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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document outlines my office policies with regard to the use of social media. Please read it to understand how I conduct myself on the Internet as a mental health professional who is active on social media, and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet.

If you have questions about or responses to anything in this document, I encourage you to bring them up with me at any time. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when I need to update this policy. If I do, I will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

FRIEND REQUESTS: I do not accept personal friend requests anywhere on the Internet or social media with current or former clients/patients or their family members. It can compromise your privacy (and mine), and blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If we are connected on social media and we end up in a therapeutic relationship, I will require us to “unfriend” on any platform through which we are connected on the Internet.

FACEBOOK GROUPS, MUTUAL FRIENDS/FOLLOWS, EMAIL LISTS: I am a member of several Facebook groups for both personal and professional reasons, and follow a number of prominent folks in the social justice, political, therapeutic, and other realms. If we find ourselves a member of the same group, or following/commenting on the same mutual friends’ pages, we can talk about that together and explore what comes up. I may limit my access to or my participation in those groups depending on what is best for the treatment. This also goes for email list serves we may both be on; if this does come up at any point in our work together, we will talk about the impact on you and on the therapeutic relationship and take the steps we think will work best for the treatment.

“LIKING” AND COMMENTING ON MY PUBLIC PAGES: It is my strong recommendation that you do not follow or comment on my public pages or profiles, simply because this could compromise your privacy and blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you do choose to comment on my public pages or profiles, I will not respond, and if I feel that your comment exposes or compromises your privacy in any way, I may delete the comment. I welcome conversation and exploration in our therapy session regarding any information you find about me online, including articles, pictures, blog posts, and so on. I do not communicate with clients/patients in any form on social media, including Facebook Messenger, Twitter DM, or LinkedIn.

MY NEWSLETTER: I publish an occasional newsletter with articles and information culled from various sources, including my own writing. I recommend you do not subscribe to my newsletter for the same reasons as mentioned above: It can blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. I am aware of the bind this may put you in as my client/patient: There is a lot of information I make available to people who may someday wish to contact me for therapy, and it is information I am happy to provide to you if you request it in person.

For all its wonder and magic, the Internet is a space where boundaries are not as clear as in the therapy room. Please know that I will not Google you or otherwise engage with you online because I believe casual viewing of clients'/patients' lives outside the treatment can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as part of your treatment, or to satisfy personal curiosity. In addition, I believe strongly in consent, and viewing your online content without explicit consent 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.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES (YELP, ETC): You may find my psychotherapy practice advertised on sites such as Google Places, Yelp, Yahoo Local, or other places that list businesses. Some of these sites include opportunities to leave reviews, ratings, or commentaries on your experience with these businesses. I utilize these sites and listings for advertising purposes only, not to solicit reviews. I do not solicit reviews from current or former clients/patients. This is an unethical practice for MFTs in California. I also strongly recommend you do not leave reviews or ratings of our work together in any public forum as it is a violation of your privacy as a client/patient. If you do choose to leave a review, by law I am not allowed to respond. If you are using these sites to communicate something about your treatment, there is a chance I will never see it. If we are currently working together, I hope you will bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly to the treatment, as these can be a rich and valuable part of therapy, even if you decide to discontinue our work together. The same can be true if you have a positive experience of our therapy. I urge you to consider the impacts of sharing private information about yourself in a public forum, and to take your privacy as seriously as I take your confidentiality.

If you feel I have done something harmful or unethical and do not wish to speak with me directly about it, you may contact the Board of Behavioral Sciences via <https://www.breeze.ca.gov/> and click "File a Complaint".

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