

# Eagala

## Transforming Mental Health Through Horses



**eagala**

The Global Standard for Equine Assisted  
Psychotherapy & Personal Development

WHAT IS EAGALA?



## EAGALA: LIFE-CHANGING OUTCOMES

The Eagala Model will help you take control of your life and change your outcomes.

Free yourself as you find the answers you are looking for.

### **Our philosophy is about:**

- Serving those who are in need.
- Believing in our clients, professionals, and horses.
- Holding space through an accepting and non-judgmental process.
- Embracing physical and emotional safety.

## There are several different types of Equine-Assisted Services.

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### ➔ Therapeutic riding and horsemanship



Non-therapy services that are delivered by specially trained or certified equine professionals. Participants in these

adaptive services may experience naturally healthful benefits of riding and horsemanship, which could include improvements in physical fitness as well as cognitive, emotional, social, or behavioral skills.

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### ➔ Hippotherapy



Hippotherapy is a specific tool or treatment strategy that occupational therapy, physical

therapy, or speech and language therapy professionals might use when the treatment plan incorporates horses, often specifically utilizing equine movement.



AND FINALLY, THERE'S  
EQUINE-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPY.

## THIS IS EAGALA.

The Eagala Model is a professional mental health model that has results.

**Take control of your life and change your results.** When you are unable to handle stresses of life and you find yourself in the same situation over and over again, it takes a toll on relationships and your ability to manage life well. Emotions and behaviors become problematic and you end up feeling stuck.

Working with your treatment team of Eagala Certified professionals, learn to effectively create change in your life by incorporating horses into mental health and personal development sessions. Where traditional talk therapy leaves off, involving horses in a safe treatment process empowers you to 'see' your behaviors and how those behaviors impact you and others. **Free yourself as you find the answers you are looking for.**



# OUR APPROACH

*The Eagala team approach guides you to positive outcomes.*

**The Eagala team approach is a professional mental health model.** It is not recreational horsemanship, riding lessons, or therapeutic riding and does not involve riding at all. The Eagala Model is a psychological framework based on sound theoretical principles led by a licensed Mental Health Professional. Your therapist is responsible for creating, with your support, a treatment plan and providing for your emotional safety. Your Equine Specialist co-facilitates with your therapist, and helps oversee physical and emotional safety of the horses and everything in the environment. Your intake interviews and progress notes are reviewed by the team so they can create the session in the way that best serves your goals. Treatment sessions are structured to focus on your goals, and the environment is set up in preparation to facilitate the best outcome for you. **Delivering life-changing outcomes in a safe, non-judgmental environment.**

**Find the answers you seek to change behaviors and make your life better.** Find meaning and solutions to the problems that trouble you. The Eagala Model delivers life-changing outcomes. You already have all the answers you're looking for.

Every Eagala session takes a team approach that includes a licensed Mental Health Professional, qualified Equine Specialist, and horses working together with you. **They create the space for positive change to occur in a collaborative environment.**



*"The Eagala team approach inspires positive outcomes."  
- Lynn Thomas, LCSW, Founder and CEO, Eagala*



# THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF THE EAGALA MODEL



**HIGH STANDARDS:** We are dedicated to ethical principles, high standards of practice, and professionalism. These guide our decisions and actions in running a successful mental health program incorporating horses.



**OUTCOMES:** Our work is supported by data. Clients and clinicians report positive outcomes such as strengthening resiliency and transforming their lives.



**REVOLUTIONARY:** Our non-traditional approach works to treat mental health challenges and consists of a team of equal partners: Eagala Certified professionals including a licensed Mental Health Professional and a qualified Equine Specialist, the horses, and you.



**SAFETY:** Your emotional and physical safety is of the highest importance. When you feel safe you can create the space where you can overcome obstacles and achieve deeper healing.



**EMPOWER:** We believe in empowering you as the client, to be the expert in your own life, to be engaged in your own experience and healing process. We believe that you have all the answers within yourself.

*"This form of therapy is especially helpful for children and their families, military personnel, and others, as the horses provide an emotionally safe way to project the strong and difficult feelings stemming from trauma and loss."*



# WHY HORSES?

**A powerful metaphor for situations in your life.**



## **An innovative approach that goes beyond traditional therapy.**

**Healing and change takes more than talking.** Horses are highly intuitive and sensitive beings who have a special ability to connect in ways that help you become present-focused, to identify your feelings, and to work through emotional and behavioral barriers without shame or stigma. Horses are large and powerful, and it is hard to ignore their presence - much like a seemingly impossible life issue. As such, horses can provide a metaphor for events or situations in your life. Difficult feelings and situations cannot always be put into words, and sometimes it's better not to try. Bringing horses into the treatment process compels you to be in the present moment, so that you aren't focusing on the past or worrying about the future, but dealing with what's going on now. This allows you to look at your life with clarity and groundedness. Physically engaging with horses while you are also processing what's going on emotionally, you have the opportunity to "rewrite" your life stories and move forward. **Horses provide a relationship for safe healing to occur, even without verbalizing.**

*"Because of their size, innate and acute sensitivity, and non-verbal nature, horses have a unique appeal helping clients of all ages become more engaged in the psychotherapy process."*



# The EAGALA MODEL

Create lasting solutions to your life challenges.



