



Phone 0423 289 813

Email carmen@companiontherapies.com.au

Client Agreement

Welcome to Companion Therapies,

This Client Agreement outlines all the information you need to begin your journey with Companion Therapies. This document sets out your rights and responsibilities as a client and our responsibilities and guiding principles as providers of Counselling, Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (hereinafter referred to as "Therapeutic Services").

This Agreement must be read and signed by all clients engaging in services with Companion Therapies, prior to the first, initial consult session. If after reading this document you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via phone, email or through our website.

Kind Regards,
Carmen Hunwardsen

Owner, Companion Therapies

Booking Policy, Cancellation and Changes

All clients engaging in therapeutic services with Companion Therapies must begin with an initial consult session. Our Initial Consult Session allows clients to become acquainted with their therapist and discuss what has brought them to our service, establish how our services can assist in reaching defined goals, and covers all necessary administration and confidentiality requirements of engaging in therapeutic services.

Clients may book their initial consult session online via our website, by phone or email contact. Subsequent sessions for returning clients may also be booked online using our website, by phone or email contact at the standard session rate.

****Please note a 24-hour cancellation policy applies to all bookings.*** Should you be unable to make an appointment or need to arrange an alternate time, please advise us as soon as possible so we may do our best to change your booking. If the client no-shows, misses a session without notice or cancels a session within this 24-hour window, you will be charged the full fee for your session.

Client Rights

Clients have the right to ask questions about treatment methods or any of the points raised within this client agreement to make informed decisions about the methods that are most suitable for them as an individual. Clients have the right to stop utilising our services at any time if something is not working.

Should this happen, we appreciate all feedback and hope all clients feel comfortable to discuss these things during a session, during formal and informal feedback or by contacting us at any time.



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You have the right to a referral should you wish to engage other services. You have the right to determine who, if anyone, has access to your information or treatment records. All information, unless otherwise indicated by yourself or as stipulated in the following confidentiality section, is kept completely confidential.

Confidentiality, Data Privacy and Information Held

All conversations between counsellor and client during a session are kept in strict confidence. Any physical notes taken during a session are kept under lock and key. Session notes may also be digitized and kept in secure, password protected storage (such as client management software). Additional client information - such as personal contact information, booking, and payment history are also kept in the secure ways as noted above.

You have the right to view your own records and notes taken at any time. Any requests for reports of sessions and client progress, may incur an hourly fee based upon the time spent in preparing reports. If you determine that it would be helpful to have your information shared with another health professional (e.g., your general practitioner), then I would have you complete and sign a form granting permission, stipulating which information and to whom your information will be released.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

In the following cases I am legally and ethically bound to disclose your information or records:

- If a client is making serious threats to harm or kill themselves or someone else.
- If there is confirmed or suspected abuse (physical, sexual, emotional) or neglect of a child under the age 18 years. While various Mandatory Reporting Requirements exist between different states in Australia, the nature of online and telehealth services broadens the Mandatory Reporting borders of Companion Counselling to be Australia-wide.
- If I am subpoenaed as a result of the client being involved in legal proceedings. I am obligated to appear and answer questions if the court subpoenas my files or myself as a professional and your right to confidentiality may be waived.

Counselling Sessions and Fees

You do not need a referral or mental health plan to engage in services with Companion Therapies. Our standard sessions are 50 minutes. Our longer sessions are 80 minutes. We offer sessions Monday – Friday and Saturdays by appointment. Please see the booking tool on our website for the current schedule.



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You may also be able to access private health cover rebates for counselling services. Our list of covered health funds is expanding all the time so verify your health insurance coverage by contacting us or mentioning it when booking your first visit.

Fees for Individual Counselling Sessions

All standard session will be charged at the rate of \$80.00 for 50 minutes.
All longer sessions will be charged at the rate of \$120.00 for 80 minutes.

Accepted Terms and Methods of Payment

All Client bookings are to be paid at the time of service. We accept cash, credit card and EFTPOS payments. Clients wanting to pay for sessions in advance will need to contact us, have an invoice raised and will be given the option to pay via EFTPOS by phone or by direct debit.

