

# Riding Free™ Pilot Study, an Equine Therapy Program for Children Diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Analysis of the PedsQL and Parent Report of Post-traumatic Symptoms (PROPS)



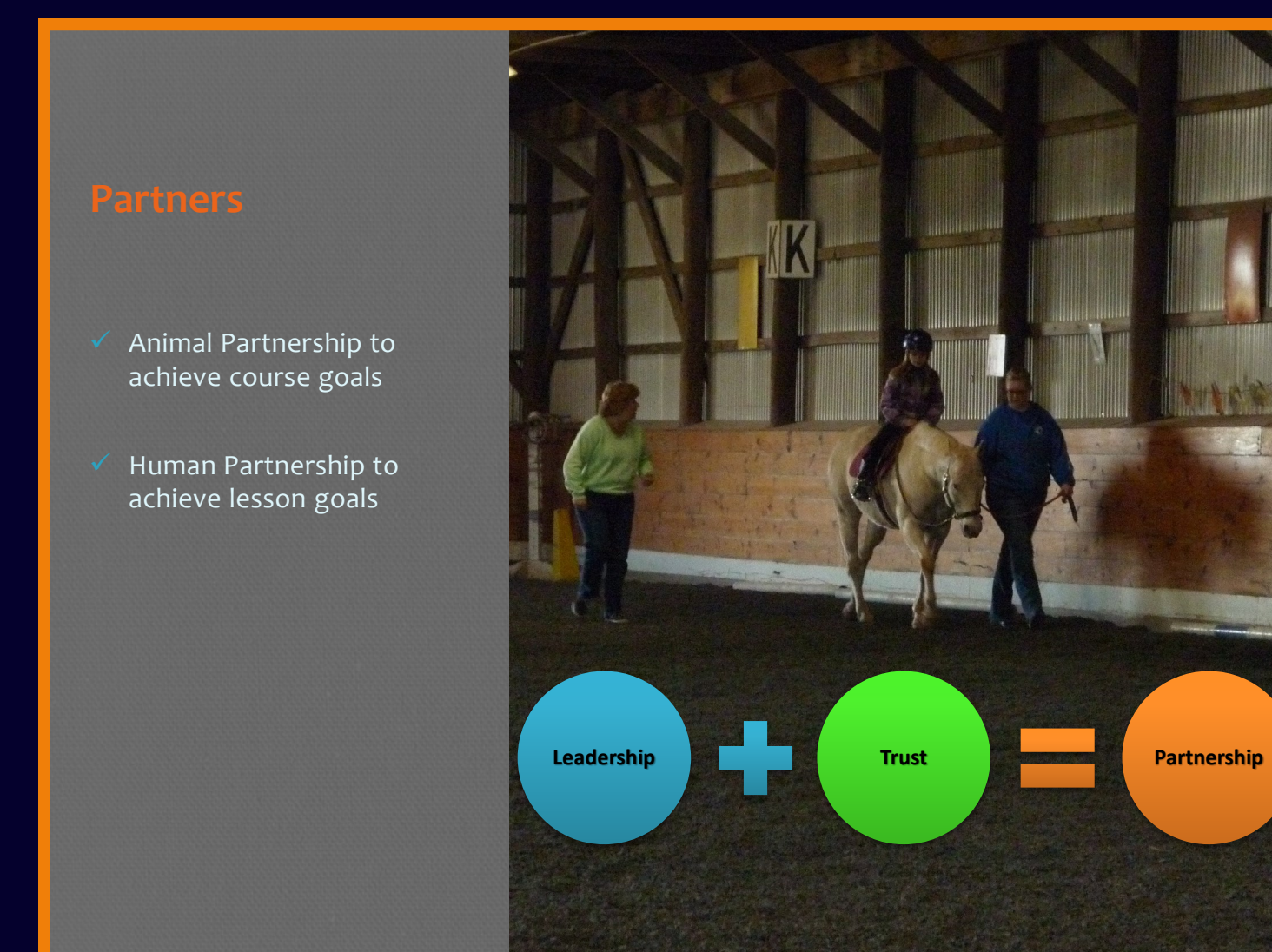
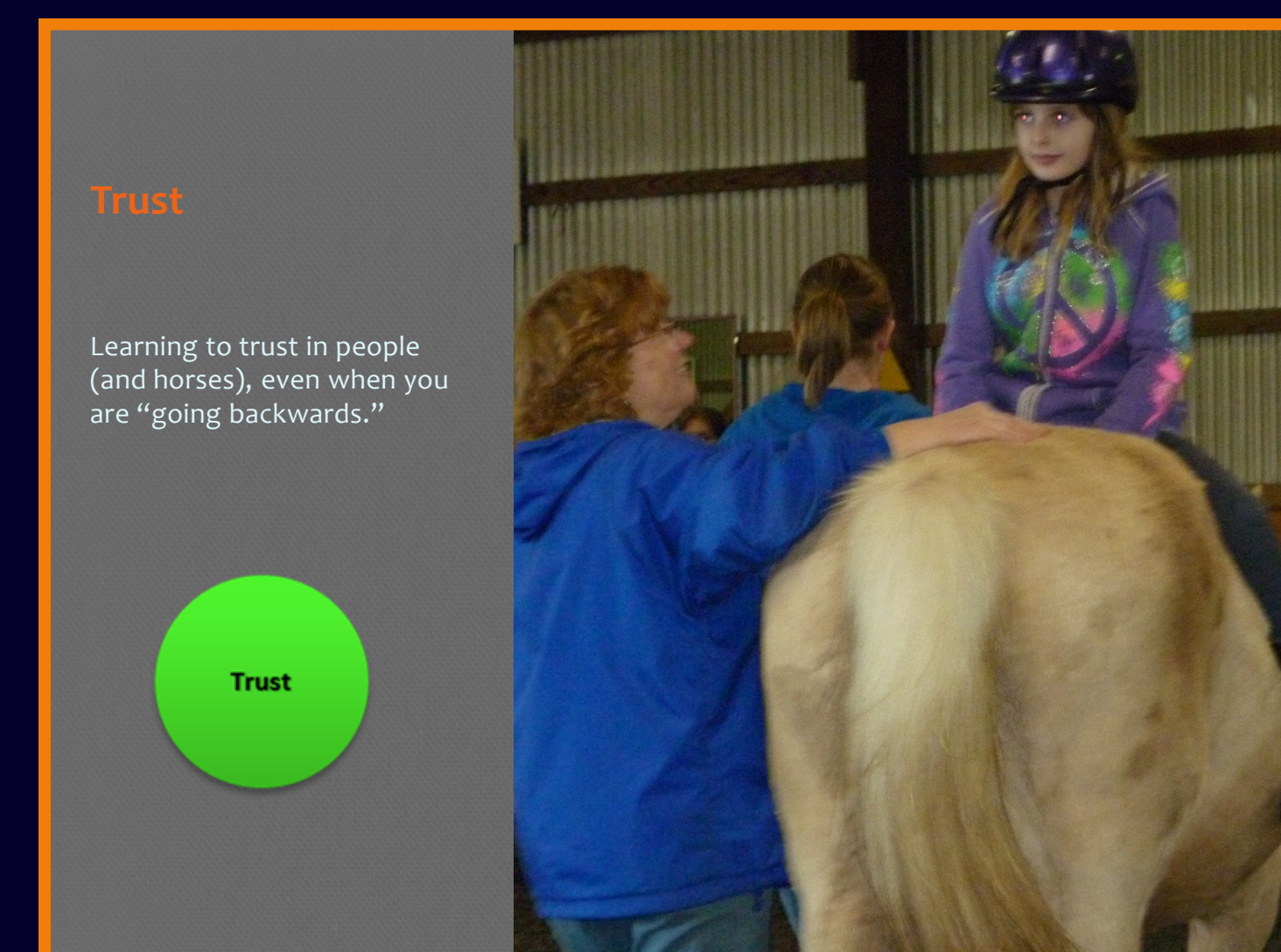
Dené Mitchell, M.P.H. , C.C.R.P.  
Andrea Crivelli-Kovach, Ph.D., M.A., M.C.H.E.S

Sebastian Riding Associates



## Background

Research shows animal assisted therapy and equine therapy are beneficial when used with children exhibiting behavioral and anxiety disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, there remains a gap in empirical research that uses precise measures with prevalidated scales to quantify program outcomes.