## THE MODEL

An Eagala treatment session consists of you working with the horses, leading a process of discovery and change, and guided by trained Eagala professionals. Your sessions are structured so that you can explore your challenges through our client-directed process. The horse's unique sensitivity to humans can help you understand your own internal processes more readily than through hours of talking. Your treatment team pays attention to the ways that the horses react, which can be a symbolic representation of situations in your life. Being able to experience your life story unfolding through the horses and the external elements in the environment, you begin to gain deeper understanding into your inner world, thoughts, and behaviors. Through this process, change occurs naturally. You become empowered to change your story. **Opportunities are provided for you to discover and choose for yourself, rather than the facilitators directing the process.**

*"Trauma is held in the body both physically and emotionally, and the horses help healing occur in both of these important areas."*



# The EAGALA MODEL

A collaborative relationship with your team.



## YOUR FACILITATORS' ROLES

All treatment plans are guided by a licensed Mental Health Professional. A licensed Mental Health Professional and qualified Equine Specialist guide the incorporation of horses based on an evaluation of your individualized goals and life situation. Your treatment plan is designed to help you increase your self-awareness, build resiliency, take charge of your life, and cultivate your desired outcomes. Eagala professionals are trained in skill sets which focus on holding space and a non-interpretive, client-centered approach, while the horses' special capacity to read and respond to peoples' non-verbal signals and cues provide a naturally judgment-free experience. This approach creates a solid foundation and environment where you are safe to learn ways to create the life you want, to mend broken relationships, overcome addiction, trauma, or PTSD, build confidence, discover hope for the future, let go of guilt, loss, depression, frustration, and discouragement, and much more. **Guiding you to experience personal and professional change.**

*"It's about the safe space we create -- and then we observe, and allow."*





# The EAGALA MODEL

Emotional safety is of the highest importance  
in your healing journey.



## SAFETY

**Creating a space of emotional safety begins with trust.** Eagala professionals recognize the role that your emotional safety plays in the success of your treatment sessions, and that you must be able to trust that professional standards, ethics, and confidentiality are upheld. You may find yourself hesitant to open up to another person about emotional challenges, past experiences, or life transitions. However, horses create a space of emotional safety and offer a unique way for you to address these challenges in a way that gives you understanding about your behaviors and emotions. They can reflect back to you things that you otherwise don't see in yourself or in your life. Working with horses in this way, you gain new perspectives that create lasting life changes. Processing challenging life experiences can be easier with a horse. **Giving you a safe environment where you can discover solutions to difficult issues.**



# EAGALA STANDARDS

The horses play powerful characters in your narrative.



## GROUND-BASED (no riding)

*Achieving the greatest benefit while being safe.*

Many people are surprised to discover that Eagala is ground-based, meaning there is no riding involved. This is because we want the horses to be themselves and have the freedom to make choices. Plus, riding requires its own training, and horsemanship is not our goal. Eagala sessions provide an opportunity for the your life stories to unfold metaphorically. The horses play powerful characters in this narrative by revealing relationship dynamics or other symbolic aspects of your life. Our ground-based model achieves the greatest benefits for our clients. **The presence of horses is what allows the dynamic that makes Eagala sessions so powerful.**



# EAGALA STANDARDS

The solutions tend to be deeper and longer lasting.



## SOLUTION-ORIENTED

*Give yourself the opportunity and you will discover your own best solutions.*

**Science says people learn best by doing.** The Eagala Model allows you to explore, problem-solve, overcome challenges and discover yourself, guided by the team's facilitation. It prescribes a hands-on approach where you are given the space to project and analyze your situation, and to find your own solutions. Emotional safety is created by not needing to talk - simply being in the presence of the horses can open avenues for you to gain deeper healing. There is a natural unfolding that occurs as you are free to explore and ponder and listen within yourself for insights. Since these solutions are personally experienced at emotional and physical levels in conjunction with intellectual understanding, they tend to be deeper, more profound, and longer lasting. **Unlock your innate ability to find your own solutions and regain control of your life.**



# EAGALA STANDARDS

Serving everyone at the highest level.



## CODE OF ETHICS

*Ensuring best practices and the highest level of care.*

The Eagala Ethics Committee ensures our code of ethics is honored. Eagala's Code of Ethics serves as a standard by which to conduct business and guide practice for all Eagala members. Eagala's Code of Ethics serves to instill confidence and safety in our clients, colleagues, and communities. It is based on providing for the fundamental overall safety and well-being of our clients and horses.

