Complete Circle Counseling & Coaching

**Private Practice 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 anything within this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. As new 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 of any policy changes and make sure a copy of the updated policy is readily available on my website. There has been discussion about use of Social Media with clinicians and a discussion was made in 2018 that sets clear boundaries about clinicians use of social media with patients and or clients.

I currently participate in Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, You Tube, and Google +. Due to code of ethics, I am NOT to accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on Facebook or Instagram. 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.

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. The Facebook professional practice page is Complete Circle Counseling and Coaching.

The National Association of Social Worker Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients. Your participation in social media posts on the professional practice page is at your discretion.

I do maintain a webpage for Complete Circle Counseling and Coaching where I publish a blog on my website, and at times, am active on Pinterest, and Instagram. I have no expectation that you, as a client will want to follow my blog, however there will be information that you may find helpful to your treatment. My primary concern is your privacy.

**Communication and Interaction**

Please DO NOT USE messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure, and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion.

Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. **Engaging with me this way could compromise your confidentiality.**

 If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone by voicemail or text message. My telephone is ALWAYS on silent and it is PASSWORD PROTECTED SO NO ONE EXCEPT ME has access to the messages. Direct email at completecirclecounseling@yahoo.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

**Use of Search Engine**

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If I have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with me 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 I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

 **Business Review Sites**

You may find my private practice on sites such as Yelp, Health grades, 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 my 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.” This is applicable for Social Workers, as well.

 Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to 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 sites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that I may never see it. Every six months, I will start to leave a comment box in the waiting room, so you can leave your feedback there for my review. I need to hear constructive criticism to better my skills.

 **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. I do not place my practice as a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Go Walla, 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 my office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

**Email**

Please do not email me detailed content related to your therapy sessions. You can give me updates but do not disclose names in email. Keep the emails brief and to the point. If you choose to communicate with me via email, you should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become a part of your legal medial record.

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