

Denise Neeley, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist MFT#34633

Social Media & Email Policy

This document outlines my policies related to the use of Social Media. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, I will update this policy accordingly.

FRIENDING

I do not accept friend requests from current or recent former clients on any of my personal pages on any social networking site. I believe that adding clients as friends on these sites can compromise client confidentiality and clients' respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.

FOLLOWING

In the future I may publish a blog or post on Instagram, and I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my blog or Instagram page. However, if clients use an easily recognizable name on Instagram follow me there, I will discuss accordingly with current or recently terminated clients. My primary concern is protecting client privacy. For those clients who wish to follow me on Social Media in the future, there are more private ways to follow me (such as using an RSS feed or a locked list), which would eliminate being publicly linked to my content. Clients are welcome to use their own discretion in choosing whether to follow my public pages. I will not follow clients back. I mainly follow other health professionals, health media, health advocates, and colleagues on Instagram and Facebook. I do not follow current or former clients' social media or blogs. I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing clients' online activities without consent and without explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the therapeutic relationship. If it would be meaningful, current clients can bring items from their online life to discuss in session.

INTERACTING

Clients are not to use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and 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 confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of a client's legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in their chart. If clients need to

contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone or direct email: denise_neeley@yahoo.com. You can also reach me via the CONTACT button on my website. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

Denise Neeley, MFT Inc. may be listed 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 a client 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 my current or former clients. The BBS code of ethics states it is unethical for therapists to solicit testimonials. Of course, my current and former clients have a right to express themselves on any site they wish. But due to confidentiality ethics and laws, I cannot respond to reviews (positive or negative) on any of these sites. For those who use these sites to communicate indirectly with me about their work with me, there is a good possibility that I may never see it. My hope is that current clients will bring their feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy. None of this is meant to keep clients from sharing that they are in therapy with me wherever and with whomever they like. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people who my clients are, and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. Clients are of course free to tell anyone they work with me. For those who do choose to write something on a business review site, my hope is that individuals will be mindful, for their own sake, they may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. Creating a pseudonym that is not linked to a personal email address or friend networks may help protect privacy.

If clients feel I have done something harmful or unethical and do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, individuals can contact the Board of Behavioral Services, www.bbs.ca.gov, which oversees licensing for my license.

EMAIL

Email is not completely secure or confidential. For those who 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, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet

service providers. Emails I receive from clients and former clients along with any responses that are related to treatment and diagnosis may be printed out kept in respective treatment records. Current and former client email information is always kept secure and not shared with any third parties.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to review my Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies or procedures, or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, please bring them to my attention so we can discuss them.

Updated 07.05.2019