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# **Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy** Utilising the Domain of Groundwork:

An Integrative Approach to Enhancing Mental Health and Physical Functioning in Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

## **AFFILIATIONS**









# The Domains Available for Application of **Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy** Riding for Therapy and/or Learning

(Harkness, 2020)

# 1. Introduction to Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy

Equine Facilitated Therapy (EFT) is a specialist provision of therapeutic intervention where a suitably trained Occupational Therapist can provide equine specific interventions to support people in improving their physical health, mental health, and emotional wellbeing.

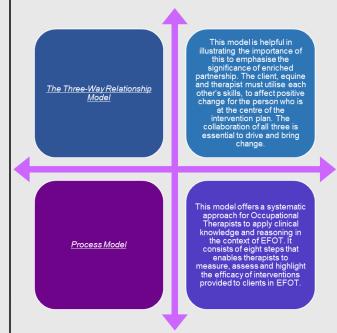
# 2. Case Study Background

Bear is a 37 year-old-lady who was diagnosed with MS at the age of 21. Assessment highlighted a number of areas of need in terms of physical health and function. More importantly, her physical health and some previous unresolved childhood trauma was affecting her mood, self-esteem, and motivation. The impact of all of these factors were affecting her negatively and was restricting her ability to carry out routine activities of daily living and occupations.

Bear had not realised how much her mood was also affecting her physical health and a number of the therapeutic sessions focussed on self-awareness and selfdevelopment activity alongside grooming tasks, and stable management which focussed on her physical needs.

# 4. Models of Practice in Equine Facilitated Óccupational Therapy Practice

In addition to choosing the right domain and equine for this intervention, it is also key to consider a model of practice. This compliments and supports the therapy process and is often evidence based. The models highlighted in the table below can be used in other areas of practice but are well suited to working in EFOT.



Berg Balance Scale Score

6 Minute Timed Walk Test

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# 5. Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy Intervention Plan



To ensure outcomes were measured as part of this intervention plan five standardised measures were used and to further enhance the outcomes three non -standardised tools were used to compliment the findings.



### 7.Discussion

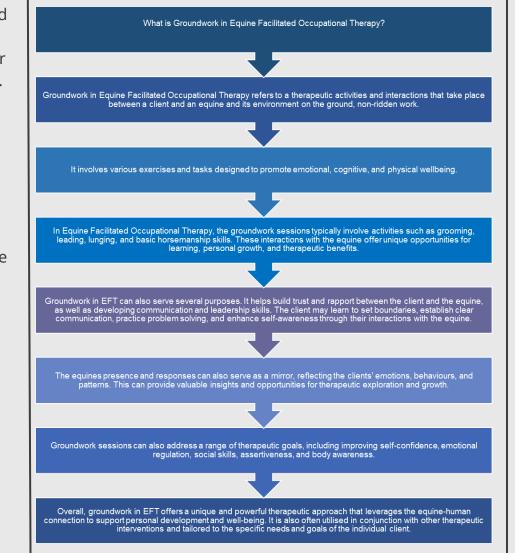
The Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy interventions and outcome measures that were used indicate considerable improvements in both mental and physical health. It would be interesting for further analysis on validity and reliability on this subject as part of a large control trial or study.

The analysis of the measures are as follows:

- The EQ-5D-3L was not sensitive enough in monitoring change in the 'Levels Domain'.
- The Visual Analogue Scale was successful in measuring Patient Reported Outcomes and links well with the spikes in improvements also shown with the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.
- The initial measures taken using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure scores were low in perceived satisfaction and performance.However, the final measures had significant
- However, the final measures had significant improvements and a change in score was measured at 5 for both saitisfaction and performance.
   The weekly activity checklist shows a significant ncrease in activity, the FitBit tracker also adds weight to support this. At the outset of treatment Bear walked on average 200 steps each day, she is now able to routinely walk on average 5,000 steps every day.
   The 6 Minute Walk Test demonstrates improved stamina and longth of walk
- and length of walk.
- The Berg Balance Scale indicates a reduced risk of falls and the falls checklist confirm a reduced frequency of

## 3. The Domain of Groundwork

There are a number of domains an Occupational Therapist is able to use, the case study was initially chosen in relation to improving her physical health, however dual needs were identified and the most appropriate domain of use in this case was Groundwork.



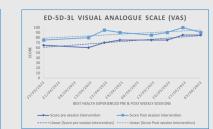
# 6. Results

The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), Berg Balance Scale (BBS), and the 6 Minute walk test (6MWT) were taken at weeks 1 & 8.

The three self reported measures were taken weekly.

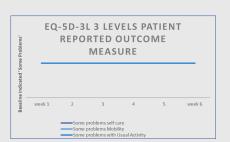
The EQ-5D-3L and the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) were taken at the beginning and end of every session to monitor closely changes in mental health and what activities worked well.











#### 8.Conclusion

In conclusion, the utilisation of Equine Facilitated Occupational Therapy and the domain of Groundwork as an Integrative Approach for enhancing mental health and physical functioning in people with Multiple Sclerosis has demonstrated as important and beneficial in improving the health and well-being of individuals. By determining importance in addressing emotional well-being in the first instance, is more likely to likely to lead to positive physical outcomes.

Bear is now independent in all the tasks that were important to her, she showers almost every day, goes out daily either shopping or socialising with friends and has increased her activity levels significantly. The one most significant and unexpected goal she has achieved is now having loan of a highland pony who she cares for daily. She has made the most

remarkable recovery by participating in this treatment programme, she has given herself another chance at life and is now living her best life.

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