

## ***3 Star Ranch Equine Assisted Psychotherapy for the Whole Family, PC***

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2400 W. Las Flores Ave.  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Anita J. Walraven, MA, LMFT #MFC 40657  
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist

### **Informed Consent**

Welcome to 3 Star Ranch, Equine Assisted Psychotherapy for the Whole Family, PC (known hereafter as 3 Star Ranch). 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.

Therapy is a relationship between people that works in part because of clearly defined rights and responsibilities held by each person. As a client in psychotherapy, 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. 3 Star Ranch have/has corresponding responsibilities to you. These rights and responsibilities are described in the following sections.

#### **Services:**

- **Psychotherapy** has both benefits and risks. Risks may include experiencing uncomfortable feelings, (sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness), because the process of psychotherapy often requires dealing with the unpleasant aspects of your life. However, psychotherapy has been shown to have benefits for individuals who undertake it. Therapy often leads 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. Psychotherapy requires a very active effort on your part.
- 3 Star Ranch offers a treatment modality called **equine-assisted psychotherapy** which is an experiential form of psychotherapy 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 treatment team, 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 bias we humans put on each other. This provides even more value in the insight they can provide us about ourselves.

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*Providing opportunities for people to interact with horses for empowering transformation.*

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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 Liability Release Form we have provided for your review and signature and which we will/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.

3 Star Ranch follows the **Eagala Model of equine-assisted psychotherapy**. This means:

1. Sessions are conducted by a facilitating team (treatment team) of a Licensed Mental Health Professional (MH) and a qualified Equine Specialist (ES) in all your sessions. These professionals are Eagala Certified which means completion of specialized training in this model, requirements of ongoing continuing education and adherence to high standards of professionalism and practice. While both members of the team are involved in your therapy process, the role of the ES is to oversee physical safety needs and provide observations on the behaviors of the horses. The MH is there to oversee the psychotherapy process and help you make the parallels of the horse observations to your therapy goals and life.
2. All sessions are on the ground – there is no riding of horses involved in the treatment process. This is psychotherapy 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 therapy goals and we commit to utilizing the methods we have found to best support that focus.
3. The process is 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 the Mental Health professional.
5. Eagala is an International, Nonprofit Professional Association for equine-assisted psychotherapy and has standards and a code of ethics which we follow and have accountability to as Eagala Certified professionals. You may review a copy of the Code of Ethics as well as go to [www.eagala.org](http://www.eagala.org) for more information. You can read more about why horses and Eagala Model equine-assisted psychotherapy at [www.eagala.org](http://www.eagala.org) and feel free to ask questions at any time.

The first session will involve assessing your needs and working with you to create a **treatment plan** to outline your therapy goals and objectives and address any questions regarding diagnosis, goals and estimated length of treatment. We will periodically review this plan with you to discuss progress or changes in the therapy goals.

If you have questions about our procedures, please discuss them with us whenever they arise.

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### **II. APPOINTMENTS & CANCELLATION POLICIES**

Since scheduling of an appointment involves the reservation of time specifically for you, a minimum of 24 hours-notice is required for re-scheduling or canceling an appointment. Unless we reach a different agreement, the full fee will be charged for sessions missed without such notification. Insurance companies do not reimburse for missed appointments. Appointments will ordinarily be 45 minutes in duration, once every other week at a time we agree on, although some sessions may be more or less frequent as needed.

### **III. PAYMENTS & INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

Clients are expected to pay the standard fee of \$100 per **45minute** session at the end or beginning of each session unless other arrangements have been made, e.g., negotiated insurance reimbursement rate. Telephone conversations, site visits, report writing and reading, consultations with other professionals, release of information, reading records, longer sessions, travel time, etc. will be charged at the same rate, unless indicated and agreed otherwise.

### **IV. RECORDS & NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

Under the Federal law known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Anita Walraven is obligated to notify you of your right to your personal information regarding the counseling services which you will receive. You have the right to inspect and copy your health information not including Anita's personal therapy notes. The cost for a summary of your records is \$100 and generally include diagnosis, dates of contact, relevant treatment considerations, and progress made while in treatment. If you want to exercise any of these rights, please make this request in writing to this office. These records may be made available to other qualified professionals upon a signed Release of Information form. The only exception to this release of records might be requested under a court order.

### **V. CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information disclosed within sessions and the written records pertaining to those sessions are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone without your (client's) written permission, except where disclosure is required by law. Most of the provisions explaining when the law requires disclosure were described to you in the Consent for Treatment.

**When Disclosure is required by Law:** Some of the circumstances where disclosure is required by the law are: where there is a reasonable suspicion of child, dependent or elder abuse or neglect; and where a client presents a danger to self, to others, to property, or is gravely disabled.

