



# Linking Practices and horse traits in secular and non-secular equine-assisted programs

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# Complicated System



Horse + Human = Health



Complex  
System

# Equine Assisted Services System

## Drivers

Purpose

Social

Economic

Locale

## Operations

Thinking

- Multipurpose

- Client or

Population

Stakeholders

- Teams

- Staff

- Horses

- Family

Planning

- Safety

- Aims

- Support

## Supporting Infrastructures

Data

Connectivity

Resources

Organization

Staff

Environment

Institutional memory

## Outcomes

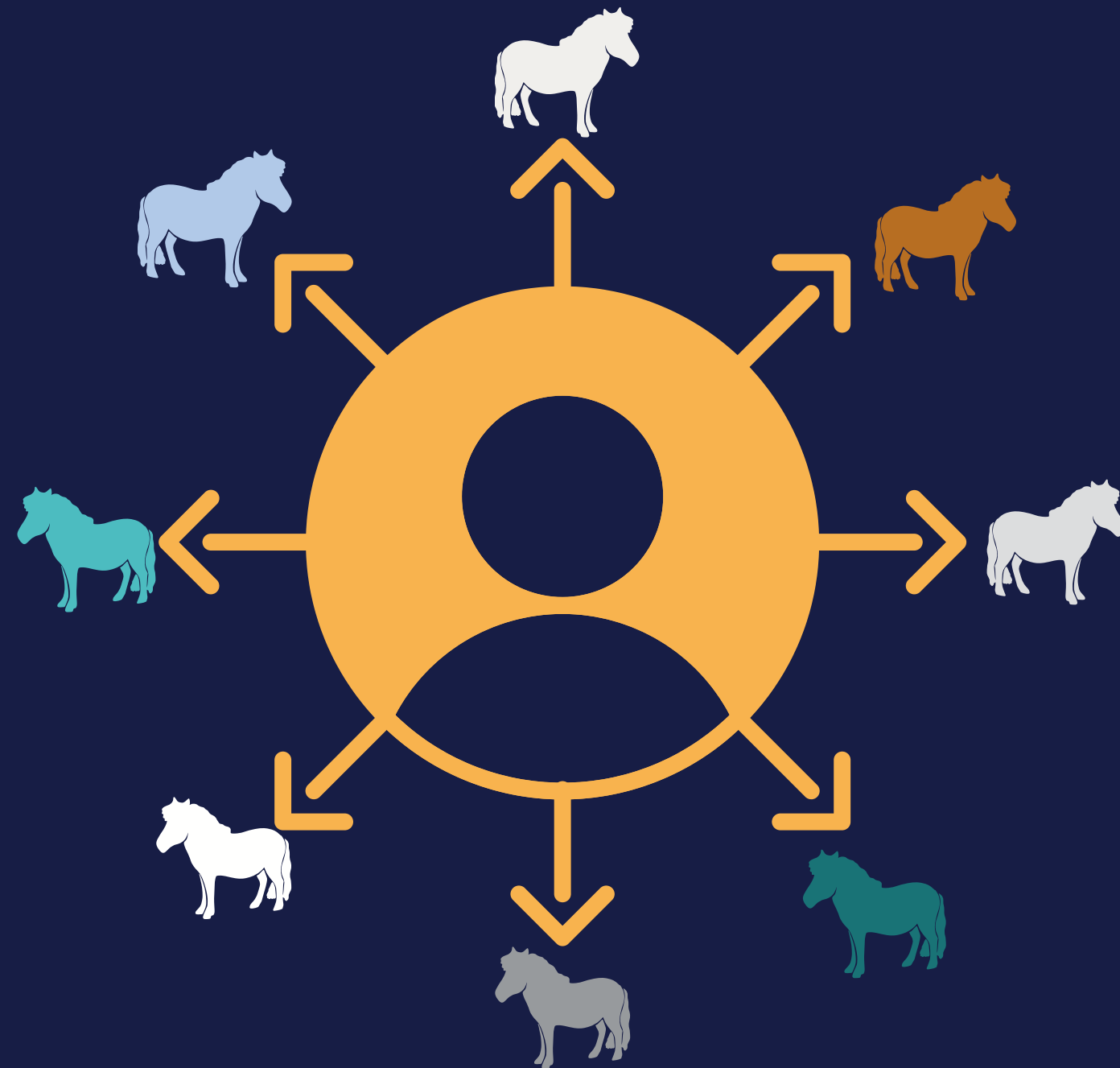
Sustainability

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Welfare

# Research Gaps





## Hope Reins' Foundational Scripture

*"Praise be to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." – 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my HOPE is in you all day long."

Psalm 25:4-5



We're a faith-motivated nonprofit that equips adolescent girls in high-risk situations through a long-term, holistic program of equine therapy and education.

Wesley Woods is your central U.M. Camp destination for faith centered adventures. Each year Wesley Woods is excited to offer youth a chance to step outside their comfort zone in a safe environment while learning about their faith through Bible Studies, large group worship, and personal devotion times.



