

Informed Consent

This agreement is intended to provide you with important information about the practices, policies and procedures of the Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice and, to clarify the professional therapeutic relationship between your psychotherapist, Emma Kate Lowe. Any concerns or questions relating to this service agreement, should be discussed prior to being signed. This form will be emailed to you to complete online after booking a session, this copy is provided on our website for your information.

Therapist Qualification & Background: Your psychotherapist is registered with the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA), registration number 25328. Emma follows strict guidelines for professional conduct that is in line with the PACFA Code of Ethics. Emma graduated from Cairnmillar University with a Masters of Counselling and Psychotherapy in 2018.

Process of Psychotherapy: Therapy will include an initial assessment identifying your goals/ concerns, treatment planning and face-to-face sessions. Depending on your treatment plan we may work on improving areas such as, but not limited to, emotional processing, expanding on self awareness, safety planning & interpersonal patterns. You are welcome to discuss your treatment at any time. Couples are asked to attend an initial session together and then an individual session each prior to attending further sessions together. Couples therapy will not be provided in cases of domestic violence or substance use where that individual is not receiving individual support or engaging with external support services.

Psychotherapy is: a process in which we discuss a myriad of issues, events, experiences and memories for the purpose of creating positive change to experience life more fully and to better understand oneself. Psychotherapy is a joint effort between the client(s) and the psychotherapist. Please see the attached form about Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Participating in therapy may result in a number of benefits, including, but not limited to, reduced stress and anxiety, increased ability to relate to others, a decrease in negative thoughts and self-sabotaging behaviours, improved interpersonal relationships, increased capacity for intimacy, and increased self-confidence. Such benefits may also require substantial effort on your behalf, including an active participation in the therapeutic process, honesty, and a willingness to change feelings, thoughts and behaviours. There is no guarantee that therapy will yield any or all of the benefits listed above.

Process of couples therapy: We book *one session all together initially* (\$190 standard fee). After that, we organise *one session each individually* (individual fee which is \$115 concession, \$155 standard).

The individual sessions are transparent and discussed together when we meet again in the following couple's session. *The reason for this* is so that I can meet both of you to get more of a sense of your individual circumstances and how that can influence patterns, communication and behaviours within the relationship.

Sessions *then continue with both of you together*. During this initial stage you can both get a sense of couples therapy, whether it will be appropriate for your goals and that you both feel like we will be a good fit. I can then suggest a plan to move forward and offer some strategies.

Moving forward, there can be anywhere from 6 up to 28 sessions. There are exercises that we practice together in session and homework tasks between sessions which are important to facilitate connection and positive communication. Frequency of sessions can always be reviewed.

Emma has been working with couples for 6 years and has completed couples therapy training, this means attending professional development webinars, completing readings, receiving supervision and it was included in her Masters education.

However Emma has not gone through a certification process (mostly because of the cost). While she is not a 'specialist' she has a keen interest in working with couples and the therapy provided is evidence based. Some couples prefer to see a therapist with more experience or a certification, which is completely understandable and an individual choice. Please advise Emma if you would like to cancel your session. The clinical file is owned by both parties, if one party requests the file the second party will be notified and also provided the file.

During the therapeutic process, you might find that you feel worse before you feel better. This is generally a normal course of events. Personal growth and change may be easy and swift at times, but may also be slow and frustrating. You may address any concerns you have about the process at any time.

Professional Consultation: Professional consultation is an important component of a healthy psychotherapy practice. As such, Emma regularly participates in clinical, ethical, and legal consultation with appropriate professionals. During such consultations, Emma will not reveal any personal identifying information concerning clients.

Records and Record Keeping: The Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice will keep records in accordance with the ethical and legal standards of PACFA. Records may be requested by you, at any time in writing. The file can be provided in summary or discussed together verbally. Records will be stored in a locked file cabinet owned by Emma Kate Lowe in which only she has access. Records will be kept for 7 years after therapy has been terminated. Records will then be shredded.