Eagala's certified professionals are committed to following our code of ethics, upholding principles, and ensuring best practices and the highest level of care for our clients. The Ethics Committee develops, communicates, and oversees standards of conduct and treatment. These are all core components of our way of being. **Eagala - setting the global standard for mental health services incorporating horses.**

[Click here to download our Code of Ethics](#)



# WHO IS THIS FOR?

Feel excited and inspired about your life again!



**The Eagala Model is a powerful treatment option for healing and growth.**

**Eagala sessions are suitable for those who want to:**

- overcome addiction, trauma, or PTSD
- let go of guilt, loss, depression, frustration, and discouragement
- build confidence in themselves
- discover hope for the future
- mend broken relationships
- improve organizational effectiveness, build teamwork, and enhance performance
- *and much more.*

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**Get help from someone you can trust.**

- Learn to have joyful and safe relationships.
- Regain control of your life.
- Feel confident in handling life's challenges in spite of setbacks.
- Express your feelings in a healthy way.
- Find new ways to look at what's happened in your life.



# WHO IS ON MY TEAM?

A professional mental health model with proven results.

Your Eagala Certified team consists of the following professionals:

- A **licensed Mental Health Professional** who is responsible for creating, with your support, a treatment plan and providing for your emotional safety. Your therapist's role also includes creating the context that guides you to your own insights and breakthroughs.
- A **qualified Equine Specialist** who co-facilitates your sessions with your therapist, and helps oversee your physical and emotional safety, along with that of the horses.

These team members will be with you at all times when you are in the arena.

- In addition, the team includes **the horses** themselves - they are unencumbered and allowed to freely act in whatever ways they choose. This provides the greatest opportunity for you to observe them and receive unfiltered feedback.

The role of the Mental Health Professional and Equine Specialist is to hold space - to observe, to put their personal opinions aside and allow you to just be to explore whatever experiences come up for you. Their role is to **be present with you**. They listen and observe with their ears and hearts, practicing compassion and empathy. They accept your truth, no matter what. They are committed to upholding the Eagala standards and ethics which are a foundation of this practice.

Likewise, by nature, horses do not judge or interpret. They provide a naturally judgment-free experience. With horses serving as equal partners of the treatment team, simply being in the presence of the horses can open avenues to deeper healing, as you open to insights and new behaviors. When we feel seen and understood, without threat of judgment, we become empowered to look at our challenges in a healthy way.

Through this team approach, you gain clarity into what's not working in your life, and create opportunities through the horses to try out new ways. This can **bring you to your own truth faster than through traditional talk therapy**.



# WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Get ready for powerful, experiential transformation!

**The Eagala Model is an experiential treatment process.** You'll be working with your therapist, equine specialist, and horses who help you to gain insight into how you respond to others and to life's challenging situations.

This is an environment where you'll find benefit in being vulnerable, open to learning, and willing to focus on self-awareness. But don't worry; you won't need to share anything that makes you uncomfortable. One of the best things about the Eagala Model is that you don't need to share anything you don't want to.

Embrace a "beginner's mindset." Everything you already know, has led you to where you are now. However, this therapy experience is about learning something new. **As a team, we are there to support and provide a safe space for you to experience, experiment, and grow personally.**



# WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING...

"I'll never forget my very first session that changed my life forever." - *Lauren N.*

"In the six weeks that I did the program, I feel like a completely different person. This has been absolutely the best I've experienced with regards to my PTSD." - *Steve S., OEF/OIF Veteran*

"The Eagala Model is a kind of catalyst and agent of change during the children's process. We haven't found anything else which has achieved better results than these." - *Administrator at Covenant House, Mexico, on working with human trafficking victims*

"Our partnership with Eagala Certified professionals has incorporated recovery-based experiences and learning that have directly assisted patients in identifying and beginning to address recovery issues more quickly than is accomplished through the use of only traditional counseling." - *Patti Hall, Manager of Wellness and Related Services, Hazelden*

"We have conducted a number of Eagala sessions with our veterans including a series of workshops focusing on coping resources, resilience and anger management. Across the board, veteran participants have told me that never have they found a group or individual session so useful and life-changing, and that they have found hope. After these workshops, many reflect frequently on the experience and skills learned then take them into their daily lives." - *Susan T. Lisi, VA Medical Center, Canandaigua, New York.*

[CLICK TO HEAR ABOUT  
A MILITARY VETERAN'S  
STORY](#)





