



Making Strides, Changing Lives

Volunteer Training Manual

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Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE PALS PROGRAM. PALS CLIENTS NEED VARYING DEGREES OF ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE, WITH SOME REQUIRING THE ASSISTANCE OF AS MANY AS THREE VOLUNTEERS, ONE LEADER, AND TWO SIDEWALKERS, FOR THEIR SESSIONS. PALS COULD NOT OPERATE WITHOUT ITS MANY VOLUNTEERS WHO ASSUME A VARIETY OF ROLES IN THE PROGRAM.

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HISTORY OF THERAPEUTIC EQUINE ACTIVITIES

The use of horses for exercise and therapeutic purposes has been documented back to early Greek mythology and the times of Hippocrates to promote optimal health and treat specific medical ailments. While the true point of origin is unknown, contemporary knowledge links the most recent growth of therapeutic riding to the success of Danish equestrian Lis Hartel, known for her Olympic accomplishments despite complications from polio that left her paralyzed below the knees and reliant on a wheelchair for mobility. Credited with developing a rehabilitation program using her equestrian knowledge and skills that eventually led to two silver medals in Grand Prix Dressage at the Helsinki Olympic games in 1952, Hartel's accomplishment soon resulted in the increased popularity of the therapeutic approach as riding centers in Norway, Denmark, and England began to develop—in the 1960s therapeutic riding arrived on the North American continent, with the number of individual programs and professional organizations beginning to increase in Canada and the United States. In 1970, the first official meeting of the North American Riding for the Handicapped (now the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, or PATH Intl.) was held with the goal of developing a professional organization to serve as an advisory council for the field. Today, PATH Intl. has 873 member centers and nearly 8,000 individual members in countries all over the world, who help and support almost 69,000 men, women, and children--including more than 6,700 veterans--with special needs each year through a variety of equine-assisted activities and therapies programs.

Since the 1950s, Equine Assisted Activities (EAA) have been identified as beneficial forms of exercise and recreation for individuals ages three and up with a wide range of disabilities. This approach combines goals in sports, recreation, therapy, and education. Professionals in the medical field have found that EAA is beneficial because of the horse's gentle and rhythmic motion as well as the warmth of the horse's body. EAA, helps relax spastic muscles, decrease or increase muscle tone, increase strength, stimulate joint and muscle function, elevate cardiovascular and pulmonary output, increase self-esteem and confidence, enhance memory and communication skills, and build positive relationships with others. In addition, the client and the horse form a special bond that enhances physical and cognitive abilities and overall well-being.

HISTORY OF PALS

Since its inception in 2000, PALS has promoted joy, quality of life, better health, and empowerment by providing therapeutic programs with horses. PALS has provided thousands of therapeutic horseback riding lessons, various educational programs, and camp opportunities designed to improve the lives of hundreds of children, adults, veterans, and senior citizens in the Indiana community ranging in age from 3 and up. As the only organization in south central Indiana to have received a Premier Accreditation distinction from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International - PATH Intl. (pathintl.org), and one of the only Therapeutic Equine Programs in Monroe County and the surrounding vicinity, PALS has been instrumental in providing the highest quality EAA for clients from 11 counties across the state. In March 2013, PALS purchased their facility at 7644 W. Elwren Road, Bloomington, IN 47403. Owning their own facility allows new opportunities for the future of PALS, the ability to house more therapy horses, provide a boarding facility and summer camps, as well as more opportunities to offer more lessons times.

PALS MISSION

PALS promotes joy, quality of life, better health, and empowerment by providing therapeutic programs with horses.

