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MY PRIVATE PRACTICE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document outlines my office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how I conduct myself on the Internet as a mental health professional and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. *My primary concern is your privacy and confidentiality.*

Communication with me:

If you need to contact me between sessions, *the best way is by phone.*

SMS (mobile phone text messaging) is best used for quick, administrative issues such as lateness or changing appointment times, because it is probable that I will see the message more quickly. Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online will not be responded to, and trying to engage with me this way could compromise your confidentiality.

Email:

I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. If I am busy, I may not be checking email frequently. Please do not email me clinical information nor content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with me by email, be aware that emails are retained in the logs of your and my internet service providers, and are, in theory, available to be read by the internet service providers' administrator(s). You should also know that any emails I receive from you and responses that I send to you become a part of your legal record.

Social Media Sites:

I do NOT follow or "friend" current or former clients on blogs, or Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social media. I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on our working relationship. As my client, you have the right to present yourself in my office in the manner that you wish. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

Use of Search Engines:

I do NOT Google clients. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If I have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with me via our usual means, there might be an instance in which finding you, or someone close to you, becomes necessary as part of ensuring your welfare.

Business Review Sites:

You may find my therapy practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places that list businesses. 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. If you find my listing on such a site, please know that my listing is NOT a request for a rating, testimonial, or endorsement from you as my client; this would be unethical behavior. The NASW Code of Ethics (4.07[b]) states that “Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a clients’s prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.” I have no responsibility for, nor, due to confidentiality, can I respond to any review — positive or negative — on any of these sites. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. Of course, you have the right to express yourself on any site that you wish, and you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that I’m your therapist or how you feel about the treatment I provided to you. Whatever your feelings and reactions to our work, I encourage you to bring these directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide we are not a good fit. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, I hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum.

Location-Based Services (LBS):

You should be aware of privacy issues inherent in LBS services. If you are intentionally “checking in” from my office, or if you have a passive LBS app on your mobile phone, or 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 my office on a weekly basis.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review my 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 my attention so that we can discuss them.

