

# Therapeutic Recreation Protocol: Cowboy Hoe Down

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## General Purpose

To improve physical health by engaging participants in fun movement to familiar music.

To develop and build social skills and relationships through group reminiscence and sharing thoughts and opinions about cowboy poems.



## Program Description

The majority of this cowboy-themed intervention is focused on using music to motivate movement. Additional activity segments and carefully chosen music attempt to engage participants who typically shun exercise or movement-focused activities. Additional activity segment includes root beer (or sarsaparilla or cream soda), and a brief introduction to cowboy poetry.

## Client Problems that May Be Addressed

Participants may experience a sense of purpose and belonging, increased self-esteem, improved physical and mental health, the development of a new interest and friends. This intervention may stimulate personal memories and reminiscing but it does not necessarily rely on previous knowledge or experience. It can be very "in the moment" and pleasant for participants who are frustrated by not being able to remember their own experiences or tap into their past knowledge.

## Materials Needed

Music and music player; copies of cowboy poetry; cup and root beer (sugar free option available); props such as bandannas; simple musical instruments such as triangle "dinner bell" or cowbell.

**Population:** All populations.

## Contraindicated Criteria

Physical challenges may require staff to assist people in participation. Alternate music selections that are slower may be more appropriate for some populations. Dietary restrictions must be regarded. Alternative movements or props should be provided to include participants with limited abilities.

## Cautions

As you invent your own moves and stretches, consider avoiding these moves as the American Fitness Association of America and various senior programs advise or caution against them.

- *Avoid full head rolls.* Only roll head shoulder to shoulder and not back on the spine. This is to protect the neck and cervical spine.
- *Avoid wrist stretches in which the hand is pushing palm forward while the other hand pushes back on the fingers to further engage the stretch.* This could be troublesome for people with osteoporosis.
- *Avoid any stretch in which there is additional pushing or pulling* either by the participant or an assistant.
- *Avoid using weighted objects during motions* to prevent injury caused by inertia in a motion and fatigue. Props or musical instruments should be light and not interfere with movement.
- *Avoid having participants bring both feet off the floor at the same time.* This stresses the lower back unnecessarily and can cause injury or aggravate existing conditions. If participants' feet are not flat on

# Therapeutic Recreation Protocol: Cowboy Hoe Down

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the floor, make sure participants in wheelchairs have footrests comfortably adjusted or use steps or blocks so their feet have something sturdy to press against.

- *Avoid any move that puts the head below the heart.* This can raise blood pressure.

Note that music is copyrighted. The music discussed in this document are examples. Please evaluate your use of music according to ASCAP and BMI which protect the intellectual and creative copyrights of musicians and performers.

## Setting Up the Environment

Participants need to be in a semi-circle with enough space between them to reach out their arms. Turn off TVs, stereos, and cell phones. Remove and prevent distractions particularly people walking through or having conversations in the same room. Respectful staff, visitors, family members, or other residents who want to observe or participate in constructive ways are always encouraged to join. Participants who need glasses should have them.

## Intervention Activity

*Anticipatory Set Segment: Questions / Script*

1. When you think of the wild west, what do you imagine?
2. What kind of people populated the wild west?
3. Let's think about cowboys, ranchers, and lawman of the west. What qualities would you have to have to be a cowboy, rancher, or lawman? Would you have to be physically fit? What kinds of activities would you do? What might you do around a campfire at the end of the day? Do you think that you might sing?
4. Today we are going to enjoy some fun cowboy and western music, do a little singing and do some cowboy moves to keep us "ridin', ropin', and hopin' for many tomorrows. Then we are going to belly up to the bar for a potent cowboy beverage and a bit of cowboy entertainment.

## *Music and Movement Segment*

Music should be cued up and ready. Distribute props (bandannas and musical instruments). The music line up starts and ends with slower songs. Strive to keep songs to three moves. Repeat some moves from song to song for some familiarity and sense of mastery. The first two songs are slow warm ups and stretching. For the more active songs which comprise the bulk of the activity, show the designated "default move" letting them know that they can do that single move through the whole song, go fast or slow, add in the other moves as they are demonstrated, or they can make up their own moves—whatever feels right, safe and fun to them. Let them know that cowboys, ranch hands, and lawmen cannot afford to be injured so "If it hurts, don't do it. If your doctor or physical therapist says 'don't do it,' then don't do it. If you feel overly tired, don't do it—but sing along, clap or tap if you can." Always err on the side of caution, evaluate your participants as you go and make moves small or slow accordingly. It helps to be on a chair or stool with wheels so that you can move easily to sit in front of specific people to prompt or encourage.

1. Okay, we all need to sit tall in the saddle so we can see those cows on the horizon or the sheriff and his posse coming our way. So, shoulders back, ears over shoulders over hips.
2. Can I get a 'wahoo?' I don't think those cows can hear you. Take a deep breath and let's do it again!