## Theory of Implementation



## Results

1. PTSD symptoms in the children decreased on average by **32%**, as shown in the mean PROPS scores.
2. Quality of life increased on average by **2%** in the mean PedsQL scores.

## Implications

Data supported that completion of the Riding Free™ program lead to an increased quality of life and a decrease in PTSD symptoms.

Research goals were met and the study adds to empirical research in equine therapy, using precise outcome measures and prevalidated scales.

Studies using a larger sample size to allow for inferential statistical methods, in order to assess significance, are needed to further support the program.

## Acknowledgments

This research was made possible by Christine Hanebury and Sebastian Riding Associates.



## Purpose

The research program, Riding Free™, was developed by the author for individuals diagnosed with PTSD. The research goals were to improve quality of life and lower PTSD symptoms in children who completed the program. Arcadia University was the IRB of record.

The purpose of this study was to assess interim program outcomes and fill research gaps.

## Research Goals

- Improve quality of life
- Lower PTSD symptoms

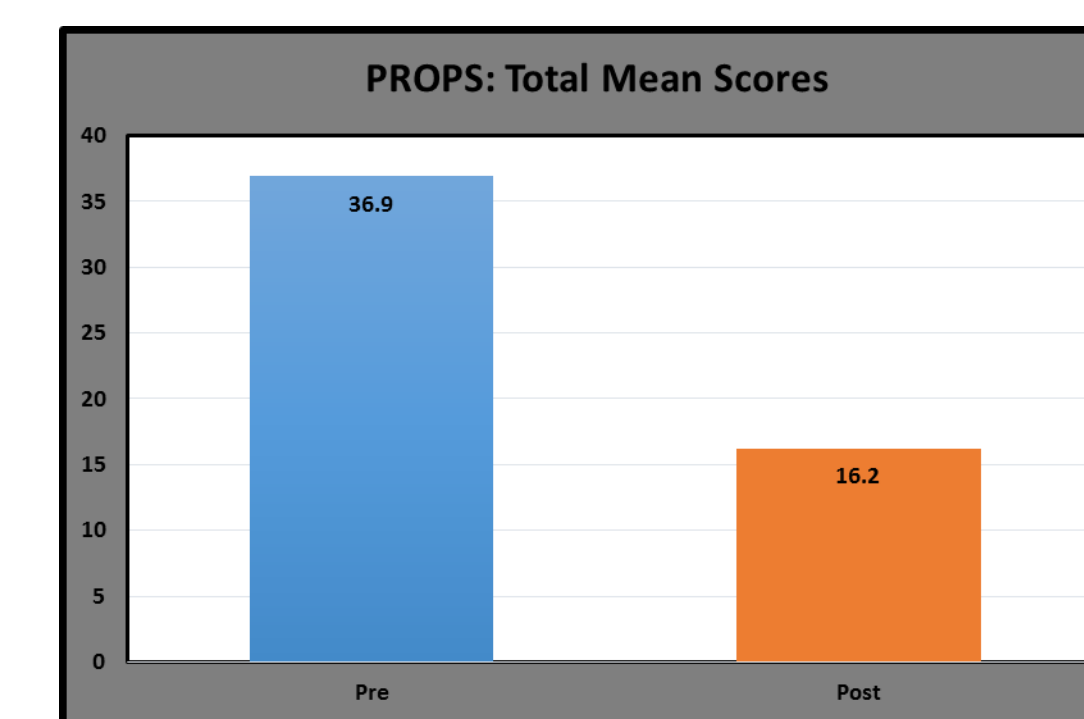


Figure 1: Raw data, mean PTSD symptoms scores—pre-test and post-test.

