

MOUNTAIN MEADOW HOLISTIC EQUESTRIAN



CENTER CODE OF ETHICS AND COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

At Mountain Meadow Holistic Equestrian Center (MMHEC), we have a standard of expected behavior that promotes an environment of learning, growth and relationships for all who are in this community. We choose to recognize each person's and animal's innate worth by listening and engaging in social relationships. All community members are expected to behave responsibly and treat each other with dignity and respect. In order for open communication to occur, people must feel that they are safe to express their thoughts and opinions without retaliation. It is expected that all community members adhere to the following guidelines.

- 1) Communication is paramount to a healthy community. Communicate directly with people, especially in those areas that may affect the other person. Do not assume others know what you mean or want. What is verbally said is not always heard the same way by all people. The only way to know if you have been understood is to ask.
- 2) When communicating, use respectful language. This includes tone and gesture. Raising the voice or pointing fingers to communicate can be intimidating because what is heard or seen is the tone or gesture, not the message. Long after the message is gone, the way the message was communicated is remembered and can be a source of hurt feelings. Once this cycle starts, other miscommunications build off the original incident and, if left unresolved, will continue to fester.
- 3) Omit language that includes swearing, ethnic, racial, religious or sexual preference slurs.
- 4) In order to build an environment of mutual trust and safety, community members must engage each other with honesty and integrity.
- 5) Personal information shared between two parties should be held in confidence and should never be the subject of gossip. Refrain from telling others your side of the story in order to gain support for your position. Direct communication between people is encouraged in order to clarify and resolve issues or

- misunderstandings. Refrain from talking about other people when they are not present.
- 6) Often the feelings attached to the issues being discussed can interfere with resolution of the issue. Mediation by a third party may be used as an option.
 - 7) Listen neutrally without trying to fix the issue, judging, or attaching feelings to the issue.

Those who do not respect these values may be asked to leave.

Steps to effective communication and to resolve disagreements that do not damage the relationship:

- Think of a constructive way to deal with the situation before you speak.
- Both people need to agree with ground rules, such as
 - No interrupting
 - No name calling or put-downs
 - Speak for yourself, not for the other person
- One person tells her or his views of the situation using I-MESSAGES* (see below)
- Second person restates what the problem is for the first person and vice versa
- Both people suggest possible solutions
- Both agree on a resolution

***I-MESSAGES (for effective communication):**

- I feel (state the feeling)
- When you (describe the other person's behavior)
- Because (describe the results of the other person's behavior)
- And I want (state what would correct the situation for you)