

LITTLE BIT THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER DUNMIRE STABLES **PROCEDURES**

Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center's (LBTRC) goal is to provide the highest quality services to our participants. We are continually developing policies and procedures to ensure that all aspects of our organization are running smoothly and efficiently. Below are policies that have been created to help us serve you better.

THERAPY

Plan to arrive 15 – 20 minutes early for your therapy appointment. When you arrive for therapy go directly to the Welcome Center. The front office staff will notify the therapist of your arrival and take payment.

Patients in the therapy program are responsible for all financial costs of services provided by LBTRC. The program will not bill third parties on your behalf for services provided. At the beginning of each treatment participants must pay the amount owed (by check or credit card – VISA, MasterCard or Discover) for the services provided. A facility fee (nonrefundable) will be collected at the beginning of each session.

ADAPTIVE RIDING

Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early for your class. Helmets are available to borrow for class or you bring your own. From the front office, go around to the back of the building to wait by the tack barn, arena gate or mounting ramp so the instructor knows you are ready to ride.

Group lessons with three or more riders are scheduled for one hour. Semiprivate lessons are scheduled for 45 minutes, and private lessons are 30 minutes. Group lessons at LBTRC are scheduled for an hour, but the first 15 minutes is allotted for the instructor to assist riders to mount their horses and instruction is designated for the following 45 minutes. It is possible that the instructor may finish teaching the class 5 minutes early to dismount riders as the scheduled time the instructor has with a group of riders is one full hour, so they have to manage their time with the students to include mounting and dismounting within the one-hour time period.

If registration circumstances result in only 1 or 2 riders registering for a particular class, the Adaptive Services Director will try to accommodate the riders by moving them to another time for a Group lesson. If moving times is not recommended or unavailable, the class length will change to 45 minutes (semi-private/two riders) or to 30 minutes (private/one rider). When riders are added to the class and becomes a group lesson (3 – 5 riders), the class length will change accordingly.

Riders in the Adaptive Riding program must remit a registration form and the full registration fee prior to session commencing unless on an approved payment plan. Services will be withheld for any riders whose account is in arrears.

UN-MOUNTED LESSONS IN THE ADAPTIVE RIDING PROGRAM

Listed below are situations and reasons why we may make the decision to do an un-mounted class:

- **Horsemanship Education:** we want to provide the opportunities for riders to learn more skills off the horse such as grooming and tacking and to gain an understanding of what goes into caring for the horse.
- **Social skills:** un-mounted activities can increase interaction with the horse, other riders, and volunteers. These experiences provide a chance for riders to practice appropriate social skills.
- **Weather:** to keep our riders safe, during extreme hot or cold, excessive rains, thunder and lightning we may choose to do an un-mounted lesson.
- **Horse situations:** horses do become ill or injured; when this happens there is some stress placed on the rest of the herd. We do our best to find a substitute horse, but with their schedules this is not always possible. Because our horses do incredible work for us, we monitor their individual workload closely to ensure they are happy and healthy.
- **Volunteer situations:** over 450 volunteers are required each week to assist us in providing this service to our community. Our Volunteer Department works hard to make sure each class has the number of volunteers needed for each rider. When the volunteer department is not able to fill the classes, rather than cancel one rider, or the entire class, we may offer an un-mounted lesson.

When a decision is made to provide an un-mounted experience, we will make every attempt to contact you before the lesson begins. If you choose not to participate in the un-mounted lesson you will not be refunded or credited the cost of the lesson you missed. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, or ideas for an un-mounted lesson, feel free to speak with your instructor.

2. ATTENDANCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

NO MAKE-UP CLASSES OR TREATMENTS

If a participant is unable to attend a class, there are no make-up classes/treatments.

It is very difficult to schedule make-up classes for participants because our schedule is so full, volunteers have other time commitments, and instructors have other duties to perform as well as other classes to teach. If a rider in the Adaptive Program misses class due to illness or a conflict in your schedule, this will simply be counted as an absence. No make-up classes can be scheduled. We are unable to issue refunds or credits for classes that you miss.

