

RAG TREE — EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING PROGRAMME

Overview

This free programme is aimed at young people in CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services). There is evidence that the use of animals, particularly horses is beneficial in supporting children with mental health difficulties, increasing their resilience, feelings of mastery and self efficacy, self confidence, assertiveness, optimism, adaptability, trust and tolerance. Rag Tree Equine Assisted Learning Centre in Kilmuckridge was chosen as the OT with CAMHS had previously worked with Rag Tree for one-to-one programmes but felt that group work may be even more beneficial. Sports Active Wexford have always had a strong partnership with the OT's in CAMHS and were eager to support this initiative. The group work has been running for the past year with the WWETB component since January this year.

Aims

- Provide an opportunity for the participants to experience success
- To increase their self confidence, self efficacy and self esteem
- To develop their skills such as equestrian, social interaction, communication skills, motor/process skills
- To develop a successful community based programme through partnership with WWETB, ourselves, CAMHS and Rag Tree Assisted Learning Centre
- To provide the opportunity for participants to further their education as many have already dropped out of school. They can complete the programme with a QQI level 4 qualification.

Implementation

Advertising was by word of mouth in CAMHS supported by OT's and social workers on the CAMHS team.

Participants were referred by OT/Social Worker, or someone in the multi-disciplinary team

Numbers were limited to 16 participants

Shelly and Denis from Rag Tree Assisted Learning Centre delivered the programme weekly every Friday morning. Sports Active Wexford supported the delivery of the WWETB health and fitness module.

Having WWETB on board allowed participants to achieve a QQI Level 4 certificate. Ongoing portfolio work and exams were carried out during the year.



13 participants from 12—17 years

Outcomes

"She looks so forward to coming. Its one hour where I can see her totally calm and content in herself, magical, and she chats about it all the way home"

"Rag Tree is medicine for our daughter" Parent's feedback.

"Rag Tree is a happy place—I love the programme and am extremely grateful for the chance to experience Rag Tree" participants feedback.

There has been great feedback from participants and their parents. Some participants are even considering a career in the equestrian centre. All aims were achieved.