

# Building confidence with your horse or pony

Just like us, horses have feelings too. They may feel happy, worried or unhappy depending on the situation they are in.

## Activities

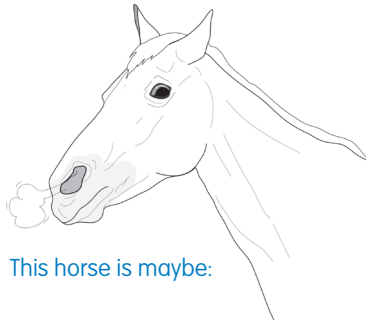
### Look and learn

Knowing how a horse may be feeling, can help us to understand them and feel confident in what to do to keep ourselves and them happy and safe. Look at the images below and write a word about how you think the horse is feeling. Take a minute to think about why.



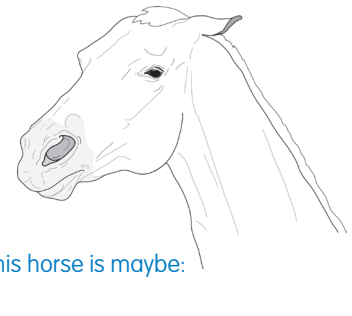
This horse is maybe:

.....



This horse is maybe:

.....



This horse is maybe:

.....

Why not talk your ideas through with a friend? And, if you are around horses, take a look and see how they may be feeling.

**Answers on reverse.**

### Word search

Can you spot the words relating to situations that may cause your horse to be worried and act differently from usual?

**Wind**

**Rain**

**Lonely**

**Fireworks**

**Pain**

**Scared**

**Busy**

**Competition**

**Vet**

**Farrier**

**Loading**

E	O	K	L	L	Z	F	H	F	O	F	B	G	Q	X
Y	J	U	Q	Y	K	R	Y	A	I	V	D	W	L	J
N	S	A	A	S	D	N	L	R	I	L	E	A	M	A
G	Z	D	J	U	T	O	E	R	D	O	O	T	A	O
O	H	O	F	B	A	W	L	I	O	N	L	S	O	F
H	W	I	N	D	O	R	P	E	Z	E	R	A	J	G
P	H	K	I	R	Z	Y	X	R	D	L	U	A	S	Y
G	Q	N	K	I	J	G	G	G	N	Y	N	D	I	B
V	G	S	C	O	M	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N	N
D	K	J	N	I	A	P	I	K	F	E	L	K	M	L
C	E	P	V	N	X	S	V	Y	B	X	Y	L	U	K
B	Z	R	B	G	H	S	C	M	F	S	G	L	H	Y
H	D	F	A	L	W	N	H	L	Q	M	H	J	V	S
W	J	V	X	C	V	G	U	W	U	S	Z	A	I	M
X	G	V	A	H	S	J	S	M	T	E	U	H	A	W

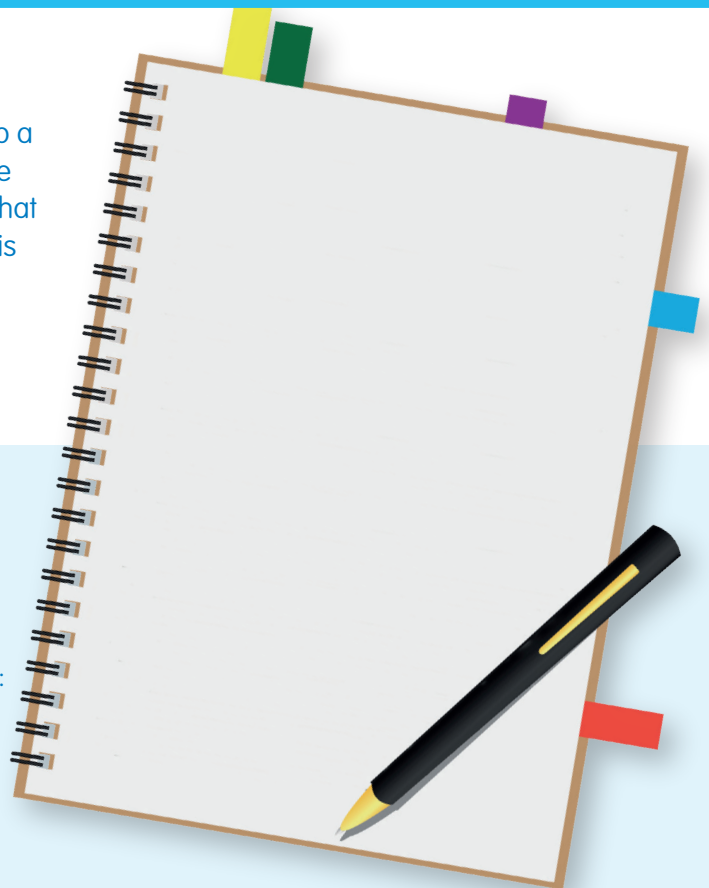
## Confidence is key

Horses are prey animals, so are hard wired to keep a look out for any threats. This means they may sense how you're feeling. If you are feeling a bit anxious that day, or nervous to try something new with them, this can make the horse feel unsure or uneasy too.

**Write on the notepad any emotions you've experienced when you aren't feeling your most confident around a horse.**

### What you can do to feel better?

- Acknowledge how you are feeling and take note of why
- Talk about your emotions with a friend, your instructor, or a family member
- Use calming breathing activities - breathe slowly: in through your nose, out through your mouth
- Set smaller targets that you can achieve
- Today may not be the day - try again tomorrow
- Remember the good things you and your horse have achieved



## Keep a journal

Writing down the successful things you have done each day with your horse is a great way to see how far you've come. Why not get creative and turn it into a scrap book of your journey together?

Remember, everybody feels nervous sometimes, but doing some activities like these can help you feel more confident and build a better relationship with a horse.



### Look and learn answers

1. **Happy** – softly forward-facing ears, relaxed eye and no white showing.
2. **Worried** – raised head, ears pointing in different directions, eyes open, tense facial muscles, a V above eye, blowing from nostrils.
3. **Unhappy** – ears back, head up and back, wrinkled muzzle, whites of the eye showing.

For more information on our free education programme and resources visit:  
[bluecross.org.uk](http://bluecross.org.uk) or email [education@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:education@bluecross.org.uk)

