



Conducting a 1st String Mentorship

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The purpose of your mentorship is to teach the student. To teach them what you have learned through your experiences as a certified practitioner. What better way than to instruct on a variety of horses with different environments, boarding practices, and riding disciplines? It is important in the first string mentorship to teach the students what you know while taking into consideration what the student is able to grasp mentally as well as physically. Find out their manner of learning. We all learn at different paces and in different ways. Take into account each student's individuality and learning strengths. Some students are "hands on", while others are more cerebral and abstract. Try to accommodate the student in the best way that you can. If the student is more hands on, then give the student plenty of opportunity to handle the hooves (schedule horses accordingly). If the student is more cerebral, give the student a mental picture first by explaining the path and technique you are taking in the trimming.

As an instructor, you are not there to judge, ridicule, or place too high a standard on the student. Your responsibility is to teach and guide. Be encouraging and complimentary. Many students are just starting out and may be intimidated by the process. We all need to build confidence in the students and let them know we are there at THEIR service, as a paid instructor, to help them become a professional and competent practitioner.

You are responsible for your student. Make sure they do not exceed their limits and get themselves or others, including the horse, into trouble or injured.

How the mentorship works

A student is allowed to choose their own mentors for this step. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and request a mentorship date. The student will usually ask for a specific date, but some may let you choose a date that you see fit.

Get as much information as you can from the student in regard to their trimming and horse handling experience before setting up a date. The instructor can also speak to the student's training cell leader and get additional information through previous training reports. Find out the areas that need to be focused on. Ask the student what they think their weaknesses are and what area they would like help in (schedule horses accordingly). Most students in their first



string will have limited trimming experience and will most likely want to see first time trims. Many first string students may not have the physical conditioning to trim too many horses in a day. Ask them what their limitations are. Try to schedule a number of horses that will allow plenty of time for instruction and discussion and not overwhelm the student mentally or physically. Asking and receiving as much information as you can at this point will allow you to match the student's needs to your client's horses.

When a mutual date is agreed upon, forward any travel and lodging recommendations that you have to the student. Prepare a basic form letter that you can simply send out with each mentorship request. Making these suggestions will get them as close to you as possible and prevent them from staying at a hotel that may be inconvenient for both of you. Some students travel a great distance and your town will be very foreign to them.

The mentorship will take place on your client's horses, and not the students (if he or she has clients). The mentorships are private AANHCP learning affairs between the instructor and one or several students. The mentorships should not be held in a public or outreach clinic format. The mentorship gives the student a "day in the life" of a certified practitioner. The first string student will be anxious to hear your approach with first time clients as well as non trimming consultations regarding diet, exercise, boarding, equipment, and balanced riding. Be a role model for the student. Teach the student how to be a professional. This is not just hands on trimming instruction for the student but also business skills and practices.

The first string mentorships will focus mainly on tool handling and trimming techniques. Learning a variety of tool handling "tricks" of the trade, as well as trimming techniques from different instructors will give the student a broader base in their education. Continue to support the model and the guidelines as they have been taught in the NT Workshops. Show the student how these guidelines apply to each and every horse. Be sure that students follow your orders and instruction and not "their own" or a previous instructor's (whom they may try to over ride you with). An instructor can "fail" a student who refuses to cooperate with their training directive.

The student is there to learn from you, they are not there to "instruct" you in the mentorship sense, although, you should observe carefully to assess their skill levels, giving them ample latitude to reveal what they know and "claim" what they have learned if it works well for them. In other words, be open to the fact that a student might have something good to share, and watch them closely that what they do is allowed in the guidelines. Take this opportunity to let the student show you what they know. Who knows you may learn something too.

Each practitioner, as well as each student, will have their own individuality and their own



“way” so to speak. Be respectful of that. Our approach is not about crushing free thought or pre-developed good technique, but to carefully improve or augment what is good and working, and supplant what does not work by our examples and suggestions. In the end, your report is intended to help the board evaluate the student’s strengths and weaknesses so that we can move them forward towards his or her goal of competency and certification.

First String Mentorship fee is \$150 per student per day. This fee is paid directly to the instructor. Let students know in advance how you prefer to be paid.

If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns about the Training Cell Program and your responsibilities, please contact:

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