

MEETING MINDS SCS

EQUINE - ASSISTED THERAPY GROUP



COURSE OVERVIEW

Set in the beautiful location of Ararimu, South Auckland, this 8 week group combines the healing power of horses with trauma-informed psychological care. Facilitated by a registered mental health professional and an equine specialist, this programme follows the internationally recognised EAGALA model - offering ground-based, non-riding interactions with horses to support recovery and resilience.

Through weekly sessions which may involve grooming, leading and reflective group activities, participants will develop practical tools for emotional regulation, build safe relationships and reconnect with themselves in a calm and non-judgmental environment.

WHO IS THIS GROUP FOR?

Kiritaki who have an approved Sensitive Claim and:

- Are aged 18 years or older. All genders are welcome.
- Can engage safely and respectfully in a group setting.
- Are able to attend all eight weekly sessions and commit to full participation in the programme.
- Are free from non-prescribed substances with attending sessions.
- Have a relatively stable mental state and are not in acute crisis.
- Are not experiencing strong suicidal urges or behaviours and can manage personal safety without high external support.
- Are able to regulate strong emotions and manage triggers.
- Do not present with high levels of aggression or issues that could impact the safety or cohesion of the group.
- Have the physical ability to safely engage in ground-based horse activities or are willing to discuss any mobility or health needs with us in advance to determine suitability.

Outline of Content

Each week builds progressively, covering key areas such as boundaries, emotional expression, communication, problem-solving and future planning. Participants are supported in a small group environment that fosters safety self-exploration and connection.

Through the programme, participants will:

- Develop emotional regulation and self-awareness
- Enhance communication and interpersonal skills
- Build trust and healthy relationship dynamics
- Strengthen resilience and problem-solving abilities
- Cultivate mindfulness and present-moment awareness
- Deepen insight into relational and behavioural patterns
- Explore alternatives to unhelpful coping strategies

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How to Register & Apply for ACC Funding

Lead providers will need to apply to ACC with the below codes and rationale (see example to the right) in line with kiritaki Recovery goals.

Label as “Urgent” given the upcoming start date of the group.

Provider Name: Samantha Head PAC 952

Supplier: Haumi Psychological Services G09819

ACC Funding Codes

1 x SCSGTT - Triage for Group-based Therapy

24 x SCSGT - Group-based Therapy 3 hours per session

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR LEAD PROVIDERS

Purchase Orders to be dated from time of request with a 12 month end date.

Lead providers: submit your registration using the form below and complete all sections fully.

<https://forms.gle/64bHCDPAT5xLTAaVA>

Kiritaki will then be contacted for a Pre-screening assessment by the group facilitator.

Sessions are facilitated in a supportive and trauma-informed environment which includes safety briefings before participation.

If you're unsure whether this group is the right fit, please contact the group facilitators to discuss.

**Limited Spaces available for Group starting Friday 7th
August 2026**

Example of rationale for ACC

“This group programme would be beneficial for (Client) to support emotional regulation develop increased mind-body awareness, explore setting boundaries and limits and increase their understanding of trauma-based reactions. This will work to enhance the therapeutic input and trauma-focused work which is currently occurring with therapy sessions.”

No horse experience required.

This is a non-riding programme. All activities take place on the ground.

Location:

Meeting Minds Equine
Assisted Therapy
909 Ararimu Road, Ararimu
South Auckland

Dates

Thursdays

August 6th - Sept 24th

OR

Fridays

August 7th - Sept 25th

(Sept 18th session moved to Sept 19th due to clash)
(Sept 17th session moved to Sept 19th due to clash)

10am-12pm

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LEAD SERVICE PROVIDER

Samantha Head



Samantha has over 20 years extensive experience as a registered counsellor, including counsellor/key worker in a secondary addiction service, senior counsellor at Massey University Student Health, health improvement practitioner at a GP practice, and many years in private practice specialising in working with ACC sensitive claims. Samantha's approach to counselling is informed by evidenced based practice, she draws from various trauma informed modalities including EMDR, CBT, ACT and is passionate about helping people to help themselves. Samantha has been around horses most of her life and is excited about combining her passion for people with her passion for horses using the Eagala Model of Equine Assisted Therapy, which she has had previous training in. Samantha is looking forward to partnering Deanna Lawson, Eagala Certified Professional – Equine Specialist, for the upcoming therapy Group.

EQUINE SPECIALIST

Deanna Lawson



I've spent the past three years holding space for equine-assisted sessions on my rural property, supporting people as they navigate anxiety, low self-esteem, identity challenges, and stress. My understanding of mental health comes not just from what I've learned, but from what I've lived—walking alongside my daughter through anorexia recovery and my son through his journey with depression, self-worth struggles, and addiction. Horses have been part of my life for as long as I can remember. Through years of facilitating Hoofcamps and witnessing countless moments of transformation, I've seen how horses gently guide us back to ourselves. They reflect our truth, challenge our patterns, and offer a kind of healing that words alone can't reach. I'm deeply committed to creating a safe, supportive space where people can reconnect with their inner strength, build clarity, and rediscover confidence—through the quiet wisdom of the herd.