Direct Debit Payment Details

Payment to	Companion Therapies
BSB	034-090
Account Number	214 541
Reference	(Your Invoice Number)

Ethics

I, Carmen Hunwardsen of Companion Therapies, am a Registered Counsellor and a Level 1 Member number #17382 of the peak Australian body for Counsellors, the Australian Counselling Association (ACA). I hold a Diploma of Counselling along with a Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Chiropractic degrees, I am a registered AHPRA practitioner - Medicare Provider # 2993908T. I have been working in health care for over 15 years. Counselling is a natural progression for me as I've grown to understand the mind – body connection for health and wellbeing.

My practice is guided by the ACA Code of Ethics and the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland). As a member of ACA, I engage in ongoing training, professional development, and supervision to maintain my registration and keep up to date on the best practice within the helping professions.

I am constantly engaged in additional training to provide the best evidence-based services and interventions within my practice and always have the best interest of my clients at heart. I practice within my registered guidelines and am happy to refer clients to other professionals if their concerns are outside my scope as a Registered Counsellor. If you choose, you also have the co-services available of Hazel who is a trained and certified assisted therapy dog through Therapy Dogs Australia.



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Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Companion Therapies encourages all clients to leave feedback on their counselling sessions and experiences here at Companion Therapies. Feedback is an integral part of the therapeutic experience. Feedback is encouraged through both informal and the use of formal feedback forms.

You will be invited at each session to provide feedback for your therapist. Clients are also able to leave feedback at any time by phone, email. Feedback helps us improve the way we provide services to you as an individual and for all future clients as well.

Though we always encourage clients to leave feedback or any complaint with us in the first instance, Companion Therapies is a member of the peak Australian body for Counsellors - Australian Counselling Association (ACA) whom clients may contact directly if they would like to make a formal complaint. The website for ACA is <https://www.theaca.net.au/>. Here you will find further information on the counsellor's scope of practice, registration details, and an online form to complete to lodge a formal complaint.

You can also find several documents published by ACA through links on our website under the Resources & Forms section. Such documents include "Questions to ask a Counsellor before Committing to a Contract of Counselling", "Australian Counselling Association - Scope of Practice for Registered Counsellors" and "Australian Counselling Association - Complaints Policy and Procedural Guidelines".

Risks of Counselling

Engaging in Counselling and other therapeutic services involves a small degree of risk. Clients may experience uncomfortable emotions while discussing concerns or aspects from their past. Counselling focuses on facilitating change based on goals set by the client. Some clients can meet resistance to this change from other people in their life as a result.

If at any time you feel overwhelmed by what is happening within a session or as a result of a session, you have the right to stop at any time. Should this happen, we appreciate all feedback and hope all clients feel comfortable to discuss these things during a session, during formal and informal feedback or by contacting us outside of their session at any time.

The Therapeutic Alliance

The foundation of Counselling and Mental Health services rests on collaboration and engagement between the client and the counsellor. You are the expert in your own life, the counsellor brings the knowledge and skills around the therapeutic process to help you reach your defined goals and desired outcomes. It is expected that clients must be actively involved in this process of change. The therapeutic alliance is about working together from a place of respect and honesty in a way that you, the client, will see the most benefit.



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We may discuss and agree on the use of complementary, evidence-based therapeutic measures from time to time such as (but not limited to) physical or mental exercises, journaling, or suggested reading. I encourage all my clients to see these complementary measures as using new tools to investigate what works for you on this journey of self-discovery and goal achievement. The toolbox you are building provides new skills for your emotional and mental wellbeing far beyond the counselling experience.

Agreement

By signing this form, I understand that the therapeutic process is collaborative, and I agree to participate in this process with Carmen Hunwardsen of Companion Therapies. I understand all information kept about me with Companion Therapies is confidential and understand the limits to confidentiality.

I also understand that at least a 24-hour notice must be given to cancel or change an appointment and agree to pay for missed sessions or cancellations in full within this 24-hour window.

I have read, understood, and agree to the information within this form.

Client

Date

(signature)

(print name)

Child's Name

(if under 18)

Name(s) of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)

Counsellor Signature

Date