoting wellness
- Building self-esteem and confidence
- Developing a meaningful relationship with the volunteers and the horse
- Channeling aggressive or hyperactive behavior and developing sequencing abilities
- Improving memory and organizational skills
- Improving ability to perform activities of daily living
- Improving communication skills
- Improving problem solving skills

WWW.OPENMYWORLD.ORG

651 N. US HIGHWAY 183 SUITE 335, BOX 12 LEANDER, TX 78641



How to Get Started

Step
1

Complete the Application and Schedule a Tour: Come out and consult with an instructor to take a tour of our facility, meet the horses, and discuss goals and expectations that you may have for your sessions.

Step
2

Schedule an Evaluation: The evaluation will help us to establish a baseline as well as determine what the participant's needs are. Evaluations generally run 30-45 minutes, including the introduction, grooming, and tacking up (saddling) process. There is no fee for this service.

***Please note that Medical History and completed Physician's release forms MUST be submitted prior to evaluation.**

Step
3

Schedule Upcoming Sessions: At the conclusion of the evaluation, the instructor will review their observations and establish a lesson plan for upcoming sessions. You will choose an available day/time for your weekly sessions and submit any previously pending application paperwork, such as physician's and therapist releases.

After your evaluation, your participant will be scheduled for their private, one hour session, which is typically held once weekly on the same day. Sometimes, participants require a shorter session and for those we offer limited 30-minute sessions. For siblings and family/close friends, we also offer Semi-Private sessions for two participants to share the one-hour session.

These sessions can include mounted and un-mounted activities (ground lessons).

Ground lessons are an integral part of horsemanship and will be included in the curriculum, unless otherwise discussed. Ground lessons may include things like horse care, bathing, feeding, arena/trail games, horse related activities, and more!

Participant Guidelines

This page contains important information about the Policies and Procedures of OMW. Please have it handy to refer to when needed.

To provide the best benefit and the safest environment to our participants, OMW has established some guidelines for acceptance into our programs:

- It is recommended that participants be at least 3 years of age.
- To protect our participants, volunteers and horses, weight guidelines have been established. Please refer to the Riding Guidelines page in this packet.
- A participant may be denied services or be dismissed from services if they have one or more of the precautions and contraindications provided by PATH International. If the individual has one or more of these conditions, Adaptive Riding and/ or Equine Assisted Services and Learning programs may not be recommended. Please review the attached list of precautions and contraindications at

<https://www.pathintl.org/60-resources/efpl/203-precautions-and-contraindications>

<http://www.mgharena.com/Precautions-and-Contraindications.pdf>.

Please note that the ***"Client Medical History and Physician's Statement" form MUST be completed and signed by your physician prior to your evaluation.***

Session Guidelines

Apparel Requirements for All Participants:

- Helmets must always be worn by the participant, once the session has begun. This includes grooming/tacking and ground lessons. If you choose to use your own helmet, it must be **an ASTM/SEI approved helmet and cannot exceed more than 5 years past the manufacturer's date**. Let us know if you have any questions.
- Long pants/jeans; should be comfortable and not too tight.
- Closed toe shoes or boots -NO CROCS OR SANDALS, you will be sent home.
- Please pre-apply sunscreen and/or insect sprays prior to your session.

Weight Guidelines: When asking our equine partners to participate in mounted activities and riding, we also must consider their physical comfort and welfare. To provide for their physical safety and comfort, our current maximum weight allowed for riders is 185 lbs. This aligns with the safe carrying

guidelines recommended by and according to research done by the University of Ohio*. While we realize that this may, unfortunately, exclude some prospective participants, we hope that you understand that our commitment to our horses' welfare is imperative so that they may want to continue providing these beneficial services, for years to come.

For those who may fall outside of the guidelines, feel free to contact us to discuss if un-mounted sessions might be a good fit.

*In a 2008 Ohio University study, researchers evaluated the impact of rider and tack weight. They monitored horses for heart rate, breathing rate, rectal temperature and loin muscle condition when carrying loads of 15, 20, 25 and 35 percent of their bodyweight.

