

Informed Consent - Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching

SERVICE AGREEMENT

Welcome to South Coast Psychology's Equine Services. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Although these documents are long and sometimes detailed, it is very important that you understand them. When you sign this document, it will also represent an agreement between us. We can discuss any questions you have when you sign them or at any time in the future.

Helping activities occur in a relationship between people, that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning &/or Coaching, you have certain rights and responsibilities that are important for you to understand. There are also legal limitations to those rights that you should be aware of. South Coast Psychology's Equine Services management and specialists have/has corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

I. SERVICES

All psychotherapy, learning & therapeutic activities, including Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching have both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, (sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness), because the process of psychotherapy, learning & therapeutic activities often requires discussing the unpleasant aspects of your life. However, psychotherapy, learning & therapeutic activities, including Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching have been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy, learning & therapeutic activities often lead to a significant reduction in feelings of distress, increased satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, greater personal awareness and insight, increased skills for managing stress and resolutions to specific problems. There are, however, no guarantees about what will happen. All psychotherapy, growth, learning, and coaching requires a very active effort on your part.

South Coast Psychology's Equine Services offers a treatment modality called **Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching** which is an experiential form of psychotherapy, growth, learning and coaching where horses are involved in the sessions. "Experiential" means that you will be involved in hands-on experiences with the horses designed to reflect things going on in your life. The process is not always about interacting with the Equine Specialist or your therapist, although that will happen at times. It is about providing you the opportunity to experience, explore, problem-solve, discover, be creative, gain insight and experience practical applications of what you are learning in the moment. The process is about "doing" along with the "talking."

Why horses? There are several reasons we choose to use horses in this work, but primarily it is due to their nature as a social and prey animal. As a result of this nature, they have an extraordinary ability to read our nonverbal communication – picking up on messages we are sending which we are not always conscious we are doing. With this, they start responding to us in familiar ways reminding us of other people and things in our life. It is through this they become metaphors (symbols) providing us the opportunity to work on ourselves in relation to those aspects of our lives. The horses tend to play out our life stories, and then may either show us or provide opportunities to change what those stories look like.

Horses do not know our past, education, gender, race or other labels we may apply to ourselves and each other. They are in the moment and can be a part of this relationship without the biases we humans put on each other. This provides even more value in the insight they can provide us about ourselves.

South Coast Psychology – Equine Therapy

95 Turner Street, Edendale 9893

vicki@scp-equinetherapy.co.nz

<https://www.scp-equinetherapy.co.nz>



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There are some risks in being around horses due to their size and nature of being an animal. This is covered in the Release and Waiver of Liability From we have provided for your review and signature and which we have covered verbally with you. It is important you understand the risks and benefits and ask any questions you may have about that in making your decision to be involved in these services.

South Coast Psychology's Equine Services follows an adapted form of the **Eagala and Equine Psychotherapy Institutes Models of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth and Learning**. This means:

1. Sessions are usually conducted by a facilitating team of a growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy facilitator, along with a qualified Equine Specialist, and the horses in your sessions. Sometimes the therapist and specialist are the same person and sometimes not. The Equine Specialist is trained in a specialised training in an Equine assisted growth, learning or therapy model, with requirements of ongoing continuing education and adherence to standards of professionalism and practice (usually either Eagala or EPI or an international training programme of certification which reaches certain standards). While both members of the team are involved in your growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy process, the role of the Equine Specialist is to oversee physical safety needs and provide observations on the behaviours of the horses. Your growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy practitioner is there to oversee the growth, learning, coaching and/or psychotherapy process and help you make the parallels of the horse observations to your goals and life.
2. Sessions are usually on the ground – there is little riding of horses involved (although some exercises may involve mounted sessions) in the growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy process. This is a growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy process, and even though you may learn a thing or two about horses, it is not the intent or focus to learn about horses or how to ride them. We are here to address your growth, learning, coaching and/or therapy goals and we commit to utilising the methods we have found to best support that focus.
3. The process is both insight and solution-oriented – meaning we believe you have the best solutions for yourself when provided the opportunity to discover them. We are here to provide the space and guidance through exploring what is happening in the process. You are an individual, and every life situation you are involved in will have its own unique solutions which fit best for you – we are here along with the horses to help you find them.
4. This process also incorporates “Best Practice” or “Evidence Based” interventions as determined by your therapist. All of South Coast Psychology practitioners are trauma informed, and experienced in working with people in a culturally safe way.
5. Eagala and the Equine Psychotherapy Institute are internationally recognised. Eagala is a non-profit professional association for Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy and has standards and a code of ethics which our Eagala trained practitioners follow and have accountability to as Eagala trained professionals. You may review a copy of the Code of Ethics as well as go to www.eagala.org for more information. You can also read more about why horses and Eagala Model Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy at www.eagala.org and feel free to ask questions at any time. The codes of ethics and more information regarding the Equine Psychotherapy institute code of ethics and models used by our equine psychotherapy practitioners and equine assisted learning, growth and coaching practitioners can be found here: <https://www.equinepsychotherapy.net.au/>.

