

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Following are our social media policies related to communications and internet web-facing activities. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the internet as mental health professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the internet.

If you have any questions about anything within this document, we encourage you to bring them up with your clinician during your initial meeting. As new technology develops and the internet changes, there may be times when we need to update this policy.

We do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and it may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet.

### FANNING (“Liking”)

Some of us maintain Facebook Pages for our professional practice to allow people to share our blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users.

You are welcome to view our Facebook Pages and read or share articles posted there, but we do not accept clients as Fans of this Page. We believe that having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and we feel that it is best to be explicit to all who may view our list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. In addition, certain professional licensing boards prohibit our soliciting of testimonials from clients. We feel that the term “Fan” comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of our practice.

Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to our individual Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

### FOLLOWING

Some of us may publish a blog on our website or post clinical news on Twitter. We have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow our blog or Twitter stream. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and we happen to notice that you’ve followed us there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

Our primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow us on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate you having a public link to our content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow us.

## INTERACTING

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact us. These sites are not secure and we may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with us in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with us this way could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart.

If you need to contact us between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Please discuss with your clinician their policy regarding emailing to our respective email address or texting messages to our mobile phones. These may be options for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email and text section below for more detailed information regarding these type of interactions.

## USE OF SEARCH ENGINES

It is NOT a regular part of our practices to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions *may* be made during times of crisis. If we have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with us via our usual means (coming to appointments, phone, or email) there *might* be an instance in which using a search engine (to find you, find someone close to you, or to check on your recent status updates) becomes necessary as part of ensuring your welfare. These are unusual situations and if we resort to such means, we will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

## GOOGLE READER

We do not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and we do not use Google Reader to share articles. If there are things you want to share with us that you feel are relevant to your treatment whether they are news items or things you have created, we encourage you to bring these items of interest into our sessions.

## BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find our respective practices on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their providers and add reviews. Many of these sites comb search engines for business listings and automatically add listings regardless of whether the business has added itself to the site or has knowledge of being added. If you find one of our listings please know that our listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating or endorsement from you as our client.

**Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality,** we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. We urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of

confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with us about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that we may never see it.

If we are working together, we hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide we are not a good fit. None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy with us wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are our client and our Ethics Codes prohibit us from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that we are your therapist or how you feel about the treatment we provided to you, in any forum of your choosing.

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, we hope that you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. We urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

## **LOCATION-BASED SERVICES**

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. We do not place our practice as a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, etc. However, if you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may surmise that you are a therapy client due to regular check-ins at our office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in,” from our office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

## **EMAIL And TEXT MESSAGING**

Please do not email or text content related to your therapy sessions as email and text are not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with us by email or text, be aware that all emails and texts are retained in the logs of yours and ours internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the internet service provider. You should also know that any emails and texts we receive from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your legal record.

**Thank you for taking the time to review our Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the internet, do bring them to our attention so that we can discuss them.**