



*Equid-Nexus*

An Equine Engaged Parts Work Psychotherapy Model

IFS+EMDR

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EQUINE-ENGAGED PSYCHOTHERAPY



## Acknowledgement and Gratitude for the Syzygy Institute

- Equid-Nexus has built upon Bruce Hersey's IFS informed EMDR model and added equine engagement
- The Syzygy Institute was founded in 2022 by Bruce Hersey and Michelle Richardson
- Bruce's model of integrating IFS informed EMDR with Coherence therapy lead to the Institute's name
- There are three steps in their experiential trainings:
  - IFS for EMDR Therapists
  - IFS informed EMDR
  - Discovery and Beyond
- 2 Levels of certification offered
  - Basic
  - Master

To Learn More: <https://www.syzygyinstitute.com/>

**SYZYGY**



# Overview

- IFS+EMDR +Equine Engagement can be a slow process
- The horse's connected engagement assists in functional dual awareness
- The relationship exploration between equine & client reveals interventions without agenda
- Healing occurs within the relationship and serves as a corrective experience for client and parts



# IFS-Informed EMDR (IFS+EMDR+EEP) Equine Engaged Psychotherapy

- Follows the **8 Phase Protocol** with **IFS upgrades and interweaves**
- **Parts** are always the **target** and interventions do not come from a trauma time-line, but rather are focused on what part has the most energy. Parts hold beliefs, emotions, somatic sensations, and memories.
- Internal **Self-Presence** and external **connection with an engaged horse** are the functional dual awareness components needed to remain grounded in the present while holding the pain from the past
- **Equine engagement** as a healing agent and a witness to the client's (part's) experience and burdens. Present connection with the horse allows for a corrective experience of healing in the presence of another attuned being.

# Overview: The 8 Phase Protocol with IFS “Upgrades”

## Standard EMDR Phases

- 1:** History Taking
- 2:** Preparation
- 3:** Assessment (access and activate)
- 4:** Desensitization
- 5:** Installation
- 6:** Body Scan
- 7:** Closure
- 8:** Re-Evaluation

## IFS Main Upgrades and Interweaves

- 1: History** of the presenting problem is viewed from the **part’s perspective**
- 2:** Drawing out and strengthening (resourcing) the innate growth promoting and healing from client’s **Self**
- 3:** Obtain detailed information from the **part’s perspective** (find, focus, flesh out, feel towards, befriending, & finding the fear)
- 4: IFS Healing Steps** (witnessing and the un-burdening process)

# Integrating and Blending IFS+EMDR...

- Phase 1: History Taking
  - Identify “the biggest part in the room” using the 1-3 of the 6F’s (“Find, Focus, Flesh out”)
- Phase 2: Preparation (resourcing Self with BLS)
  - Includes two components: guide clients in resourcing their Core Self (8C’s + 5P’s) *and* with connection with the engaged horse
  - Use Syzygy’s “presence of Self Scale (PoS) 1-7”. Positive cognition (PC) comes from Self – not the part.
  - Use Syzygy’s “Discovery” (Phase 2.5) with heavily blended protectors to find the “Protector’s Positive Intention (PPI)” and “Level of Urge to Protect (LUP)” scale 0-10
- Phase 3: Assessment (access and activate) obtain SUDS 0-10 from part
  - Client is blended with the part that holds the emotional material to be processed. Obtain the images, beliefs, emotions, and physical sensations related to the context *from* the part. Do not ask for PC because it needs to come from Self, not from the part.
  - Use 4-6 F’s: “Feel Toward, BeFriend and find the Fear”

# ... Integrating and Blending IFS+EMDR

## ◦ Phase 4: Desensitization

- Must have Self-Presence and functional dual attention
- Use BLS to assist processing but **not** to desensitize parts! Obtain contract to use BLS to get to know the parts better
- Use SUDS for the part, check how true the part believes the Self's PC

## IFS Healing Steps

1. Un-blend
2. Create trust between Self and part
3. Witnessing
4. Retrieval and Do-Over
5. Unburdening
6. Invitation
7. Integration of positive qualities or characteristics
8. Appreciation\* (phase 7)
9. Reconsolidation\* (phase 7)

# ... Integrating and Blending IFS+EMDR

- Phase 5: Installation
  - Install the Self's adaptive/positive belief when the part believes it (VOC 1-7)
- Phase 6: Body Scan
  - Check in with other parts that may have emerged during processing, or other parts "known or unknown" having a reaction to this process, and to check if burdened energy has been released from the body. Return to protectors and check if they would also need/want to be unburdened.