BASIC PALS RULES

- Follow PALS Guidelines and Procedures as detailed in the Volunteer Training Manual.
- Maintain the PALS Confidentiality Statement.
- Maintain PATH Intl. operating center standards outlined in the PATH Intl. Standards for Certification and Accreditation Manual.
- Please refrain from horseplay or allowing others to behave in such a manner. Please no running, shouting, throwing or waving objects, wrestling, fighting, or chasing others.
- To ensure the safety of all service animals excluded, no dogs are allowed on premises at any time, unless approved by the executive director. (Renters of the house are allowed a max. of two dogs that must stay on their side of the fence.)
- Feel free to utilize the PALS kitchen and community room for your personal needs. Please do not leave food in the refrigerator, as it will be cleaned on Friday and all remaining food will be removed.
- No glass or any other breakable containers or objects are allowed in the aiseways or arena space
- No alcohol is permitted on the premises at any time.
- Smoking is only permitted on the premises if you are in your vehicle. Please do not throw your cigarette butts out on the PALS property.
- To ensure the safety of all horses on the PALS property, please keep gates closed at all times when horses are present.
- PALS utilizes mechanical lifts to assist our therapeutic clients with mounting and dismounting their horses as necessary. Please refrain from entering this area or utilizing the lifts without permission. PALS staff are specially trained in the use of these lifts. Volunteers will be trained to use the lifts as needed.
- Individuals not volunteering are welcome to observe boarders/clients utilizing the arena and aisle but are asked to remain outside of the working arena area to ensure the safety of all clients and observers.

AS A PALS PROGRAM VOLUNTEER...

- You can work independently as long as you are at least 16 years old. If you are under 15, you must have a guardian volunteering with them.
- You must attend a PALS volunteer orientation.
- You must complete a background check (if over the age of 18) and pay a fee of \$12 to complete the background check.
- You must be able to meet the physical requirements demanded for that specific volunteer job.
- You must be emotionally fit enough to cope responsibly with situations and concerns as they arise pertaining to clients and horses, and always use good judgment.
- You are requested to volunteer on a regular basis in order to experience the benefits of the program and to develop relationships with other volunteers, staff, clients, and horses.
- You are covered by PALS' insurance while on the premises.
- You must be prompt and dependable. Without the proper number of volunteers, clients would not be able to ride in their lessons. If you need to cancel, please review our cancellation policy.
- You must always maintain confidentiality with regard to PALS participants. Do not disclose any personal information outside the PALS program concerning the clients, their disabilities, etc.
- You must follow all PALS rules and be familiar with PALS emergency procedures.
- You must dress appropriately for working in the barn. (See Attire Section)
- You must always inform a PALS staff of any accidents or injuries to clients or volunteers, no matter how minor the situation.
- You must be attentive to your surroundings at all times and report any safety concerns with clients, horses, or other volunteers to PALS staff.
- You must not touch the clients unless given specific instructions by the instructor or therapist. Handling a client without knowledge of their disability could be harmful to the client.
- You must not hand feed the horses treats and only feed horses at the discretion of PALS staff.

AS A PALS PROGRAM VOLUNTEER...

- You are offered a discount off group lessons you schedule if you volunteer and log a minimum of 12+ hours a month. Each lesson will be discounted to \$35.00. All volunteers using the discount have to ride in a group. Group lessons must be scheduled in advance with one of the certified instructors and are based on the roster availability. You must use the PALS volunteer portal to log your volunteer hours. You may pay at the time of your lesson or PALS will bill you. Volunteer hours for the purpose of discounted lessons are not accrued. If you stop volunteering at PALS, you are not entitled to the discount. Volunteering hours cannot be transferred or shared with other volunteers for the purpose of discounted lessons, but the discount can be transferred to one child of the volunteer.

PALS BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

Program Volunteers:

Before your first volunteer shift, new volunteers* are required to pay a \$12 fee for PALS to run a standard background check. Volunteers are to submit a new background check every 3 years. PALS reserves the right to conduct annual background checks on an as-needed basis. If you have a current background check from school or a job, that may be submitted in place of paying the \$12 fee.

*Volunteers under the age of 18 will not be required to undergo a background check. Once the volunteer has turned 18 they will be required to undergo a background check.

