

Highland Park Counseling Associates LLC Private Practice Electronic Media Policy

This document outlines my office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we in this organization conduct ourselves on the Internet, smart phones, texting media, or other media as a mental health professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet or by telephone or smartphone including texting.. If you have any questions about anything within this document, the psychotherapists who practice at this office encourage you to bring them up when you meet with your psychotherapist. As new technology develops and the Internet and telephone systems change, there may be times when this organization and the psychotherapists who practice here need to update this policy. If so, your therapist will refer you back to changes in this on-line policy. You may request a paper copy of this policy. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that you have read this policy or the future changes.

Friending

Psychotherapists here do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). We believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it. Some of the psychotherapists here keep a Facebook Page for our professional practices to allow people to find our practices and access our websites through Facebook.. All of the information shared on this page is available on our websites.

You are welcome to view Facebook Pages and read or share articles posted there, but we do not accept clients as Fans of these pages. The psychotherapists here believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality. In addition, most national professional associations ethics codes (Psychology, Social Work, Family Therapy, Professional Counselor, Chemical Dependency) prohibit our soliciting testimonials from clients. Our primary concern is your privacy. At this time HPCA does not have a Twitter, Tumbler or any other social media page and we will not respond to contacts of any kind there.

We will not view any of your pages on any social media site. Viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific 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 your psychotherapist, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

Interacting

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn or any other sales media to contact one of us. These sites are not secure and your psychotherapist may not read these messages in a timely fashion or at all. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with any of us in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with your psychotherapist 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 your psychotherapist between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email through contact information on this website is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

You may use texting to a business cell phone for DBT coaching or to let us know that you are running late. Other texting is not an effective communication and prone to miscommunications. The DBT Coaching cell phone does not accept texting.

Use Of Search Engines

It is NOT a regular part of our practices to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If your psychotherapist has a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with your psychotherapist or the psychotherapist on duty on the DBT Coaching phone via our usual means (coming to appointments, phone, or email) there might be an instance in which using a search engine (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 any one of us ever resort to such means, we will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

Business Review Sites

You may find this psychotherapy 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 these sites, please know that my listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client.

Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, your psychotherapist cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. We urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as the professionals here take our commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with your psychotherapist about your feelings about your psychotherapy work, there is a good possibility that your psychotherapist may never see it. Please bring your feelings and reactions to your psychotherapy work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide you and your psychotherapist are not a good fit.

None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy with your psychotherapist wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are our client and our various Ethics Codes (Psychology, Social Work, Family Therapy, Professional Counselor, Chemical Dependency) prohibits us from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that you engage in psychotherapy with one of the professionals here in any forum of your choosing. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, please keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. Do create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

If you feel your psychotherapist has done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your psychotherapist, you can always contact the Board of Psychology, the Board of Social Work, The Board of Marriage and Family Therapy, the Board of Professional Counseling, or the Board of Chemical Dependency.

Location-Based Services

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone or tablet, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. This practice is not listed as a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, etc. 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 our offices or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

Email

At HPCA the psychotherapists prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email your psychotherapist 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 our 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. You should also know that any emails your psychotherapist receives from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your legal record.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review the HPCA LLC Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, do bring them to the attention of your psychotherapist so that we can discuss them. You will be given a paper acknowledgement to sign stating that you have access to this on-line or by a paper copy. *

*The original content of this message was taken with permission from the site of Dr. Keely Kolmes, PsyD of San Francisco, CA. Thank you to Dr. Kolmes for this.

Names and Addresses of Professional Boards

MN Board of Social Work
2829 University Ave SE, Suite 340
Minneapolis, MN 55414-3239 (612) 617-2100; (888) 234-1320;
FAX (612) 617-2103
Email: social.work@state.mn.us

2013 Minnesota Board of Psychology
2829 University Ave SE Suite 320 Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 617-2230 FAX (612) 617-2240
email psychology.board@state.mn.us

MN Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy
2829 University Ave SE Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 617-2178 FAX (612) 617-2187
email: bbht.board@state.mn.us

MN Board of Marriage and Family Therapy
2829 University Ave SE Suite 330, Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 617-2220 FAX (612) 617-2221
Email: mft.board@state.mn.us