# ... Integrating and Blending IFS+EMDR

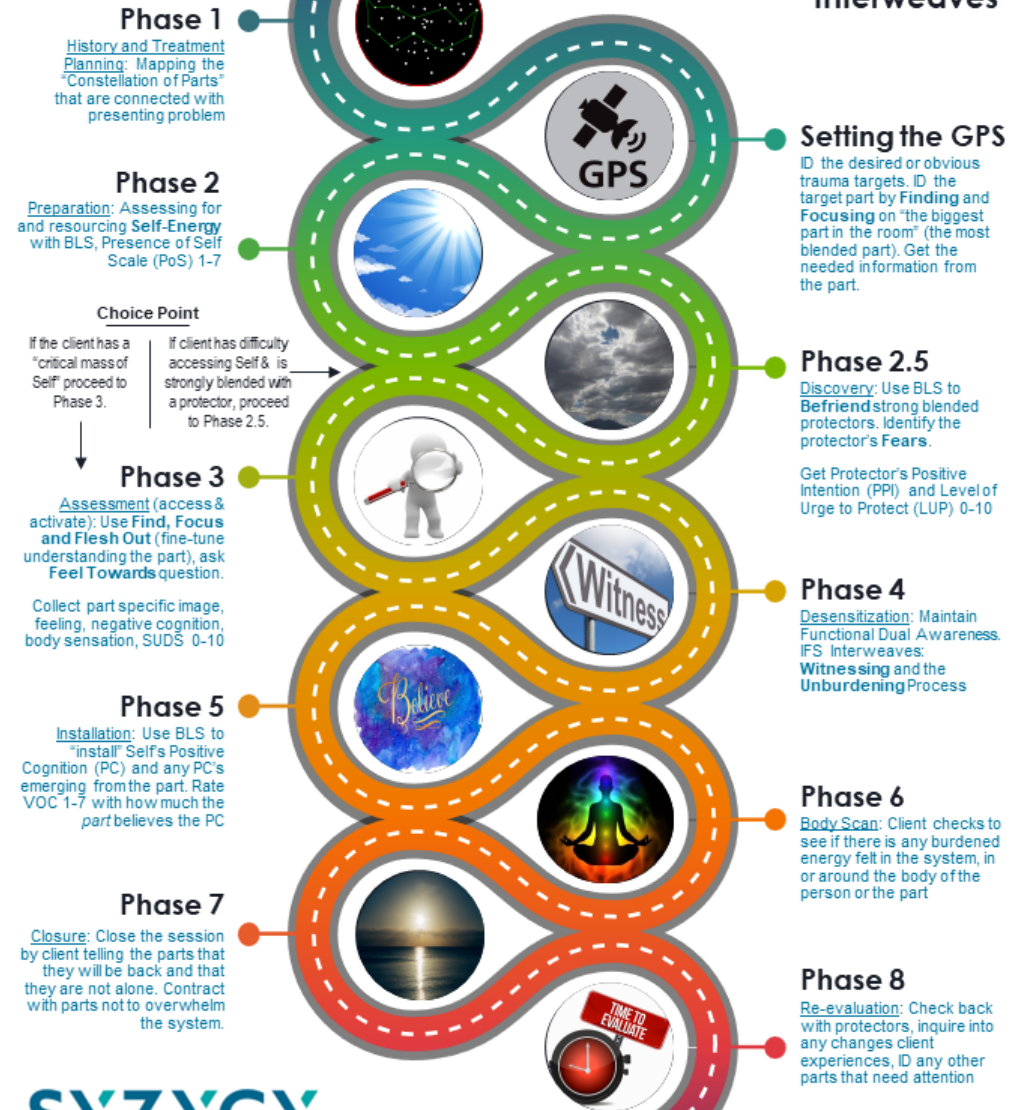
- Phase 7: Closure

- Appreciation and reconsolidation
- Guide the client to let the parts know that they will not forget about them and that they will be back
- Guide the client to check in with their parts throughout the week with the goal of connection and journal