Background check findings shall be reviewed in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner. Because PALS's priority is the safety of the clients, staff, volunteers, and guests, certain actions and convictions for certain crimes serve to automatically disqualify applicants for employment or volunteer service at PALS in any position that involves working with children. A person will be ineligible for employment or volunteer service if the person:

- Refuses to consent to a criminal background check
- Makes a false statement in connection with such criminal background check
- Is registered, or required to be registered on any sex offender registry
- Has been convicted within the past 5 years of a misdemeanor involving:
 - physical assault or battery
 - cruelty to animals

PALS BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

With respect to convictions for crimes not listed above, any applicant with such a conviction shall be evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether they should be excluded from consideration based on the conviction. Final approval of these applicants will be given at the discretion of the executive director. In so doing, PALS shall consider the following factors: the nature and gravity of the offense; the time that has passed since the offense or completion of sentence; the nature of the job sought or held; the facts and circumstances surrounding the offense or conduct; the number of offenses for which the individual was convicted; the age of the individual at the time of conviction or release; evidence that the individual performed the same type of work, post-conviction, with the same or a different employer with no known incidents of criminal conduct; the length and consistency of employment history before and after the offense or conduct; rehabilitation efforts, e.g. education and/or training; employment or character references and any other information regarding fitness for the particular position; and whether the individual is bonded under a federal, state, or local bonding program.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All volunteers must sign a “Policy of Confidentiality” agreement prior to volunteering at PALS. Volunteers are educated about this policy during their volunteer training sessions.

POLICY OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality is defined as "told in secret or private relations; trusted." Any information in regard to the participants at People and Animal Learning Services, Inc. must be held in strict confidentiality. It is critical that we respect each individual. Confidentiality is considered one of the most basic responsibilities of our facility. In failure to abide by this policy, the quality of the services we provide may diminish and result in legal ramifications.

CANCELLATION POLICY

We understand that events happen that would prevent you from honoring your scheduled shift. If you need to change or cancel a shift, please do the following:

- For cancellations before the day of your scheduled shift, please email or call the PALS volunteer coordinator at 812-336-2798 ext. 0 or volunteer@palstherapy.org.
- To cancel on the day of your shift, please call the PALS Barn at 812-336-2798 ext. 0. If no one answers the barn phone, please leave a message to indicate your cancellation. If you leave a message, we will receive it via email.

TRACKING HOURS

Wranglr, our volunteer portal system, will track the hours that you are volunteering. You will sign up for specific shifts through the portal. If you do not feel comfortable using the portal, there is a sheet posted on the tack room for you to track your hours. Volunteers are responsible for logging hours in the portal OR filling out the sheet posted in the tack room before and after each shift on the volunteer sign-in sheet located in the volunteer room. If a volunteer needs to record and track their volunteer hours with PALS, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to provide the necessary documentation to be verified by a PALS staff member. PALS reserves the right to deny confirmation of volunteer hours if the volunteer does not comply with these guidelines.

WE VALUE YOUR TIME AND EFFORTS

- If you are assigned a task before you feel you are ready, or if you are uncomfortable in any way, please inform a PALS staff member as soon as possible. Volunteers should feel free to communicate any questions, problems, concerns, or preferences at any time.
- Volunteers should talk with the PALS staff if they have a specific job request or would like to work with a particular client. If you ever need help with something, do not be afraid to ask. It is always better to be safe.
- Have fun assisting with PALS programs! Build positive relationships with clients, horses, staff, and your fellow volunteers!

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Generally, volunteers are expected to try to resolve their own conflicts with those they work with before taking the issue to PALS staff. When volunteers cannot resolve a conflict, or when the issue involves harassment, abuse, or fraud, the grievance process should be used. All PALS volunteers are eligible to use the grievance procedure. Grievances must be presented within 5 working days from the date of the original cause of grievance, or the volunteer's right to file a grievance will be lost. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are not included, and the time period may be extended by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. The volunteer must participate in the investigation in a timely manner to facilitate the resolution of the grievance. The presentation of a grievance must follow the grievance procedure steps as follows:

GRIEVANCES NOT INVOLVING ONE'S IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR:

The volunteer must present the Issues/Concerns Resolution Review Form (available from PALS staff members) to their immediate supervisor. The executive director has 10 working days to respond (unless there are special circumstances). A copy of the grievance form must be sent to the executive director. The supervisor and staff member will meet to discuss the grievance within 10 working days (unless there are special circumstances).