The researchers found that an average adult light riding horse could comfortably carry about 20 percent of their ideal bodyweight.

Siblings & Guests: ALL GUESTS ENTERING THE PROPERTY AND LEAVING THEIR CARS MUST COMPLETE A LIABILITY WAIVER

Liability waivers are available in the front office, barn area and Sensory Trail entrance. A copy is attached to this packet for your convenience. Please complete one for each guest on their first visit and give it to your instructor. We welcome siblings, friends, and families to observe sessions (excluding the evaluation). These are wonderful opportunities for participants to share their progress with loved ones, though it is best to consult with their instructor prior to any groups larger than four. We kindly ask that all spectators remain in the numerous shaded, sunny, or covered viewing areas that we have throughout the property while the instructor is teaching. Unless your instructor requests your assistance, please remain outside of the enclosed arena and riding spaces until prompted. This is to minimize distractions and keep the participant's focus on their instructor and horse.

Once again, children MUST be always under the supervision of an adult.

Conduct: It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted safety rules and abides by all posted off-limit areas. OMW is a no smoking facility and the use of illegal drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden. No mistreatment, threats, harassment, abuse, or suggested abuse of any person or animal will be tolerated. For the safety and respect of others, NO weapons of any kind are permitted on the premises.

We reserve the right to ask anyone to leave the property at any time.

Attendance and Cancellations

Our attendance and cancellation policies are in effect to support the success of our participants; valuing the time and specialized training of our instructors and volunteers while upholding the integrity of our program. By signing the application, you agree to the following conditions:

Enrollment:

Please complete and submit the new client paperwork at your earliest convenience. Physician and Therapist (if applicable) releases must be signed and submitted prior to your initial evaluation. Our services are billed once a month with no contract terms. This is a month-to-month agreement. And fees are nonrefundable. A minimum of 30 days PAID notice is required if a client wishes to withdraw from sessions. If your assigned instructor becomes unavailable for an extended period, we will attempt to schedule your remaining sessions with an alternate instructor. If one is not immediately available, all remaining session fees will be refunded, and the client will be placed at the top of the waiting list.

Calendar:

OMW follows the Leander Independent School District's calendar. In addition, we typically take one week off at the end of the school year and again in the fall. This gives our horses a much-needed break and allows us some to reset and recharge! Your instructor will keep you informed of these dates when you enroll.

Punctuality and Late Arrival:

Please arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the start time of your scheduled session and wait for your instructor or assigned volunteer to greet you in the barn area.

If you're running more than 5 minutes late, please contact your instructor directly so that they know you are still coming. If you are 15+ minutes late, your instructor reserves the right to un-tack your horse and use the remaining time, if there is any, to teach a ground lesson. If you choose not to attend this adjusted session, it will be forfeited.

If you are 15+ minutes late and have NOT notified your instructor, they reserve the right to cancel and forfeit the session. There are no refunds for missed sessions.

When OMW Cancels:

If a sudden illness, turn in weather or emergency arises on our end requiring OMW to cancel your session, we will contact you as soon as possible to reschedule. If, for any reason, you are not able to reschedule the missed session, we will roll it in to the following month and adjust that month's invoice accordingly. There are no refunds for missed sessions.

Cancellations and Make Up Sessions:

When you enroll, you/your participant will be scheduled for a predetermined and agreed upon day and time, every week. Each personalized session requires 1-3 trained volunteers, one horse and your instructor, who is an independent contractor and is only paid for completed sessions. We are very understanding that life happens sometimes, so whether it be illness or another reason, if you are unable to make your scheduled session, please do your best to notify us as soon as possible by contacting your instructor directly. If an emergency arises at the last minute and you know that you cannot make it, please contact your instructor directly.

However, please understand that our instructors are currently at capacity so there are no guarantees of availability on the schedule for makeups and there are no refunds to self-paid participants for missed sessions. Missed sessions do not "roll over" into the following month. Please keep this in mind when considering cancellation.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the policies of the Case Management Agencies (DSSW, BCBSTX etc...), if your services are paid for by an agency, your makeup session cannot be in the same week as the following scheduled session. You are only approved for one session per week, without exception. If the makeup session cannot be rescheduled during the same week that your session was cancelled, that session will be forfeited.