**Walk On Water** is a non-profit organization dedicated to giving individuals the opportunity to experience and bond with horses in a safe and loving environment. We are committed to teaching responsibility, self-confidence, teamwork and communication skills with the help of our equine partners. We have and joyfully accepted students of all abilities and backgrounds including veterans, individuals with special needs or at-risk individuals.

We provide a counter-cultural experience in a rural setting for children to learn life and relational skills with the Holy Spirit and horses.



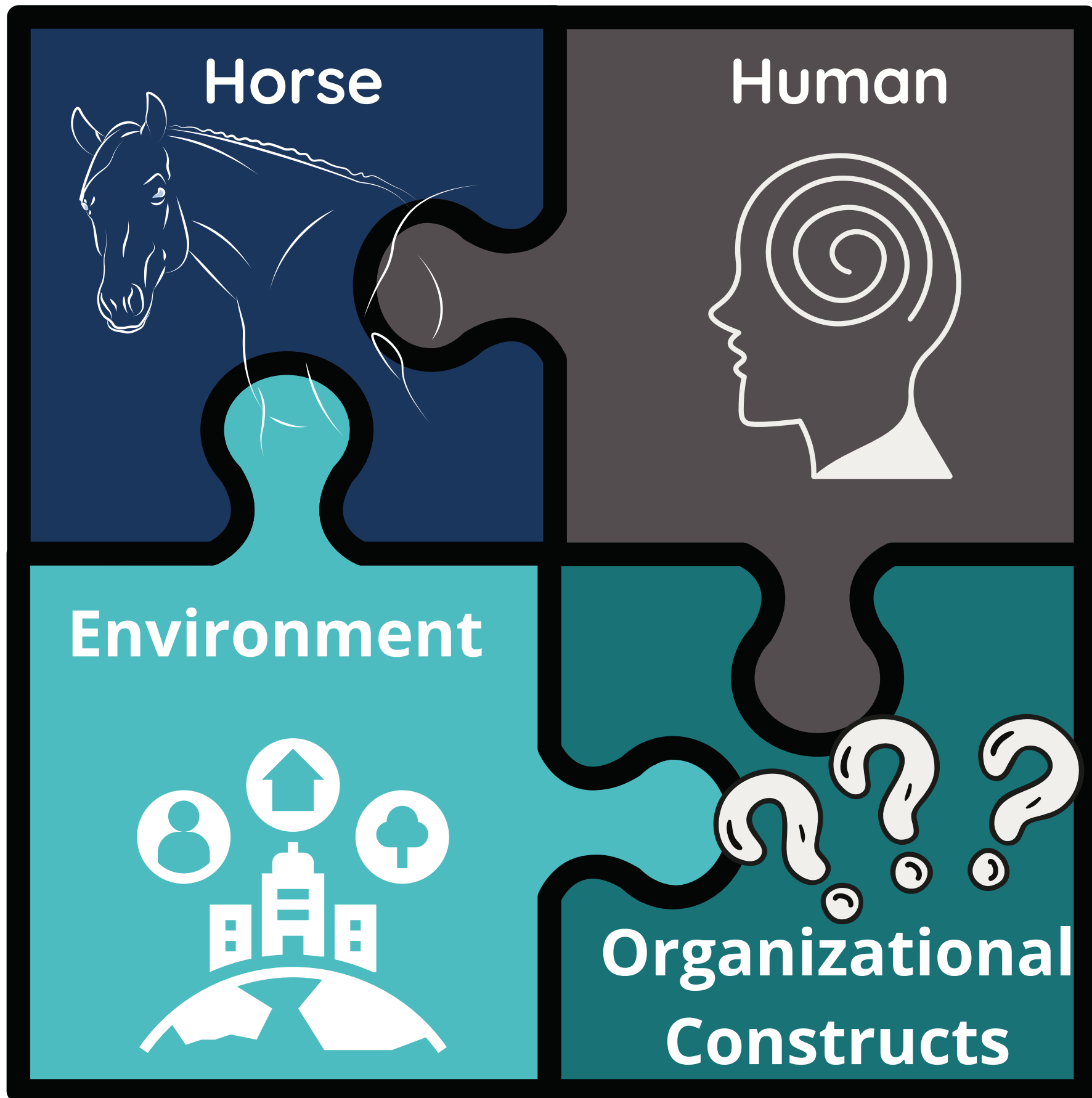
# Central Question

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Does organizational structure and values based on faith-affiliation affect how practices are used in equine assisted programs?