Parties involved must cooperate with the investigation in a timely manner. The two parties in conflict will also meet in an attempt to resolve the conflict. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, the volunteer may take the grievance to the executive director. The volunteer must notify the executive director in writing in advance that they are taking the grievance to the next level. The executive director will meet to discuss the grievance within 10 working days of the receipt of the written notification. The executive director will have 15 working days to issue an opinion on the grievance. The decision of the executive director is final and binding. The volunteer will receive a copy of the grievance response.

GRIEVANCES INVOLVING ONE'S IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR:

When a grievance is with one's immediate supervisor, employees must follow the procedure outlined above, but begin with the supervisor's supervisor.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The grievance procedure does not apply to the following matters:

- Duties within position classifications.
- Disagreements with PALS policy.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SIDEWALKER

The volunteer sidewalker is responsible for walking along with clients during PALS programs to provide both moral and physical support. Sidewalkers are also expected to assist with barn chores as assigned. All PALS volunteers will begin as a sidewalker and can become a horse leader if they would like to go through the necessary training.

Requirements:

- Must attend siderwalker training
 - Must be familiar with the 3 different types of sidewalking positions for the client.
 - Must be comfortable working with clients during PALS programs.
 - Must be able to walk and run in sessions for up to 60 minutes.
 - Must be able to lift 50 pounds
 - Must be able to hold arms up at shoulder height in order to support the client
-

HORSE LEADER

The volunteer horse leader is responsible for leading horses during PALS lessons and making sure the horses are groomed, tacked, and warmed up for lessons. Horse leaders are also expected to assist with barn chores as assigned.

Requirements:

- Must have strong horse knowledge and understand horse behavior and psychology.
- Must pass the PALS Leader Training prior to leading in lessons - including grooming, tacking, and leading
- Must be able to walk and run in sessions for up to 60 minutes.
- Must be able to lift 50 pounds

BARN HELPER

The volunteer barn helper is responsible for mucking stalls; cleaning and raking aisles; cleaning offices, bathrooms, the classroom, kitchens, and the tack room as needed; cleaning feeders and filling water as needed; cleaning tack; taking out the trash; and doing laundry.

Requirements:

- Must attend a volunteer orientation
- Must attend Barn Help Training
- Must be able to lift 50 pounds

LEAD VOLUNTEER

The lead volunteer is responsible for doing all of the tasks associated with being a sidewalker, horse leader, and barn helper. Additionally, lead volunteers are able to turn the horses in and out.

Requirements:

- Must attend a volunteer orientation
- Must attend Barn Help Training
- Must attend Sidewalker Training
- Must attend Horse Leader Training
- Must pass the PALS Leader Training prior to leading in lessons - including grooming, tacking, and leading
- Must be pasture trained
- Must be able to lift 50 pounds

INSTRUCTOR-IN-TRAINING

For those who are interested in becoming an instructor-in-training, please contact PALS instructor at (812) 336-2798 ext. 2 or email ride@palstherapy.org.

ATTIRE

Volunteers must:

- Always wear closed-toe shoes
- Always dress weather appropriately (for cold or warm weather).
- Always wear shirts with straps or sleeves that cover all undergarments (and never wear tops that are low cut or have spaghetti straps.) Never wear attire with inappropriate or offensive text or images.
- Never wear perfume or cologne because it may bother horses and clients or attract flies.
- Never wear dangling necklaces or earrings.
- Never wear shorts shorter than thigh-length.
- Never chew gum while at PALS.

INFORMATION UPDATE

Volunteers should keep the PALS Volunteer Coordinator up to date about changes in their health and contact information. (i.e. phone numbers, address, and email). On an annual basis, all volunteers are required to fill out a new volunteer application.


CONDUCT AND DISMISSAL

- Anyone on PALS property must follow the written rules and guidelines posted around the arena and barn. Authorized personnel signs are posted in areas where participants and guests must be accompanied by PALS staff or volunteers. The PALS map posted around the barn indicates which areas are off-limits.
- Any person unwilling to follow PALS rules and guidelines will be asked by PALS staff to leave the facility and an occurrence report will be filed.

- Any person who acts inappropriately or abusively toward any animal or person will be asked to cease the behavior immediately and will be terminated from the program.
- Any client, volunteer, or guest who attempts to participate in the program while showing the effects of alcohol or illicit drugs will be asked to leave or appropriate transportation will be called. An occurrence report will be filed and further investigation will take place. The individual may return at the discretion of the executive director.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE...

