

Electronic Communication Policy

In order to maintain clarity regarding the use of electronic communication, I have prepared the following policy. Many people believe that email, social media, or texting are the best ways to communicate, whether the relationship is social or professional. However, many of the most common modes of electronic communication put your privacy at risk. Additionally, they can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of my profession. In short, this policy is in place to protect the security of your personal health information and the privacy of your treatment.

If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss them with me.

Email Communications

I use email communication and text messaging only with your permission, and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. That means that email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments, billing matters and other related issues. Please do not email me about clinical matters, because email is not a secure way to contact me and it may be as long as a day before I can check my account. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with me, please call me so we can discuss it on the phone or, if the matter is not a crisis, wait so we can discuss it during your session.

Text Messaging

Because text messaging is a very impersonal mode of communication and lacks the level of security required by Federal and State law for health information, I do not text or respond to texts from anyone in treatment with me *about clinical issues*. If you want to contact me about appointment times or with administrative questions, please be aware that you will be placing the fact that you are in treatment with me into the public domain. This fact also applies to emails.

Social Media

I don't maintain a social presence online, and so don't communicate through social media platforms like Instagram, Tumbler, Twitter or Facebook. My professional presence is represented on LinkedIn, but I don't "link" accounts with patients or former patients for the same security reasons stated above.

If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that a service may "link" us without our consent. For example: LinkedIn frequently generates emails to its members falsely stating that another member wants to link accounts. These emails are generated solely by LinkedIn to promote their product, and are false requests. Therefore, if I discover that our accounts have become linked, I will terminate that relationship. Please understand that this is solely to protect your security and does not reflect my regard for you in any way.

Websites

I have a website that you are free to access. I use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about me and my practice. You are welcome to access and review the information there and, if you have questions about it, we should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

Skype and Telephone

I do not do Skype or do telephone sessions unless there is significant clinical need (ie crisis) to do so or an insurmountable reason (ie more than 150 miles between your residence and my offices or a physical disability) why we cannot meet in person. This is because it negatively affects my ability to provide treatment when you and I are not face-to-face. Please note that insurance companies rarely pay for either of these kinds of sessions and so you may become responsible for my fee. I suggest that you call your insurance company and ask if your policy covers electronic sessions before we arrange to use these tools. Occasionally, I may arrange telephone “check-ins” with you once you have completed therapy.

Web Searches

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. I believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, I understand that you might choose to gather information about me in this way. In this day and age there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about me through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with me during our time together so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on your treatment.

Recently it has become common for clients to review their health care providers on various websites. Unfortunately, *mental health professionals cannot correct or respond to such comments or any related errors because of confidentiality restrictions*. If you encounter inaccurate and/or negative reviews of me or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with me so we can discuss it. Please do not rate my work with you while we are in treatment together on any of these websites. This is because it puts the fact that you are in treatment with me into the public domain and has the potential to significantly damage our ability to work together.

Last, I believe that any communication with clients online has a high potential to compromise the security of information stored in my progress notes. For that reason, please do not try to contact me through the mediums listed above.

Thank you for respecting this policy.