REFUND POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- If an adaptive rider cancels a month or more from the start of a session, full tuition minus a \$100.00 non-refundable deposit is given.
- If an adaptive rider cancels less than a month prior to the start of a session, 50% of the registration fee will be refunded, unless the cancellation is an unplanned medical necessity with a doctor's note or faces an extreme hardship discussed with our Executive Director
- If an adaptive rider cancels after classes have commenced, Little Bit will not refund the full tuition unless the cancellation is an unplanned medical necessity with a doctor's note or faces an extreme hardship discussed with our Executive Director.
- If Little Bit cancels the class or treatment because we cannot offer the service, we will refund or credit the rider's account. Excludes cancelations due to weather or "acts of God". Make up lessons are not offered.

RUNNING LATE TO CLASS - 15 MINUTE POLICY

Out of respect for your other classmates and other riders in the Adaptive Program, we cannot hold your horse more than 15 minutes past the time your class is scheduled to start. If you know that you will be late, please call and let us know. After 15 minutes, if you are not here and/or have not called, your horse will be returned to the barn to be put away and your volunteers will be released to leave. Everyone involved appreciates your promptness!

LEAVING THE PREMISES DURING YOUR RIDER'S CLASS OR TREATMENT

If you choose to leave LBTRC while the person you are with is riding in a class or receiving treatment, please notify the front desk that you will be leaving the property and confirm that we have a cell phone number to reach you in the case of an emergency while you are off the property.

TAKING TIME OFF FROM LITTLE BIT

Adaptive riders are allowed to take a break from the program of up to one year before they must return to the wait list.

Be aware that when you choose to take a session off, LBTRC is not able to hold your place in the same class or treatment time. Class space for the Adaptive Program is filled by those who return their registration first. The therapists keep full caseloads every session so when a patient takes a session off, their treatment time is filled with a new patient. When you choose to return to the Hippotherapy program, the therapist can

inform you of any openings in their schedule. As a returning patient you will be offered treatment openings prior to those on the wait list.

RETURNING TO LITTLE BIT AFTER ANY INJURY

If a LBTRC Adaptive Rider or therapy patient has any traumatic event (for example a broken arm or surgery) that requires medical attention LBTRC will require a doctor's release prior to the individual returning to Adaptive Riding or therapy treatment. A verbal release from the doctor is not adequate. A doctor's note can be delivered, mailed, or faxed to LBTRC (fax number: 425-883-1818) before the scheduled ride time. If the necessary documents are not provided the instructor may make the decision for the individual to not ride at all until all information is provided. Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies are higher risk activities and should be considered as such. In order to return to Adaptive Riding or therapy treatment at LBTRC the individual must:

1) Submit a note from the treating physician stating that, in their opinion, the individual may return to adaptive riding or therapy treatment.

2) The individual must also meet the safety considerations of the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications as determined by LBTRC staff.

3) The instructor or therapist must be comfortable with the medical condition and any changes that may need to be made to accommodate the situation.

A doctor's release does not guarantee that the individual can return to Adaptive Riding or therapy treatment.

STAY HOME IF SICK!

Due to the sensitive medical nature of many of our riders we cannot take the chance of infecting others. Considering the vulnerable population we work with on a daily basis at Little Bit, please DO NOT come if you have flu -like symptoms. If you're feeling ill, please contact us or leave a message on the cancellation line by calling Little Bit at 425-882-1554. A good guideline is to wait 24 hours without fever, vomiting or diarrhea. For overall safety, an instructor has the discretion to ask a rider not to ride if they are ill.

