

Therapeutic Services Agreement



An Ethical and Transparent Equine Assisted Therapy Services Agreement

Welcome to Equine Assisted Therapy Australia.

This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully. When you sign this document, it will constitute an agreement between you as the 'client' and Equine Assisted Therapy Australia as the 'service provider'.

Contract for Equine Assisted Mental Health Services between;

Name_____

Address_____

Phone No_____

And Equine Assisted Therapy Australia (EATA).

Equine Assisted Mental Health Services

At Equine Assisted Therapy Australia, we provide Equine Assisted Mental Health Services (EAMHS). These services are designed to address psychological, relationship and communication skills issues, self-confidence and self-esteem issues, attention and focus issues, family issues and to help promote the health and wellness of the whole person.

Equine Assisted Mental Health Services include horses as part of the therapeutic experience. Due to this inclusion, your treatment will look different from a more traditional therapeutic service.

- You will be in close proximity to the horses. You will be engaging with the horses in a number of ways that could include observation, touching, grooming, leading and even riding. Therefore, it is essential that you understand the inherent risk factor that comes with the horse/ human relationship.
- Horses are large and potentially dangerous and may act or re-act suddenly without noticeable warning. The Equine Assisted Therapy Australia staff will provide you with important safety information prior to coming into close proximity with horses and will utilize any and all safety precautions needed to help keep you safe. When a horse is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is the horse's instinct to jump forwards or sideways, to run away from perceived danger or even to kick, bite, rear up or throw their head.
- It is important that you understand the inherent risks and dangers associated with this form of treatment, and that you voluntarily agree to assume them. You will be asked to read and sign a Waiver that further demonstrates your agreement to assume these risks.
- In our practice, therapeutic work with horses appears to deeply impact some clients. You may experience intense emotional states when in the presence of horses. You may also experience sudden change, personal realisations, or make new decisions about old situations.

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- Horses generally require that we are honest and authentic about our situations and in our communication. Therefore, during treatment you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness.
- At the closure of a session you may feel particularly raw and emotionally exposed. We recommend that you take some time to come back into your body, refocus, and prepare for departure back to your 'normal' life. We also recommend that you drink plenty of water and have a snack available in your car for your drive following the session.
- Counselling and psychotherapeutic services call for a very active effort on your part. Since the horses ask us to be authentic, congruent and honest with ourselves, you may find that our services are more confrontational than traditional psychotherapeutic services. It is important that you are aware of and agree to a psychotherapeutic service that may induce more rapid change due to the intensity, confrontation and focus of the service.
- Your services will generally be conducted outside, sometimes regardless of the elements, and will be with or around horses. You will need to be prepared for varying weather conditions and dress accordingly. This means wearing closed in shoes, a hat, pants, and being prepared with layers appropriate for the weather conditions. Please wear sun protective clothing and bring a water bottle.
- In many cases we will also use art, nature-based activities, guided imagery, mindfulness exercises and yoga.

Code of ethics

Counsellors at EATA are either members of a professional body and thus suitably qualified, or appropriately supervised trainees. All counsellors will work to the Australian Counselling Association code of ethics, which can be found on the ACA website.

All counsellors will offer unconditional positive regard, empathy, genuineness and respect for you, your values and belief systems; we welcome all clients.

Confidentiality and exceptions

Respecting your confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us. However, if it is assessed that you are at risk of seriously harming yourself or others, it may be necessary to alert others, such as your GP, of our concerns.

In all discussions between us you have a right to expect that anything we talk about will remain confidential. We will respect and guard your right to confidentiality very carefully, but you need to know that there are a few cases where that may not apply. These are the situations where information may be shared with someone else:

- 1) If you ask the counsellor to speak with someone else for you or give them information you wish them to have;
- 2) If the counsellor feels that you or someone else may be in danger or in need of protection,
- 3) If a court orders the release of information,
- 4) If required by law, as in cases of child abuse.
- 5) To consult with another professional person in confidence to try to find solutions or answers for you.

These situations are very rare, but it is important for you to know about them.

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Due consideration should be exercised before disclosing anything of a previously unreported criminal nature, as Equine Assisted Therapy Australia may be obligated, in compliance with the law, to notify other agencies, particularly when the protection of children and vulnerable adults is a concern.

We will always endeavour to discuss disclosure to others with you beforehand and jointly agree a way forward.

Everything that is discussed in the counselling session is kept in the strictest confidence.

Each counsellor might keep brief notes after a session, which will be securely stored.

Privacy

In the course of delivering its services and programs, Equine Assisted Therapy Australia collects personal information from its clients. Personal information means any information that could be used on its own, or with other information, to establish the identity of a client, the client's service provider or the client's substitute decision maker. Personal information also includes any other information about a client including information that is contained in a client record.

Equine Assisted Therapy Australia collects, uses and shares client's personal information for the following purposes:

- Providing quality programs and services to clients
- Providing information to other people or organisations with client consent (for example, making a referral for service)
- Contacting clients to evaluate Equine Assisted Therapy Australia service and work
- Conducting research to understand the kinds of issues our clients are facing
- Reviewing client files to ensure high quality of service and documentation

Sessions, Fees and Cancellations

Sessions are \$185 and should be paid either before your session or at your session, you can pay with cash or do a bank transfer.

If you cancel with less than 24 hours' notice (except in an emergency) the full fee will be payable. You may email or leave a voicemail message or text on 0404 787 162.

Counsellors will not be able to work with you if you are under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances. If this is found to be the case, the counsellor will end the session, and you will be charged at the normal rate.

Ending Therapy

Your participation in therapy is voluntary and you have the right to end therapy whenever you want. However, if you do decide to exercise this option, please talk with your counsellor about the reason for your decision in a counselling session together. Please allow for one final session for you and your counsellor to have an ending together, to review what you've done in the previous counselling sessions and to offer feedback to each other.

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Likewise, at the counsellor's discretion, they reserve the right to end therapy work together and provide you with some appropriate referrals, for reasons including, but not limited to, failure to participate in therapy, conflicts of interest, untimely payment of fees, or the counsellor's belief that they may not be the best person for your needs.

Boundaries

No contact is permitted with your counsellor outside the therapeutic relationship of the counselling room, paddock or equine premises and this includes individual counsellor's private social media accounts. The Facebook page for Equine Assisted Therapy Australia may post helpful information for you to take a look at.

Physical contact is inappropriate at any time. When working with the horses the counsellor may be required to physically move or touch you to keep you safe.

In order to respect your privacy, the counsellor will discuss with you in the first session how you might interact if there is a chance meeting in a social setting.

Counsellors are not qualified to help or advise clients in respect of certain practical aspects of the presenting issues, such as housing, entitlement to statutory benefits, or legal advice. It is not the policy of our organisation to provide reports in support of litigation.

Complaints

If you have a concern regarding any aspect of the service, please raise it with your counsellor. Alternatively, you may write directly to: The Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

Freely given consent to this contract

As the entire therapeutic relationship is built on trust and openness between the client and the counsellor, a binding contract will not be effective until you have had an opportunity to read, consider and query any aspects of these terms and conditions. Only then will you be invited to sign a copy for our records.

I agree to the terms set out above and will collaborate, to the best of my ability, with my counsellor.

Client's signature: _____

PRINT Name: _____

On behalf of Equine Assisted Therapy Australia, I agree to work with the above-mentioned client to the best of my ability, adhering to the highest ethical guidelines of the counselling profession.

Counsellor's signature: _____

Date: _____