



## **My Private Practice Social Media & Contact Policy**

This document outlines my office policies related to use of Social Media and what to do should we meet outside of a session. 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.

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 situations change there may be times when I need to update this policy. If I do so and if we are still engaged in therapy I will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

### **Contact outside of our agreed therapy time**

Edinburgh can often seem a pretty small place and there may be a time when we 'bump' into one another. As your confidentiality is extremely important to me I will not start or engage in a conversation with you, but will take your lead if you choose to acknowledge me (say hello/nod/eye contact), but will not be offended in any way if you choose not to. I understand the need for privacy. If either of us are with another I will not engage in more than an acknowledgment (if you choose to) as issues can arise if our companions inquire how we know one another and this may jeopardize your privacy. This does not mean I do not care about you, and we can discuss in session if/how this experience affected you.

## **Social Media**

### **Friending**

I do not accept friend requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. I believe that adding clients as friends on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

### **Liking**

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. All of the information shared on this page is available on my website. I encourage you to protect your own privacy and confidentiality by not "liking" my page. You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there. Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without "liking" it and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this. I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my blog or business facebook page. My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to my content.

You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Please Note that I will not follow you back. I mainly follow other health professionals and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs. 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. 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 our therapy time.

### **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. Do not use 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. If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone, direct email or texting – for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

### **Business Review Sites**

You may find my practice on sites such as google local, 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. 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.

### **E-mail**

Please be aware, if you choose to e-mail me anything relating to you and your therapy sessions, that email (in general) 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.