3. CANCELTION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

CANCELTION POLICY

As soon as you are aware you will not be attending class or treatment, contact the front office immediately to cancel. Because a number of volunteers commit their time to ensure a safe ride, we ask for notification of when a rider will be absent at least **24 hours in advance, for all non-medical reasons**. If it is a last minute medical emergency, we ask to be notified as soon as possible. Please speak with someone at the front desk **directly**, do not cancel with your therapist or instructor in any circumstance.

We ask that cancellations are not made via email but rather over the phone or in person at the front office. It is not guaranteed that a cancellation received through email will reach the instructor in time. After regular office hours we have a 24 hour cancellation line that you can leave a message informing us of your absence. Notification after your scheduled ride or treatment time will count as a “no-show.”

When you know you are going to miss a lesson please don't cancel your volunteer/s. Your volunteer/s maybe used to assist other riders in your class. The Volunteer Department is responsible for scheduling and canceling volunteers.

NO SHOW & 3 STRIKES POLICY

If you miss an Adaptive lesson without notifying Little Bit ahead of your scheduled ride time, it will be considered a “no-show.” After three no shows in one session, you will be canceled for the rest of the session without refund or credit and you will not be able to register for the following session. With a long wait list of people who want to participate at Little Bit we want to ensure that those who are filling a place in the schedule are committed to participating in the program.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER OR UNSAFE DRIVING CONDITIONS

The basic assumption of this policy is Little Bit (LB) is open. However, when inclement weather occurs, LB Riders and Clients follow the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) www.lwsd.org and/or Northshore School District (NSD) www.nsd.org for weather closures.

- **LWSD and/or NSD closed:** Classes and treatments at LB will be cancelled for the day.
- **LWSD and/or NSD late start:** Classes and treatments at LB will start at the same time as LWSD or NSD.
- *For example, if one district is open and the other is closed, LB will be closed.*
- *If one district is open and the other is two hours late, LB will open @ 11am. Classes or treatments that would have taken place before 11am will be cancelled.*

Arena Conditions: If LWSD is open, there may still be conditions that necessitate offering un-mounted lessons. For example, temperatures below 20 degrees may cause the footing in the arena to freeze making it unsafe for horses and volunteers. Similarly, snow melt from the roof, wind or other stormy conditions can create unsafe conditions in the arena. In these cases, classes and treatments at LB will be individually evaluated and transitioned to un-mounted lessons.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

CLOTHING

What to wear:

- Long pants and closed toed shoes are required.
- We prefer that riders wear a hard-soled shoe with a low heel, like a cowboy boot or paddock boot.
- Sneakers are ok, but they should not have a thick and heavy tread. Sneakers need to be firmly tied so they will not slip off.
- We require that ALL riders wear an ASTM-SEI approved safety helmet no older than 5 years while mounted and in the barn. You may borrow one of ours (a variety of sizes are found in the helmet room); or, if you wish to purchase your own, please ask your instructor or therapist for a recommendation as to where to buy one.

What is not allowed:

- Open toed shoes, sandals, and slip-on shoes cannot be worn while in the barn, working around the horses, or riding. The rest of the clothing should be weather appropriate; it is good to dress in layers in the cooler months.

REASSESSMENTS OF PARTICIPANTS AT LBTRC

Sometimes during a rider's tenure at Little Bit it is necessary to re-evaluate the rider or patient for a variety of reasons. When this evaluation is urgent it may be necessary to put riding on hold until a determination has been made that is in the best interest of the rider and the Program. One of LBTRC's core values is to put riders' first and this reassessment process may help to fulfill part of this core value.

Every effort will be made to complete the re-assessment process in a timely manner, but we are unable to determine how long it may take. In some cases we are counting on doctors and other professional to provide us with medical records and testing to help us make the best possible evaluation of each rider on a case by case basis.

The reassessment process does not supersede the casual ongoing process of re-evaluating riders in classes that instructors do every day. This is often demonstrated by asking another instructor, the Head Instructor, Program Director, or a Therapist to take a look at one of their riders, or even help in the class to problem solve. This process is designed as the next step once a casual assessment has not helped the rider or in the event some new medical information has come to our attention or the parent or rider has requested a formal reassessment from Little Bit.