You are entitled to access your health information kept on file at any time under the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)* subject to certain exceptions and the payment of fees (if any).

Access may be refused when providing access would;

- a. pose serious or imminent threat to the mental health or life of an individual or,
- b. have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others (for example where services are provided to couples, families or groups) or,
- c. be prejudicial to an investigation or prosecution of alleged unlawful activity or,
- d. be frivolous.

Access of files: A file request should be provided in writing to 3 Archer Drive, Mornington 3931 or by email to emma@willowpsychotherapy.com.au. To protect clinical safety and maintain confidentiality boundaries, this practice does not release raw client files or raw session notes directly.

If you require access to your clinical information, it will be provided in one of the following formats:

1. Collaborative Review: Reviewing the files together with your practitioner during a standard scheduled consultation.
2. Clinical Summary: Receiving a structured, written summary report of your treatment, milestones, and progress.
3. The released data may consist of the Client Service Record (basic administrative details, intake forms, referral letters) and/or a heavily redacted copy of the Confidential Client Record redacted where legally required.

Please note that standard consultation rates or administrative report-writing fees apply for file reviews, collaborative review sessions, and summary preparations. These options can be discussed directly with your practitioner.



Provision of Records & Administration Fees: Standard administration and professional fees apply to the preparation and provision of client records as follows:

- Administrative Base Fee: \$155.00 (+ GST) to cover file retrieval, compilation, and administrative processing.
- Per-Page Fee: An additional \$0.35 (+ GST) per page applies for files exceeding 50 pages.
- Professional File Review: If a psychologist is required to review the file, conduct risk assessments, or redact third-party privacy information, this time is billed at a pro rata rate of \$38.75 (+ GST) per 15-minute increment.

Upon receipt of payment, the completed file or clinical summary will be delivered digitally or via an alternatively agreed method within 3-4 weeks or as practicably possible.

Privacy: As part of providing counselling and psychotherapy service to you, the Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice needs to collect and record personal information from you that is relevant to your situation, such as but not limited to your name, contact information, medical history and family history. This collection of personal information will be a necessary part of the psychotherapeutic assessment and treatment.

Your information is kept securely and, in the interests of your privacy, used only by your psychotherapist. Your privacy and the information that you provide is protected at all times. The collection, storage and disclosure of your personal information is protected by the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*. You can find more information at: <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/the-privacy-act> Please see our privacy policy at www.willowpsychotherapy.com.au.

Confidentiality: All communications between you and your therapist, Emma Kate Lowe, will be held in the strictest confidence unless you provide written or verbal permission to release information about your treatment. Generally written permission will be required.

Limitations to Confidentiality: There are exceptions to confidentiality. For example, psychotherapists are mandated to report instances of suspected child abuse. Your psychotherapist is permitted to break confidentiality when;

1. Records are subpoenaed by a court; or
2. Failure to disclose would, in the reasonable belief of your psychotherapist, place you or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or
3. Your prior approval has been obtained to;
 - A. provide a written report to another professional or agency. e.g. GP, a specific school contact ie. wellbeing coordinator or a lawyer; or
 - B. discuss the material with another person, eg. a parent, employer or health provider; or
 - C. disclose the information in another way; or
4. You would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed to another professional or agency (e.g. your GP) and disclosure of your personal information to that third party is for a purpose which is directly related to the primary purpose for which your personal information was collected; or
5. Disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law; or
6. When consulting with colleagues, or in the course of supervision, your psychotherapist will be required to conceal your identity and any associated parties involved; and to preserve your privacy in the utmost professional manner in accordance with the PACFA Code of Ethics.



Consequence of not providing personal information: If you do not wish for your personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this consent form, Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice may not be in a position to provide the psychological service to you due to duty of care and legal regulations.

