

Nature Based Therapy

**life
matters**
PSYCHOLOGISTS





PSYCHOLOGISTS

Welcome.

We look forward to seeing you soon at Yarraman, our new 'outdoor office'. Before getting started, there's a few things we need to go through with you, given we're working with mother nature. So, please carefully read the sections below, our policy and our consent form to understand our nature-based service.

Location.

Our site, *Yarraman*, is on Awabakal country, located at 134 Wangi Rd Toronto, an enjoyable 35 min drive from our Glebe Road office. The name *Yarraman*, meaning horse, comes from the Gamilaroy language and people of central new south wales. The Yarraman site is set on a large privately owned property surrounded by bush. *If you get lost, please call or text our site mobile on 0412 318 864.*

Directions.

Before you leave, look at the maps and type in 134 Wangi Road into google maps. DO NOT TYPE IN YARRAMAN. Once you've passed the Toronto Fire Station, start to look out for our 'Nature Based Therapy' sign and the large St Joseph School sign. Take a left here. (If you get to the golf course, you've gone too far). Once you've turned left, immediately look out to the right for our 'Almost There' sign and take a sharp right onto the dirt road. You'll have to go up a bit of a steep hill at this point (please take care on the driveway as it can have a loose surface after heavy rain) but in 50m, you'll find our carpark and our psychologist Rachel will be there to meet you. *Maps attached at the end of this pack.*

Timeliness & Cancellation Policy

Providing nature-based therapy requires a great deal of planning and preparation to ensure your privacy and the privacy of others is maintained. We ask that you arrive on time for your session and no more than 10 minutes before your session. If you are more than 15 minutes late, it will be considered a 'no show' and our [fees policy](#) will be applied (full fee payable). Session times are 55 minutes in length. Parents, please note. If the client is a minor without his/her own transportation, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to also ensure prompt drop off and pick up to and from session, as there is no one at the site to provide supervision for your child after his/her session.

Parents, Siblings, and Guests

Therapy conducted in the outdoors is a regular counselling or psychotherapy session that takes place in nature and thus it is confidential. Parents, siblings, or other visitors and guests are not allowed to observe sessions and are asked to remain in the designated areas to protect the confidentiality of both their own children and others who are engaging in the service. Parents can drop off their children at the session. However, must return promptly at the end of the session to collect the child. If you plan to wait on site, please note that parents/siblings/guests are not allowed to touch/pet/feed the animals and must wait in the designated waiting areas (the car parking area or at times, the office may also be available). Please, remember that this is a non-smoking property, and we ask that everyone uses quiet voices in consideration of the natural environment, animals, and property owner.

What to expect.

What will I be doing.

Our Nature Based Therapy service is quite simply – moving your therapy session from the office to the outdoors. Although you will be chatting with your therapist in a natural setting, they will still provide the same type of counselling or psychotherapy that they would in an office, but with a natural environment around you and the potential addition of animals. You might walk around the property, work with our horses or stay warm in our converted shipping container. Whatever is right for you and the environment is what will guide your therapist on the day. Each time you visit Yarraman, we recommend coming prepared to be in a natural setting and around animals. Weather changes quickly, so bring layers and be ready for the elements. Also, eating before you come is a good idea, as is drinking plenty of water.

What to wear & bring

- Dress to be outside in the elements. Wear sturdy, closed toes shoes, long shorts or pants, and a comfortable and durable shirt (nothing too easy to tear/catch on things).
- Wear or bring sunscreen, a hat, water bottle and insect repellent
- Bring a raincoat or warm coat if there is a chance of rain or if the weather is cool
- Gumboots encouraged :)

What NOT to wear & bring

- Don't bring your phone into the paddock as it could get dropped, stepped on, or otherwise damaged while outdoors. You can leave it in the office or in your car.
- Don't wear thongs, sandals, high heels, or other open-toed shoes.
- Don't bring pets of any kind
- Don't wear long earrings or loose jewellery.
- Don't bring drugs, alcohol, or any type of smoking paraphernalia

Site Safety & Guidelines.



Facilities & First Aid

Camp toilet facilities are available on site. However, if you would prefer the luxuries of indoor plumbing - public toilets are located 4 minutes' drive away on the Toronto Boulevard so we suggest going before you arrive. There are no tea, coffee, or water facilities (yep, we're really in nature!) so please BYO. Our clinician is a registered first aid and CPR officer and there is a first aid kit on site.

