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Social Media Policy
Effective Date: June 30, 2015

This document outlines my office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how I conduct myself on the Internet (email) and with mobile phone texting of SMS messages as a mental health professional and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet and with mobile phone texting messages.

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

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.

.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

Please do not use 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. 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 choose to interact with me via SMS (mobile phone texting) please know this too is not a secure, confidential interaction. **Please avoid texting me after office hours except for an emergency notification of a cancellation. If you have a mental health emergency, please go to your local emergency room for assistance.** All text messages and emails will be printed out and placed in your chart for future reference. I am not available for after office hours texting unless this has been pre-arranged. There will be a fee of **\$60.00 per hour** for **after- hours texting involving clinical content to which I respond to.** This will not be billed to your insurance and will be due at your next therapy session.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Please use direct email at jsmithchild@gmail.com for administrative issues such as changing appointment times. These emails will be forwarded to the office manager for assistance with cancellation and rescheduling functions. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

Email

I prefer using 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. If you choose to communicate with me by email, 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 provider. 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.

Use of Search Engines

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. 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 (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 I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

Google Reader

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

Business Review Sites

You may find my counseling 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 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. It is unethical for me to solicit testimonial from clients. 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. Some of the information on these sites are outdated and/or incorrect.

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 form of your choosing.

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 following licensing boards which oversee Ohio licensing, and they will review the services I have provided:

Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board 50 West Broad Street, Suite 1075 Columbus, OH 43215
Phone (614) 466-0912 www.cswmft.ohio.gov

Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board Vern Riffe Center 77 South High Street, 16th Floor Columbus, OH 43215 Phone (614) 387-1110 Fax (614) 387-1109 Website: www.ocdp.ohio.gov
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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. 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.

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.

_____ I have reviewed this policy and agree I will follow this Social Media policy.

Client signature

Date

(Policy adapted from © Keely Kolmes, Psy.D. – Social Media Policy – 4/26/10 If you use my policy for training or educational purposes, please cite me as the original author)