



Equine Stress Control Therapy differs from training and other relaxation techniques.

by Barbara H. Wright

Horse training and all other equine relaxation techniques treat the body, not the horse's brain. ESCT is the only equine psychotherapy and the only treatment method to calm horses using the brain as the primary treatment target.

This is achieved with neural reprocessing. This makes all the difference in the world in achieving quick and lasting results in calming nervous, anxious and spooky horses. Body changes, through operant conditioning, can take many tries and a great deal of time to achieve results. However, combining operant conditioning with ESCT creates a new treatment modality, one that accelerates the learning process and envelopes the horse in a therapeutic safety net at the same time. Behavior modification usually takes as long as operant conditioning, in most cases.

Again, with ESCT the behavior modification process is sped up. By combining ESCT with traditional training methods, both body and mind in the horse are trained to maximum benefit.

Massage, acupressure, acupuncture and other bodywork does not neurally reprocess the brain as does ESCT. They are wonderful methods for relaxing horses temporarily and assisting them through an issue. But, they do not change the fearful memory or remove the anxiety like ESCT, which is then reactivated when the treatment is over. By using such relaxation techniques with ESCT, behavior changes take place in a calm manner. The horse learns in a relaxed state and is later able to engage his awareness of new situations and objects in the same relaxed way.

You are encouraged to use ESCT along with the methods already working for you and to experiment with combining it with other treatments in ways that are particularly beneficial to each horse. Horses are eloquent and straightforward with their body language and you will have no problem understanding what he likes least and best. I emphasize that ESCT is a process and that means a work in progress.

What is Neural Reprocessing with ESCT?

Equine Stress Control Therapy (ESCT) is effective in horses due to neural reprocessing of the horse's brain circuitry using the ability of consciousness itself to create change. This harkens back to quantum physics and the idea that our minds or a horse's mind are not the only instruments that can understand information and/or meaning. Our bodies can also understand information and meaning at the physical cellular level.

Meaning is both physical and mental in nature because meaning carries thought and information. In humans, both thought and information are carried. We assume horses do not think, so their meaning is carried physically, not mentally as thought as words. (I personally do not feel that horses can't think as they can make choices and know better than me how to be a horse).

Thought and information are precursors to the physical world, as worked out by the great physicist David J. Bohm and described in his book, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. This explains why healing in animals in therapeutic settings without the language link is possible. Animals do not need to speak to understand the meaning of the deeper reality, the implicate order, out of which matter arises, forms into life and becomes sentient and happy to be alive and well. They dwell in the implicate order as we all do and benefit from the intelligence and information offered by the unseen as it transforms itself into molecular existence, then cellular existence, then in-body sensation of life experienced.

“The active use of information by electrons and, indeed all subatomic particles, indicates that the ability to respond to meaning is not only a characteristic of consciousness but of all matter,” said Michael Talbot, *The Holographic Universe*.

So now, when we deal with neural reprocessing with ESCT, we have a better understanding of why this intelligence gathering and reorganizing can take place. The electrons that jump across the empty space between synapses on neural cells are taking that “leap of faith” because they are armed with information that you, as the healer or therapist, guide with your technique and intention to heal. You cannot take yourself out of the process, nor can the object of your treatment, be it horse or humans. In the experiment, at the basic level of “stuff” as we know it, the observer is the observed.

With ESCT, one deals with brain chemistry changes in the horse brought on by the gentle neural reprocessing created during therapy. The eye movement and tapping transmit electrical signals to the brain via the bony structures, fascia, muscles and optic nerve, depending on which approach is used. The knitting together continues after therapy during integration.

Fear-based reactions are replaced with responses.

While horses don't have the frontal cortex of humans, they still develop the fear cycle the same way humans do as we both share amygdala driven responses. We know that with spooky horses, the scan and evaluate capability is erased or greatly diminished and the automatic startle response is highly activated. ESCT creates a more benevolent body chemistry that makes it easier for the horse to calm itself, allowing his brain to lay down new neural pathways by making choices that encourage him to “stay and play” instead of “run away.”

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