# ABOUT EAGALA

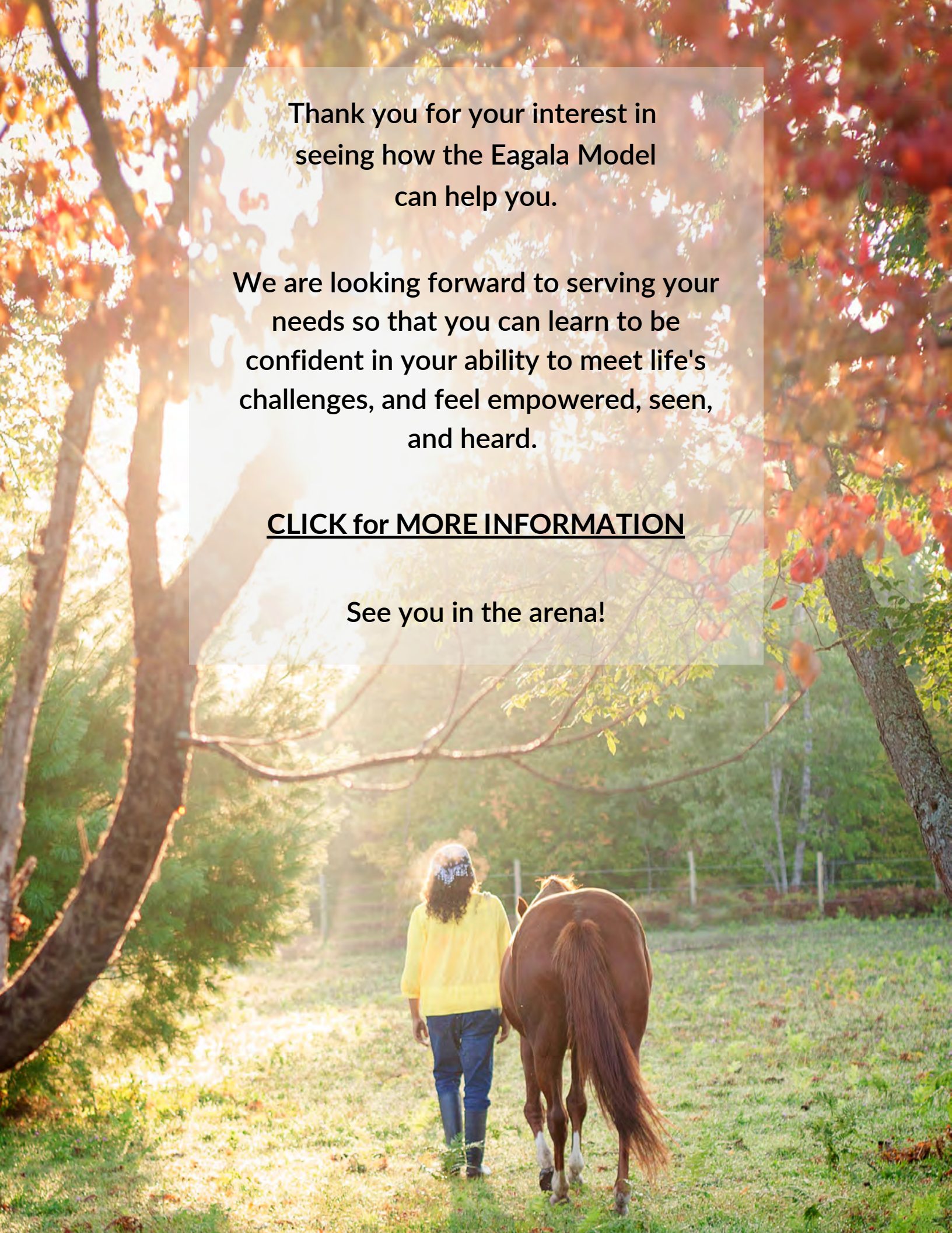
Founded in Santaquin, Utah in 1999, Eagala provides resources, education, standards, and support for professionals incorporating horses for mental health and personal or organizational development.

Eagala is a global network - the largest, most established professional organization for equine-assisted psychotherapy and personal development in the world, with over 2,500 members in 40 countries, 500 credentialed programs, and 90 local networking groups supporting members throughout our regions:  
Africa, Europe/Middle East,  
Latin America, the Pacific, and the U.S. and Canada.

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Eagala's philosophy is about holding space, believing in the innate abilities of our clients and horses, avoiding judgment and interpretation, embracing confidentiality and emotional safety, and mastering skill sets that apply to many areas of life.



A person with long dark hair, wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is walking away from the camera on a grassy path. They are walking alongside a brown horse, also seen from behind. The path is flanked by trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The background shows a line of green trees and a fence, suggesting a rural or farm setting. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

Thank you for your interest in  
seeing how the Eagala Model  
can help you.

We are looking forward to serving your  
needs so that you can learn to be  
confident in your ability to meet life's  
challenges, and feel empowered, seen,  
and heard.

**[CLICK for MORE INFORMATION](#)**

See you in the arena!