Medical Leave:

Medical leave may be applied to participants who are absent due to a hospital stay or a significant medical issue. The instructor will determine, on a case-by-case basis, if the absences are considered "Medical Leave". Common illness and doctor's appointments are not considered Medical Leave. There will be no fees associated with keeping that time slot reserved for you for up to 60 days. We just ask that, whenever possible, to allow us as much advance notice as possible and to stay in communication with your instructor throughout the process.

Leave of Absences and Vacations:

If the participant will be on vacation or must discontinue sessions temporarily, please notify your instructor at least 30 days prior to the planned event, whenever possible. There will be no hold or cancellation fees, however, we can only guarantee your time slot, when you return, if the time is **held with 60% of the tuition paid, every month, until you return.**

Weather:

For the safety of the horses and humans, OMW has a weather policy with the guidelines that we follow during times of extreme heat, cold, wind and rain. OMW reserves the right to cancel or reschedule sessions, as available/needed, if weather falls outside of our approved guidelines. These guidelines will be posted in the barn area and made available to you at the time of enrollment.

"No-Shows":

OMW has a zero-tolerance policy for so called "No Call, No Shows", with limited exceptions.

Failing to contact your instructor about a cancellation (no call) prior to your scheduled day/time (no show) results in that session being forfeited. While we are understanding of the occasional memory lapse about an appointment, unfortunately this has become an issue. For that reason, we have instated a new written policy, agreeing to the following: **After TWO (2) No Shows, you will forfeit all remaining sessions and lose your reserved spot on the schedule. This applies to ALL participants, including those receiving services through Medicaid and those gifted with a scholarship. DSSW, BCBSTX, Four K and the other agencies require complete documentation of all missed sessions and have their own attendance requirements, potentially affecting the participant's ability to receive approval for our services.**

Payment Processes

- 1) Private /Self Pay – Credit Card, Check, Zeffy, Venmo, PayPal
- 2) Medicaid Case Management Agencies – We accept some Medicaid plans with prior referral and approval by your Case Management Agency (Disability Services of the Southwest (DSSW), Four K/Blue Star, BCBSTX /MTM and more).

PLEASE NOTE that we **MUST** receive a **DIRECT** referral from an agency to schedule your evaluation unless you agree to self-pay while awaiting approval. Once the evaluation is completed, OMW submits it to your agency, where they determine eligibility for services. There can sometimes be a delay of 1-4 weeks, while waiting for that approval. We encourage you to continue with services during this time, as a self-paid client (\$85/session), but if that is not an option your instructor will keep that appointment time open and available to you for up to 4 weeks.

IMPORTANT: Please confirm your intended method of payment to your instructor prior to the evaluation. If there is no confirmation, you will be billed as a self-paid client with payment due within 10 days of receipt.

- 3) Private insurance - We do not accept private insurance at this time.
- 4) Scholarships – We do not currently have any active scholarship funds available. When funds are available, we gift scholarships on a case-by-case basis, in order of application. To request a scholarship application, please contact jocelyn@openmyworld.org. Please consider donating to gift another deserving participant access to these life changing therapies. <https://www.zeffy.com/donation-form/59787533-bc6f-4b4d-b97f-191bba152721>

Initial Evaluation: All new participants will complete a 30–45-minute scheduled evaluation with their assigned instructor prior to beginning their lesson plan. This important session will serve as a baseline in tracking participant progress, setting realistic goals and creating lesson plans. There is no fee for this session for self-paid participants.

Monthly Tuition: Private paid (self-pay) tuition fees are based on an annual concept. Some months may have 5 weeks, others may have 3 available weeks due to holidays, so it all balances. Tuition is billed on or around the first of the month, for that month's tuition, due within 10 days of receipt. Unused sessions due to vacation or holiday are eligible to be rescheduled as a makeup, at your instructor's discretion and availability. There are no refunds for canceled or unused sessions, and they do not "roll-over" into the following month. For our participants with an authorized referral by DSSW, BCBSTX or Four K/Blue Star, your sessions will be billed directly to your case management agency. Please confirm your approval with them prior to the evaluation.

