

Nina Ekholm-Fry

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Nina Ekholm Fry is Director of Equine Programs at the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at University of Denver where her work focuses on therapeutic human-horse interactions and on equine behavior and welfare. She is a faculty member in the Graduate School of Social Work and the Graduate School of Professional Psychology and leads the post-graduate Equine-Assisted Mental Health Practitioner Certificate program. Nina is the former Director of Equine-Assisted Mental Health at Prescott College and Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Counselor Education until 2014.

For the past 15 years, Nina has focused on horses in human services in the U.S. and Europe, specializing in inclusion of equine interactions in psychotherapy. She is the co-chair of the Certification Board for Equine Interaction Professionals (CBEIP), second vice president of the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA Inc.) and chief editor of the HETI Journal, published by the International Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy. Nina is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP) and has worked with populations diagnosed with trauma/PTSD, ASD, ADHD, anxiety and addiction, as well as with youth-at-risk and military service members and veterans.

Nina has a particular interest in equine welfare issues and ethics, both in equine-assisted services and in human-horse interactions in general. She holds a certificate in equine management (Vocational College of Ostrobothnia) and is a certified Riding Instructor (CHA level 4/4). Nina is a certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor and a certified Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning through PATH International. She is a former Equestrian Special Olympics coach and teaches Equine Behavior at Yavapai College. As a practitioner member of the International Society of Equitation Science (ISES), she is dedicated to ethical equitation, correct application of learning theory, and the understanding of equine cognition, behavior, and mental states as part

of equine management, assessment, handling, and training. Recent activities in this area include speaking at the FEI European Championship conference on Horses, Science & Healthcare in 2019, at the Progressive Equine Behavior and Training Forum in 2018 and the Homes for Horses Coalition conference in 2017, all by invitation. She led the Watershed Animal Fund national taskforce on equine behavior from 2016 to 2017, and served as the interim Program Director for the Equine Center at Yavapai Humane Society in Arizona from 2015 to 2016. There she started an adoption-focused equine rehabilitation and re-training program, and designed the YHS Equine Center. Nina is active in the equine welfare community in the United States, and consults on equine behavior and facility design nationally.

Nina has a background as a mental health practitioner providing clinical services, specializing in trauma treatment, as a competitive rider and equine behavior consultant, and as an academic professional actively engaged in national and international organizations for both human and equine health. She has a particular interest in applied ethics and social justice perspectives within human-animal interactions, including human-horse conflict.