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Youth with mental health and special education needs propel providers to create innovative interventions, as traditional methods do not always meet the diverse needs of these youth. Adjunct intervention using equine-assisted therapy (EAT) has been previously used. However, scientific research on EAT remains sparse and its credibility has been questioned. The problem this study addressed was whether or not 12 weeks of EAT could provide psychological, behavioural, social and academic benefits to special education students. Using a mixed method design, phenomenological data was combined with pre-test and post test scores on The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Results showed no statistical differences between pre-test and post test scores for students and parents; however, staff reported more strength was gained during the intervention. Further, from staff and student reports, phenomenological themes related to EAT that emerged included the student's ability to participate and be responsible, building self-control, emotional insight, behavioural awareness, relationship skills, coping skills, positive interactions with horses and staff and recounting experiences via fond stories. Collaborative data suggested staff and students thought EAT was beneficial socially, behaviourally and psychologically. Parents did not concur with this conclusion. The mixed method design filled a gap in previous EAT studies that were qualitative or quantitative only. The implications for social change include a more expanded dialog about the effectiveness of EAT with special education students. This study demonstrated the utility of a comprehensive and collaborative mental health intervention using EAT that can result in a deeper understanding of special education students' values, learning, social/life skill acquisition.