

Social Media Policy and Practices

This document outlines Soul Work Counseling's office policies related to use of social media. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the Internet 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 to administration or with your therapist. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when we need to update this policy.

Friending or Connecting

We do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social media networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, 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 past or current therapeutic relationship. In addition, the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code prohibits the soliciting of testimonials from clients. If you have questions about this, please bring them up to Soul Work Counseling administration or to your therapist so we can talk more about it.

We keep a professional Facebook Page that allow us to share blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. Much of the information shared on this page is available on our website.

Social Media

Our primary concern is your privacy. We will also not follow your social media content. Our rationale is that we 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 your treatment or to satisfy our personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement toward 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 therapist, please bring them into a therapy session where you and your therapist can view and explore them together.

We request that all clients refrain from taking photos, videos, or audio recordings on the premises of Soul Work Counseling and to not post any photos, videos, or audio recordings onto any social media platform(s), in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of other clients.

Interacting

Please do not use the private messaging feature (or public posting) on any social networking site to contact your therapist or administrative staff. These sites are not secure and we may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Instead, please use our Spruce Health telecommunications system for all calls and texts (our clinic and provider direct numbers can be found on our professional website). You can simply call those numbers from any phone, and, if you make a secure account on Spruce Health using the directions that we can give you (which will also then enable videoconferencing ability for the Spruce Health App), then all of your subsequent texts and calls are also HIPAA compliant and secure within that App.

If you need to contact us between sessions, the best way to do so is by calling our phone number(s). Messaging/texting your therapist directly via our Spruce Health telecommunications system is the second-best way to address quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times.

If you wish to email us, you may do so, as our email addresses are posted on our public website. Although we have a HIPAA compliant executive Google email account, your email may not be ideally secure for confidential information. Feel free to email at your own risk.

Please DO NOT email us (or text/message us) if you are experiencing an emotional or psychiatric crisis, or for any other reason, that would require emergency services. We cannot guarantee that the email or text/message you send seeking emergency help will be seen soon enough to respond properly to keep you or others safe. Please call 911.

Use of Search Engines

It is NOT a regular part of our clinic 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 the next time you meet with your therapist.

Google Reader

We do not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and we do not use Google Reader to share articles. If there are things you want to share with your therapist that you feel are relevant to your treatment whether they are news items or things you have created, we encourage you to bring these items of interest into your psychotherapy sessions.

Business Review Sites

You may find our clinic 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 clinic 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.

Our respective professional associations' ethics codes prohibit us from soliciting client testimonials so as not to take advantage of client's potential vulnerability to undue influence. Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, we cannot respond directly 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.

We hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions about our work directly into the therapy process with your therapist, if needed. However, this social media policy is not meant to keep you from sharing that you are working with a therapist or with an evaluator at Soul Work Counseling, wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are our client and our professional Ethics Codes 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 your therapist, you can always contact the professional licensing board of your therapist which oversees licensing, and they will review the services which have been provided to you:

Marriage and Family Therapists (MA, LMFT or MS, LMFT) - Minnesota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy 2829 University Avenue SE, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55414 612.617.2220 mft.board@state.mn.us

Psychologists (PhD, LP or PsyD, LP) - Minnesota Board of Psychology 2829 University Avenue SE, Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55414 612.617.2230, psychology.board@state.mn.us

Professional Counselors (LPC and LPCC) and Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC) - Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy 2829 University Avenue SE, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55414 612.548.2177 bbht.board@state.mn.us

Social Workers (LCSW) - Minnesota Board of Social Work 2829 University Avenue SE, Suite 340, Minneapolis, MN 55414 888.234.1320 social.work@state.mn.us

Location-Based Technology

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. We do not place Soul Work Counseling 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 our clinic office. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in,” from our clinic office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review Soul Work Counseling’s 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.

Updated 1/23