

BACH Sports Psychology with Dr. Sandy Vennemen, April 15, 2023

Over 20 BACH and soon-to-be-BACH members met at the Larry Ringer, College Station Library April 15, 2023 at 3:00 PM to hear Dr. Sandy Venneman talk about “Sports Psychology for the Equestrian”. Sandy is a professor of Psychology and Biology at University of Houston-Victoria. In addition to training and giving lessons, she coaches riders in the use of psychology to improve their riding, giving mounted and un-mounted clinics nationwide. A PhD experimental



psychologist, with a lifetime teaching certificate in secondary education, Sandy, a bronze medalist, combines psychology with over 40 years of experience riding to help equestrians reach their potential.

As a membership drive, Sandy forwent most of her honorarium to the cause of giving away 5 free memberships to BACH to attendees who came to the talk. A big thank you to

Sandy. We now have 5 new members!

Sandy talked about biological reasons why we get into “flight” mode when we are in stressful situations and how we can practice relaxation techniques, pinning them to a visualization that brings us down. The interactive subjects included how to replace negative self-talk with positive thinking. How visualization of the coming ride helps to prepare and therefore to calm the rider.

She pointed out that for the sake of our partners, our horses, we need to stay calm and in-charge.



Another exercise involved progressive muscle tightening follow by relaxation while pinning the relaxation to a visualization that could be used without the whole exercise eventually. A quick moment before entering the arena or handling a tricky situation with a problem horse and one can relax into a thinking mindset.

So a big “thank you” to Sandy for taking time out from her Sunshine Stables in Fulshear to come and educate us in Aggieland about Mind Games for riding.