



Notice of 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 any information contained in this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. As 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 provide you with a copy of the updated policy.

Friending

I do not accept friend or contact request from current or former clients on any social networking site such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise their confidentiality and our respective privacy. They also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

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 puts them at risk of compromising their confidentiality. I feel it is best to let all who may view my list of Facebook fans 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. The term "fan" comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of my practice. You should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a fan and without creating a visible, public link to my page.

Following

I occasionally blog on my websites and/or post psychology news on Twitter. I have no expectation that you, as my client, will want to follow my blog or Twitter stream. However, if

you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you are following me there, then we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship. My primary concern is protecting 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 to post a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back. I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of my clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it is being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent may influence our working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you want to share with me, please bring them into our session where we can view them together during the therapy hour.

Interacting by Electronic Media

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 methods of communication are not secure. Also, I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use wall postings, @ replies, or other means of messaging with me in public online if we already have 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 treatment record and will need to be documented and archived in your treatment chart. If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by telephone. Direct email at schedule@drchristythrash.com is the second best method for communicating quick administrative issues such as changing appointment times and billing questions. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

Google Reader

I do not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and I do not use Google Reader to share articles. 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 these items of interest into our sessions where we can view them together.

Business Review Websites

You may find my psychology practice on websites such as Yelp, Health Grades, Yahoo Local, or other places that review businesses. These sites include forums in which users rate their providers and add reviews. These websites often comb search engines for business listings and automatically add listings regardless of whether the business owner wants it added to their site. If you should find my practice listed on any of these websites, please know that my listing

is not a request for a testimonial, review, or endorsement from you as my client. The American Psychological Association's ethics code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials from clients: "Psychologists do not solicit testimonials from current therapy clients/patients or other persons who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence."

Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any website you wish. But due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any reviews on any of these websites, whether it is positive or negative. You should 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 websites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings with regard to our work together, there is a good possibility that I may never see it.

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 am your psychotherapist or how you feel about the treatment I provide to you, in any form 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 as pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or Facebook friends network for your own privacy and protection.

Location-Based Services

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, you should be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. I do not place my practice as a check-in location on websites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Lopt, etc. However, if you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may guess you are a therapy client due to regular check-ins at my office on a weekly basis. Be aware of this risk if you are intentionally "checking in" from my office, or if you have a passive GPS application enabled on your phone.

Email

I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. 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 available to be read by the system administrators of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send you become a part of your treatment record.

Client Signature

I have read the Notice of Social Media Policy. I had sufficient time to review this document carefully, ask any questions that I needed to, and I comprehend it.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Effective date: September 25, 2017