

Quantitative evaluation of the impact of the IFEEL Method of Equine Facilitated Psychotraumatology (EFPT) intervention using the Clinical Outcome in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure (CORE - OM)



Jane M Williams
Hartpury University
Gloucester, UK

Sun Meyer
IFEEL Method
West Sussex, UK



The use of horses within human mental health services has occurred since the 1950s (Wang et al, 2015). Equine human interventions are increasing in popularity within human counselling and behavioural development programmes. However, despite this, few evidence based studies evaluating the impact of these studies on their human participants exist.

RESEARCH AIM

To measure the impact of a 3-day EFPT programme on participants' psychological health using an established tool: the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure (CORE - OM) (Evans et al, 2000)

METHODOLOGY

- 3-day EFPT programme
- 37 veteran participants presented with and/or were diagnosed with a Mental Health Disorder (MHD) and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- CORE - OM completed by participants @ start of Day 1 (D1) and @ end of Day 3 (D3)
- Mean \pm sd scores calculated for all CORE - OM dimensions, CORE ALL and CORE ALL R (Evans et al, 2000)
- Wilcoxon signed rank analyses tested differences D1 - D3 (significance: $P < 0.05$)

CORE - OM (Evans et al, 2000)

- Widely used measure designed to promote practice based evidence of impact of psychological therapies
- 34 Likert scale style questions
- Rated from 1: not at all to 5: most/all of the time
- Four dimensions:
 - CORE W: subjective well being
 - CORE P: problems/symptoms
 - CORE F: life functioning
 - CORE R: risk/harm
- Also measure CORE ALL
- Mean scores between 0-4 indicate global psychological distress from 'healthy' $0 < 0.6$ to 'severe' > 2.5 , with clinical distress cut off > 1.0

MAIN FINDINGS

- CORE - OM results for all dimensions reduced from the start (D1) to the end (D3) of the EFPT programme, demonstrating a reduction in participants' psychological distress (Table 1)

Table 1: CORE - OM results start of Day 1 (D1) to end of Day 3 (D3)

CORE - OM dimension	MEAN \pm SD D1	MEAN \pm SD D3	P VALUE
CORE W	2.02 \pm 0.86	1.48 \pm 1.02	P=0.0001
CORE P	2.1 \pm 0.82	1.22 \pm 0.80	P=0.025
CORE F	1.83 \pm 0.7	0.87 \pm 0.77	P=0.0001
CORE R	0.71 \pm 0.83	0.22 \pm 0.47	P=0.0001
CORE ALL	1.74 \pm 0.65	0.92 \pm 0.64	P=0.007
CORE ALL ^R	1.99 \pm 0.70	1.74 \pm 0.74	P=0.025

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The IFEEL Method EFPT intervention was an effective tool to reduce short term psychological distress in this sample of participants with PTSD.

The results support the use of EFPT in affect and interpersonal regulation skills interventions for clinical populations suffering the effects of trauma.

We recommend CORE - OM as an objective, repeatable and validated measure by which equine human interventions can be evaluated.

REFERENCES: Wang, M.E., (2017). Equine Assisted Psychotherapy: An Overview of the Therapeutic Use of the Horse in Mental Health Settings. Evans, C., Mellor Clark, J., Margison, F., Barkham, M., Audin, K., Connell, J., & McGrath, G. (2000). CORE: Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation. Journal of Mental Health, 9 (3), 247-255.