Participation in Litigation: Emma will not participate in any litigation, or custody dispute in which client and another individual, or entity, are parties. Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice has a policy of not communicating with a client's attorney and will generally not write or sign letters, reports, declarations, or affidavits to be used in a legal matter unless agreed upon at the beginning of the therapeutic relationship. Emma will generally not provide records or testimony unless compelled to do so. *Should Emma be subpoenaed, or ordered by a court of law, to appear as a witness in an action involving a client, the client agrees to reimburse her for any time spent for preparation, travel, or other time in which she has made herself available for such an appearance at her hourly rate of \$155 (plus GST).*

Fee Arrangements: The fee for individual psychotherapy is \$155.00 (incl. GST) for 50 minutes/ concession fee is \$115.00 (incl. GST) for 50 minutes and both are applied to online and in-person sessions. Couples standard fee is \$190.00 (incl. GST) for 50-60 min. Medicare rebates are not available. NDIS fees are determined in the service agreement and aligned with recommended NDIS fee guidelines for 15_043_0128_1_3 (\$150) Capacity building for daily living. The concession rate can be applied if you are a student, have a health care/disability pension or, if you are in financial hardship. Please advise Emma to discuss this option.

Payment Method: Payment is expected after the appointment by cash, debit/ credit card or bank deposit. You can make a payment online via a secure link emailed to you with the invoice or via card using the SQUARE system. Your personal information is kept secure via the payment systems. Alternatively, you can make a payment via bank deposit or a SQUARE payment link can be sent to you for an online payment. *The Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice reserves the right to periodically adjust this fee. You will be notified of any fee adjustment in advance. In addition this fee may be adjusted by contract with managed care organisations or third party payers.*

Missed Appointments & Cancellation Policy: Please give at least 24 hours notice if you are unable to attend your scheduled appointment by calling or texting 044 859 4469. A reminder will be emailed or texted to you 24 hours before your session. If you fail to give 24 hours notice to reschedule, you will be charged a late cancellation/ non-attendance fee of \$75. This fee must be paid in full prior to the commencement of your next session. Your cancellation notice would be much appreciated, as this can enable Emma to provide services to other clients who may be in need of an urgent appointment.

Therapist Availability: You may contact Emma via phone on 0448594469 or via email, emma@willowpsychotherapy.com.au. Emma will make every effort to return enquiries as soon as possible but cannot guarantee the calls will be returned immediately. Emma is unable to provide therapy outside scheduled appointments. You will be notified in advance of vacations or planned extended absences. *The Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice is unable to provide 24-hour crisis service. In the event that you are feeling unsafe or require immediate medical or psychiatric assistance, please call 000 or attend your nearest hospital emergency department.*

Termination of Therapy: You may terminate therapy at any time. Emma also reserves the right to terminate therapy at her discretion. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, untimely payment of fees, failure to comply with treatment recommendations, conflicts of interest, failure to participate in therapy, client needs are outside of her scope of practice, or the client is not making adequate progress in therapy.

You also have the right to terminate therapy at your discretion. Upon either party's decision to terminate therapy, Emma will generally recommend that you participate in at least one, or possibly two termination sessions. These sessions are intended to facilitate a positive termination experience and give both parties



an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been done. Emma will also attempt to ensure a smooth transition to another therapist by offering referrals, if requested.

Concerns/complaints: If you have any ethical complaints about the practices offered, please refer to <http://www.pacfa.org.au/community-resources/complaints/ethicscomplaints/>. Emma is open to discussing any concerns you have at any time and would aim to find a suitable resolution. All consultation fees pay for the practitioner's professional time, clinical assessment, and expert advice. Once a session is completed, no refunds will be issued under any circumstances. We cannot guarantee specific health outcomes, and lack of satisfaction with clinical results does not qualify for a refund.

Acknowledgement & Consent:

I, _____ have read and understood this Consent Form.

I am over the age of 18. I have asked any questions prior to signing and I agree to the above conditions for the psychotherapeutic service provided by Emma Kate Lowe at the Willow Counselling & Psychotherapy Practice.

Client Signature: _____

Date: / /