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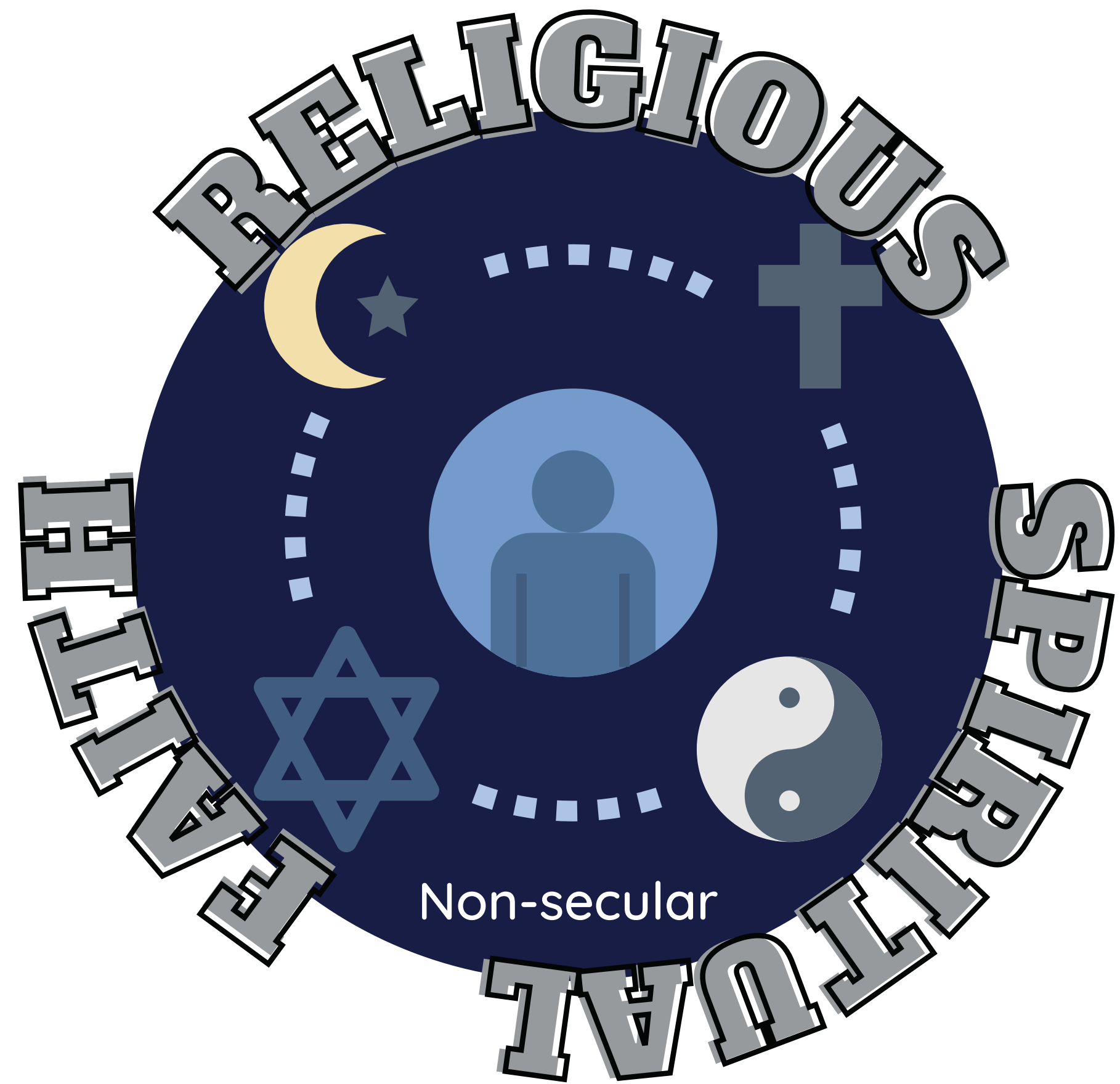
# Research Questions



1) What facilities are openly using faith programming?

2) Are organizational and program-level practices different between secular and non-secular facilities?





# Methods



Cross Sectional Survey



Research Electronic Data Capture



March-August 2021

# Methods

Are faith/religious belief systems openly discussed?

- Yes, fully transparent
- Yes, but only on-site/internal
- No



Statistics



# Survey Results (n=93 completed)

## *Demographics*

HAS FAITH  
AFFILIATION  
71% Non-secular



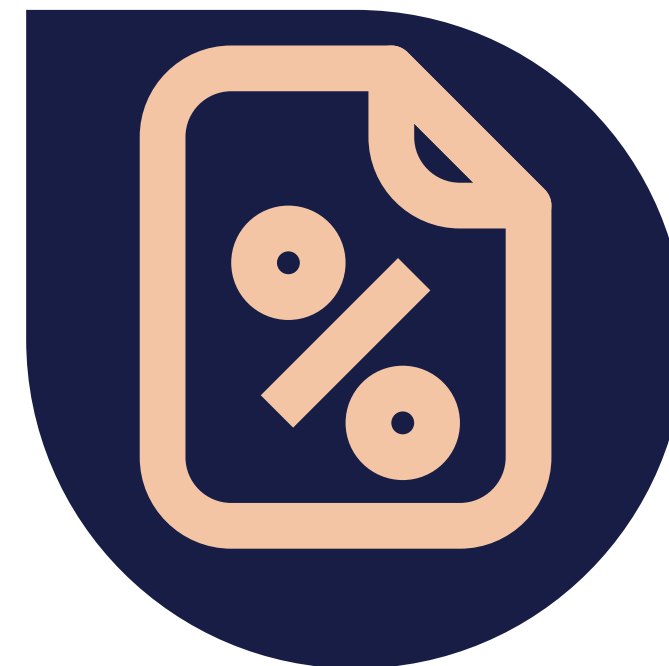
TRANSPARENCY  
60% Non-secular  
fully open



