



Canine Assisted Therapy Framework

The use of animals for health interventions can be traced back hundreds of years. Dogs were kept in the healing temples of the Ancient Greeks, Florence Nightingale recognised the benefits animals had on her sick patients and even Sigmund Freud worked with his Chow Chow, Jofi, who he noted had a calming effect on people. In the 1960's, research began into Canine Assisted Therapy by Dr Bons Levison when he realised the positive effect his dog had on the mental health of his clients and so the therapy developed.

There are many benefits to Canine Assisted Therapy as it enables clients to work therapeutically whilst emotionally co-regulating with the dog using the bond created between human and canine. Dogs offer unconditional love and acceptance. They will not judge or criticise, they don't care what you look like, they just offer affection. Studies have proved that therapy with dogs showed a significant decrease in conditions such as depression, PTSD, trauma symptoms and dissociation. People feel calmer and less threatened being around a dog resulting in a less anxious, more relaxed state to be able to work therapeutically. It also reduces blood pressure! Particularly for abuse survivors, working with a dog provides the first opportunity to learn a 'safe touch' whilst grounding and being in the present moment. They will also make you laugh!

Canine Assisted Therapy with Emma Marshall Counselling Services, combines the talking therapy of the Person-Centred Approach with the addition of Bentley, a registered, fully trained and insured, Golden Retriever. Having Bentley present in a session to interact with when talking, can help as a focus whilst exploring difficult or painful issues. He can bring comfort by sitting beside him and giving him a stroke when distressed or for some clients, they will talk to him as it feels easier than looking at another person.

To be able to provide Canine Assisted Therapy, there are certain guidelines and legal regulations that need to be adhered to, ensuring that the service is ethical, safe and effective for both the client and the dog.

Dog Welfare

- Bentley will be in good health to participate
- Sessions are for 50 minutes and Bentley will work a maximum of 3 sessions per week
- Adequate breaks for Bentley will be given before, after and in between sessions to allow toileting, fresh air and exercise
- Bentley will be identifiable by a therapy dog harness and/or jacket
- Fresh drinking water for Bentley will be available at all times
- There will be an area in the office with a dog rug for Bentley to go to. If he is in this area he is not to be approached by clients and he will not continue to work for the rest of the session
- If Bentley shows any sign of distress, anxiety or fatigue he will be taken to his area of the office and will not continue to work for the rest of the session. He is only to be approached by Emma

- Bentley will be reassessed annually to ensure he remains in good physical and mental health and that he continues to have the right temperament
- Emma is responsible for ensuring that Bentley is not put in any situations which may compromise his health and wellbeing
- Other dogs will not be permitted in the therapy room
- Bentley is trained using reward based methods
- Any aggressive or negative behaviour towards Bentley will not be tolerated and the session will be terminated immediately. Bentley's welfare is priority, so if necessary Emma will remove Bentley from the office before attending to the client's needs
- Bentley will walk with Emma between the office and reception on a static lead but will be off lead in the office
- Only treats provided by Emma may be given to Bentley and only when specified
- During the first session, time will be given for general instruction from Emma on how to approach and interact with Bentley and for Bentley to get to know the client. This ensures that all participants are comfortable

General Health, Hygiene and Safety

- To minimise the risk of spread of infection or disease, clients will be asked to wash hands thoroughly before and after the session and hand sanitiser is available
- If Bentley has an open wound he will not be present in the session
- If clients have any open wounds they must be dressed
- If Bentley shows any sign of illness or disease he will not be present in the session, or the session will be postponed. Where veterinary care is required, permission from the vet will be sought before Bentley will resume working
- Due to the potential risks associated with food borne infectious diseases Bentley will not be raw fed
- If the client is unwell the session will not go ahead
- Any client that is immune suppressed due to illness or medication will not be offered Canine Assisted Therapy unless written medical approval from a doctor is provided
- Bentley's vaccinations, defleaing and worming treatments will be kept up to date
- Bentley will be discouraged from licking. However, Golden Retrievers are known for slobbering and whilst this will be managed as much as possible by Emma, clients must be aware they may come into contact with some slobber but tissues and antibacterial wipes will be available
- Clients must be aware that Golden Retrievers do shed hair so should dress appropriately. Bentley will be brushed before sessions but hair on clothes is inevitable
- Clients are to advise Emma of any potential risks before a session such as allergy, illness, fear of dogs and health issues such as immunosuppression. Necessary action will be taken
- Clients must be aware that certain illnesses can be transferred from human to canine. These include but are not exclusive to Salmonella, MRSA, Ringworm, Human flu viruses, SARS-COV-2, Mumps, Tuberculosis, Giardiasis and C.Difficile. Clients must advise Emma if they are suffering from any of these conditions and sessions will not take place for at least 2 weeks depending on severity and treatment

Dog training and behaviour standards

- Bentley is trained to the Kennel Club Silver Good Citizen Award or equivalent standard
- Bentley will walk calmly on a lead at all times
- Bentley will be familiarised with the therapy setting

- Bentley will not bark, mouth, paw or jump up at people
- Bentley enjoys human interaction and will be relaxed and calm. He enjoys being stroked (especially his tummy!) and playing
- Bentley will not display guarding behaviour of treats or toys
- Bentley will be expected to take treats gently when offered and not snatch toys

Legislative requirements

- Emma is Bentley’s legal owner
- Emma knows Bentley well and together they have passed the necessary assessments to be able to offer Canine Assisted Therapy. Emma is competent at understanding Bentley’s needs, body language and behaviour and will act accordingly to protect Bentley’s health and wellbeing. If necessary sessions will be ended early to ensure this
- Appropriate Public Liability Insurance is held
- All therapy sessions will be held in accordance to GDPR, Confidentiality, Child Protection and Safeguarding policies
- Emma holds an enhanced DBS
- As an Accredited registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychology (BACP), Emma adheres to the BACP Ethical Framework
- As a Therapy Dog UK certified Therapy Dog Handler, Emma abides by the Society for Companion Animal Studies Code of Practice (SCAS), the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and adheres to The Five Freedoms Animal Welfare Guidance by the World Organisation for Animal Health
- Emma will keep up to date with training, best practice guidelines and legislation such as risk assessments, health and safety legislation and basic and emergency first aid
- Clients will be required to read and sign this working agreement before any sessions will commence

Client name: _____

| | I confirm that I have read and understand the guidelines and requirements stated above and agree to adhere to them

| | I confirm I will advise Emma Marshall of any potential risks before a session, as stated above and understand that sessions may be cancelled or rescheduled as a result

| | I confirm I freely consent to participating in Canine Assisted Therapy with Emma Marshall Counselling Services

Signed (Client): _____ Date: _____

Signed (Counsellor): _____ Date: _____