- Phase 8: Re-evaluation

- Ask the client what they noticed as they connected with their parts during the week
- Ask client what they notice when they draw their awareness back to the emotional content
- Check in with other parts in the constellation, if needed
- Assess client's level of Self-Energy

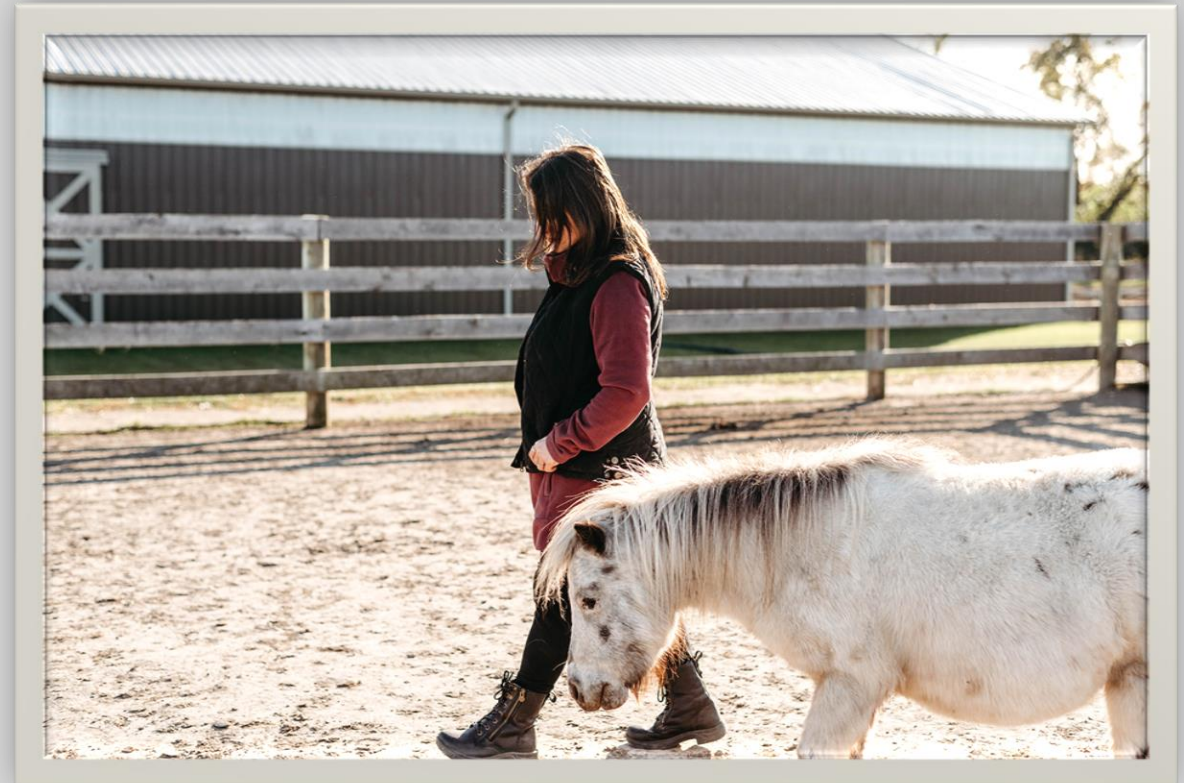
# IFS Informed EMDR 8 Phase Roadmap with IFS Upgrades & Interweaves



Tip: Application of BLS is used at a speed most comfortable for the client throughout all Phases.