- Put on your name badge (located in the volunteer room).
- Check the "Client Roster" (example below) on the cork board to see the lesson schedule and your assignment.

Time/Name/Location	Instructor	Participant/Horse/Volunteers
 PALS - 11/06/2023		
Schedule for 11/06/2023		
9:00AM - 10:00AM - Recreational Riding - PALS	Helen S.	<p>Katryna Novelo on Tank (E4 W5) Halter: n/a; Bridle: Hackmore; Saddle: E4; Saddle Pad: dressage; Reins: rainbow; Girth: n/a; Cinch: n/a; Surcingle: n/a; Half Pad: plus</p> <p>Laurie Stant (English) on Cisco Halter: n/a; Bridle: bit; Saddle: English; Saddle Pad: dressage; Reins: rainbow; Girth: n/a; Cinch: n/a; Surcingle: n/a; Half Pad: plus</p> <p>Nicole Robertson on River Halter: n/a; Bridle: bit; Saddle: western; Saddle Pad: green patterned western; Reins: braided; Girth: n/a; Cinch: n/a; Surcingle: n/a; Half Pad: n/a</p>
11:00AM - 12:00PM - Wheeler Mission - PALS	Nicole R.	<p>Wheeler Mission Horses: Frankie, Nemo, Junie</p>
12:00PM - 1:00PM - Silver Spurs - PALS	Nicole R.	<p>Silver Spurs Horses: Daisy Mae, Frankie, Junie</p>
1:00PM - 2:00PM - Centerstone Recovery - PALS	Nicole R.	<p>Centerstone Recovery Horses: Daisy Mae, Frankie, Junie, Dolly, Nemo</p>
4:00PM - 6:00PM - Barn Help - PALS		

continued on next page ...

EMERGENCY DISMOUNT

Anyone can call an emergency dismount when necessary. In the event that a client needs to dismount from the horse, please do the following:

- Notify the instructor of the immediate situation.
- Say “emergency dismount” loudly
- Halt the horse if possible
- Make sure the client puts the reins up toward the horse’s head. If the client will not let go of the reins, unclip the reins from the halter.
- Have the client take their feet out of the stirrups with the sidewalkers assisting if necessary. The designated sidewalker (i.e. the sidewalker closest to the middle of the arena) will dismount the client.
- Dismounting the rider, pull the rider off at a 45-degree angle towards the horse's tail. When the client is off, the sidewalker should be between the horse and the client.
- The horse leader should move the horse away from the client by walking the horse straight more than 8 steps turning the horse's head toward the client and pushing the hind end away from the client. The horse leader should then lead the horse to a neutral corner of the arena or remove the horse from the arena at the discretion of the instructor.
- Sidewalkers and/or the instructor should stay with the client. They should support the client emotionally and physically if necessary. Try to keep the client calm.
- If 911 needs to be called, the instructor will designate someone to call 911.
- When the instructor advises, remove all clients and horses from the arena.

LOOSE HORSE

- If there is a loose horse speak loudly to alert staff and volunteers of loose horse by saying “loose horse”
- If a lesson is going on, immediately stop the lesson and emergency dismount if necessary. All leaders and sidewalkers should stay with their clients. Leaders should assume the lead halted position and sidewalkers should do thigh holds.
- PALS staff or designated volunteers will catch the loose horse.