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Sometimes the first one or two sessions will involve assessing your needs and working with you to create a plan to outline your goals and objectives and address any questions regarding goals and estimated length of your programme. We will periodically review this plan with you to discuss progress or changes in the goals.

If you have questions about our procedures, please discuss them with your therapist or the Equine Specialist whenever they arise.

II. APPOINTMENTS

Appointments will ordinarily be 45-50 minutes in duration (longer for groups as outlined by your group facilitators), once per week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be more or less frequent, as needed. If you need to cancel or reschedule a session, we ask that you and your practitioner/s provides the Equine Specialist with 24 hours notice. If it is possible, we will try to find another time to reschedule the appointment. In addition, you are responsible for coming to your session on time; if you are late, your appointment will still need to end on time.

III. PROFESSIONAL FEES

Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching sessions will be for 1 hour in total and will be held at the SCP Equine Therapy venue (95 Turner Street, Edendale) or

a property obtained by a contracted provider of services.

There is a fee of per session for the Equine Specialist and horses. You (or your funding source) will receive an account for this fee.

IV. PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

We are required to keep appropriate records of the Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching services we provide. Your records are maintained in a secure location per professional standards. We keep brief records noting that you were here and our Equine Specialist's observations. Except in unusual circumstances that involve danger to yourself, you have the right to a copy of your file. Because these are professional records, they may be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, we recommend that you initially review them with us, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional to discuss the contents. If we refuse your request for access to your records, you have a right to have our decision reviewed by another mental health professional, which we will discuss with you upon your request. You also have the right to request that a copy of your file be made available to any other health care provider at your written request.

V. CONFIDENTIALITY

All sessions and their content, as well as your records, will be kept strictly confidential. To the extent possible, you will be informed before confidential information is disclosed, and in that event only the essential information required by law or to collect payment will be revealed.

There are legal limits to this confidentiality creating circumstances in which we may disclose mental

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health records without consent or authorisation which include: 1) If we feel you are a danger to yourself or others, 2) if we suspect a child or elderly or incapacitated person is abused or neglected, 3) disclosure is required by the court.

Information about your privacy rights can be found <https://www.privacy.org.nz/your-rights/your-privacy-rights/>. We have discussed your privacy rights. Please remember that you may reopen the conversation at any time during our work together.

VI. CONTACTING US

Please contact us through your Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching provider. If we are your therapy provider, the following applies: we are often not immediately available by telephone. We do not answer our phone when in session with clients or otherwise unavailable. At these times, you may leave a message on our confidential voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

If, for any number of unforeseen reasons, you can't contact your therapy provider, or you do not hear from us or we are unable to reach you, and you feel you cannot wait for a return call or if you feel unable to keep yourself safe, please go to your local hospital emergency room or call 111 and ask to speak to the mental health worker on call.

VIII. EMERGENCY POLICY

In the event of an emergency, we will contact the usual emergency services as appropriate.

IX. OTHER RIGHTS

If you are unhappy with what is happening in Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching sessions, we hope you will talk with us so that we can respond to your concerns. Such comments will be taken seriously and handled with care and respect. You may also request that we refer you to another therapist and are free to end Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching services at any time. You have the right to considerate, safe and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment. You have the right to ask questions about any aspects of Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching services and about our specific training and experience. You have the right to expect that we will not have personal or sexual relationships with clients. Your Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching provider is accountable to their professional body

We hope that we can talk problems through. If you have any concerns, please talk directly to the Equine Specialist or your Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, Growth, Learning & Coaching provider. If you feel they are not addressed, please contact the primary Psychologist of South Coast Psychology, Diane Gillespie (di@southcoastpsychology.co.nz or through the website) and she will assist you in addressing the concern if she can or help you find the appropriate person to address your concern.

You also have the right to submit formal concerns to your therapy providers professional body in the event your concerns are not addressed by us following our professional codes.

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Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand this Agreement and agree to their terms.

Signature of Client or Personal Representative

Printed Name of Client or Personal Representative

Date

Description of Personal Representative's Authority

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