

Summary of Diploma Thesis Social Cognition with horse's assistance

Adela Pfannova

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Social Cognition is an area of psychology, which evaluates how people perceive others, relations and events in their social environment. Improving skills in this area is beneficial for different parts of life of a person and for the whole society. Consequences can be the development of prosocial behaviour, collaboration, and decrease in aggressive behaviour and in perceiving people through stereotypes. These skills can be improved with Equine Assisted Activities, which I further write about in this Thesis. With the inspiration of Natural horsemanship or Equitation Science, it is possible to try to understand horse's cognition, which differs a lot from human perspective. Horses are social animals, which are sensitive for signals from their environment and quick in responses to them. Because they are naturally living in herd hierarchy, they are trying to clear social positions with humans as well. That makes humans to realize their current place in hierarchy and to communicate it. Horse's influence on people is complex and it can affect all parts of their personality, which I describe as bio-psychosocial-spiritual. It is possible to use horse's positive effect for Treatment or Therapy.