CLIENT FALLS FROM THE HORSE

- Do not panic if there is a fall. Listen to the instructor for instructions.
- The instructor should immediately go to the client and talk to them.
- The leader should catch and/or keep the horse under control. The leader should walk the horse straight
- more than 8 steps away from the client, turn and halt the horse facing the client.
- The sidewalkers should help keep the client calm and follow the instructor's instructions. This will allow the instructor to assess the situation and give directions efficiently. The instructor and the client's sidewalkers should remain with the client at all times.
- If more assistance is needed, the instructor will designate a volunteer to go get another PALS staff member and come to the arena or trail with what is needed (the client's guardian/caregiver/staff, first aid kit, client file or phone).
- The fallen client should remain lying down and still until they can be checked for signs of injury. An individual onsite with the most advanced medical training (instructor, therapist, or nurse) will be summoned to examine the fallen client.
- 911 will be called if necessary. The instructor will make this call.
- Signs of serious injury include:
 - Unconsciousness (even for a moment)
 - Bleeding or fluid draining from the mouth, nose, or ears
 - Serious bleeding
 - Limb at an unnatural angle or pain with pressure or pain with movement
 - Pupils contract unevenly
 - Signs of shock (paleness, mottled color, sweating, nausea, fainting)
 - Consider the possibility of head injury and/or spinal injury in any fall. If it is suspected, keep the
 - Keep client absolutely still until the medical team arrives. Do NOT remove the helmet.

INSTRUCTOR MAY ASSIGN A VOLUNTEER TO:

- Retrieve the first aid kit located in the volunteer room.
- Retrieve the AED located on the wall in front of the volunteer room.
- Retrieve the client's file from the PALS instructor's office (files are organized by last name alphabetically) If asked by the instructor.
- Call 911 from the telephone located in the tack room, facility, and equine manager's office, instructor's office, executive director's office, or operations director's office. The caller should follow the operator's instructions and stay on the telephone until the operator tells you to hang up. Give directions to PALS, which are posted next to each phone.
- Take the client's parent, guardian, caregiver, or any other person who brought the client to PALS to the client in the arena or on the trail. Make sure to involve the parent, guardian, or caregiver because they know the client best. If necessary contact the fallen client's parents, guardian, caretaker, or emergency contact. This information can be found in the client's file located in the PALS instructor's office.

OTHER EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- If the instructor thinks the client is injured and needs medical attention but 911 is not required, then strongly encourage the client to be taken to the doctor, urgent care facility, or the hospital (depending on the level of medical attention needed). If the client does not have visible injuries, suggest that the client be taken to a doctor for evaluation as a precaution.
- If the instructor thinks the client is uninjured, then they should walk the client to the PALS waiting area.
- The client should be reassured and the instructor will discuss with the client what caused the fall. When the situation is under control, reassure the rest of the clients and explain to them what caused the fall. The instructor will encourage the client to get back on the horse.
- For any injury or fall the instructor is required to fill out an occurrence report with the entire volunteer team, client, parent, guardian, or caregiver. All parties must sign the form, and then the form should be given to the executive director.

- The instructor should follow up with the client's parent, guardian, or caregiver within 24 hours of the incident. All encounters should be documented in the client's file and given to the executive director to be put with the occurrence reports.
- The instructor should make the executive director aware of any injury at PALS immediately in order to discuss if further actions need to be taken.

IN CASE OF FIRE

- Evacuate calmly and quickly out of the barn or arena through the nearest exit. Keep everyone quiet and under control. Gather behind the small house and account for all individuals.
- Call the fire department (911). Give the operator your name, the property name, and the location. (All of this information is located by telephone. Stay on the telephone until the operator tells you to hang up.
- With the PALS Staff's permission, evacuate horses if possible.
- Do not let the horses loose outside of the barn since they may try to return to the barn. If the horse will not lead, blindfold the horse with a towel, a sack, or a coat. If possible, wet the blindfold in the horse's water before putting it on the horse's head.
- Make sure the driveway is clear for fire equipment.
- Use fire extinguishers located in the kitchen, classroom room, arena entrance aisle, border aisle, PALS aisle, PALS east sliding door, or manure storage area if your safety will not be compromised.
- Once help arrives, immediately check the horses for injuries.

IN CASE SEVERE WEATHER

- Lead clients and volunteers as quickly and quietly as possible to the designated safe area, the bathroom, or the PALS tack room.
- Instruct everyone to sit down, put their heads between their legs, and cover their heads. Leave helmets on the client's head for their protection.
- Leave horses in the arena with the gate closed, if there is no time to put them outside in pastures.

- Remain in the designated safe area until the storm is over and the "all clear" signal is given by the instructor.
- When the severe weather threat is over, inspect the premises for downed power lines before permitting clients and volunteers to leave.
- With the PALS Staff's permission, evacuate horses if possible.

