

EQUINE  
ENCOUNTERS  
AUSTRALIA



## Clinic To Arena

*Who Am I Now?* – Using Equine Assisted Therapy  
to Heal the Emotional Wounds of Breast Cancer

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Equine Assisted Psychotherapist  
Clinical Resource Therapist



When the treatment is finished the journey's not over  
On every conceivable level life has changed  
Family, friends colleagues expect life to return to normal  
For the client life can feel overwhelming both emotionally  
and physically

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# Purpose of the Program

The aim of the program is to help these women re-frame their experience, re-connect with themselves and their emotions and develop resources to cope better with everyday life.

## WHY POST TREATMENT?

- Receive a lot of support during treatment
- Regime limitations/low immunity
- Physical /psychological demands of treatment



# Program Objectives

- Explore thoughts, behaviors and emotions
- Re-build confidence and trust
- Learn to re-regulate and separate *'What if's'* from *'What if doesn't'*
- Expand *'Window of Tolerance'*
- Re-connect to somatic experience
- Discover *'Who Am I Now?'*



# Program Design

- 4-day immersive-style, residential group program
- Participant Centric
- Therapeutically based – Centered around Equine Assisted Therapy
- Incorporates a range of adjunct therapeutic modalities
- All interactions with the horse are ground-based
- Includes Psycho-education



Centred around Equine Assisted Therapy, the program incorporates a range of therapeutic modalities and gently graded activities.

Equine Assisted Activities, Relational Gestalt, Narrative Group work and Mindfulness.

Participants are encouraged to share stories, explore the suppressed emotions of their cancer journey and be supported to develop new resources to move forward in your life.





# Why horses?

- Sentient creature
- Prey Animal – Live with hypervigilance
- Live in the moment
- Authentic in their response
- 500kg+ of free thinking flesh!