**When Disclosure May be Required:** Disclosure may be required pursuant to legal proceeding. If you place your mental status at issue in litigation initiated by you, the defendant may have the right to obtain the psychotherapy records and/or testimony by Anita Walraven. In couple and family therapy confidentiality and privilege do not apply between the couple or among family members. Anita Walraven will use her clinical judgment when revealing such information. Anita Walraven will not release records to any outside party unless she is authorized in writing to do so by all adult family members who were part of the treatment.

**Health Insurance and Confidentiality of Records:** Disclosure of confidential information may be required by your health insurance carrier in order to process the claims. Only the minimum necessary information will be communicated to the carrier if you so instruct Anita Walraven to bill your insurance. Anita Walraven has no control or knowledge over what insurance companies do with the information she has submitted or who has access to this information.

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**Confidentiality of E-Mail, Cell Phone and Fax Communication:** It is very important to be aware that these communication devices can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people, and hence, the privacy and confidentiality of such communication can be compromised. At this office Anita Walraven is the only individual that has access to the voice mail system. Please notify Anita Walraven at the beginning of treatment if you decide to avoid or limit in any way the use of any or all of the above communication devices.

### **VI. CONTACTING US**

We are often not immediately available by telephone. We do not answer our phone when in session with clients or are 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 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 911 and ask to speak to the mental health worker on call.

### **VII. EMERGENCY POLICY**

If injury occurs while at 3 Star Ranch, we are certified to provide immediate First Aid and will call 911 if necessary. If you have an emergency outside of 3 Star Ranch, it is recommended that you go to the local emergency room at either Ridgecrest Regional Hospital at 1081 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest, CA, or call 911 or go to a local emergency room in the community where you are at during the time of the crisis.

**VIII. CONSULTATION:** Anita Walraven consults regularly with other professionals regarding her clients; however, the client's name or other identifying information is never mentioned. The client's identity remains completely anonymous, and confidentiality is fully maintained. Considering all of the above exclusions, if it is still appropriate, upon your request, Anita Walraven will release information to any agency/person you specify unless she concludes that releasing such information might be harmful in any way.

### **IX. OTHER RIGHTS**

If you are unhappy with what is happening in therapy, 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 therapy at any time. You have the right to considerate, safe and respectful care, without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or source of payment. You have the right to ask questions about any aspects of therapy and about our specific training and experience. You have the right to expect that we will not have social or sexual relationships with clients or with former clients. We are accountable to our licensure board and in Eagala Model equine-assisted psychotherapy, to the Eagala Ethics Committee. You have the right to submit formal concerns to these professional agencies in the event your concerns are not addressed by us following our professional codes.

### **IX. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

3 Star Ranch Equine Assisted Psychotherapy for the Whole Family is a Professional Corporation that provides services to the Indian Wells Valley community by bringing horses and humans together to transformation. We are certified and use the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) model. Under this certification, we are governed in the professional practices of equine assisted psychotherapy and have set standards of ethics, practice and professional expectations.

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3 Star Ranch, the values that are important to us include:

- Empowering clients to find internal answers to personal challenges
- Connecting people with horses for transformation
- Provide community service opportunities
- Safety – physically & emotionally, ethically & legally
- Founded on a faith-based foundation

Anita J. Walraven is a licensed Marriage and Family therapist through the state of California with over 20 years of experience. She is an Eagala certified Mental Health Specialist. Anita is an experienced therapist with clinical skills qualified to treat and communicate with clients from diverse background. Thorough clinical skills in treating children, juveniles, young adults and families, which may require assessment skills, development of clinical treatment plans, and facilitation of crisis intervention procedures. She is proficient in equine assisted psychotherapy. Anita is an avid horse lover with over 37 years of owning and/or working with horses.

Rex M. Walraven is an Eagala certified Equine Specialist. He is a US Marine veteran and law enforcement officer. Rex retired from the Department of Defense after 38 years of service. He has over 37 years working with horses as a trainer, instructor, farrier and owner. He is an active rider and appears in parades and community events with his horses. Rex is skilled in the natural horsemanship approach.

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Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand this Informed Consent and agree to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Patient or Personal Representative

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Patient or Personal Representative

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

**Release to Use Image**

Part of our ongoing business plan is to present truthful and real information about 3 Star Ranch. Periodically a photo opportunity comes along that is special and we would like to share it on our website or in our promotional material. We will maintain a sense of confidentiality in our photos by taking them from a distance and without showing the faces of our clients. By signing below, you are giving us permission to take such photos of you or your children and are aware that these photos may be used on the website and in promotional material. Leave the consent empty below if you do not wish photos to be taken.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand this Release to Use Image and agree to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Patient or Personal Representative

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Patient or Personal Representative

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_