Site Rules

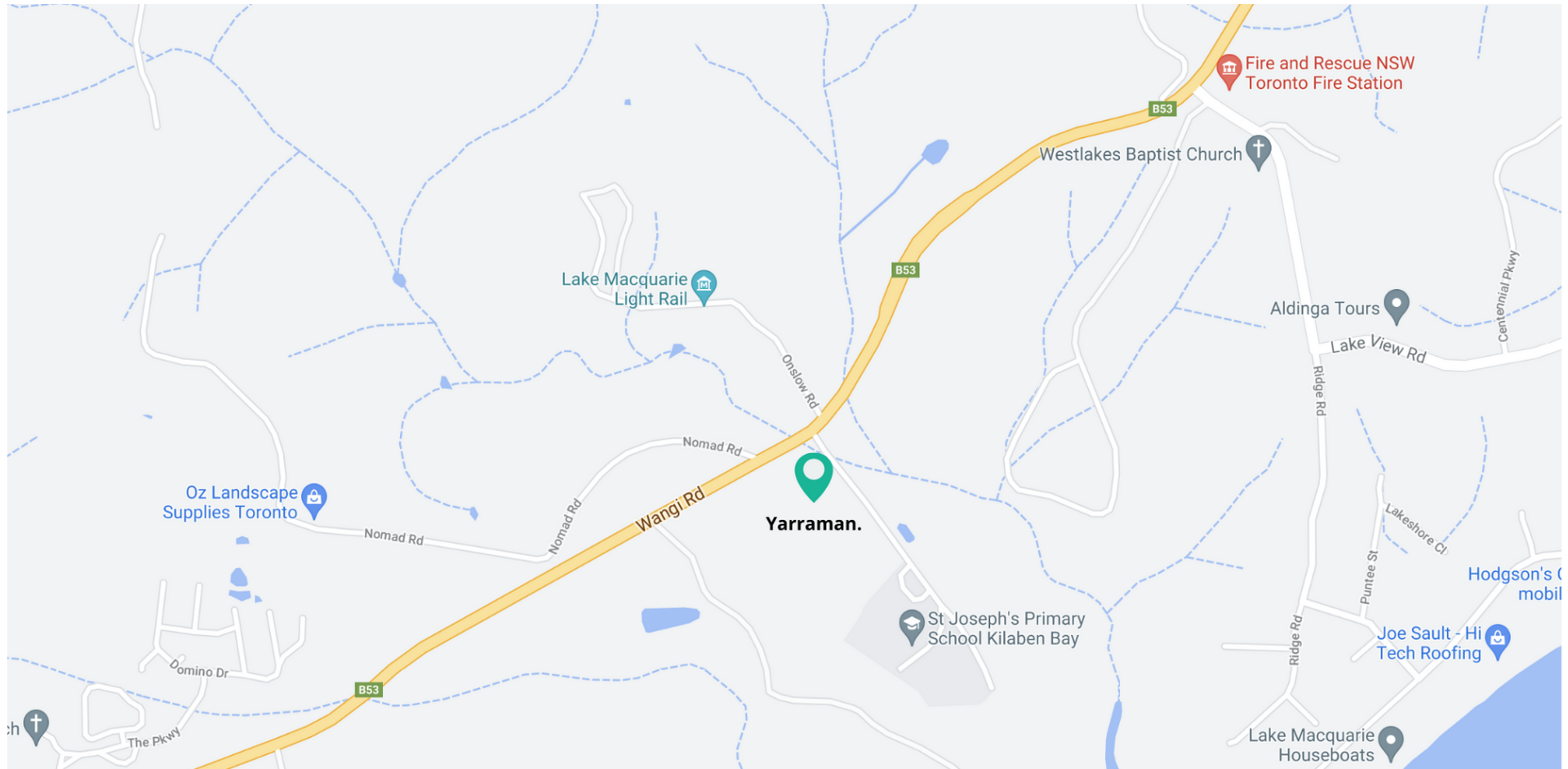
Along with our detailed guidelines, we have some important site safety rules that must be always adhered to.