## Methods

The program consisted of twelve, objective-driven, sessions to improve:

1. social skills and relationship building
2. self-confidence
3. self-efficacy

Pre-validated questionnaires were used to assess the following measures:

1. Quality of life (PedsQL)
2. PTSD symptoms (Parent Report of Post-traumatic Symptoms (PROPS))

Data was used from the first 10 (out of 20) children to complete the program.

Pre-test and post-test averages were evaluated, using descriptive statistical methods to identify trends.

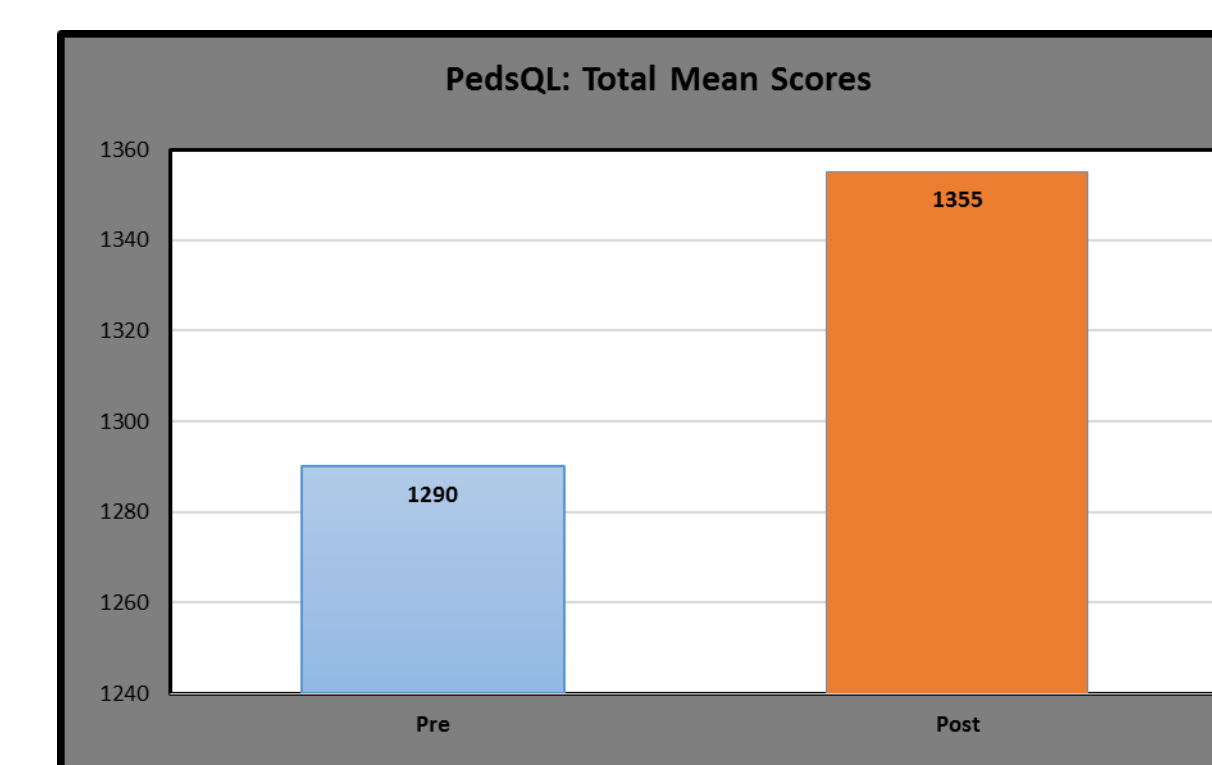


Figure 1: Raw data, mean quality of life scores—pre-test and post-test.

## Riding Free™ Program Mission

To increase the quality of life and reduce PTSD symptoms in children diagnosed with PTSD.

## Recommendations

- ➔ Lengthen duration of program to 24 weeks
- ➔ Add follow up tests to the study design
- ➔ Acquire funding to sustain the program



Equine Therapy for Individuals with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder