



## Document for Equimotional Facilitators on Using the Trauma-Informed Glossary

### Introduction

This document serves as a guide for Equimotional facilitators to implement trauma-informed language in equine facilitated learning and our equine wellbeing coaching. By understanding the origins and mindful usage of these terms, facilitators can create a supportive and empathetic environment for both clients and horses. This approach not only enhances the therapeutic experience but also respects the natural behaviours and needs of horses.

### What is Trauma-Informed Practice?

Trauma-informed practice involves recognising and responding to the effects of trauma in all aspects of service delivery. It emphasises safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. In the context of equine facilitated learning & coaching, this means being mindful of the language and actions used to ensure they do not inadvertently trigger or distress participants, while also respecting the welfare and natural behaviours of horses.

### Mindfulness in Language

Mindfulness in language refers to being deliberate and thoughtful about the words we choose. Words carry weight and can significantly impact how participants perceive and experience the equine learning sessions. By using mindful language, facilitators can promote a sense of safety, respect, and understanding.

### How to Use the Glossary

1. **Familiarise Yourself:** Begin by thoroughly reading the glossary to understand each term and its intended use. Pay special attention to the sensitive alternatives provided for commonly used terms.
2. **Educate Clients:** Share the glossary with clients and explain the importance of using trauma-informed language but also where we can still use language applicable the equine

world. Discuss how these terms promote a respectful and supportive environment.

3. **Practice Consistently:** Integrate the glossary terms into your daily practice. Be mindful of your language during sessions and gently correct yourself or others if less mindful terms are used when not appropriate.
4. **Reflect and Adapt:** Regularly reflect on your use of language and its impact on clients and horses. Be open to feedback and adapt your approach as needed to continually improve the therapeutic environment.

## The Importance of Not Censoring Life

Life is filled with diverse experiences, and part of our role as facilitators is to help clients navigate these experiences in a healthy and constructive way. Censoring life or shielding clients from all potential triggers is neither practical nor beneficial in the long term. Instead, we focus on equipping clients with the tools and understanding they need to manage their responses to various situations.

## Examples of What to Censor, What to Consider, and What Might Not Need Censoring

### What to Censor

1. **Graphic Descriptions of Trauma**
  - **Example:** Avoid detailed descriptions of violent incidents or traumatic experiences during sessions.
  - **Reason:** These can re-traumatise clients and cause significant distress. Instead, focus on discussing coping mechanisms and healing strategies.
2. **Explicit Language**
  - **Example:** Refrain from using profanity or explicit language that might be offensive or triggering.
  - **Reason:** Such language can create an unsafe and uncomfortable environment for clients, especially those with trauma histories.
3. **Inappropriate Humour**
  - **Example:** Avoid making jokes about sensitive topics such as mental health, trauma, or personal experiences - unless rapport is created already with client & maybe some “dark humour” is useful.

At Equimotional, we strive to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and care. We acknowledge the potential benefits of humour in coaching but emphasise the importance of using it appropriately. Facilitators are encouraged to use humour thoughtfully and consider the individual needs and boundaries of each client. If in doubt, err on the side of caution and choose humour that is inclusive, positive, and respectful.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can ensure that our sessions remain supportive, safe, and conducive to healing for all clients.

### Contact Information:

For any questions or concerns regarding the use of humor in sessions, please contact Equimotional at [equimotionalcoaches@hotmail.com](mailto:equimotionalcoaches@hotmail.com)

**Use of Dark Humor Disclaimer** Equimotional is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all clients. While humor can be beneficial in fostering connections and reducing stress, it is crucial to exercise caution, particularly with dark humor. Dark humor, which often involves making light of serious, painful, or distressing subjects, can have unintended negative consequences and may not be appropriate for all clients.

#### Guidelines for Using Humour:

1. **Assess Client Comfort:** Before using any form of humour, especially dark humour, assess the client's comfort level and sensitivity to the subject matter. Consider their background, trauma history, and current emotional state.
2. **Prioritise Safety and Respect:** Always prioritise creating a safe and respectful environment. Avoid humour that could be perceived as dismissive, offensive, or triggering.
3. **Seek Consent:** If considering the use of dark humor, seek explicit consent from the client. Ensure they understand the nature of the humour and are comfortable with its use in the session.
4. **Be Mindful of Boundaries:** Respect the personal boundaries of clients. If a client indicates discomfort or distress, immediately cease the use of dark humor and apologise if necessary.
5. **Use Alternative Humour:** Opt for light-hearted, positive, and inclusive humor that is more likely to be well-received and less likely to cause distress.

#### What to Consider

##### 1. Discussion of Difficult Topics

- **Example:** When discussing challenging subjects like loss, grief, or personal struggles, consider the timing and approach.
- **Reason:** While these discussions can be important for healing, they should be approached with sensitivity and readiness to provide support.

##### 2. Sensitive Terms and Language

- **Example:** Words like "control" or "use" when referring to interactions with horses.
- **Reason:** These terms can be triggering for some clients. Instead, use terms like "guide" or "partner with" to create a more positive and respectful atmosphere.

##### 3. Visual and Auditory Stimuli

- **Example:** Consider the impact of certain images, sounds, or environments on clients.
- **Reason:** Some stimuli might trigger traumatic memories or discomfort. Creating a calm and controlled environment can help mitigate these effects.

#### What Might Not Need Censoring

##### 1. Realistic Interactions

- **Example:** Demonstrating natural behaviours of horses, such as **mutual grooming** or play behaviours.
- **Reason:** These are normal and healthy behaviours that **clients should understand as part of the horses' natural interactions**. Educating clients about these behaviours helps demystify, normalize & help remove the negative connotations on them.

##### 2. Everyday Challenges

- **Example:** Discussing common life challenges such as stress at work or school.
- **Reason:** These discussions can help clients relate their experiences to everyday situations and develop coping strategies without feeling overly protected or sheltered.

##### 3. Authentic Emotions

- **Example:** Expressing genuine emotions, whether positive or negative, during sessions.
- **Reason:** Authenticity helps build trust and demonstrates that it is safe to express a full range of emotions. Facilitators should model healthy emotional expression and coping strategies.

## Balancing Protection and Exposure

The goal is to strike a balance between protecting clients from unnecessary distress and exposing them to life's realities in a way that promotes growth and resilience. This involves:

### 1. Building Resilience

- Equip clients with coping mechanisms and strategies to handle difficult situations. This might include mindfulness practices, grounding techniques, or supportive conversations.

### 2. Creating a Safe Environment

- Ensure that the learning environment feels safe and supportive, allowing clients to explore and express their feelings without fear of judgment or harm.

### 3. Encouraging Open Dialogue

- Foster an open dialogue where clients feel comfortable discussing their triggers and experiences. This helps facilitators understand individual needs and tailor their approach accordingly.

### 4. Providing Education

- Educate clients about the natural behaviours of horses and the rationale behind trauma-informed practices. Understanding these concepts can help clients feel more in control and less vulnerable.

### 5. Offering Support

- Be available to support clients through challenging discussions or experiences. This might include providing resources, referrals to additional services, or simply offering a listening ear.

By not censoring life but instead using mindful language and trauma-informed practices, we can help clients develop the resilience and understanding needed to navigate their experiences constructively. This approach respects the complexity of both human and equine experiences, fostering a therapeutic environment that is both supportive and empowering.

## Mindful Language

Mindful language involves choosing words carefully to ensure they are considerate and supportive. It means being aware of the impact that words can have on an individual's emotional state and striving to communicate in ways that promote understanding and respect. Mindful language is about being considerate of the nuances in communication and the potential effects words can have on clients.

### Examples of Mindful Language

- **Instead of "breaking" a horse, say "training" or "gentling."**

*Explanation:* This shifts the focus from a potentially harsh method to a more compassionate and understanding approach.

- **Instead of "using" a horse, say "working with" a horse.**

*Explanation:* This emphasises partnership and collaboration rather than exploitation.

- Instead of "controlling" a horse, say "guiding" or "leading" a horse.

*Explanation:* This conveys a sense of leadership and mutual respect rather than dominance.

## Trauma-Informed Practice

Trauma-informed practice goes beyond mindful language by incorporating an understanding of trauma into all aspects of interaction and care. This approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and integrates this knowledge into policies, procedures, and practices to avoid re-traumatisation and to support healing.

### Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

1. **Safety:** Ensuring physical and emotional safety for clients and horses.
2. **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Building trust through honest and transparent communication.
3. **Peer Support:** Encouraging support among clients to foster community and mutual aid.
4. **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Emphasising partnership and shared decision-making.
5. **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice:** Prioritising client empowerment and respecting their choices.
6. **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** Recognising and respecting diverse backgrounds and experiences.

## Educating Clients Without Triggering or Traumatizing

While it is important to be mindful of language and trauma-informed practices, it is equally important to educate clients about language and its use in the equine world in a way that does not trigger or re-traumatise them. This can be achieved through thoughtful and empathetic communication.

### Strategies for Educating Clients

1. **Create a Safe Space:** Ensure the environment feels safe and welcoming. This helps clients feel secure and open to learning.
2. **Use Gentle Language:** When introducing new concepts or terms, use gentle and non-confrontational language. For example, instead of saying "This word is wrong," say "We prefer to use this term because..."
3. **Provide Context:** Explain the reasons behind using certain terms or practices. Understanding the "why" can help clients appreciate the importance of mindful language and trauma-informed practices & also why we might use other "equine specific" terms.

Understanding the reasons behind specific terms and practices helps clients appreciate their significance and appropriateness within the context of equine facilitated learning. It promotes a deeper connection with the horses and a greater awareness of how language can impact emotional and psychological well-being.

## Examples of Terms and Their Context

## Grooming

- **Traditional Use:** In the horse world, grooming refers to the process of brushing and cleaning a horse. It's a routine care activity that keeps the horse healthy and clean.
- **Context and Explanation:**
  - **Natural Behaviour:** Grooming is a natural behaviour for horses. In the wild, horses groom each other to strengthen social bonds and maintain hygiene. When we groom horses, we are mimicking this natural behaviour, which can help build trust and connection.
  - **Therapeutic Benefits:** For clients, grooming a horse can be a calming and grounding activity. It encourages mindfulness, presence, and gentle interaction, which are beneficial for emotional regulation and building trust.
  - **Mindful Language:** Instead of simply instructing clients to "groom the horse," explain the context of mutual grooming in the wild and how this activity helps build a bond between the horse and the person.

The term "grooming" has unfortunately been demonised in broader societal contexts due to its association with predatory behaviours, particularly in the realm of abuse. However, within the equine world, grooming holds a fundamentally different and profoundly positive meaning. In horses, grooming is a natural, social behavior that strengthens bonds and fosters trust within a herd.

When humans engage in grooming horses, they are participating in a vital bonding activity that mirrors the horses' innate social interactions. This act of grooming, far from its negative connotations, becomes a therapeutic and calming practice, promoting connection and mutual care between horse and handler. Understanding and embracing this context is crucial for appreciating the wholesome and beneficial aspects of grooming in equine facilitated learning.

1. **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Allow clients to ask questions and express their thoughts. This can lead to a deeper understanding and a sense of involvement in the learning process.
2. **Model Behaviour:** Demonstrate mindful language and trauma-informed practices in your interactions. Clients often learn best by observing and emulating.
3. **Offer Support:** Be available to support clients who may find certain topics challenging. Provide reassurance and remind them of the resources available to help them navigate their emotions.
4. **Reflect and Review:** Encourage clients to reflect on their experiences and how different terms and practices affect them. Regularly review and adjust approaches based on client feedback.

By differentiating between mindful language and trauma-informed practice, we can better serve our clients and horses. It's about being considerate and thoughtful in our communication while providing a supportive environment that acknowledges and respects the impact of trauma. Educating clients on these concepts without triggering or traumatising

them helps empower them to engage in their healing process and fosters a deeper understanding and respect for the equine partners involved in their journey.

## Origins and Explanations of Key Terms

### 1. Grooming

- *Origin:* The term "grooming" comes from the behaviour observed in horses and other animals where they clean and care for each other. It is a social activity that helps strengthen bonds within a herd.
- *Explanation:* Mutual grooming is a natural behaviour in horses that signifies trust and social bonding. When we groom horses, we are participating in an activity that is familiar and comforting to them - **explain this to the client.**

### 2. Collaboration

- *Origin:* Derived from the Latin word "collaborare," meaning "to work together."
- *Explanation:* In equine facilitated learning, collaboration emphasises working alongside the horse as a partner rather than using the horse as a tool.

### 3. Trust-building

- *Origin:* The concept of building trust comes from psychological practices where establishing trust is fundamental for any therapeutic relationship.
- *Explanation:* Trust-building activities in equine facilitated learning focus on creating a safe and reliable environment for both the horse and the participant.

### 4. Positive Reinforcement

- *Origin:* A term from behavioural psychology, positive reinforcement involves encouraging desired behaviours by offering rewards.
- *Explanation:* Using positive reinforcement with horses means rewarding them for behaviours we want to encourage, which helps create a positive and trusting relationship.

### 5. Empathy

- *Origin:* Derived from the Greek word "empathia," meaning "passion" or "state of emotion."
- *Explanation:* Empathy involves understanding and sharing the feelings of another. In equine facilitated learning, it means being attuned to the emotional states of both the horse and the participant.

### 6. Grounding

- *Origin:* A term used in psychology to describe techniques that help individuals stay connected to the present moment.
- *Explanation:* Grounding activities with horses can help participants feel more stable and centered, often involving physical contact with the horse or mindful observation of the horse's behaviour.

### 7. Boundaries

- *Origin:* A psychological concept referring to the limits that define acceptable behaviour and protect personal space and integrity.
- *Explanation:* Respecting boundaries with horses involves recognizing their physical and emotional limits and ensuring their comfort and safety.

### 8. Enrichment

- *Origin:* From the concept of environmental enrichment used in animal care to improve the well-being of captive animals by providing stimuli.

- *Explanation:* Providing enrichment for horses means offering activities and environments that stimulate their natural behaviors and promote their overall well-being.

## 9. Co-regulation

- *Origin:* A term from developmental psychology where individuals help each other to regulate their emotions.
- *Explanation:* In equine facilitated learning, co-regulation involves the horse and participant mutually influencing each other's emotional states to achieve calmness and balance.

## 10. Mutual Respect

- *Origin:* The concept of mutual respect is foundational in many cultures and philosophies, emphasising the importance of recognising and valuing each other's rights and dignity.
- *Explanation:* Mutual respect between the horse and participant means acknowledging the horse's autonomy and needs while fostering a respectful and trusting relationship.

## Teaching Clients the Origins and Use of Words

1. **Educational Sessions:** Include brief educational segments in your sessions to explain the origins and meanings of key terms. This helps clients understand the rationale behind the language used.
2. **Interactive Activities:** Engage clients in activities that demonstrate these concepts, such as grooming sessions that highlight mutual grooming behaviour in horses.
3. **Discussion and Reflection:** Encourage clients to reflect on their experiences and discuss how using trauma-informed language and learning about origins of words impacts their interactions with horses and their personal growth.
4. **Resource Materials:** Provide handouts or digital resources that clients can review at their own pace, reinforcing the learning from sessions.

By adopting and consistently applying trauma-informed language in addition to educational empowerment and practices, Equimotional facilitators can enhance the therapeutic benefits of equine facilitated learning, creating a more empathetic and respectful environment for both clients and horses.

## Glossary of Trauma-Informed Language for Equine Wellbeing Coaching :

### 1. Collaboration

*Meaning:* Working together with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "use the horse," say "collaborate with the horse."

### 2. Partnership

*Meaning:* Forming a cooperative relationship with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "using the horse," say "working in partnership with the horse."

### 3. Interaction

*Meaning:* Engaging with the horse in a mutual manner.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "handling the horse," say "interacting with the horse."

### 4. Grooming

*Meaning:* Cleaning and caring for the horse. Horses naturally groom each other as a



bonding activity.

*Sensitive Use:* Acknowledge that grooming is a natural and positive behaviour for horses.

#### 5. Facilitation

*Meaning:* Assisting the learning process with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "controlling the horse," say "facilitating the session with the horse."

#### 6. Connection

*Meaning:* Establishing a bond or relationship with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "dominating the horse," say "building a connection with the horse."

#### 7. Engagement

*Meaning:* Actively participating with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Instead of "making the horse work," say "engaging with the horse."

#### 8. Companionship

*Meaning:* Providing company and support.

*Sensitive Use:* Recognise the horse as a companion rather than a tool.

#### 9. Empathy

*Meaning:* Understanding and sharing the feelings of the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Encourage empathy towards the horse's experiences.

#### 10. Respect

*Meaning:* Valuing the horse's autonomy and feelings.

*Sensitive Use:* Always show respect for the horse's individuality.

#### 11. Trust-building

*Meaning:* Creating a safe and trusting environment for the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Focus on activities that build trust rather than obedience.

#### 12. Support

*Meaning:* Offering emotional and physical support to the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Support the horse's needs rather than imposing tasks.

#### 13. Sensitivity

*Meaning:* Being aware of and responsive to the horse's feelings.

*Sensitive Use:* Practice sensitivity to the horse's mood and responses.

#### 14. Well-being

*Meaning:* Ensuring the horse's physical and emotional health.

*Sensitive Use:* Prioritise the horse's well-being in all activities.

#### 15. Comfort

*Meaning:* Making the horse feel safe and comfortable.

*Sensitive Use:* Create a comfortable environment for the horse.

#### 16. Cooperation

*Meaning:* Working together with the horse in a harmonious manner.

*Sensitive Use:* Emphasise cooperation instead of control.

#### 17. Mindfulness

*Meaning:* Being present and attentive to the horse's needs and behaviours.

*Sensitive Use:* Practice mindfulness in interactions with the horse.

#### 18. Kindness

*Meaning:* Treating the horse with gentleness and care.

*Sensitive Use:* Always act with kindness towards the horse.

## 19. Mutual respect

*Meaning:* Recognising and respecting the horse's boundaries and individuality.

*Sensitive Use:* Encourage mutual respect between humans and horses.

## 20. Safety

*Meaning:* Ensuring the horse feels safe and secure.

*Sensitive Use:* Prioritise the horse's safety in all activities.

## 21. Consent

*Meaning:* Allowing the horse to have a choice in participation.

*Sensitive Use:* Seek the horse's consent through its body language.

## 22. Awareness

*Meaning:* Being conscious of the horse's physical and emotional state.

*Sensitive Use:* Maintain awareness of the horse's needs and signals.

## 23. Positive Reinforcement

*Meaning:* Encouraging desired behaviours through rewards.

*Sensitive Use:* Use positive reinforcement instead of punishment.

## 24. Boundaries

*Meaning:* Respecting the physical and emotional limits of the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Acknowledge and respect the horse's boundaries.

## 25. Healing

*Meaning:* Supporting the horse's recovery and well-being.

*Sensitive Use:* Create a healing environment for the horse.

## 26. Grounding

*Meaning:* Helping the horse feel stable and connected to the environment.

*Sensitive Use:* Engage in activities that promote grounding.

## 27. Nurturing

*Meaning:* Caring for the horse's overall development and well-being.

*Sensitive Use:* Nurture the horse's physical and emotional health.

## 28. Acceptance

*Meaning:* Accepting the horse as it is, without judgment.

*Sensitive Use:* Practice acceptance of the horse's behaviours and traits.

## 29. Listening

*Meaning:* Paying attention to the horse's signals and communications.

*Sensitive Use:* Listen to the horse's needs and responses.

## 30. Patience

*Meaning:* Allowing the horse time to respond and learn at its own pace.

*Sensitive Use:* Show patience in all interactions with the horse.

## 31. Calmness

*Meaning:* Maintaining a calm demeanor to soothe the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Approach the horse with calmness and serenity.

## 32. Understanding

*Meaning:* Comprehending the horse's behaviour and needs.

*Sensitive Use:* Strive to understand the horse's perspective.

## 33. Compassion

*Meaning:* Showing empathy and concern for the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Act with compassion towards the horse.

#### **34. Empowerment**

*Meaning:* Enabling the horse to feel confident and in control.

*Sensitive Use:* Empower the horse through positive interactions.

#### **35. Trust**

*Meaning:* Building a reliable and safe relationship with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Foster trust between the horse and the facilitator.

#### **36. Attunement**

*Meaning:* Being in harmony with the horse's emotional and physical state.

*Sensitive Use:* Practice attunement to the horse's needs and signals.

#### **37. Validation**

*Meaning:* Acknowledging and affirming the horse's feelings and behaviours.

*Sensitive Use:* Validate the horse's experiences and reactions.

#### **38. Co-regulation**

*Meaning:* Helping the horse to regulate its emotions through supportive interactions.

*Sensitive Use:* Engage in co-regulation activities to calm the horse.

#### **39. Choice**

*Meaning:* Allowing the horse to make decisions and have control over its actions.

*Sensitive Use:* Provide the horse with choices in activities.

#### **40. Exploration**

*Meaning:* Encouraging the horse to explore its environment and learn.

*Sensitive Use:* Facilitate safe and supportive exploration for the horse.

#### **41. Gentleness**

*Meaning:* Interacting with the horse in a soft and tender manner.

*Sensitive Use:* Always use gentle handling with the horse.

#### **42. Harmony**

*Meaning:* Creating a balanced and peaceful relationship with the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Strive for harmony in all interactions with the horse.

#### **43. Presence**

*Meaning:* Being fully present and attentive to the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Maintain a strong presence when working with the horse.

#### **44. Sympathy**

*Meaning:* Feeling concern for the horse's well-being.

*Sensitive Use:* Show sympathy towards the horse's needs and conditions.

#### **45. Understanding**

*Meaning:* Grasping the reasons behind the horse's behaviour.

*Sensitive Use:* Practice understanding in all interactions with the horse.

#### **46. Compassionate Listening**

*Meaning:* Listening to the horse with empathy and care.

*Sensitive Use:* Engage in compassionate listening to understand the horse.

#### **47. Non-judgmental**

*Meaning:* Approaching the horse without preconceived notions or criticism.

*Sensitive Use:* Maintain a non-judgmental attitude towards the horse.

#### **48. Sustenance**

*Meaning:* Providing the necessary care and nourishment for the horse.

*Sensitive Use:* Ensure the horse receives proper sustenance and care.

#### 49. Enrichment

*Meaning:* Enhancing the horse's environment to stimulate its mind and body.

*Sensitive Use:* Offer enrichment activities to keep the horse engaged.

#### 50. Attentiveness

*Meaning:* Paying close attention to the horse's needs and behaviours.

*Sensitive Use:* Be attentive to the horse's signals and responses.

This glossary aims to foster a trauma-informed approach by emphasising respectful, empathetic, and supportive language and actions in equine wellbeing coaching & can all be applied to ourselves and our clients too.

Thank You ,

Equimotional™