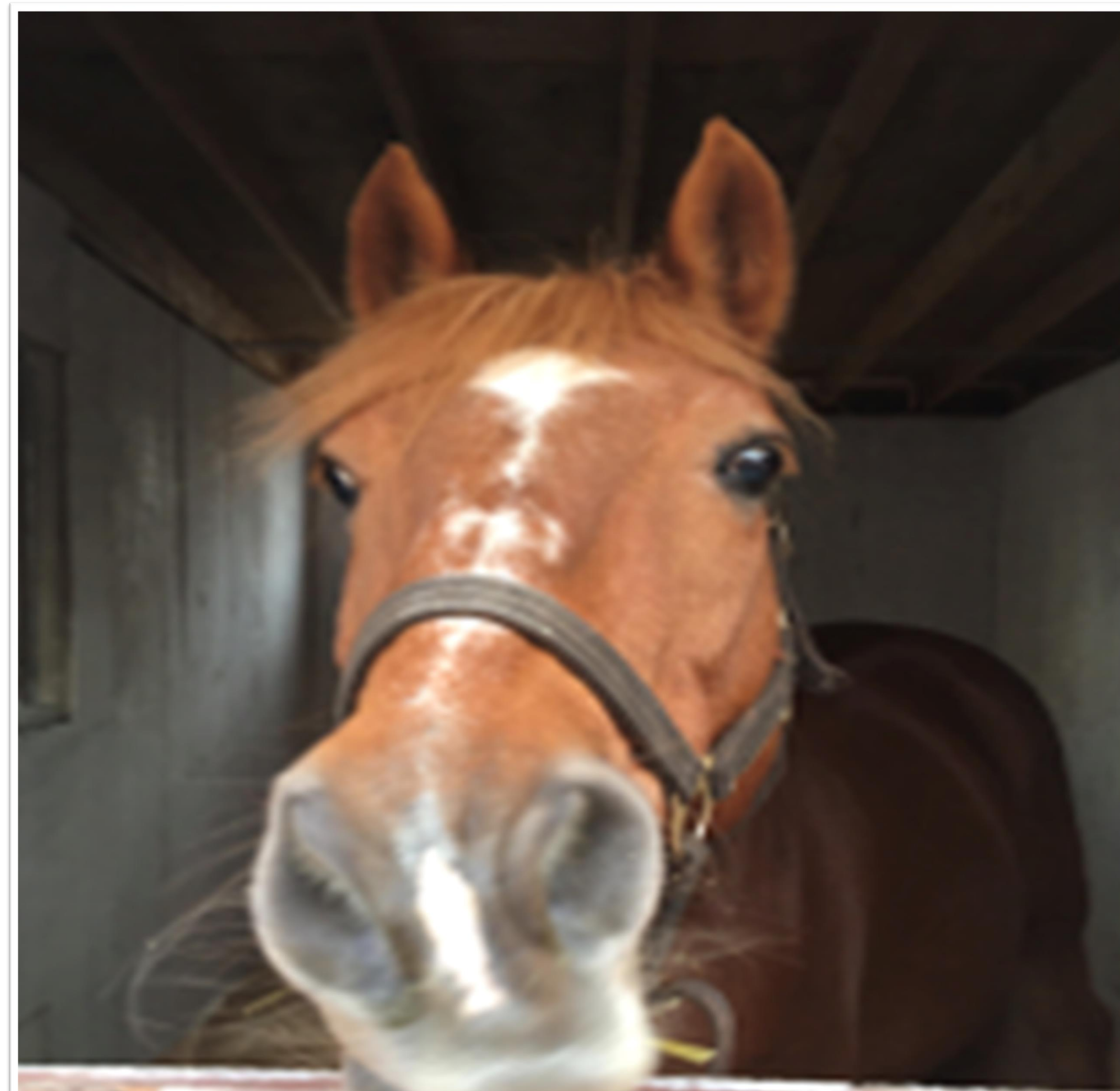




Novel Adaptive Riding Intervention for Youth with Anxiety: Fidelity Outcomes



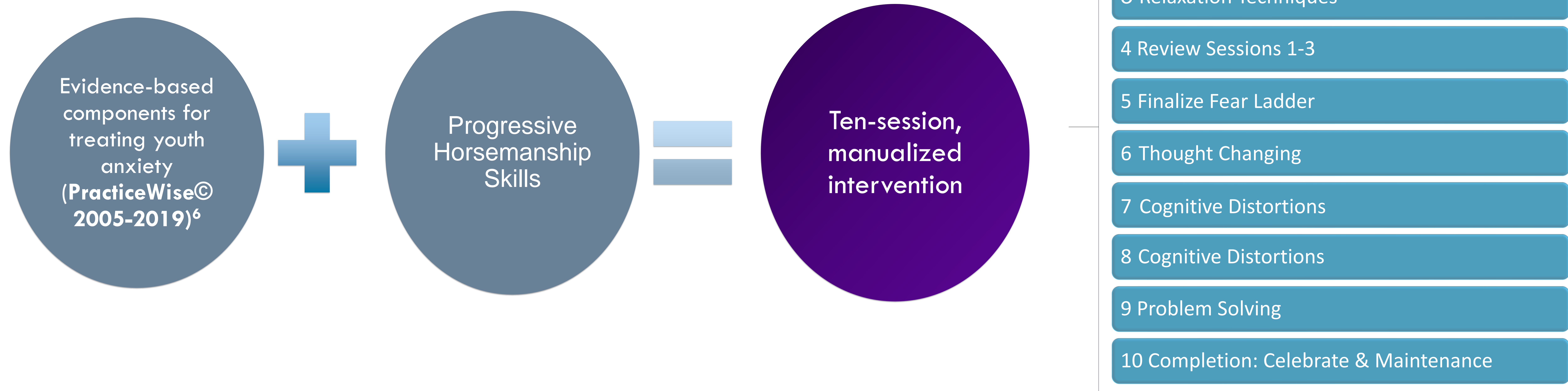
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Introduction

