

# **My XYZ Does This, That, Or The Other Thing...**

*What Should I Do?!?!?!?*

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# The Goal Of This Presentation

- ▶ Identify The Cause Of Problem Behavior During The Riding Lesson
- ▶ Determine What Can Be Done In The Moment And What Will Need A Longer-Term Approach
- ▶ Review Frequently Used Interventions
- ▶ Take What We Already Know And Have Tried One Step Further
- ▶ Invite Other Suggestions And Solutions From The Audience

# Three Scenarios

1. The Rider Won't Keep The Helmet On
2. The Horse Nips The Volunteer
3. The Volunteer Talks Over The Instructor

# Who Is The Primary Learner At The Moment?

- ▶ The Rider?
- ▶ The Horse?
- ▶ The Volunteer?
  
- ▶ How Can The Instructor Make Horse And Volunteer Corrections Through The Rider?



**There Is No  
Magic Wand**

# Scenario #1

## The Rider Won't Wear A Helmet

- ▶ Is The Cause:
  - ▶ Sensory Based (Tactile Defensiveness)?
  - ▶ Or
  - ▶ Behavioral?

# Sensory Based vs. Behavioral Based Behavior

- ▶ **Sensory Based Behavior**
  - ▶ Involuntary Neurological Response
  - ▶ Overstimulation of Sensory Integration
  - ▶ Hyper-reactive Sensation to Touch
- ▶ **Behavioral Based Behavior**
  - ▶ Purposeful/Intentional/Non-Compliance
  - ▶ Power Struggle to Gain Control



# The Rider Won't Wear A Helmet

- ▶ Sensory Based Issue
  - ▶ Comfort
    - ▶ Helmet Model & Head Shape
    - ▶ Helmet Shims, Foam Rubber Or Knit Cap Underneath
  - ▶ Can The Rider's Head Be Desensitized?
    - ▶ Heat
    - ▶ Cold
    - ▶ Massage



# The Rider Won't Wear A Helmet

- ▶ Longer Term Strategy - Sending A Helmet Home
  - ▶ Don't Worry About Securing The Harness Until The Rider Tolerates The Feel Of The Helmet
  - ▶ Have The Rider Wear The Helmet When Playing Video Games, Watching TV, Etc.
  - ▶ Have The Rider Wear The Helmet When Eating Ice Cream Or Another Favorite Treat
  - ▶ Use Force To Keep The Helmet On Until It Is Tolerated (Parents Choice)
  - ▶ Tell The Rider Several Days Ahead When (What Day) They Will Wear The Helmet At The Riding Center

# The Rider Won't Wear A Helmet

- ▶ Behavioral Issue - Oppositional Behavior
  - ▶ Consequences:
    - ▶ Natural - If You Don't Wear A Helmet You May Hurt Your Head If You Fall Off
    - ▶ Logical - It's A Rule, Everyone Who Rides Here Must Wear A Helmet
    - ▶ Implied - If You Wear Your Helmet During Your Lesson You Can Have Ice Cream On The Way Home

# The Rider Won't Wear A Helmet

- ▶ Behavioral Issue - Determine Cause:
  - ▶ Oppositional (ODD)?
  - ▶ Fear?
  - ▶ Discomfort: Tired, Hungry, Thirsty?
  - ▶ Medication?
  - ▶ Does Presence Of Parent Exacerbate Behavior?
- ▶ Possible Solutions:
  - ▶ Allow A Parent Or Sibling To Put On A Helmet And Ride
  - ▶ Can You Make Wearing A Helmet The Rider's Idea?
  - ▶ Ground Lessons: Curriculum To Build Confidence With Horse
  - ▶ Change Lesson Time/Day
  - ▶ Ask Parent To Wait In Area Where They Cannot Be Seen

## **Scenario #2**

# **The Horse Nips The Volunteer**

**All behavior is a form of communication**

# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ When?
  - ▶ Tightening The Girth/Cinch
  - ▶ Asking For The Trot
  - ▶ In The Mounting Ramp
  - ▶ Backing
  - ▶ Crowded

# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ Is The Cause:
  - ▶ Pain/Discomfort?
  - ▶ Confusion?
  - ▶ Burn-out?
  - ▶ Dominance?

# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ Pain/Discomfort
  - ▶ Saddle/Equipment Fit/Quality
  - ▶ Girth Or Cinch
  - ▶ Rider Position
  - ▶ Crowding
  - ▶ Lameness
  - ▶ Reflex/Reaction



# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ Confusion
  - ▶ Listen To The Leader?
  - ▶ Listen To The Rider?
  - ▶ A Spotter??? Now What?
  - ▶ Rider Involvement



# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ Burn Out
  - ▶ Day Or Two Off During The Week
  - ▶ Week Or Two Between Semesters
  - ▶ Trail Ride Or Off Property Fun

# The Horse Nips The Volunteer

- ▶ Dominance
  - ▶ The Hierarchy Of The Herd
  - ▶ Body Language
  - ▶ Proactive Vs. Reactive

# Rewarding & Correcting In Horse Language

- ▶ The Three Second Rule
- ▶ Effective Rewards For Good Behavior
- ▶ Effective Corrections
- ▶ What Corrections Can Be Done “In The Moment” With The Rider On The Horse’s Back?

# Correcting In Horse Language: Horse Teeth



# Horse Teeth



# Learn How To Snarl



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# Nipping Has Become A Reflex Reaction

- ▶ Horse And Handler Respecting Each Others Space
- ▶ Horse Invading The Handlers Space
- ▶ Handler Invading The Horses Space
- ▶ Handler Choking Up On Lead Rope In Mounting Ramp
- ▶ Physical Restraint - Human Cross Ties



# Scenario #3

## The Volunteer Talks Over The Instructor

- ▶ What Is The Cause?
  - ▶ Lack Of Training
  - ▶ Lack Of Awareness
  - ▶ Lack Of Self Control
  - ▶ Alpha Mare Syndrome
  - ▶ Passive Instructor

# Positive Redirection



# Levels Of Assistance

- ▶ Verbal - The Instructor
- ▶ Visual - The Volunteer
- ▶ Tactile - The Volunteer

# Lesson Ideas

- ▶ The Chat Lap
- ▶ Turn Taking Games
- ▶ Mime Lesson

# Good Luck Everyone!

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