NON-SECULAR  
AFFILIATION  
70% Christian



US TAX CODE  
22% Non-secular  
recognized as  
faith-based



# Survey Results (n=93 completed)

## Demographics

### PAID STAFF MEMBERS (DAILY)

One to Three 45%

Four to Seven 15%



### VOLUNTEERS (DAILY)

More than 12 26%

Eight to twelve 24%

### STAFF LICENSED THERAPISTS OR COUNSELORS

One to Three 51%

None 38%

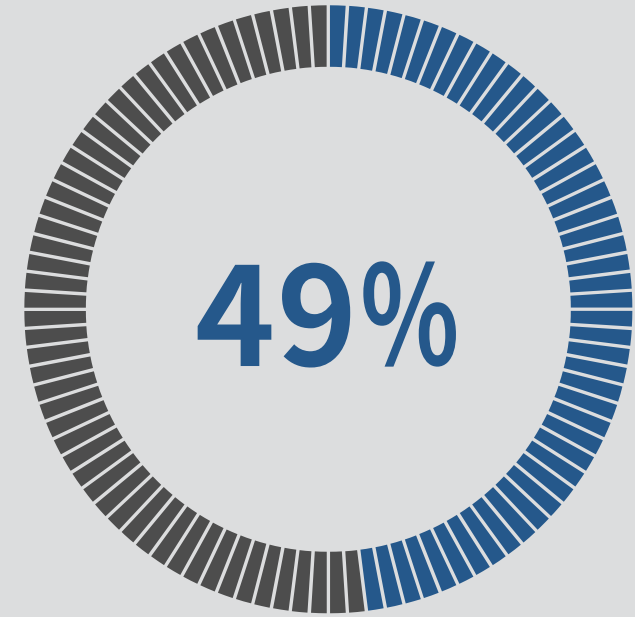
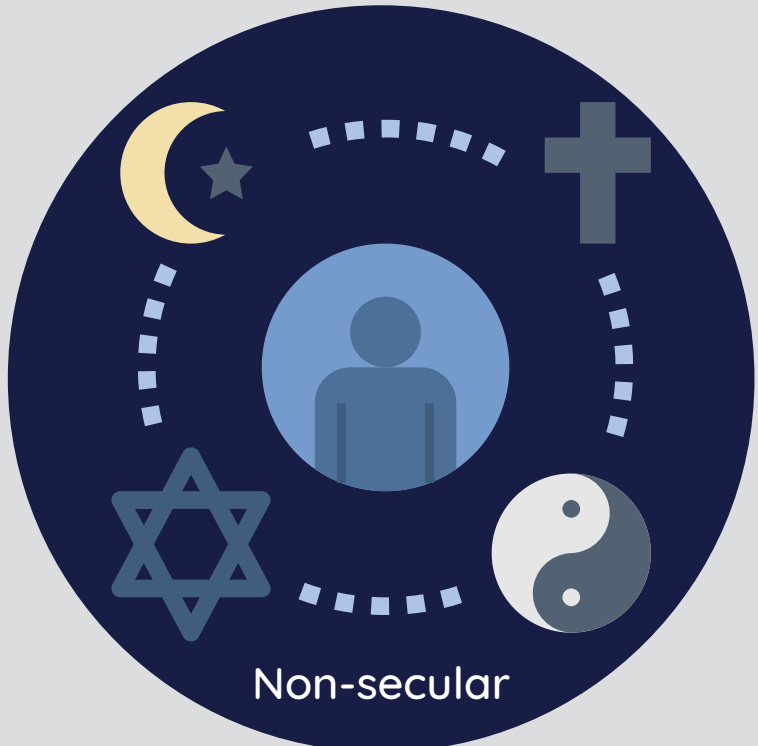