- Clients must wear appropriate clothing/footwear to be allowed near the animals
- No smoking or vaping anywhere on the property
- No weapons, alcohol or illegal substances allowed on the property
- Off-limit areas must be observed
- Do not go into fields, paddocks, barns, or stalls unless you are supervised by a staff member, volunteer, or your therapist
- Close all gates behind you
- Do NOT climb on fences or gates
- No pets allowed on the premises
- All visiting minors must be supervised at all times
- Visitors must be respectful of the clients who take part in services at Yarraaman. Please remember that sessions are private and confidential so DO NOT APPROACH areas where sessions are taking place.
- Chasing, teasing, taunting, harassing, or purposely annoying, scaring, or irritating the animals at the property is strictly prohibited. Please treat animals with respect. Use kind, even if direct, words with the animals. Anyone not being kind will be asked to leave the immediate area where the animals are located.
- DO NOT feed any animals without permission from staff.
- Always listen to the Yarraaman staff and follow these safety rules.

As your final step, please read and understand our Nature Based Therapy Policy
You will need to acknowledge that you have read and agreed to our policy in your consent form to be permitted on site.

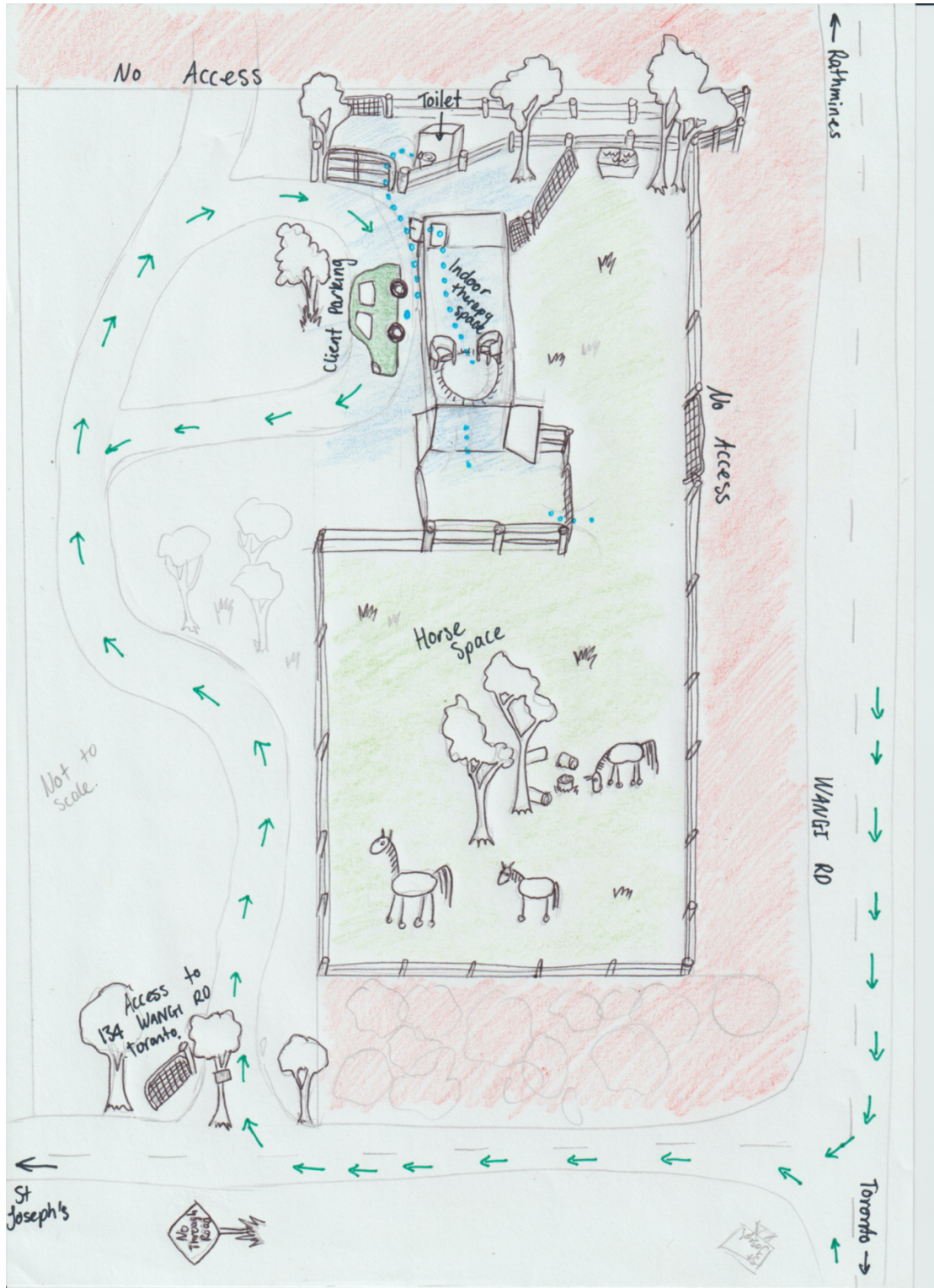
We look forward to welcoming you at Yarraaman!

