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Private Practice Social Media Policies

I use some social media for my practice and in an effort to be completely transparent with you, I am providing you with a social media policy to help you understand how I use social media in my practice and how it could impact the therapeutic relationship. If you have any questions about my policy, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet.

Social media is also constantly changing and there may be times when I need to update this policy. If I do so, I will post the policy online and inform you of the changes in our session. The basis for this policy is to truly protect our relationship and your confidentiality in session. For example, you are the person that can decide what you want to keep confidential. I must keep my relationship with you completely confidential except in cases of where you might harm yourself or others (see informed consent for details).

Thus, if you post on my page, you are opening up the possibility of people inferring about our relationship or asking you about your connection to me. You get to decide what you tell people. You have a choice as to what you reveal about yourself online, however I will not reveal my connection to you.

This is how I handle different social media options:

FRIENDING

To respect your privacy and confidentiality, I do not accept friend requests on my personal Facebook page and LinkedIn page from current or former clients on any social networking site.

FOLLOWING

I sometimes publish a blog on my website. I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my blog. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back. I may follow other health professionals and I do not follow current or former clients on social media. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our therapy sessions where we can view and explore them together.

INTERACTING

Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. Also if there were an emergency, I would not be able to respond timely as I do not check these accounts regularly. The best way to interact with me is by phone. If you post on my wall 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.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES You may have a Facebook page, LinkedIn account, Instagram account or twitter accounts. I do not “google” my clients or look up information on them for any reason. I think it is important that I know you as you are in my office. If I do come across your information online, I will move on and avoid reading content.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

I may have a yelp page and other directory pages. 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. The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist's Ethics Code states that it is unethical for LMFTs to solicit testimonials. However, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. If you do post a review, I cannot respond 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. 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 Board of Behavioral Science Examiners, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided. Board of Behavioral Sciences at 1625 North Market Blvd., 2nd Floor, Suite S-200, Sacramento, CA 95834, (916) 574-7830 or email BBSWebmaster@dca.ca.gov or file a complaint at https://app.dca.ca.gov/bbs/complaint_ssl.asp

EMAIL

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. 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.

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.

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.