### VOLUNTEERS LICENSED THERAPISTS OR COUNSELORS

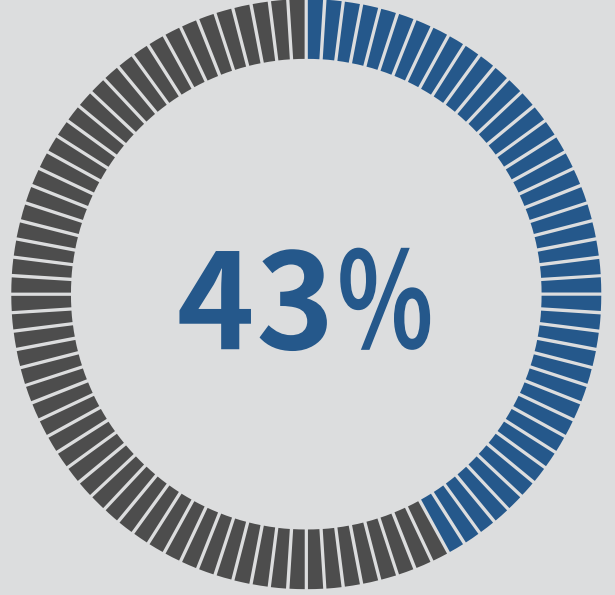
None 50%

One to Three 31%

# Program Characteristics



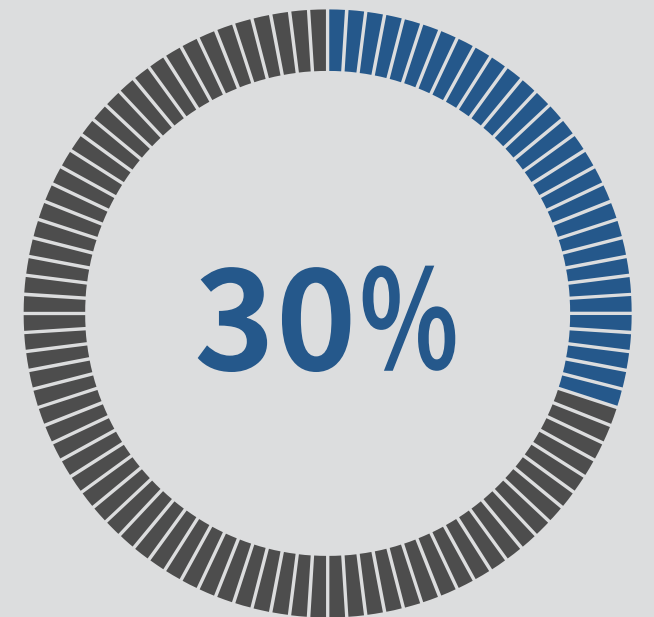
Offer Therapeutic Riding



Offer Trauma-informed practices

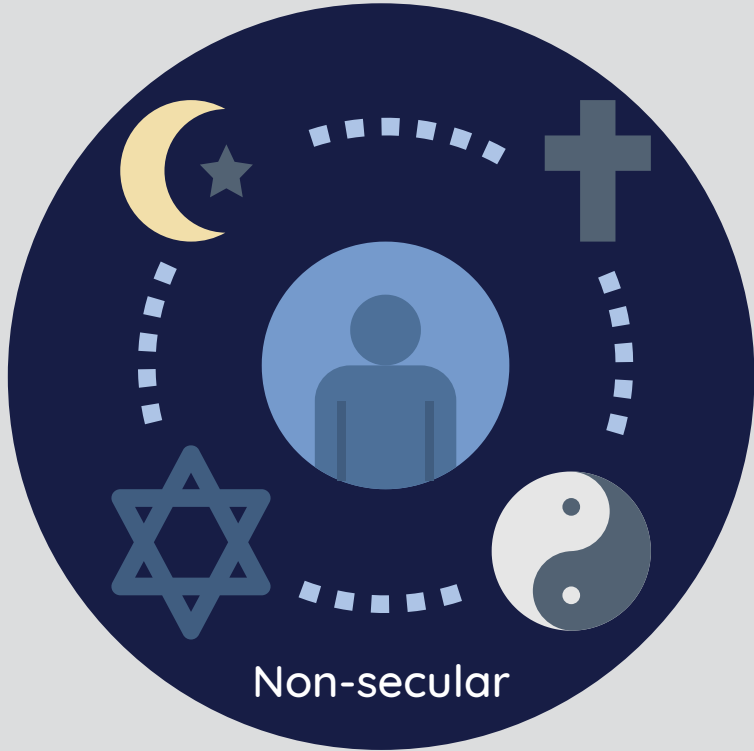


More offer Hippotherapy or Occupational therapy (p=0.0263)



Offer Trauma-informed practices

# Program Characteristics



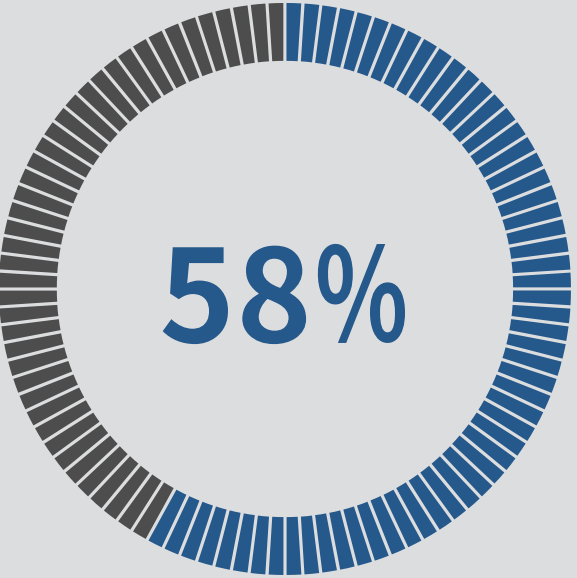
Professional Affiliations  
( $p=0.0314$ )