- Equine-Assisted Services (EAS) have shown promise in improving children's mental health challenges^{3,5}
- EAS may be particularly effective when stigma is high or barriers to access create lack of engagement^{4,8}
- No manualized, evidence-based, EAS have been rigorously studied for youth with mild to moderate anxiety^{3,5}
- Rates of anxiety are increasing¹, and half of children with anxiety do not receive needed treatment⁷
- Our team created Reining in Anxiety, an adaptive riding intervention for youth with mild to moderate anxiety
 - The intervention was created to be delivered by PATH-certified therapeutic riding instructors

Can Reining in Anxiety, an adaptive riding intervention for youth with anxiety, be delivered by PATH-certified therapeutic riding instructors with fidelity?

Intervention: 10 Sessions



Reining in Anxiety was tested in a small randomized trial at a New York City stable in a sample of 41 youth (ages 6 to 17) who screened positively for mild to moderate anxiety and their parents. Instructors who participated in research were assigned to teach either:

Reining in Anxiety Groups

Standard Therapeutic Riding Groups

Methods: Training Instructors on Reining in Anxiety

N=3 instructors from
GallopNYC



Implementation supports

- Checklists
- Session Props
- Handouts/ Journal

Supervision

- Weekly
- As needed/safety planning
- Fidelity

Training

- Initial 3-day in-person training with master's level mental health clinician/PATH CTRI/Co-Developer of Reining in Anxiety
- Printed manual + PowerPoint
- 1-day booster training 3 months after initial training

PATH Certification

- Evidence of equine handling & management skills
- Proof of CPR and First Aid
- Demonstration of riding skill and instruction
- Documentation of experience working with people with disabilities
- Pass 2 online exams (PATH Standards & general knowledge)
- **Instructors in this study had additional 3-15 months of experience as a PATH instructors**

Methods: Fidelity Collection

- Fidelity checklists were assembled for each of the 10 sessions
- Fidelity was collected by 7 different raters who observed the sessions
- Fidelity checks completed at 100% of sessions in first semester, then at 20% of sessions in remaining semesters
- Scores were calculated as percentages of elements completed in each session, then averaged overall and for individual instructors

Session 1: Psychoeducation on CBT Components		
A	<u>CHECK-IN</u>	DONE
1	Instructor introduced themselves and other staff members present in the room	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Instructor asked <u>riders</u> to introduce themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Instructors introduced riders to the horse they will be riding	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Instructors reviewed barn rules with riders	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Instructor instructed rider on how to groom horse	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<u>RIDING</u>	
6	<u>Mount</u> Instructor asked riders to mount the horse	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<u>Warm Up.</u> Instructor conducted warm up activity (physical tasks=muscular movements; mental tasks=riders tell jokes)	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<u>Activity</u> Instructor reviewed horse commands (WHOA BACK, WALK ON)	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Instructor asked riders to define anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Instructor described the three components of anxiety (what we think, feel and do)	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Instructor elicited examples of the 3 components of anxiety from riders (aloud/index card)	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Instructor had mounted riders sort index cards into buckets representing 3 components of anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	<u>Cool Down</u> Instructor explained importance of horse cool down	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Instructor facilitated dismounting off of horse	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	<u>END OF SESSION</u>	
15	<u>Psychoeducation.</u> Instructor asked riders to tell parents examples of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	<u>Practice</u> Instructor demonstrated/distributed practice journals for riders to complete	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Instructor asked riders to make a safety plan in their journal for the week (names of people to call if they need help)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Results

- Individual session fidelity ratings averaged 98.7%
- Individual instructor fidelity ratings were 98.1% (Instructor 1) and 99.7% (Instructor 2)
- Well beyond the threshold of excellent fidelity established in the field ($>80\%$)²
- Inter-rater reliability was excellent at $k= 0.92$

What we Learned:

PATH-certified riding instructors, who have no formal training or licensure in mental health, can be taught the curriculum by a trained and experienced master's-level mental health professional, and, with weekly supervision and implementation supports, deliver Reining in Anxiety with high fidelity.

Next Steps:

- Currently testing Reining in Anxiety in a second pilot trial
- Feasibility testing for collection of saliva as biomarkers of stress from horse, rider, and volunteer
- Planning for a larger randomized trial

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