

## **MY PRIVATE PRACTICE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

This document describes my policies related to use of Social Media or other Internet/electronic/digital tools. 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 you read here, 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 in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

(NOTE: This policy is meant to clarify with you what **my** legal and ethical restrictions are, so you may understand the context for my behavior and communication choices. **You**, however, are completely free to share your information in whatever forum you choose. Confidentiality means that I cannot reveal that you are my client; you are welcome to share this with anyone you wish.)

### **CONTACTING ME VIA EMAIL AND TEXTS**

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone at (415) 570-4277. Texting this number or direct email at [jessica@jessicakatzman.com](mailto:jessica@jessicakatzman.com) (or the secure contact form on my website) is second best for quick, administrative issues such as arranging or changing appointment times.

Although email and mobile phone text messaging are immediate and convenient communication methods, they are unfortunately not completely secure or confidential. Emails and texts, in particular, are vulnerable due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to the messages travelling through them. Additionally, people with access to your computer, mobile phone, and/or other devices may also have access to your email and/or text messages. Please take a moment to contemplate the risks involved if any of these persons were to read the messages we exchange with each other.

Therefore, I prefer using email and SMS **only** to arrange or modify appointments, and do not include content related to your therapy sessions. If **you** communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail or texts, I will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and will honor your desire to communicate in this manner. I will then ask you when we meet again about future arrangements for communication. Please do not use texts,

e-mail, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies, as computer or network problems may prevent timely delivery or receipt.

## **FRIENDING**

I am unable to accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc). Adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy, and 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.

I keep a Facebook Business Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. All of the information shared on this page is available on my website. You are welcome to read this page and share posts. However, please be aware that if you click on the "Like" button, an update will be published to your News Feed and on your wall stating that you "Like" Jessica Katzman, Psychologist, and will be visible to your connections on Facebook.

Additionally, I ask that you do not use messaging, wall postings, @replies, etc. 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. Engaging with me this way 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.

## **FOLLOWING**

I publish a blog on my website, and also use my Facebook page to distribute this content. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog or social media stream. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on these networks and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate creating a public link to my content.

You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. I am not able to follow you back, as I only follow other health professionals or social justice organizations on social networks, and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or social networks. Viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards 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 me, please bring them into our sessions, where we can view and explore them together during the therapy hour.

## **USE OF SEARCH ENGINES**

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), and I am unable to reach your emergency contact, 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 explain my decision-making process when we next meet.

## **BUSINESS REVIEW SITES**

You may find my psychology practice on sites that list businesses such as Yelp, HealthGrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or Google + Local. 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. (I have placed the below disclaimers on my Yelp page so as to create awareness, NOT to solicit testimonials.)

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, 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.

Please 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. If we are working together, I 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, regardless of whether your feedback is positive or negative.

As mentioned earlier, 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 I cannot tell people that you are my client and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that I'm your therapist or how you feel about the treatment I provided to you, in any forum of your choosing.

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, I hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. I urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy.

If you feel I have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, you can always contact the Board of Psychology, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

Board of Psychology  
1625 North Market Street, Suite N-215  
Sacramento CA 95834  
(866) 503-3221  
<http://www.psychology.ca.gov/consumers/filecomplaint.shtml>

## 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, 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 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.

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

**Acknowledgement of Review of Social Media Policy**

*By signing the electronic form, I am indicating that I have read this document, understand my rights as a client, and accept the responsibility as stated. I have been offered a printed copy of the Social Media Policy and all questions regarding these policies have been answered to my satisfaction.*