

Procedures: Hippotherapy

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Sumlar Therapy Services, Inc.

Therapists must adhere to all safety guidelines as presented from all sources, both written and verbal.

Therapists are responsible to ensure **correct and effective helmet fit**. When a helmet is donned properly, it should not slide or slip over the patient's eyes or ears. The chin strap should be fitting so that only one or two of your fingers can be slipped between the strap and the chin. Do not let a child ride the horse without first donning a snug-fitting helmet. If hair style interferes with the helmet fitting as designed, then the therapist should discuss it with the parent. The parent may choose to change the hairstyle to allow the session to proceed. If the helmet cannot be fit properly then the hippotherapy session should be deferred and therapy can proceed in the clinic.

Therapists should be dressed appropriately for the task. No open-toed shoes, flip-flops, slides, or crocs should be worn in the arena. Full-coverage, tied, tennis shoes or boots should be worn. No excessively loose fitting clothing should be worn; jackets flapping in the wind may frighten the horse. No skirts. These same rules also apply to sidewalkers, and the treating therapist should ensure that these rules are discussed and adhered to at every session.

The treating therapist should make the determination to allow or disallow a parent, student, or volunteer into the arena. The therapist's main concern should be safety. One way to maintain a safe environment is to **control the environment** to the greatest degree possible, including the people in and around the arena and parking lot. If an individual is nervous, unable to follow directions, dressed inappropriately, making inappropriate or sudden noises, or does not possess the physical ability to serve their purpose, it is the therapist's responsibility to ask the person or persons to leave the area. Politely and firmly direct the person to an appropriate area, such as the waiting room, or end the session.

Hippotherapy may not take place if thunder is heard, or if lightning is seen. Seek shelter inside the clinic. (See Weather Safety Procedure.)

A child should never be left unattended near or within the arena.

The horse should never be left unattended without being first properly secured in the paddock. The area should be checked and cleared of unauthorized persons.