## Therapeutic Recreation Protocol: Cowboy Hoe Down

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### 3. Start the music

- Gunsmoke (TV Theme Song)
  - Slow tempo. Use the metaphor of waking up and working out the kinks from the previous hard day of cowboy work. Ear to shoulder, looking far left and right, stretch back by clasping hands and pushing forward or push with one hand, take a big breath with arms over head. Big smile!
- Don't Fence Me In (Moe Bandy)
  - Slow to medium tempo. Shoulder shrugs, shoulder rolls, point and flex ankles, point feet left and right, "wet dog/loose face" head shake.
- Rawhide (TV Theme Song—Longer Version Covered in 'The Blues Brothers' Movie)
  - Fast tempo. Default move is rolling hands. Cowboy marches or foot taps, roll hands up and down, lassos, rein in the horses with both hands. Song ends with a yell "Rawhide!"
- El Paso (Marty Robbins)
  - Medium Tempo. Default move is waltz hands. Flamenco hands, foot taps, intermittent big breaths with chest open wide.
- Move It On Over (Hank Williams)
  - Fast tempo. Default move is hitchhiker thumbs. Hands push forward, look left and right,
- Deep in the Heart of Texas (Moe Bandy)
  - Fast tempo. Default move is clapping. Display hands over head or out in front. In the middle of the song, a cow moos once—cue everyone to get ready to moo and the whole group "moos" together.
- Bonanza (TV Theme Song)
  - Fast tempo. Default move is moving horse reins up and down. Hold reins with one hand, slap thigh with other hand. Song ends with a yell "Bonanza!"
- Sixteen Tons (Countdown Singers or Tennessee Ernie Ford)
  - Slow tempo. Default move is shoveling. Big breaths, bicep curls, lifting a bucket on each side, look behind each side with gentle torso twist. Song ends with everyone singing last line "I owe my soul to the company store."
- Honky Tonk Man (Dwight Yoakam)
  - Slow to medium tempo Default move is alternating shoulder rolls. Hat tips, alternate heels.
- Good Night Irene (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band with Willie Nelson and Tom Petty)
  - Slow tempo. Posture check—chest open, shoulders back, and ears lined up with shoulders lined up over hips. Hands on belly, breathe in and feel the belly expand, exhale with a "whoosh." Ear to shoulder, looking far left and right, stretch back by clasping hands and pushing forward or push with one hand, take a big breath with arms over head. point and flex ankles, point feet left and right, "wet dog/loose face" head shake. Hands on belly, breathe in and feel the belly expand, exhale with a "whoosh." And everyone waves and says "Goodnight Irene!

### *Sensory and Social Segment*

Be prepared to serve beverages in this "belly up to the bar" segment. Serve root beer in cups (sugar-free root beer also available).

Read at least one cowboy poem. Note the underlined words. What might these words mean?

- A quirt is a short-handled riding whip.
- An Andy bronc is a bucking horse.

## **Therapeutic Recreation Protocol: Cowboy Hoe Down**

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- A corndodger is fried, baked or boiled cornbread or dumpling.
- A diamond-studded jaw is a bi-fold wallet decorated with diamonds.
- A rounder is a drunk or someone who frequently patronizes saloons.

### *Closure*

Distribute copies of two additional cowboy poems for them to read later and encourage them to share the poems with others or practice reading them aloud—possibly for a future variety show.

## **When Bob Got Thrown**

*Author Unknown*

That time when Bob got throwed  
I thought I sure would bust.  
I like to died a-laffin'  
To see him chewin' dust.

He crawled on that Andy bronc  
And hit him with a quirt.  
The next thing that he knew  
He was wallowin' in the dirt.

Yes, it might a-killed him,  
I heard the old ground pop;  
But to see if he was injured  
You bet I didn't stop.

I just rolled on the ground  
And began to kick and yell;  
It like to tickled me to death  
To see how hard he fell.

'Twarn't more than a week ago  
That I myself got throwed,  
(But 'twas from a meaner horse  
Than old Bob ever rode).

D'you reckon Bob looked sad and said,  
"I hope that you ain't hurt!"  
Naw! He just laffed and laffed and laffed  
To see me chewin' dirt.

I've been prayin' ever since  
For his horse to turn his pack;  
And when he done it, I'd a laffed  
If it had broke his back.

So I was still a-howlin'  
When Bob, he got up lame;  
He seen his horse had run clean off  
And so for me he came.

He first chucked sand into my eyes,  
With a rock he rubbed my head,  
Then he twisted both my arms,—  
"Now go fetch that horse," he said.

So I went and fetched him back,  
But I was feelin' good all day;  
For I sure enough do love to see  
A feller get throwed that way.

## Diamond Joe

Author Unknown

There is a man you hear about, most every place you go  
His holdings are in Texas, and his name is Diamond Joe  
He carries all his money, in a diamond studded jaw  
And he's never been much bothered by the process of the law

I hired to Diamond Joe boys, I did offer him my hand  
He gave me a string of horses, so old they could not stand  
I liked to die of hunger, he did mistreat me so  
And I never earned a dollar, in the pay of Diamond Joe

Well his bread it was corndodger, his meat I could not chaw  
And he drove me near distracted, with the wagging of his jaw  
By the telling of this story, I aim to let you know  
There never was a rounder, that lied like Diamond Joe

I tried three times to quit him boys, but he did argue so  
That I'm still punching cattle, in the pay of Diamond Joe  
When I'm called up yonder, when it is my time to go  
Give my blankets to my buddies, give the fleas to Diamond Joe!

## **When Ida Puts Her Armor On**

The Cowboy had a sterling heart,  
The Maiden was from Boston,  
The Rancher saw his wealth depart—  
The Steers were what he lost on.

The Villain was a banker's limb,  
His spats and cane were nifty;  
The Maiden needs must marry him—  
Her father was not thrifty.

The Sheepmen were as foul as pitch,  
The Cowboy was a hero,  
The gold mine made the hero rich,  
The Villain's score was zero.

The Sheepmen tried to steal the maid,  
The Villain sought the attic,  
The Hero fifteen bad men slayed  
With his blue automatic.

The Hero kissed the willing lass,  
The final scene was snappy;  
The Villain went to Boston, Mass.  
And everyone was happy.