Individual Sessions  
( $p=0.0241$ )

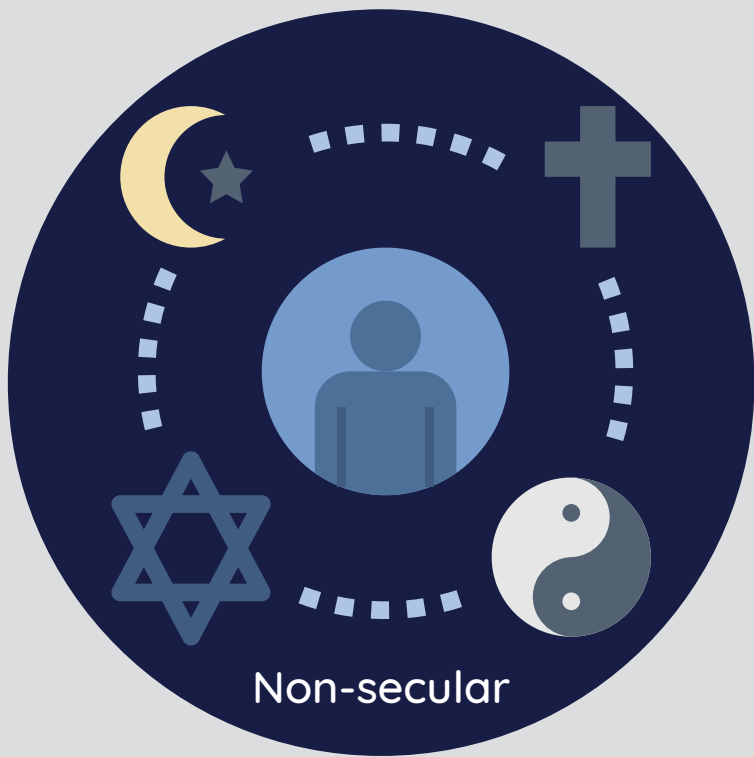


Professional Affiliations  
( $p=0.0014$ )



Serve both children  
and adults

# Horse Characteristics



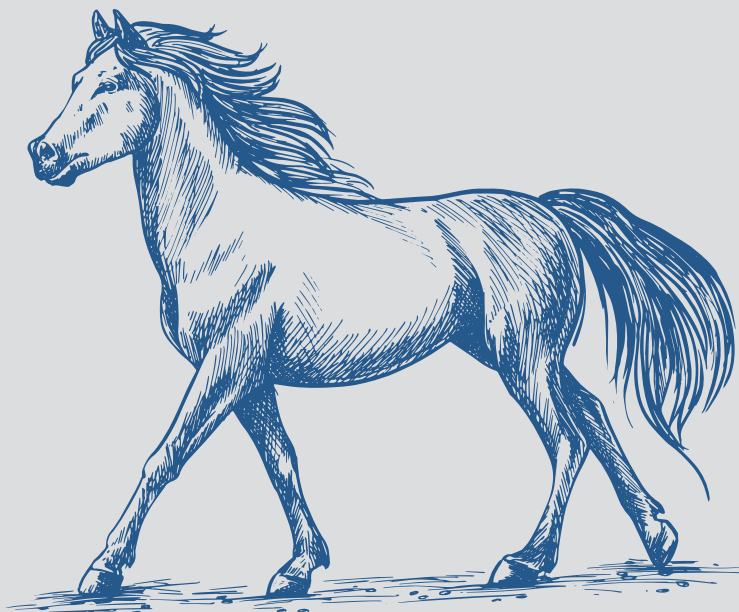
Sensitive to environment and people ( $p=0.0323$ )



Aesthetically appealing horses ( $p=0.0645$ )



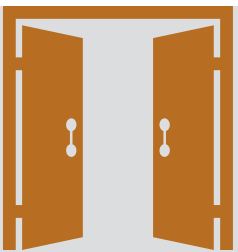
History of abuse or neglect ( $p=0.0481$ )