LBTRC RIDER WEIGHT LIMIT

LBTRC strives to do what is best for our horses, volunteers, staff, and riders. We work on ensuring that no horse has to carry a rider who is too heavy for him or her. While some of our horses may be large and look very strong, they may have other issues that are not visible that would make it unsafe, or unethical, for them to carry adult or large riders (age, soundness, conditioning, confirmation, etc.). As well as taking the horses into consideration, we also have to be aware of the staff and volunteers when it comes to rider weight limits to help prevent injury in the event of an emergency dismount. Our weight limit here is 190 lbs.

DISCHARGE POLICY

Occasionally, it is necessary for an existing (current) rider in the Adaptive Program to be discharged. These discharges may occur after a re-assessment has been made by a licensed PT or OT, and this therapist has determined that the rider is: 1) In danger of being injured just by sitting on the back of a moving horse, 2) Little Bit does not have a horse which is suitable for the rider, or 3) Little Bit does not have the staff to serve the rider within established safety guidelines (staff consists of Instructor, therapist, or volunteers) or 4) the rider's weight exceeds the maximum weight limit (190 lbs.).

The procedure for the discharge of an existing rider will follow these steps:

- 1) A PT or OT assesses the rider and the therapist has determined that there is a risk if this rider continues in the class/situation that he/she is currently enrolled.
- 2) The rider is moved to a Hippotherapy session, and the rider still cannot be managed safely even with alternative positioning, modifications to tack and equipment, staffing changes, and a horse change, if available.

The therapist will assess the rider for the following:

- a. Is the rider able to accommodate to the movement of the horse (head control, symmetry)
- b. Does the rider have adequate range of motion in the hips to sit astride a horse with the proper barrel width to offer a secure base of support
- c. Does the rider have the potential to achieve biomechanical alignment
- d. Does the rider demonstrate safety awareness
- e. Does the rider appear to have the ability to express pain or discomfort
- f. Does the rider have the potential for independent sitting balance
- g. Does the rider demonstrate violent behavior against themselves, staff or horses while at Little Bit, which cannot be managed by the staff
- h. Is the riders weight in excess of the Little Bit weight limit

If after assessment the therapist has determined the rider cannot be managed safely, given the aforementioned criteria, then the rider will not be allowed to continue until or unless the deciding factors have changed and the rider can be re-assessed.

The rider may be appropriate to participate in un-mounted lessons, if the therapist has determined safety can be maintained in the barn environment.

SEIZURE INFORMATION

There are a number of riders in our program who experience seizure activity. This is a factor to be considered in any sport activity, and especially in riding horses. The instructors at Little Bit are trained to provide safe, fun and effective riding lessons to a wide variety of students, and communication about seizure activity is a very important factor in making this possible. We have safety measures that we may be able to put in place to ensure added security when there is a change in seizure activity. Seizures can vary widely in type and severity depending on the individual. For this reason, *the presence of seizure activity does not necessarily rule out riding as a safe activity*, but rather through a clear and honest dialogue with the instructor we are able to assess and often implement safety measures to allow a student to continue riding safely.

Please maintain ongoing communication with your instructor to help us plan better for the needs of each rider. Thank you for your help in this area!

VISITORS ACCOMPANYING RIDERS AND PATIENTS

If you bring a relative or friend to watch a class/treatment, they must check in at the front office in the Welcome Center. The front office staff will provide them with a "Special Occasion Volunteer Form" The forms are available at the front office. Please see the front desk with any questions regarding visitors.

Personal Care

LBTRC staff and volunteers are not trained or qualified to provide assistance for personal care needs. LBTRC staff or volunteers may not provide personal assistance with the exception of professional therapist in the course of their treatment plans. Individuals requiring assistance with personal care must provide their own caregiver.