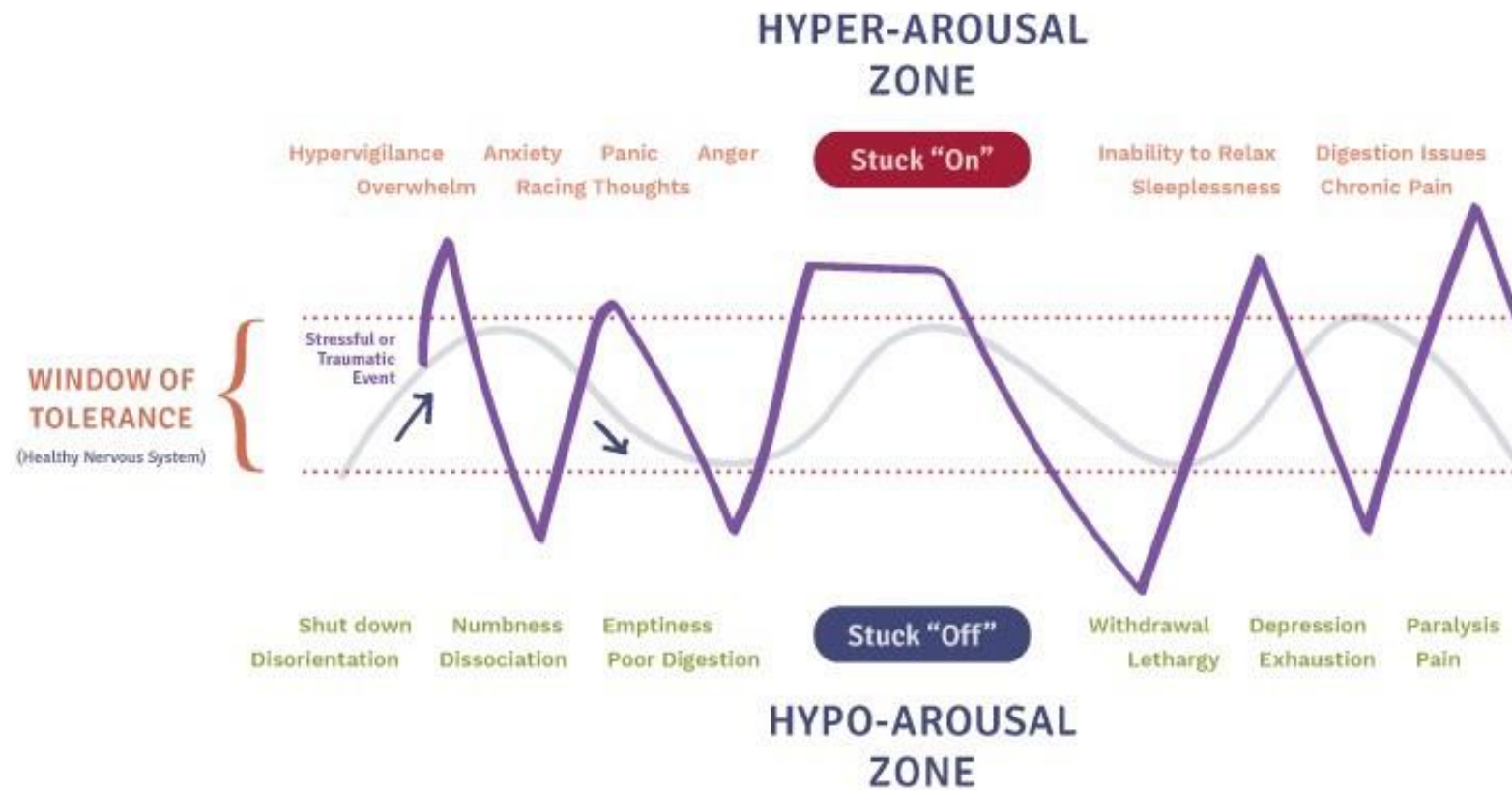
# Graded Equine Assisted Activities

Activity	Purpose
<b>Herd Meets</b>	Daily activity each morning to raise awareness that every day is different for self and others.
<b>Ground Work</b>	Based around learning natural horsemanship skills, these activities are undertaken daily and build in complexity, proximity and connection to the horse.
<b>Grooming</b>	Activity to allow participants to make close and tactile contact with a horse.
<b>Liberty Work (No contact with lead rope)</b>	In the latter stages of the program, the participants 'tie-off' the lead ropes and move the horse by energetic connection only.
<b>Obstacle Course</b>	'Metaphorical' activity where the course represents obstacles in life.

