



TheHorseCourse.org

proven in prisons, now available in the community for ex-offenders,
mental health service users and young people at risk



Professor Meek, RHUL Criminology, reports:

- 74% drop in negative behaviours, 168% increase in positive behaviours recorded in prison
- three times more effective in reducing reoffending than the next best programme (TSP)

Short, high impact interventions. We shift people who are **STUCK** at the extremes - aggressive and disruptive or anxious, shut down, depressed.

The non-verbal coaching style gets through to the **'HARD TO REACH'**, and helps them to **ENGAGE** with conventional treatment or education.

Participants learn by **DOING...**

- **CALMNESS** and **ASSERTIVENESS** as habits
- clear and respectful **COMMUNICATION**
- engage as **CONFIDENT, WILLING** learners
- take **RESPONSIBILITY** for thoughts, emotions and actions
- reduce **ANXIETY & CONFLICT**
- set **GOALS** and achieve them



The group above are receiving certificates at the end of the course. One spoke of his new found ability to understand other people, another said he felt hope for the very first time.

The young offender below is using calm, assertive leadership with empathy to build the horse's trust and confidence.



• **FREE TASTER SESSIONS** •

Please call Harriet Laurie on 01308 485080

or email h@thehorsecourse.org

Referrals

Building on our successful work in prisons, we have begun to replicate this intervention in the community. Referrals include severe ADHD, eating disorders, low self esteem, anxiety/depression, self harm, fighting/oppositional behaviour. We are also working with teachers, mental health workers and coaches to enhance their practice through learning our unique coaching style.

Skills gained through the programme

We use the **THC Star** (on page 3) as a referral and feedback tool. It reflects the eight skills we work on in a very deliberate way. If the participant is “stuck” near the centre on several points, we recommend the **ReStart**. Where difficulties are less extreme or entrenched, a **Highlight** day may be enough.

“We have CAMHS, Behavioural Support Services, Counselling and CBT – but what about the kids who just don’t seem to get anything out of talking? For the first time in years I now have a really effective alternative – TheHorseCourse offers us a new option to prevent exclusions and to reduce ongoing mental health issues.” Kirsty Dring, Wellbeing Team Leader, All Saints School

In order to achieve horsemanship goals, participants find themselves working on the eight **THC Star** skills.

Active Ingredients

The Horse provides motivation, structure, feedback and reward to participants. The horses are specially trained to provide very clear and easily observed feedback which participants cannot attribute to an interpersonal agenda.

The Horsemanship provides a context which is challenging, engaging and rewarding. The sheer size of the animals increases the sense of urgency in learning. The style of horsemanship we practice and teach (*Parelli.com*) is relationship-based, modelling the eight core skills shown on the **THC Star**. Challenges are guided by the Instructor to address specific needs. Shifts are made ‘in the moment’, in response to difficulties.

The Instructor observes participants *as if they were horses*, (reading their bodies, rather than listening to their words), and flexes coaching strategies in response. Our method relies largely on the skill and experience of the instructor as a horseman. Rather than try to talk people into self-efficacy, we “train” the skills non-verbally and then talk about it later. Instructors are trained to gradually increase challenges and decrease support - creating a struggle, yet ensuring success. It can be an uncomfortable process for participants, but crucially, they always find success through change.



“Horses are great teachers. Seeing these kids getting a horse to do something for them simply by controlling their own moods is incredible”

Martin Clunes PATRON

Available nationally, working in facilities local to service users

<p>Highlight Day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 participants, full day, broken into 3 sessions • working with 2 instructors and 2 horses • short written report for each pupil • c. £120 / participant
<p>A challenging, fun day in which clients taste the benefit of making changes in the eight areas outlined in the THC Star, but where just one particular area of difficulty will be highlighted in detail for each participant. In a recent pilot, 8 of 12 pupils with a range of behavioural problems were seen to make sufficient shifts in one day, four were referred on to the ReStart to continue the work. Service users and staff can usefully participate as a team. All receive a THC Certificate and photos.</p>	
<p>The complete ReStart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two participants, seven 2 hour sessions • 2 horses, one Instructor, consecutive days • written report & THC Star • c. £500 / participant
<p>The ReStart exactly replicates the successful programme we have delivered in prisons. In seven back to back sessions, the participant learns, practices and fixes new habits for life. A horsemanship goal gives the sessions a shape and purpose, though the underlying goal is to improve the eight human skills outlined in the THC Star. Before and after scores are discussed and completed by the instructor and participant together in an exit interview, based on tangible progress made during the week. At this point strategies are verbalised and participants take ownership of their learning and understand what they need to keep working on. The THC Star enables participants to share and continue their progress with key workers.</p> <p>Participants receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parelli Level 1 Horsemanship – external video assessment (USA) • THC Certificate, photos and a 10 minute Performance DVD of themselves • Their completed THC Star, to document and share their progress 	
<p>Tailored sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • c. £80 / hour
<p>Individual sessions, group top-ups, coaching the coach.</p>	

* Costs may vary depending on location and facilities.



