

ADAPTIVE RIDING ROLES

Instructors are in charge of the lessons.

Leaders are responsible for the horse. They assist the student to prepare the horse before the lesson, lead the horse in the lesson and put the horse away.

Sidewalkers are responsible for the participant before, during and after the lesson under the supervision of the Instructor. They may also help with preparing the horse and putting it away.

Leaders:

- Follow the Hope Haven method of handling the horses. Consistency is very important as it directly translates to happy horses.
- Responsible for the horse at all times but must be aware of the participant and sidewalkers.
- Halt the horse and advise the instructor if the sidewalker or participant indicates there is a problem.
- Hold the lead rope with 2 hands - one hand on the rope 6"-12" from the halter and the extra folded in the other hand. Ensure you follow the "Fold and Hold" method .
- To allow the horse freedom of movement through his head and neck, make sure not to hold the lead rope too tightly.
- Walk behind the ear and in front of the shoulder to ensure you can see any behavioral issues when and if they arise to allow for timely correction.
- Ensure the horse's head is always facing forward in order for the horse's body to be straight which will therefore translate to the participant. This should be consistent during continuous movements in walk or trot, bends as well as transitions.
- Make sure the lead rope is always gathered safely in your hands. Ensure reins are tied up when not being used or looped through the pommel strap, but within the participant's reach.
- Ensure that the sidewalkers have plenty of room between the horse and the wall or other obstacles.
- For safety reasons do not assist the participant while holding a horse, wait for help.
- Avoid unexpected sharp turns. If a quick change must happen, let sidewalkers and participant know what you are doing.
- Talk to participant and sidewalkers only when necessary. The participant needs to be able to focus on the instructor's voice.
- Allow the participant to do as much as possible for themselves (steering, transitions, etc.). Help only when necessary, they will have a feeling of accomplishment if they do it by themselves.
- Maintain 1-2 horse lengths between horses at all times. Cut corners only when you need to catch up and have been asked to do so.
- Use one short pressure forwards on the lead rope and say "Walk On" to encourage the horse to move forward. Let the horse take the first step before you walk forward.

- Keep the horse moving forward in an active walk - this maximizes the therapeutic benefits for the rider, helps keep the horse straight and makes it easier for the rider to balance.
- Use ½ halts and say “whoooooa” to halt horse, say “Easy” to slow it down.
- Lead horse from the inside (on the left when on the left rein, or the right when on the right rein) to ensure you can hear the instructor at all times unless instructed otherwise.
- Walk figures and movements accurately. Circles should be round, straight lines straight so the participants can experience it correctly and learn to ride it correctly.
- Use arena letters. Example, for a change of rein from B to E - leave the track at B and walk straight to E, turning the opposite direction at E.
- Wait for directions from the Instructor before entering the mounting area.
- Keep the horse as still as possible during mounting; stand in front, on a 45 degree angle to the horse’s right, facing the horse to make sure the horse's weight is evenly distributed on all 4 feet (i.e. he is standing “square”). Pay attention to the Instructor as well as to what is going on around you at all times!
- If you need to tie your shoe, blow your nose, go to the washroom, etc. have someone else hold the horse.
- Before trotting ensure that sidewalkers and participant are prepared; maintain a steady rhythm at the trot.
- When entering or exiting the arena or barn yell “Door” to let others know you are coming.
- If a participant falls off, stay with the horse and follow the Instructor’s directions.
- Watch for signs of irritation or distraction in the horse: ears flat back or pricked forward looking at something, swishing tail, biting, kicking, stomping, etc. and notify the Instructor; make sure the horse’s attention is on you.

Sidewalkers

- Ensure the safety of the participant.
- Accompany participant into the arena, advise the Instructor if the participant’s helmet is not secure.
- Assist Instructor with mounting, dismounting, stirrup adjustments, etc. as needed.
- Once mounted, walk beside the participant in line with their hip.
- May use any of a number of holds to support the participant as instructed by the Instructor.
- When using a hold, keep your thumb lined up with fingers to prevent injuring your thumb or inadvertently squeezing the participant.
- When supporting a participant be sure not to touch or lean on the horse.
- Ask the leader to halt the horse if there is a problem.
- Let the participant answer questions - they are here to learn!
- Give the participant enough time to process the Instructor’s directions before repeating them - at least 10 seconds.
- Stay with the participant while mounted at all times.

- Change sides safely: One sidewalker at a time changes sides so the participant is never left unattended. If there is only one sidewalker, ask Instructor to stay with the participant while changing sides in front of the horse.
- Use hand over hand to help with the participant when directed to do so by the Instructor. Always ask if you can touch them and tell them what you are doing.
- Stay with the participant after dismounting and accompany them safely to their parent/caregiver.
- Inform the Instructor about unacceptable participant behaviour: e.g. spitting, hair pulling, swearing and kicking, so that it can be dealt with.
- Let Instructor know if you have concerns or suggestions about the participant you are working with, new insights are welcome.