Location Maps



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Nature Based Therapy | Policy

Last reviewed: 28 April 2021 (EL)

Next Review Date: 28 April 2022

Purpose

The Nature Based Therapy policy outlines how Life Matters Psychologists (Life Matters) conduct clinical therapy in a nature-based setting (Yarraman Site) and the expectations of clients engaging with nature-based therapy. The policy outlines the potential risks, and management of those risks, through a risk management plan and procedure. This procedure aims to limit the potential risks to clients associated with working in a nature-based setting and with the potential inclusion of animals.

Guidelines

1. Nature-Based Clinical Setting

- 1.1. Before consenting to the service, a client must be made aware of their clinical options to ensure they are comfortable with the differences between room-based counselling/psychotherapy versus therapy in a natural setting.
- 1.2. Even though psychology is delivered in nature, a licensed mental health professional must follow all the same laws, ethics, and treatment procedures they would in an office setting, but with some additional considerations due to the potential inclusion of the environment and animals.
- 1.3. Participation in the outdoor setting is at the discretion of the clinician. There may be times when it is deemed inappropriate to complete a nature-based session and the session will instead take place in the indoor area on site at the property.
- 1.4. When attending a session outdoors, confidentiality is harder to maintain. Although the Yarraman site is relatively private, a client may be visible or overheard by someone passing by such as the property owner or horse owners. Our clinicians will take all possible precautions to protect your confidentiality, including moving our session to a more private area, or asking you to stop taking if the clinician believes someone might overhear you.

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- 1.5. Sessions are typically held outdoors, regardless of the elements and a client will be around animals and in a farm environment. A client must alert the clinician if they have any medical or mental health condition that could be exacerbated by exposure to varying weather conditions, environmental allergens, or contact with animals. Such conditions could include asthma, allergies, or a health condition that would make being active outdoors unsafe. Steps will be taken to reduce these risks including moving session indoors if required.
 - 1.6. If a client is a parent/guardian attending with a child, the parent/guardian is required to alert the clinician if the parent/guardian or the child has suffered any animal-related trauma, has been exposed to animal abuse or engaged in abusive behaviours, are afraid or uncomfortable around animals or have an animal specific phobia.
 - 1.7. Clients who are pregnant or post-natal are permitted on site, however particular restrictions are in place. For safety reasons, pregnant clients will have limited interactions with horses. Parents of young babies should consider if the nature space is right for them. As a therapeutic relationship often requires commitment, circumstances of a child's safety must be considered by the parent. E.g., If a baby is happy to sleep in a pram, then a session can be completed compared to a child that crawls.
2. Risk Management Plan and Procedures
- 2.1. Life Matters has developed a risk management plan to outline the potential risks of therapy in a natural setting including animals and mitigants of those risks in a nature-based setting. The risk management plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the site manager and the Life Matters management team.
 - 2.2. There are always potential risks when exposed to animals and the elements of nature. A client needs to be aware of these risks and talk with their therapist about any concerns they may have when considering therapy in a nature-based setting.
 - 2.3. Animals may be unpredictable and could bite, scratch, kick, knock into, or step on those around them leading to serious injury or death. A client must wear appropriate clothing and footwear as advised and be always supervised while on site.
 - 2.4. While on site, the client and therapist will interact with the animals in a respectful manner and give them freedom to express themselves in an authentic and natural manner.

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2.5. The relationship between client and an animal is closely monitored by the clinician to ensure both parties are respected. Occasionally a circumstance may arise where a clinician must mediate. This might be similar but not limited to:

- clients may perceive that an animal has rejected them, commonly because they misunderstand the animal's behaviours. This may exacerbate issues of low self-esteem or low self-confidence.
- Death of an animal may generate intense feelings of grief and sometimes guilt
- A client might become so involved with the animals that they become possessive of those animals, and an atmosphere of competition rather than social cooperation develops.

2.6. The staff at Yarraaman are trained and skilled at managing and mediating the above-mentioned circumstances should they arise and will provide support if any of these or other situations develop and make appropriate treatment decisions as required.

Related Policies

Life Matters Psychologists Cultural Policy

Life Matters Psychologists Fees and Cancellation Policy

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