

## **Best Practice When Incorporating Hippotherapy as a Treatment Tool into OT, PT or SLP Services**

### ***Don't Put Yourself at Risk" in your Marketing Materials***

When marketing your practice make sure that all your marketing materials (websites, brochures, social media sites, etc) reflect the variety of treatment tools/strategies used within your therapy practice. Therapists should always be following Best Practice Guidelines for their particular discipline. **The following examples are not Best Practice and are not endorsed by the AHA, Inc.**

- ***Website photos being focused on patients with horses with no photos of patients and other standard therapy tools.***

*This suggests that the therapist "only" uses hippotherapy with all patients and excludes other standard therapy tools and strategies. This is not best practice and creates the impression of "hippotherapy as a stand alone service". Make sure you represent a myriad of treatment tools/strategies that you offer in your practice.*

- ***Blurring the lines between a facility's "therapeutic riding" programs and the treatment practice that is housed in the same facility.***

*Comingling of the two jeopardizes standard therapy practice standards. Any implication that therapeutic riding is in itself a "treatment" is health care fraud. If your practice is at a riding center it should be separate from other therapeutic/adaptive riding services. Riding centers are not recognized as a medical business.*

- ***Using incorrect terminology such as "hippotherapy practice" or "hippotherapy program".***

*Adhere to the AHA, Inc. description of what hippotherapy's role is as a treatment tool incorporated into OT, PT and/or ST services. You have an OT, PT or ST practice and equine movement is just one of the treatment tools you may choose to use.*

- ***Failure to lead with the therapy services being provided in service descriptions.***

*It must be clear that the therapy service is "physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech-language therapy" and there should never be a statement or implication that the therapist is providing "hippotherapy only" as there is no such therapy service.*

- ***Misrepresenting "hippotherapy" as a specific procedure when in fact equine movement is a treatment tool that can be utilized a variety of ways within therapy protocols.***

*Emphasis must be on the fact that hippotherapy is not a specific isolated procedure. Instead highlight the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a treatment tool used with other tools for enhanced therapeutic outcomes within a client's plan of care.*

- ***Referring to your treatments as a "hippotherapy session" versus a OT, PT or ST session***

*There is no time where you stop doing an OT, PT, and ST treatment session and start providing a "hippotherapy session". You are a licensed OT, PT or SLP and hippotherapy is just one of the treatment tools within your treatment session that you might choose.*