SEIZURES

- Sometimes you or the client can tell if a seizure is going to happen, other times you cannot.
- The main thing to remember is to not restrain a person when they have a seizure. Simply keep the client safe until the seizure is over.
- If a volunteer or a client knows that a seizure is going to happen, the instructor should be notified and will determine if a dismount is needed. If dismounted the client should sit or lie down in a comfortable and safe place.
- If a seizure happens when a client is on the horse, a volunteer should notify the instructor immediately.
- Have the client lean forward on the horse's neck with his or her head off to the right side of the horse's neck. The instructor will evaluate the client after the seizure is over. The client will either be dismounted or will continue with the lesson at the discretion of the instructor, therapist, and/or other medical personnel.

PALS OCCURRENCE REPORT POLICY

- An occurrence is defined as any situation resulting in physical or mental trauma to a client, volunteer, or staff member involving the horse, facility, or equipment.
- When any occurrence happens with a PALS staff member, volunteer, guest, or client it is documented with a minor occurrence report or a major occurrence report by a staff member present during the incident.

- **Minor Occurrence** is defined as an incident where an individual requires “basic 1st aid or has experienced a mental trauma”.
- **Major Occurrence** is defined as an incident where an individual requires an ambulance to be called or requires more than “basic” first aid and medical attention from PALS staff, or if the individual needs to be taken to a hospital, clinic, or doctor’s office.
- All parties involved and identified on forms (including parent/guardian if the injured person is a minor) must sign forms within 24 hours.
- Signed and completed reports should be completed and turned in to the executive director within 24 hours of occurrence.
- Signed and completed forms must remain in the file of the injured person involved.
- If the occurrence requires someone to receive medical attention at a hospital or at a doctor’s office then the executive director must be called within one hour of the incident and depending on the situation PALS insurance company must be contacted by the executive director.
- If a client falls off a horse, an occurrence report must be filled out before the client leaves the PALS premises and all parties must sign the form (if the client is a minor, parent, caregiver, and/or guardian must sign the form). If a parent or guardian is not present at PALS the instructor must call them immediately to inform them that the incident has occurred and this should be documented on the form.
- If an occurrence report is completed, PALS staff who completed the form must follow up with the injured person within 24 hours of the occurrence and report via email (or in writing) the individual's updated condition to the PALS executive director.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- There are 15 fire extinguishers at PALS. The extinguishers are clearly marked.
 - Fire extinguishers are:
 - Checked on a monthly basis by a PALS facility and equine manager to make sure that they do not need to be serviced and that the yellow needle in the dial is located in the “green”. The individual checking the fire extinguisher will place their initials on the tag of the fire extinguisher and in the monthly fire extinguisher checklist (kept in the facility and equine manager's office).
 - Inspected, recharged, or replaced as recommended by a professional company during their annual visit.
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FIRST AID KITS AND AED

- The human first aid kits are located in the tack room and volunteer room.
- The Horse First Aid Kit is located in the storage/bathroom across from the feed room.
- The AED is located on the wall in front of the Volunteer Room.
- PALS human and equine first aid kits and AED are checked on a monthly basis by a PALS facility and equine manager to ensure all items on the checklist are present. All items missing or low should be replaced as soon as possible. If items are low, then write down the item(s) and notify the facility and equine manager so the items can be replaced.

TELEPHONES

PALS has working telephones on the premises. These are located in the facility and equine manager's office, instructor's office, executive director's office, and the PALS tack room. Additionally, emergency information is posted near the telephone.

SERVICE ANIMALS

According to Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

- For the safety of all service animals while on the premises, PALS requests that all service animals be under the control of their handler at all times. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
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- While the client is engaged in equine activities, the service animal must be confined to a crate in a non-public area. The crate must be supplied by the client. If there is another certified handler on site the dog may stay.
- A current record of Rabies vaccinations is required before any service animal is brought onto the premises.
- PALS reserves the right to request the service animal be removed from the premises if (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken

INTERACTING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS A DISABILITY

PUTTING CLIENTS FIRST: A GUIDE TO PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE