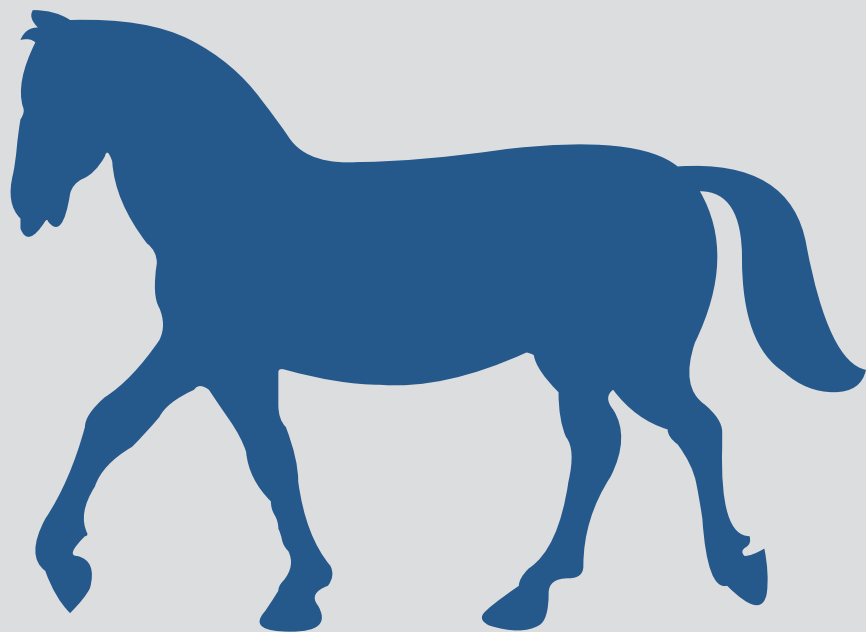
Gait and smoothness ( $p=0.0243$ )



# Horse Characteristics



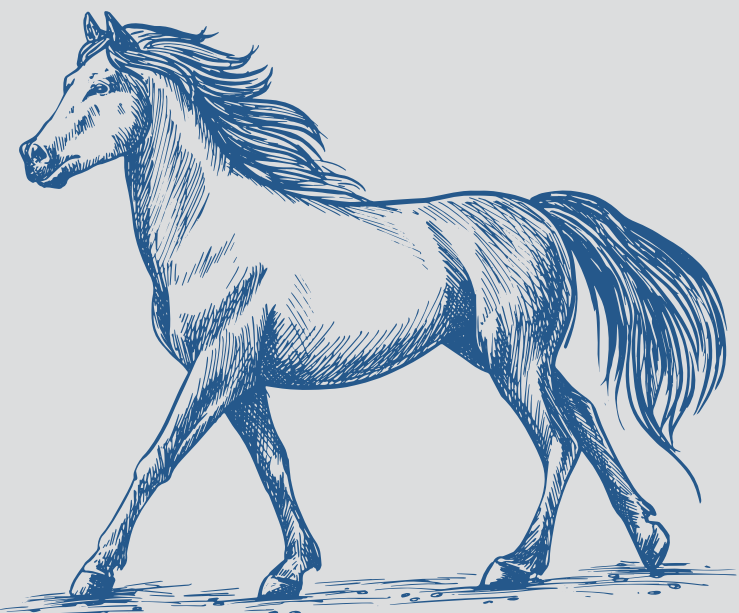
Sensitive to environment and people (p=0.0675)



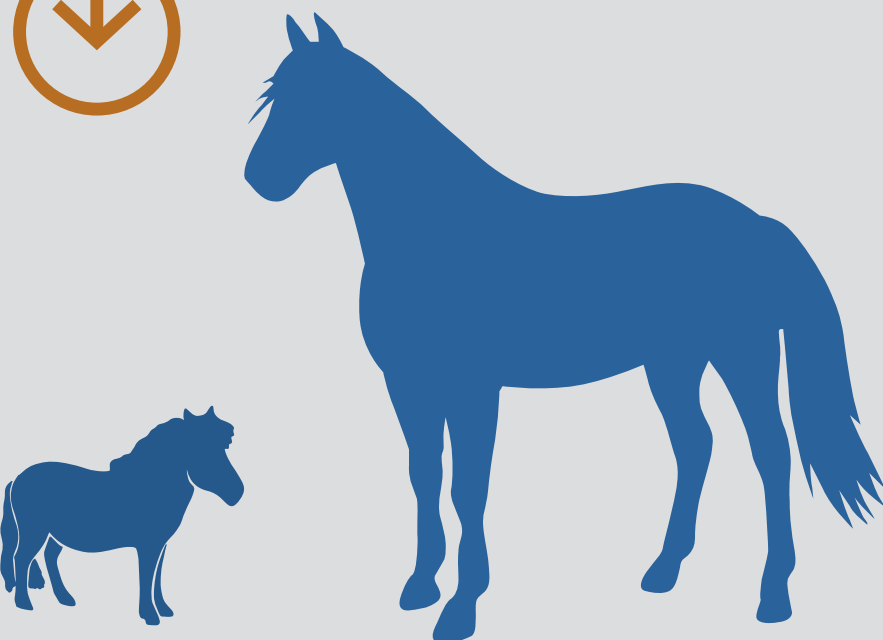
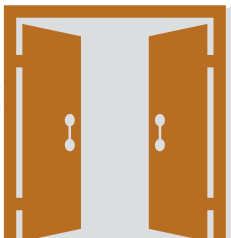
Girth and bone (p=0.0004)



History of abuse or neglect (p=0.0033)



Gait and Smoothness (p=0.0033)