# IFS + EMDR + Equine Engagement

- Can be facilitated on the ground or mounted
- Once client has enough Self-Presence to have one foot in the past and the other in the present within a connected relationship, processing with BLS can begin
- Client's Self is simultaneously connected to the target part and engaged with the horse
- The client's Self, the horse and the treatment team are witnesses in healing process
- This dual engaged connection creates a corrective experience for the part and for the client in the present



# Bilateral Stimulation (BLS)



- Horses are not to be “used” for BLS - their **engaged connection** to the client helps client to **hold functional dual awareness** when parts or Self is present
- BLS is used to **deepen and expand** access to Self-Energy and to increase Self-Presence, help facilitate client befriending their protectors, and during reprocessing/witnessing
- Client can implement **butterfly hug** or crossed arms or legs tapping
- Depending upon the amount of Self present, client can pause BLS when it feels right for them, or guide the client with start/stopping BLS if they have minimal access to Self
- Speed & length of tapping varies; it is whatever the client is comfortable with
- BLS can be implemented while **walking with the horse** and holding dual attention
- Depending upon the amount of Self present, client can ask for connection through attachment and walk with the horse, or the horse could be led by EP



# Competency, Self-Led Horsemanship™ and Ethical Dedication to Staying within Scope of Practice and Training

- Therapists must be trained in both IFS and EMDR to effectively, ethically and successfully blend both models.
- The team approach is recommended. A single facilitator should not serve in a dual role with mounted work.
- Equine professionals should be well versed in trauma informed interventions.
- Equine professionals need to be confident in their skills and abilities to connect with the horse and notice nuanced subtleties in the horse's behavior and reactions.
- Working with the horse and understanding its window of tolerance is paramount to successful interventions. Ethical treatment of horses is a primary concern. Special attention is paid to compliance, dissociation, fawning behaviors, or patterns of control.
- Ongoing education and consultation is paramount to achieving and maintaining competency.

# Self-Led Facilitator Roles

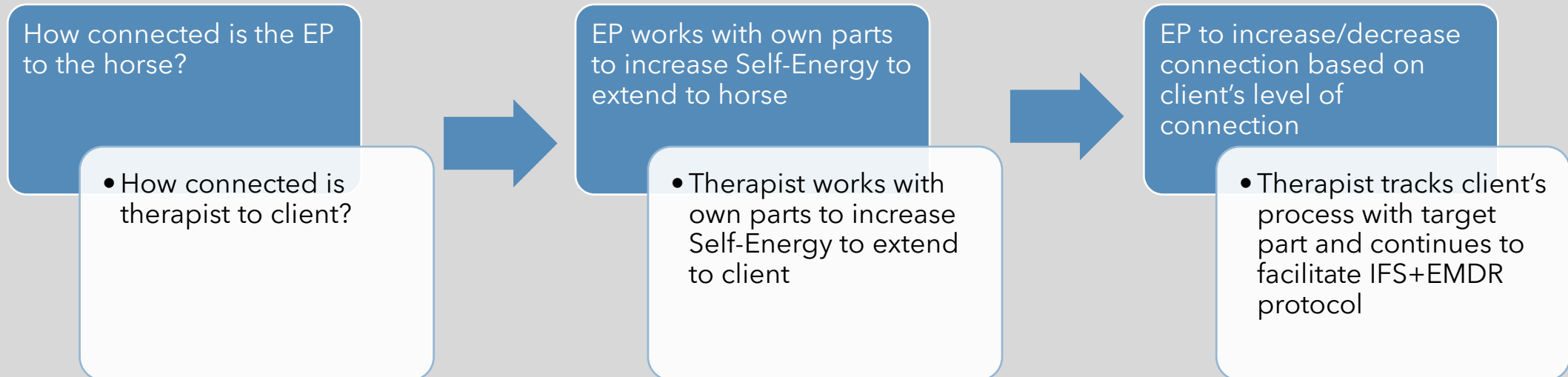
## EQUINE PROFESSIONAL

- Use Self-Energy as an **anchor** for the horse
- Hold space for the horse and the unfolding process of exploration
- Identifying relational dynamics which may be harmful to the horse
- Balancing continual interaction with the process between therapist and client while maintaining focused connection with the horse
- Noticing the horse's parts, patterns and reactions to client's internal dynamic process

