Willow & Thyme Therapy

**Therapy Agreement**

## Ethics & Equity

Shauna New, the principal therapist of Willow & Thympe Therapy, is an accredited member of the *National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society* (NCPS) and follows the NCPS Code of Ethical Practice. The NCPS Register is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority to uphold public safety and professional standards.

Willow & Thyme Therapy acknowledges the role of identity in shaping experiences, including but not limited to: religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, politics, and socioeconomic status. Willow & Thyme Therapy is committed to ongoing professional development, maintaining high professional standards, and continually developing an anti-racist and GSRD-affirming practice to enhance safety and deliver a better service.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a foundational aspect of therapeutic work. Information gathered concerning your identity, personal details, and the content of the work is held with respect and trust. Sessions may not be recorded without prior agreement from both client and therapist.

Confidentiality is limited by the following legal and ethical exceptions:

- The presence of risk of harm to yourself or others
- Drug trafficking
- Money laundering
- Terrorism
- Safeguarding children and/or vulnerable adults
- Court order

*Supervision* is a key component of maintaining ethical standards. For this purpose, anonymised aspects of therapy sessions may be discussed in professional supervision. Anonymised material may also be used for further training and academic assessment.

## Record Keeping

Therapy records are securely stored in a cloud-based Electronic Health Record (EHR) system that is GDPR-compliant, encrypted, and ISO 27001 Certified. Payment records are anonymised where possible, and stored within banking, payment, and accounting software. Data security measures include password protection for electronic records and locked storage for paper files. Please see the Privacy Policy for more details on data storage, usage, and protection.

**Commitment**

An effective therapeutic relationship is a commitment for both the client and the therapist.

My commitment:
- To be available at the mutually agreed time and place
- To start and end sessions on time
- To provide a confidential and non-judgmental space
- To maintain professional boundaries and ethical standards
- To regularly review the therapeutic process with you
- To provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure inclusivity
- To offer an alternative appointment if I need to cancel

Your commitment:
- To attend sessions as agreed
- To provide at least 48 hours' notice for cancellations or changes
- To pay for sessions as outlined in the ‘Fees’ section
- To provide GP and emergency contact details
- To engage in and lead your therapeutic work
- Notify your therapist of changes in your mental health status
- Inform your therapist of physical health changes relevant to therapy
- To discuss progress and changes, as well as ending therapy when you’re able and ready

**Telehealth**

Telehealth allows you to engage in therapy remotely via secure technology. Willow & Thyme Therapy offers video sessions via the Zanda Health platform and audio-only sessions through WhatsApp. Video sessions offer visual cues similar to in-person therapy, while audio sessions rely solely on tone of voice and content.

Benefits:
- Therapy in your preferred location
- Encrypted software platforms to protect confidentiality
- Ease of scheduling
- Flexibility to choose between audio or video sessions where appropriate

Considerations:
- Your comfort level with technology and preferred mode of therapy
- Access to a device with a stable internet connection
- Availability of a private, distraction-free space for sessions
- Potential limitations in interpreting non-verbal cues (especially in audio-only sessions)
- Screen fatigue if using digital devices frequently

Safe Telehealth Practices:
- *Confidentiality*: Ensure sessions take place in a private setting.
- *Emergencies*: Provide an emergency contact, your location, and any relevant information before starting telehealth sessions.

- *Technical Issues*: If connection problems arise, your therapist will contact you via the mobile number on file to troubleshoot or reschedule.
- *Recording and Consent*: Sessions will not be recorded unless explicitly agreed upon. Consent to record must be discussed and documented separately.
- *Platform Security*: Zanda Health and WhatsApp are encrypted platforms, but it is essential that you take steps to protect your devices (e.g., using secure Wi-Fi and password protection) to further safeguard your privacy.
- *Suitability*: If telehealth is deemed unsuitable for your needs, alternative arrangements will be discussed.

By signing this agreement, you acknowledge the risks associated with telehealth and agree to take reasonable precautions to protect your privacy and create a secure, distraction-free environment for sessions.

**Outdoor Therapy**

Outdoor therapy, a type of ecotherapy, integrates nature into the therapeutic process. Walk-and-talk sessions adapt traditional face-to-face sessions to the natural environment. While outdoor sessions involve movement, attention to pace, breaks, and comfort remains important.

Benefits:
- Physical health benefits
- Accessibility for those who prefer to be out of an office and away from a screen
- Support for the mind-body connection
- Fosters creativity
- Promotes a sense of community.

