



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.

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). If it is discovered that an online relationship has inadvertently been established, that relationship will be cancelled. This is because these types of casual social contacts can jeopardize client confidentiality as well as the therapeutic relationship.

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.

Fanning

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users.

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. In addition, the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients. I feel that the term "Fan" comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of my practice.

Following

I publish a blog on my website. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog, although you are free to do so. My primary concern is your privacy. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow my blog, being mindful that if you share a blog post on social media or comment on a blog post, your action may communicate to others that you are a client.

Note that I will not knowingly follow you back if you have your own blog or on any social media. 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 and Contacting Me

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 Facebook 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. Please note that these exchanges will 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. Direct email at hello@kindred-counseling.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

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 or when safety concerns arise. 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.

Google Reader

I do not knowingly follow current or former clients on Google Reader and I do not use Google Reader to share articles *with clients*. 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 hard copies of these items of interest into our sessions. A copy of these items will be kept in your file.

Business Review Sites

You may find Kindred Counseling, PLLC 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.

Of course, 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 my supervisor, Tamara Suttle, M.Ed., LPC at 303-660-4989 or 6222 Lancaster Avenue, Castle Rock, Colorado 80104-3279 or the Mental Health Licensing Section of the Division of Registrations. The Board of Licensed Professional Counselors can be reached at 1560 Broadway, Suite 110, Denver, Colorado 80202, (303) 894-7855.

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.

Email

I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. With your permission (indicated below by your signature), I may also use email to follow up with you from time to time. 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.

Texting

If Client chooses to use text messaging, it should be with the understanding that messages may be inadvertently seen by others, either by access to Client's phone or via the preview window. Emails or text messages Therapist receives from Client and any responses will become a part of Client's therapy record.

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.

Acknowledgement

By signing below, Client acknowledges that he/she has reviewed and fully understands the terms and conditions of this policy. Client has discussed such terms and conditions with Therapist, and has had any questions with regard to its terms and conditions answered to Client's satisfaction. Client agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of this policy. Client acknowledges he/she has received a copy of this document for their records.

Client Name (please print)

Date

Client Signature

Date

Therapist Signature

Date