



## NORTHERN COLORADO COUNSELING, PLLC

### **Social Media Policy**

This document outlines our office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the Internet as a mental health professional 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 when we meet.

As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when we need to update this policy. If we do so, we will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have 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, Instagram, SnapChat, 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.

#### **Use of Search Engines**

It is NOT a regular part of our practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If we have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with us 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 we 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 our practice on sites such as Google, 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 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 Counseling Association's Ethics Code states under Principle C.3.b that it is unethical for counselors to solicit testimonials: "Counselors who use testimonials do not solicit them from current clients, former clients, or any other persons who may be 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 we are working together, we 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 we cannot tell people that you are a client of ours and our Ethics Code prohibits us from requesting testimonials.

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. We urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection. If you feel we have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with us, you can always contact the State Board, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services we have provided.

The State Grievance Board  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1340  
Denver, CO 80202  
Phone: (303) 894-7766

### **Email**

We prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. 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 we receive from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your legal record.

### **Location-Based Services**

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. 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 or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to review our 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 our attention so that we can discuss them.