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Digital Media Policy

This document outlines my policies related to Digital Media, including social media formats. 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.

Feel free to ask me any questions you may have about anything within this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. The Internet is an ever evolving medium, and as a result this policy is subject to change as the Internet and other like social media devices change. The policies outlined here are subject to change with the continued evolution of the Internet. 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

While I may choose to maintain a social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, ect.) account for either personal or professional use, I do not accept friend requests from current or former clients. It is my belief that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. This type of contact may blur the boundaries of our therapeutic and professional relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

LIKING

I choose to maintain a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts, practice updates, and reports of interesting articles by others. All of this information is shared on my Facebook Page and is available on my website.

You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there, and are free to do so without “Liking” the page. Whether you choose to “Like” the page or not is up to you and will have no impact on our therapeutic relationship. If you decide to Like the page, please be aware that the fact you have done so will be visible to your Facebook friends and potentially others (depending on your privacy settings). If you are a current or former client, please be aware that Liking the Page is equivalent to greeting me in public (e.g., at a coffee shop). As with public interactions, I will not acknowledge online that you are a client unless you request that I do so.

If you “Like” the Page, it also allows me, as the Page administrator, to view any Facebook information you have made “public.” Please review Facebook’s Policies and Guidelines if you have questions about what is public. Though I have access to that information it is not my policy to view your personal Facebook page or posts unless a) you request that I do so, b) it is therapeutically warranted, AND c) we are viewing them together in session, OR possibly in case of emergency (see Use of Search Engines

below). Please note that you may be able to subscribe to the Page via RSS without Liking the Page and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

FOLLOWING

I may choose to publish a blog on my website and may periodically repost others' articles relevant to psychology. I have no expectations that you as a client will want to follow my blog or other online activities. However, if you use an easily recognizable name online and I happen to notice that you've interacted with me online, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship. Overall my primary concern is for your privacy and I will not follow your blog, web site, Twitter feed, ect. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regards to whether it's being done as part of your treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. Viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific treatment 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

The use of Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me are not appropriate means of communication. These sites are not secure means of communication 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 forums if we have already established a 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 via phone. Direct emails at jasonajohnsonpsyd@gmail.com are the second best way to reach me for administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

EMAIL

While email is an effective means of communication and a common practice in the modern social media world, you should remember that email communication is not secure and is susceptible to malware that allows for others to read the content. My policy regarding email communication is that it is acceptable for any short communications such as rescheduling appointments. However, for any clinical questions a phone conversation is the preferred route of communication. If you feel the need to communicate via email regarding clinical issues remember that confidentiality cannot be assured, but all efforts will be made on my behalf to ensure your confidence on my end of the communication. Be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my Internet service providers (ISPs). While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by a system administrator(s) of the ISPs. Further, any email communication exchanges regarding clinical treatment, excluding administrative actions, are subject to become part of your clinical record.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES

It is not my policy to use search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, ect.) or social networking services to search for clients. In extremely rare situations, such as times of crisis, exceptions may be made. If I have 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 search engines (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.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find my psychology 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 th these sites, please know that my listing is not a request for testimonial, ratings, or endorsement from you as my client.

The American Psychological Association’s Ethics Code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologist to solicit testimonials: “Psychologists do not solicit testimonials from current therapy clients/patients or other persons who because of their particular circumstances are vulnerable to undue influence.”

You have the right to express yourself in any way you deem fit on any site, however due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to consider your own privacy and take serious consideration of your privacy before posting on any public forum. I urge you to take your own confidentiality as serious as I do. However if you should choose to express any of your feelings indirectly to be about your treatment on these sites there is a good possibility I will never see it.

If we are working together I urge you to bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy session. This is an important part of the therapy process even if you feel we are not a good fit. This is not intended for you to keep that you are in therapy with me, it is your decision to share that wherever and with whomever you choose. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people that you are a client of mine and my Ethics Code prohibits me to request testimonials. You have the right to tell anyone you want that I am your therapist or how you feel about the treatment I provided to you, in any forum you choose.

If you 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 electronic identity 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 Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners (OBPE)
3218 Pringle Rd. SE, Suite 130
Salem 97302
<http://www.oregon.gov/OBPE/pages/index.aspx>

Phone: 503-378-4154
Fax: 503-378-4404
oregon.bpe@state.or.us

LOCATION-BASED SERVICES

If you use 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 on a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, ect. 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 read my Digital Medial Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies do bring them to my attention so we may discuss them.

Adapted from Social Media Policy- 4/26/10 © Keely Kolmes, PsyD

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