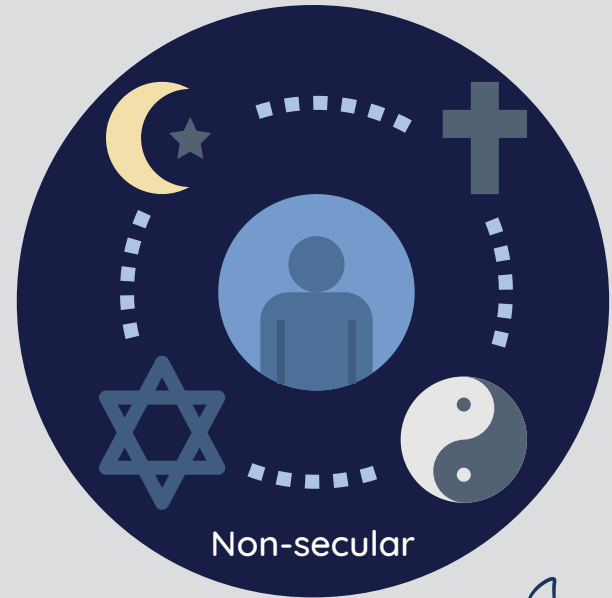


Size is important 81%



Temperment is important 77%

# Conclusions



- We were successful in reaching non-secular facilities
  - Importance of networking
- This is the first study to explore how a proxy for organizational-level values associate with practice.
- Both affiliation and openness of that affiliation affect program and horse trait importance

# Next Steps

## One minute flow

- Write
- Type
- Doodle
- Move your body

Sharing ideas



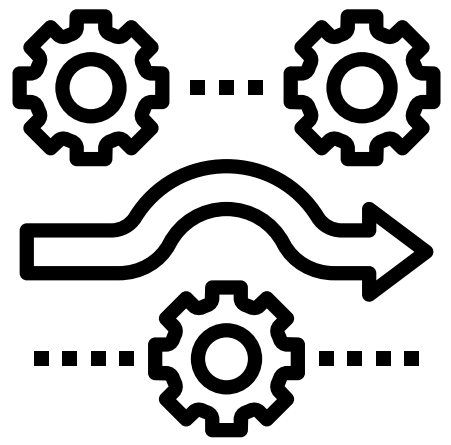
# Next Steps

How can these findings inform research practices?



# Next Steps

Do differences in  
horse traits  
impact  
participant  
outcomes?



# Acknowledgements

Survey Participants


Stacey Lilley, PhD, LPSC, LPC-S

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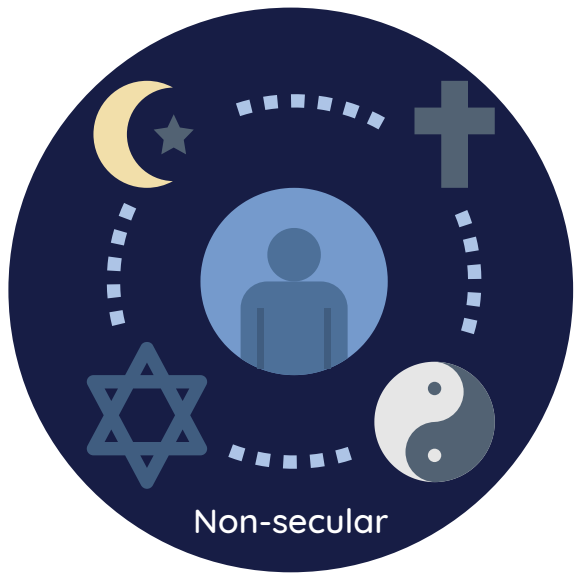
 Center for Innovation  
in Population Health

 Center for Clinical and  
Translational Science

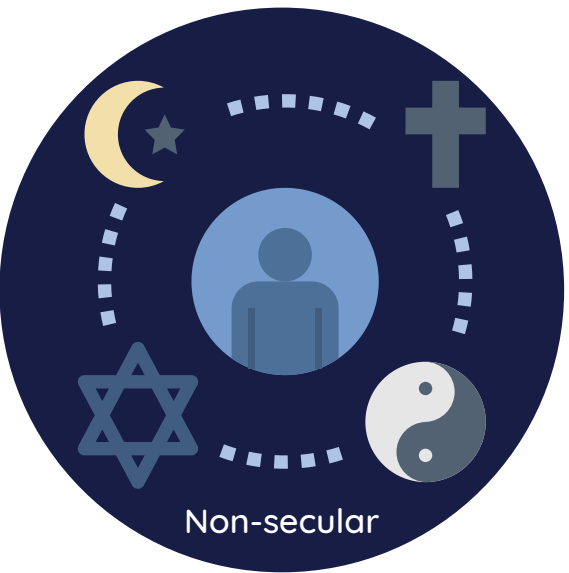
Michaela Keener, MS



# Additional Resource Slides







# Outcome themes for non-secular facilities who value faith and equine interactions

