

Maplewood Counseling LLC

Contact@MaplewoodCounseling.com

My 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 in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

FRIENDING

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former patients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding patients 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.

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. A link to all of the information shared on this page is available on my website.

You are welcome to view my Facebook Business Page and read or share articles posted there, but I do not accept patients as Fans of this Page. I believe having patients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised patient confidentiality and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. In addition, professional organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis Code of Ethics prohibits my soliciting testimonials from patients. I feel that the term “Fan” comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of my practice.

Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

FOLLOWING

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 you having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Note that I will not follow you back. I only follow other health professionals on social media and I do not follow current or former patients on blogs or social media. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of patients' 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 my personal curiosity. In addition, 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.

INTERACTING

Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook (Meta), 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. 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.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email at lisa.lempelsander@gmail.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 ENGINES

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for patients 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 psychotherapy practice 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 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 patient.

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.

EMAIL

I prefer using email to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you 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 provider. 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 record.

CONCLUSION

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, do bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.

(modified by Maplewood COounseling from the original copy to reflect practice differences)

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