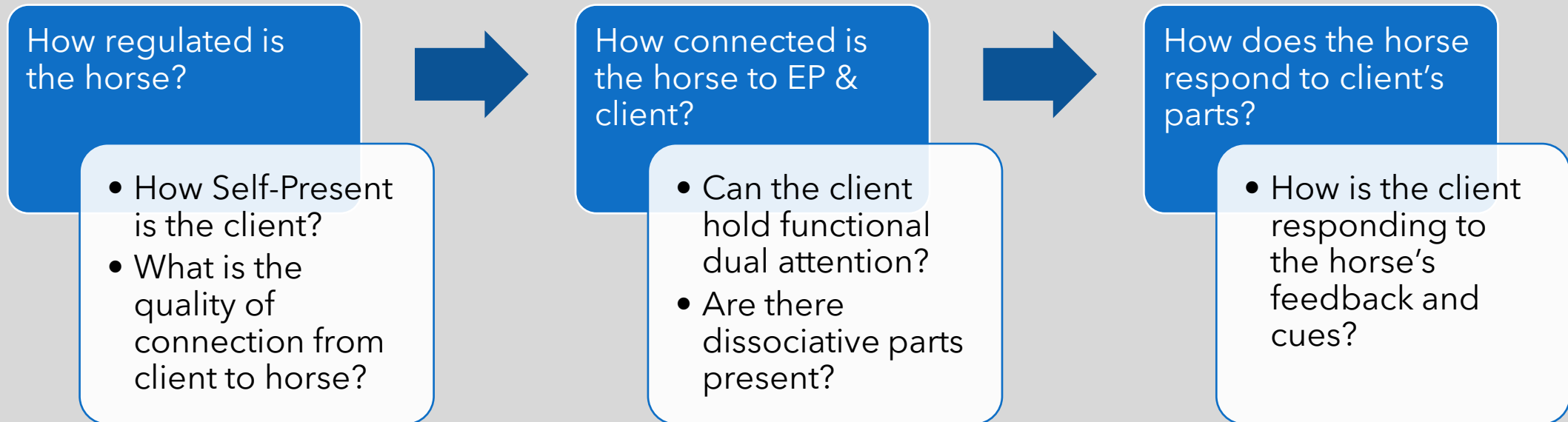
## THERAPIST

- Use Self Energy as a **scaffold** for client
- Manage own parts by awareness of thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and having an agenda
- Facilitate the 8 Phases with IFS upgrades
- Attune to the client and horse's interaction
  - Noticing when they are interacting (or re-enacting) from a part
  - Noticing the horse's reactions when they client is in a part versus Self

# Questions to Assess Readiness Facilitation Team



# Assessing Readiness for the Equine and Client





# Connected Engagement to Process Trauma

6F's. Use BLS to un-blend & build trust. Notice how equine is responding. Facilitate engaged connection.

SUDS from part. Witness, retrieval, un-burdening, invitation. Horse as a witness and corrective experience.

Install Self's PC and any PC from part

Check w/protectors to release burdened energy

Phase 3: Work w/Protectors

**Phase 4: Healing Steps**

**Phase 5: Installation**

**Phase 6: Body Scan**

**Glide Awareness Between Horse and Human,  
Foster Contingent Communication,  
Guide the Flow of Connected Engagement, &  
Weave Together their Co-Created Experience**

Phase 2: Resource Self

**Phase 1: Constellation Map  
without equine engagement**

**Phase 7: Closure**

Get PC. Have client and horse interact and BLS positive emotions, thoughts, beliefs, experience

ID the "Biggest Part in the Room"

Appreciation, reconsolidation and maintain connection.