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Participants

“this can make a proper angry person calm down”

“when you’re nervous they are too”

“other courses, they tell you what to do but they don’t really put it into action”

“not just talking, I’ve been doing that since I was 6 years of age and it’s never worked”



“Right from the first moment they had to change the way they were being, take control of the situation, be effective. If they can do that in their lives, that is huge.”

Tracey Hodder, Specialist Support Worker, Compass PRU

“You learn self-discipline”

“how to read body language so you understand “

“horses teach you to just not escalate things so much, so quickly”

“this has made me practice things, usually I just give up”

“having the horses means you see their reaction, they know better.”

“I’m not so aggressive on the wing now, I realised it’s all about communication”

“It’s a thing about life, how we should treat one another”

Staff

“enormous gain for our young people in a remarkably short and powerful intervention”

“often I see these kids so afraid of failure that they won’t even try”

“pushed well and truly outside his comfort zone and achieving so much”

“the style and approach fitted perfectly with the needs of our lads”

“new skills in emotional self management”

“greater willingness to accept advice and guidance”

“more than doubled her time in lessons”

“thought-provoking and enlightening”

“Wing staff and the most hard bitten officers have been impressed and won over”

...more on the website, including an academic analysis of exit interviews

“Conflicts get resolved, difficult behaviour reduces and a sense of commitment and purpose seems to follow... we are keen to repeat this for staff and service users together. ”

Nicholas Purchase FRSA, Director, Ashness Care, London
Specialist mental health services for men with forensic histories and challenging behaviours

Academic Evidence

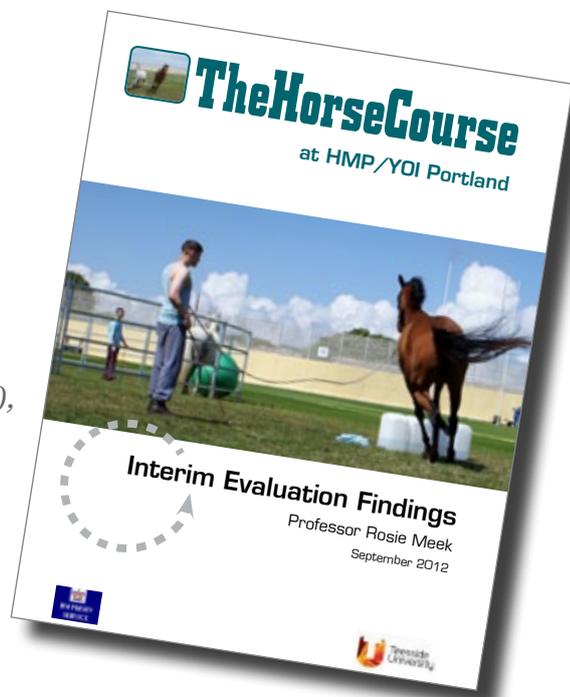
The project began in HMP/YOI Portland in 2010, see the *interim evaluation 2012* and more on our website.

Professor R Meek, Criminology, RHUL, 2013:

*“At 12 months post-release, reoffending among TheHorseCourse participants stands at 44%, a **19% drop** on the cohort’s 63% predicted reoffending rate (OGRS). Given the small sample (n=25), we cannot say with certainty that this reduction in reoffending will be maintained as the cohort increases, but earlier evidence from the evaluation includes statistically significant reductions in adjudications and negative behaviour entries. Taken together with the emerging reoffending data, THC stands out as a*

promising intervention with particular success among some of the hardest to engage

*offenders, for whom so little is available. Note that the most successful intervention with this cohort, Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) achieves **just 6% reduction** in reoffending (Sadlier 2010), and that THC referrals include those who are considered too disruptive or disengaged for TSP.”*



“This non-verbal method of teaching empowers and teaches entirely new life skills such as responsibility, control, self esteem and a sense of necessity, the knowledge that they need to be a resourceful and assertive leader and learner right now and that they can shape their own experiences of life”

Kitty Forrester, Head of Year, All Saints School

As an organisation

The equine-assisted field typically suffers from poor evidence of efficacy. We are committed to bold innovation, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

As a charity we aim to promote effective work as widely as possible. To this end we offer workshops and information widely, hoping to contribute to best practice. We do not endorse everyone who has attended a training or who uses our materials, though we very much hope they find both useful. Our own **THC Practitioners** are carefully selected, trained, assessed and monitored. TheHorseCourse is available nationally in the UK, delivered by **THC Practitioners** listed on www.thehorsecourse.org/team They are free to contract independently, or through TheHorseCourse.



TheHorseCourse.org

Registered Charity No 1141654 Patrons Lord Knight of Weymouth Martin Clunes

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