The words each of us uses to interact with and describe one another can have a tremendous impact on the perceptions we may develop, how individuals may be treated, and how someone may feel. A simple choice of words, while sometimes overlooked, has the ability to ensure an individual is defined by his or her own abilities and not separated by any limitations. Person First Language strives to ensure that each individual is identified first as a person, with their disability or impairment described as a secondary attribute. When arranged in this fashion it allows secondary attributes to be seen as only a part of an individual, not what defines her or him. In practice, always identify the person before the descriptive adjectives and/or conditions:

Avoid - Use Instead

- The schizophrenic - The gentleman with schizophrenia
- The hearing impaired - Individuals with hearing impairments
- Autistic child - A child with autism
- Cleft palate children - Children with cleft palate
- The retarded adult - An individual with an intellectual disability

Other Notes

- The term “mentally retarded” is being phased out---“intellectual disability” will soon replace the term in the medical community.
- The term “handicapped” is purely situational in nature---an individual may be handicapped in one situation and not another—thus the term should be used on a limited basis and not to generalize an entire group or population.

Additional Resources

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:
http://www.asha.org/publications/journals/submissions/person_first.htm
- United Spinal Association:
<http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>
- Stone Belt:
<http://www.stonebelt.org/styles/stonebelt/defiles/factsheets/Person%20First%20Language>

Things to Remember

Remind yourself that persons with disabilities are just like you with their own goals, limits, capabilities, attitudes, experiences, etc. People with disabilities like to be treated as normally as possible.

- Be yourself when you meet them.
- Treat them like you would a person without a disability of a similar age.
- Help only when help is needed. This is very difficult to determine at times but use your judgment.
- Remember that safety is our main goal but we also want clients to develop independence.
- Resist the temptation to constantly assist clients who need to develop more independence. It is usually a good idea to have a client try something before you step in to assist.
- Be patient! It is often more difficult to wait for an inexperienced person to accomplish something than to do it yourself. It is very important to encourage clients to try the task because they learn by doing and also gain confidence in the process.
- Do not be overprotective, do not shower clients with too much kindness, and do not be overly sympathetic. Be genuine and be yourself!
- Develop friendships and relationships with clients.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

- If you are listening to persons with **speech impairment** and you cannot understand what they are saying, ask them to repeat it. Be patient and encouraging. Ask questions that they can answer briefly or by nodding. It may also be helpful to have something for them to write on. Do not pretend to understand if you do not understand.

- For persons with **hearing impairment**, you may need to get their attention first. Tap them lightly on the shoulder or wave a hand. It helps people understand what you are saying if they can see your facial expressions and body language. Try to position your face so they can clearly see your lips move. Look directly at them and speak clearly. This is another instance where it may help to have something to write on. If they have an interpreter, direct your conversation to the person with whom you are communicating, not to the interpreter.
- For persons with **visual impairment**, identify yourself and introduce others who accompany you. Repeat the name of the person to whom you are speaking so they will know where the comment is being directed. If you want to offer assistance, allow them to take your arm. Do not grab theirs and try to pull them. As you guide them, describe the terrain and let them know of approaching obstacles. Be specific and say "There is a step approximately five steps in front of us."
- If you are talking to an individual with a **mental disability**, speak simply, not loudly, and do not use childish language.
- If you become aware that a person with a **physical disability** may need assistance, ask first if you can help. Do not assume they need help. Grabbing someone's wheelchair and pushing them without asking can be an invasion of privacy and independence. Also, do not lean on the wheelchair since it is considered part of body space. When talking to someone in a wheelchair, get down to their level so neither of you ends up with a stiff neck caused by looking in an awkward direction. If you are giving directions to someone using a wheelchair, make sure to reference barriers such as curbs, hills, narrow doorways, etc. that may pose a problem.
- It may take extra time for a person with a disability to express a thought or to get something done. Be sensitive to the situation and do not convey impatience. Let them set the pace.
- All of these suggestions boil down to three things: common courtesy, common sense, and respect. Interacting with persons with disabilities may seem awkward, but by focusing on who they are and what they can do, you will discover individuals just like you who want to be productive and respected. You will be encouraged by the contributions they make to life and how much progress can be seen if we all work together.

PEOPLE & ANIMAL LEARNING SERVICES

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