

My 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 _____ (your title) and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. If you have any questions about anything within this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when I need to update this policy. If I do so, I will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

Friending

Do you have a personal or professional Facebook page? Yes (review items below) No (move to Following heading)

Will you allow clients to be your "friends" on your personal Facebook page? Yes No

Will you allow clients to be your "friends" on your professional Facebook/LinkedIn page? Yes No

NO/NO

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

NO/YES

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on my personal social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it. I do accept friend requests from current or former clients on my professional networking site (specify social networking site/s). Be advised that if you choose to identify yourself as a friend that this may compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy.

YES/YES

If you selected to have clients as "friends" of your personal networking sites you need to understand that this can significantly blur the the professional boundaries. While there is no clear standard on specifically this; standards about dual/multiple relationships exist and this is an avoidable relationship. So proceed with extreme caution.

I do accept friend requests from current or former clients on my professional networking site (specify social networking site/s). Be advised that if you choose to identify yourself as a friend that this may compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy.

Fanning

Do you have a professional networking site that allows fans? Yes (see below) No (move to Following heading)

Will you allow clients to be your “fans” on your professional networking site? Yes No

YES (Again, think through the potential risks and gains of allowing current and former clients to be a fan. Proceed with extreme caution.)

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. All of the information shared on this page is available on my website (Is this applicable?). You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there. If you choose to be a fan of this page, please know that this can compromise client confidentiality and our respective privacy. 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 my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

NO

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. All of the information shared on this page is available on my website. You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there, but I do not accept clients as Fans of this Page. I believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. 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 my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

Following

Do you publish a blog or have a Twitter profile? Yes or No (move to Following heading)

Will clients be able to follow you? Yes (review items below) No (review items below)

YES/NO

I publish a blog on my website or I post (what do you post, ie psychology news) on Twitter. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog or Twitter stream. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you’ve followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship. My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back. I only follow other health professionals on Twitter and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. My reasoning is that 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. 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.

Interacting

Do you text or message clients on social networking sites? Yes or No

YES or NO

You will have to personalize this response to fit your parameters.

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me 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 me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone.

Use of Search Engines

Will you conduct internet searches on your clients? Yes No or Maybe

YES

At times I may conduct a web search on my clients before the beginning of therapy or during therapy. If you have concerns or questions regarding this, please discuss with me.

NO

While my present or potential clients might conduct online searches about my practices and/or me. I do not search my clients on Google, other search engines, or on social networking sites. If clients ask me to conduct such searches or review their websites or profiles and I consider it might be helpful, I will consider it.

MAYBE

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis or emergency. These are unusual situations and if I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

Business Review Sites

Something to consider including in your policy.

You may find me or my practice 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 Social Media Policy whether the business has added itself to the site. If you should find my listing on any of these sites, please know that my listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as my client. You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings about our work, there is a good

possibility that I may never see it. If we are working together, I 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 me wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people that you are my client and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. But 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, in any forum of your choosing. 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. I urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

If you feel I have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, you can always contact the (put your board here, ex: Board of Social Workers, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

(Your board contact info)
Board of Social Work
2829 University Ave SE Suite #340
Minneapolis MN 55414
(612) 617-2100; (888) 234-1320; FAX (612) 617-2103
Email: Social.work@state.mn.us

Location-Based Services

Something to consider including in your policy.

If you used location-based services (LBS) on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. I do not place my 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 my office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally "checking in," from my office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

Email

You will have to personalize this response to fit your parameters.

I use email only to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential and may not be read in a timely fashion. Be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my 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 providers. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become a part of your legal record. Emails may not be

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.

References

- Kolmes, K. (2014). Private practice social media policy. Retrieved from <http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf>

hushmail.com

2:15-3:30 PM – Breakout Sessions

- ❖ **Digital Ethics? Practice and Ethical Considerations – Part 2** presented by Kimberly Zammitt from the Department of Social Work at Minnesota State University, Mankato

Session Description: The internet and social networking are offering a number of new practice and ethical challenges for social service professionals, such as extra contacts between social service professionals and their clients, questions about what distinguishes personal and professional activities online, and a lack of clearly developed policies related to our online behaviors and interactions. This session will delve into these digital challenges and address practice and ethical safeguards.

Objectives:

- Identify the ethical challenges that may arise from engaging in activities on the internet.
- Discuss the relevant ethical issues as they pertain to your professional/personal websites and social networking profiles.
- Develop strategies for minimizing risk of ethical violations on the internet.
- Discuss elements to construct a social media policy to address potential boundary issues with clients.