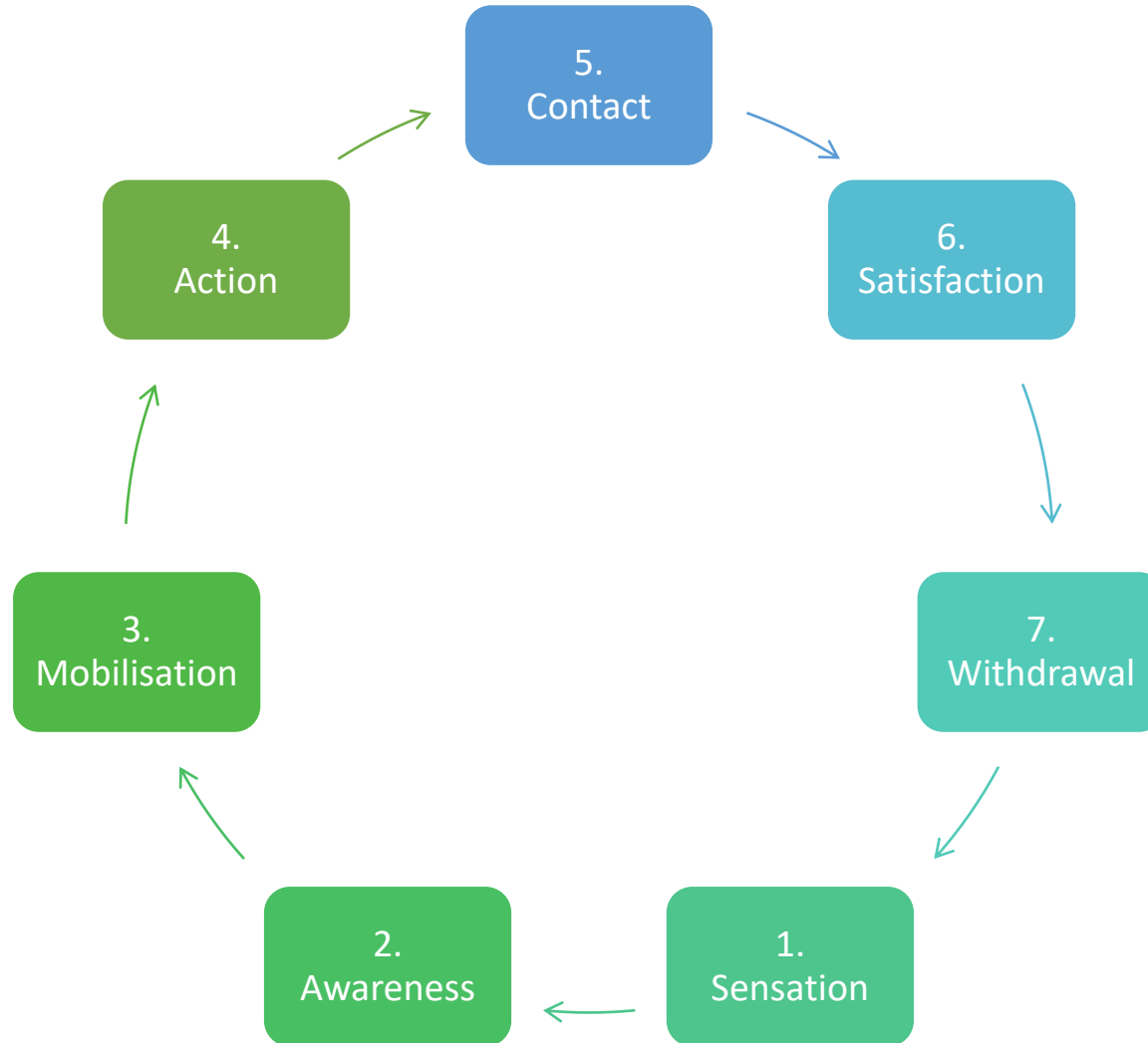




# Window of Tolerance



# Interruption to the Contact Cycle



# Group Activities

Activity	Purpose
<b>Mindfulness/Trauma-informed Yoga</b>	Sessions are incorporated throughout each day. These are used to support grounding, self-regulation, relaxation and provide resources for use at home.
<b>Art Therapy/Photo Languages</b>	Undertaken at a suitable point in the program to help participants view their perspectives on life – past, present and future.
<b>Group Discussions</b>	Group discussions form a major part of the program, allowing participants to share narrative in a safe and held space.



# Exemplar Session Plan

<b>0830 - 0930</b>	<b>Group Check-in</b>	Group discussion to see how everyone is travelling. Discuss individual reflections and issues.	<b>1100-1200</b>	<b>Reflection in Group</b>	Un-pack the activity. High lighting learnings, challenging thinking, reinforcing forward looking.
<b>10 mins</b>	Mindfulness	Somatic connection mindfulness – Inner & outer zone awareness	<b>1 hour</b>	LUNCH	
<b>0945 - 1000</b>	Meet & Greet Horses	Each day is different. What's happening with the herd? What's happening with you? Creating awareness, slowing down and regulating	<b>10 mins</b>	Mindfulness	Somatic connection mindfulness – Inner & outer zone awareness
<b>1000-1100</b>	Graded Activity with Horses	Choosing an activity with the horse which builds on themes that were raised during check-in	<b>1315 - 1415</b>	Graded Activity with Horses	Choosing an activity with the horse further develops the day's themes and learning outcomes
			<b>1430 - 1530</b>	Group Activity - Yoga	Relaxing body, mind & soul
			<b>1545 - 1630</b>	Group check-out	Group share at the end of day discussing reflections, learnings, awareness



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*Thank you*

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