

A Pilot Study of Therapeutic Horseback Riding for Autistic Children with Parent-Child Relationship

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ABSTRACT

By using the theory and practice of therapeutic horseback riding in combination with the overall environment and the therapeutic course's design and layout, this study aims to further compare and criticize the intimacy change of the parent-child relationship in autistic children. The research purposes of this study are as follows: (1) to find out whether creating a horse-riding race course for therapeutic horseback riding and the parent-child interaction modes would have a positive influence on the parent-child relationship; (2) to understand the current status and connotation of therapeutic horseback riding on the improvement of parent-child relationship; (3) to review the possible options of therapeutic horseback riding, and aim to include therapeutic horseback riding in the National Health Insurance scheme. This study conducted in-depth interview, which is a qualitative research method, to on five parents who participated in a therapeutic horseback riding activity. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) the child of the interviewed family must have been diagnosed and confirmed by a doctor as having autism; (2) the age requirement for participants of this therapeutic horseback riding activity must be between the ages of six to ten considering that they are children; (3) children who participate in the activity must have no previous equestrian training. The results of the initial research are: (1) the experience of interaction in a new environment can strengthen the parent-child relationship; new environment experience includes the traffic from home to the race course, and the parent-child interaction on the way; (2) taking the cooperation initiative enhances the parent-child relationship; parents' participation in horse-riding on the race course gives children positive encouragement; (3) a stable emotional attachment needs time as a bridge; the longer the parents give out their care and love, the more reinforced the emotional attachment is; (4) regular exercise is beneficial to the parent-child relationship; with a metabolic equivalent of about 2.5 to 4, therapeutic horseback riding is a moderate exercise. Parental involvement would be more conducive to the maintenance of parent-child relationship.

Keywords : therapeutic horseback riding、autism、parent-child

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