

**BAYFIELD COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT
TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

Hon. John P. Anderson
Circuit Judge

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July 20, 2010

Vicki Tribovich
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RE: Equine Assisted Therapy

To Whom It May Concern,

During the last decade, both the criminal and juvenile justice systems in many states have attempted to refocus rehabilitative programs for adults and juveniles with a primary focus on incorporating (evidence based or researched based) evidence and practice. This process has resulted from an unfortunate recognition that most adult and juvenile rehabilitation programs and efforts used by departments of human services and department of corrections and others, have shown little or no effectiveness in resolving the undesirable behavior which causes individuals to come into contact with the justice system.

It is my understanding that psychologists and psychiatrists throughout the country are also encouraging treatments and programs whose effectiveness has been researched and substantiated. Obviously, a degree of experimentation is necessary before a particular method can be validated as being effective.

An area where there appears to be some exciting potential is the Equine Assisted Therapy or Equine Assisted Psychotherapy programs. These programs, like other animal based assisted programs, use human and animal interactions as a therapy tool for behavioral issues, attention deficit disorder, substance abuse, abuse issues, anxiety, depression, and communication problems.

While there is a reasonably new process, there is not a large quantity of research available to establish a full qualitative determination, the evidence that is available, including anecdotal evidence, has shown significant benefits. As a circuit court judge, I believe it is important to analyze a perspective program based upon a qualitative study as to its effectiveness, however, it is also important to look for new ways to approach old problems, which means it is sometimes important to do your own experimentation. The equine therapy programs, in my opinion, are worthy of significant discussion and consideration for troubled youth and some adults.

You may also want to contact Sarah Edwards who has a Masters in Clinical Psychology from Duke University and who operates Interpersonal Therapy LLC, in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, for additional information.

Again, I believe that the equine assisted therapy model is worthy of consideration in both juvenile and adult justice systems and should be looked at as an option of programming. I would encourage the Department of Human Services for Bayfield County to make a serious evaluation of our local resources in this regard and to make an educated determination if it is the type of programming that we should explore.

Sincerely yours,



John P. Anderson
Circuit Court Judge