Full Hour Private Session--	\$85 per session	\$340.00
30 Minutes (on approval) Private Session--	\$55 per session	\$220.00
Semi-Private (two related participants), one hour session--	\$130	\$520.00
Horse Powered Reading Full Hour Private Session—coming soon...		\$TBD

Payments: As a small nonprofit organization, we rely entirely on session fees, private donations, and grants, when available, to feed our horses, pay our instructors and all the costs associated with maintaining this leased 9-acre property every month. While our goal is to own our property and be able to offer our services to all who need them, free of charge, we aren't there yet. Therefore, you agree to the following payment policy:

- Invoices for sessions are billed for that entire month in advance (4 one-hour sessions) and due, in full, within 10 days after receipt. Invoices will be emailed on or around the 1st of the month. If you prefer to receive your invoices via US Mail, please inform your instructor prior to your initial evaluation.
- If an invoice becomes over 30 days past due, your sessions may be paused until the account is made current. After 60 days past due, your scheduled session day/time may be offered to someone on the waiting list.
- Transactions that are declined due to insufficient funds, credit card errors, or closed accounts will incur a \$25 fee.
- A client who is withdrawn from the program for financial reasons will be placed on the waiting list above clients who have not yet joined the program. The previous balance must be paid in full prior to returning.

Final Steps

You're ready to:

1. Complete the Client Application, waivers, and Medical History. This can be hand delivered or email to info@openmyworld.org
2. Therapist and/or Physician's Statement: Please have your/the participant's physician and therapist, if applicable, complete and sign the forms. This must be completed prior to the evaluation.
3. Schedule a tour! Come out and meet the horses, tour the property, and discuss your goals and expectations with one of our instructors.
4. Depending on availability, your instructor will schedule the initial evaluation and following sessions, up to 12 weeks at a time. If we have a waiting list, you will not be scheduled until an opening arises. These can occur at any time, depending on the circumstances. We will do our best to keep you updated.
5. If you are with DSSW, BCBSTX, Four K/Blue Star or any other Case Management Agency, please confirm that you have an ACCEPTED referral to Open My World Therapeutic Riding Center.



**OPEN MY WORLD THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER
LIABILITY WAIVER**

I (print name) _____ am choosing to participate/am the guardian of _____ who I give permission to participate in the Open My World Therapeutic Riding Center(OMW) program AND/ OR am present on the property as a potential client, visitor, spectator, event guest, service professional or other unspecified reason. I acknowledge the risks and potential risks of Equine Assisted Services and Activities, including but not limited to physical injuries caused by direct contact from the equines, the uneven or rough terrain in and around their environment on property and the act of horseback riding. I hereby, intending to be legally bound, for myself, my heirs, and assigns, executors or administrators, waive and release forever all claims for damages against Open My World Therapeutic Riding Center, its Board of Directors, Executive Director, Instructors, Therapists, Aides, Horse Owners, Volunteers and /or Employees for any and all injuries and/or losses I/my son/daughter/ward may sustain while participating in OMW programs and/or while on the property.

WARNING-Under Texas law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities. (Complete copy of Texas Law Chapter 87 available upon request)

Signature: _____

Date _____

Printed Name: _____

Email: _____

Photo Release

I, hereby (circle one) **Consent** -or- **Do NOT Consent** to the use and reproduction by OMW of all still photographs, video and any other audio/visual materials taken of me/my son/daughter/ward for social media, promotional printed material, educational or for other unspecified purposes.

Print name: _____

Signature: _____

In the Event of an Emergency, Contact:

Name: _____ Relation: _____ Phone: _____

***PLEASE SIGN AND SUBMIT THIS FORM WITH YOUR NEW CLIENT APPLICATION. KEEP THE INFORMATION PACKET FOR REFERENCE.**

