

## **Social Media Network Policy**

This document outlines office policies related to use of Social Media Network. Please read it to understand how we at River Valley Psychology conduct ourselves on the Internet community as mental health professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet.

If you have any questions about anything within this document, we encourage you to bring them up during your next in-person visit. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when we need to make adjustments and update this policy. If we do so, we will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you obtain a copy of the updated policy.

### **FRIENDING**

We 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 and impact. If you have questions regarding this, please approach the topic with your Mental Health Provider. bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

### **FOLLOWING**

Our primary concern and focus is your privacy. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow or review us on Facebook or other social based networks.

Note that we will not follow you back. We do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. Our reasoning is that we want to respect and provide ongoing privacy. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with us, please bring them into your 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 to make contact with us. These sites are not secure and we may not read these messages in a timely fashion and 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 us between sessions, the best way to do so is by using our office phone line.

### **BUSINESS REVIEW SITES**

You may find our psychology practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, Google 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 our listing on any of these sites, please know that our listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as our client.

The American Psychological Association's Ethics Code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials: "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 site you wish. But due to confidentiality, we 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 we take our commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with us about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that we may never see it. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, we hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum.

### **LOCATION-BASED SERVICES**

If you use location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. We do not place our practice as a check-in location on various sites. 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 our office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally "checking-in" from our office.