Considerations:
- Physical health, allergies, and weather-appropriate clothing
- Session content being explored in an open space
- Transportation
- The presence of animals and uneven terrain

Confidentiality is a priority, and walk-and-talk therapy increases the likelihood of encountering others. The therapist and client will share responsibility for managing interactions with other members of the public, including adjusting direction, speaking quietly, or taking silent breaks.

Weather conditions can change during sessions; any necessary adjustments will be made by mutual agreement. If severe weather arises before the session, your therapist will contact you to offer an online session or reschedule. The 48-hour cancellation policy does not apply to weather-related changes.

While reasonable precautions are taken to ensure safety, each accept responsibility for their physical well-being and Willow & Thyme Therapy is not liable for any injuries, accidents, or adverse reactions that may occur during outdoor therapy sessions. If you feel unwell or uncomfortable, please inform your therapist immediately. Your therapist will carry a mobile phone for emergencies. All routes are publicly accessible, with risk assessments carried out seasonally, and reachable via public transport.

By signing this agreement, you confirm that you will notify Willow & Thyme Therapy of any factors that may impact your safety during outdoor therapy.

**Fees**

Sessions are charged at a rate of **£60** for up to 60 minutes.

Payment is due **48 hours before the session**. If payment is not received by the due date, therapy sessions may be postponed until the balance is settled. Repeated late payments may result in therapy being discontinued. If a change in your financial situation results in challenges accessing therapy, please speak with your therapist as soon as possible.

Payment can be made by card, cash, cheque, or via bank transfer:

Account Type: Business Account
Account name: Shauna New trading as Willow & Thyme Therapy
Sort Code: 04-00-04
Account Number: 29438543

**Cancellations & Late Arrivals**

Willow & Thyme Therapy kindly ask that you notify your therapist of any cancellations at least **48 hours** before our scheduled session.

If you cancel within 48 hours, the session fee will still apply unless it is rescheduled within the same week (subject to availability).

If possible, please contact your therapist as soon as you know you will be late; your therapist will also attempt to contact you within the first 15 minutes of the scheduled session. If you arrive more than 30 minutes late, the session will be considered cancelled and charged accordingly.

Refunds and exceptions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Contact Outside Sessions**

Due to the nature of therapy, time-limited sessions help to create a dedicated, safe container to explore emotional experiences. Communication outside of sessions is limited to making, changing, or cancelling appointments, excepting prior agreements.

Phone and email hours: **Monday - Thursday 12 pm - 7 pm** (when not in session)
Expected response time: **48 hours**, excluding weekends

Public encounters will be met with discretion to protect your privacy.

**Social Media**

To develop a mutually supportive digital space and maintain clear professional boundaries:

- Your therapist will not search your details online.
- If you find their personal social media profiles, including LinkedIn, please do not add your therapist as a friend or connection.
- If you'd like to send something from a social media platform, please do so via e-mail or text. If your therapist sees a relevant piece of art, poetry, or other writing on social media, they will send it via email or text.

**Ending Therapy**

You may discontinue therapy at any time. However, co-creating a planned ending is encouraged for a structured transition. In rare cases, your therapist may determine that another therapist or type of therapy would better suit your needs. If so, they will discuss this with you and, where appropriate, provide referrals.

**Complaints**

If you find that the therapy and therapeutic relationship are not meeting your expectations, please speak with your therapist directly, if possible. Your concerns will be received and considered without judgment, creating an opportunity to address the issue and ensure the quality of the service provided.

The National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society also have a complaints procedure available here: https://ncps.com/complaints.

**Limits of Therapy & Scope of Practice**

Therapy is a supportive addition to self-care practices and/or a multi-disciplinary care plan led by a healthcare professional. Therapy is not a substitute for medical treatment. Willow & Thyme Therapy does not provide psychiatric diagnoses, medication management, or 24/7 crisis support. Telehealth and outdoor therapy are not sufficient support for those actively in crisis; where needed, Willow & Thyme Therapy can support referrals. If you experience a mental health crisis, contact emergency services or a crisis helpline:

- **Emergency (UK): Call 999**
- **Gloucestershire Crisis Team: 0800 169 0398**
- **Mental Health Helplines:** https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/mental-health-helplines/

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**Emergency Contact Information**

Full Name: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Telephone: _____

**Acknowledgement & Consent**

*I have read the Therapy Agreement, Privacy Policy, and provided emergency contact information. I have discussed questions with my therapist and will bring further questions forward should they arise. I acknowledge that there are risks involved in therapeutic work, and my therapist and I will work together to promote safety. I will review the therapeutic work with my therapist regularly and understand that I can terminate services at any time by contacting my therapist. I understand and consent to the terms outlined.*

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

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