

Clinical Toolkit — Document 4

AI Companion Platform Reference Sheet

AI Companionship in Clinical Practice | Amy Clark Last updated: March 2026 — this field changes rapidly; verify current status before citing in reports

Designed Companion Platforms

Replika

- **What it is:** Avatar-based AI companion offering friendship, mentorship, and romantic relationship modes
- **Users:** 10M+
- **Key features:** Persistent memory, customisable avatar, voice calls, AR mode, diary function
- **Demographics:** Broad — adults across age ranges, significant female user base
- **Clinically relevant event:** February 2023 — removed erotic roleplay (ERP) feature overnight. Mass user distress, grief, and anger. Partially reversed for existing users after backlash.
- **Risk profile:** Engineered for attachment. Premium features create financial incentive for escalating engagement. Memory systems create continuity and bonding.

Character.AI

- **What it is:** Platform for interacting with AI "characters" — fictional, celebrity, or user-created personas
- **Users:** 20M+ monthly active users, majority under 24
- **Key features:** Vast character library, user-created characters, group chats, voice
- **Demographics:** Predominantly adolescents and young adults
- **Clinically relevant events:** Linked to at least two adolescent deaths. Implemented safety restrictions for teens in 2025 (time limits, content filters, crisis intervention prompts).
- **Risk profile:** High for minors. Role-play format can blur reality boundaries. Character attachment can be intense. Content moderation is inconsistent.

Nomi

- **What it is:** AI companion emphasising emotional depth and long-term memory
- **Users:** Smaller user base, growing
- **Key features:** Strong memory systems, emotional continuity, group rooms
- **Demographics:** Adults seeking deeper emotional AI interaction
- **Risk profile:** Designed for emotional attachment. Long-term memory creates strong continuity bonds.

Kindroid

- **What it is:** Highly customisable AI companion — personality, voice, appearance, and photo generation
- **Users:** Niche but dedicated
- **Key features:** Customisable personality sliders, voice calls, AI-generated photos of the companion, backstory creation
- **Demographics:** Adults, often tech-savvy
- **Risk profile:** High customisation deepens personalisation and attachment. Photo generation adds visual dimension to the bond.

Emergent Companion Platforms

ChatGPT (OpenAI)

- **What it is:** General-purpose AI assistant — the most widely used AI in the world
- **Users:** 300M+ weekly users; unknown number using relationally
- **Key features:** Conversation memory (when enabled), voice mode, custom GPTs, image generation
- **Demographics:** Broad — all ages, all contexts

- **Clinically relevant event:** February 2026 — retired GPT-4o model. Users who had formed relationships with that specific model version reported grief, anger, and searching behaviour.
- **Risk profile for relational use:** No attachment safeguards. No relational use acknowledgment. Model changes happen without warning. Memory features create continuity that can deepen bonds unexpectedly.

Claude (Anthropic)

- **What it is:** General-purpose AI assistant positioned as helpful, harmless, and honest
- **Users:** Growing user base; relational use not publicly quantified
- **Key features:** Long context, nuanced conversation, Projects (persistent instructions)
- **Demographics:** Broad, often professionals and researchers
- **Risk profile for relational use:** Users report deep relational bonds despite Anthropic's non-companion positioning. No attachment planning. Model updates can shift personality characteristics.

Gemini (Google)

- **What it is:** Google's general-purpose AI assistant
- **Users:** Large, integrated into Google ecosystem
- **Risk profile for relational use:** Similar to other emergent companions — no relational safeguards, personality shifts with updates.

Beyond the Mainstream

Third-Party and Open-Source Clients

- **Examples:** OpenClaw, SillyTavern, Kobold, Oobabooga
- **What they are:** Software that accesses AI models (Claude, Llama, Mistral, etc.) outside official platforms, often removing safety guardrails and content restrictions
- **Why it matters clinically:** Users seeking unrestricted emotional or intimate AI interaction often end up here. Content may include explicit material with no safety boundaries. Harder to identify in clinical settings — your client won't find these by searching "AI companion apps."
- **Risk profile:** Variable. Ranges from responsible customisation to completely unmoderated interaction.

International Platforms

- **Examples:** Kimi (Moonshot AI, China), DeepSeek (China), Doubao (ByteDance, China)
- **Why it matters clinically:** Relevant for international students, bilingual clients, or clients engaging with non-Western AI ecosystems. Different regulatory environments, content policies, and cultural norms around AI interaction.
- **Risk profile:** Variable by platform and jurisdiction. Less research available in English-language literature.

Quick Comparison

Platform	Type	Primary Risk	Memory	Relational Design?
Replika	Designed	Dependency, financial	Yes	Yes
Character.AI	Designed	Minors, reality-blurring	Limited	Yes (role-play)
Nomi	Designed	Dependency	Strong	Yes
Kindroid	Designed	Deep personalisation	Yes	Yes
ChatGPT	Emergent	No safeguards, model changes	Optional	No
Claude	Emergent	No safeguards, model changes	Limited	No
Third-party clients	Variable	No guardrails	Variable	No (user-configured)

Note for Clinicians

You do not need to know every platform. You need to know:

1. **Whether your client's platform is designed or emergent** — this changes the risk profile
2. **Whether memory/continuity features are present** — this predicts attachment depth
3. **Whether the platform has had recent disruptions** — model changes, feature removals, policy shifts
4. **Whether your client is using official or third-party access** — this changes the safety landscape entirely

When in doubt, ask the client to show you. Most will be willing if they feel safe.