

YODER SAYS...

They come to the farm early some days, just to watch the sunrise or sit in the quiet. Often in the middle of the day I see them hustle out of a meeting, walking briskly and full of air until they come to rest next to one of the herd and then, exhale.

Late in the day the saddles come out and we might ride off into the woods. The hum of voices, beeping of computers, and ringing of phones is swiftly exchanged for the rustle of tree branches and the steady beat of hooves onto the earth. The startling change of scene, sound, feeling—and okay, even smell—creates an opportunity to release and get grounded.

These restorative opportunities are part of the benefits package of working at our farm. A time for intentional release followed by a grounding moment can restore the mind and body. Of course, clinicians at our farm use a variety of interventions (including me, Yoder, the most awesome intervention) to help a client experience grounding or self-regulation. I know feeling my steady movement can settle the most agitated client, and I have experienced others who learn to up- or down-regulate themselves just by encouraging one of the herd to move with them or perhaps be calm and still. Clients develop incredible awareness of their ability in these moments; it is also important to bring these experiences to every member of our team. We have both mental health and occupational therapy clinicians at our farm and they talk a lot about this, sharing ideas and strategies, all of which help our clients and the entire team.

Admittedly, I am happiest to see the team take time to help themselves with these strategies. Our clients and the entire herd can feel it when they don't. Tension runs high when team members neglect their own self-care. It happens, but it is always better when they enjoy the wonderful resource of our farm, even if that means taking just a moment between clients or meetings. One time they scheduled a whole day to enjoy the farm and each other, and us horses of course, with some skjoring! Whoop! That was a blast! (Please note my handsome self in the photos.)

We can talk all day about healing and restoration. You smart clinicians can explain the benefits of our services to clients, but I think we truly begin to serve when we practice what we teach. The complementary practices of mental health and occupational therapy at our farm have given great benefits to our clients and our team members. The function of restoration and grounding builds a foundation for healthy connection and a more productive work environment. That's how we like it here. Come and visit us sometime.

~ Best, Yoder



YODER

THE THERAPY PONY, FEATURED COLUMNIST

You can email me through
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(Please write Yoder Says in the subject line)

