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 requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. I believe that adding clients as friends 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.

LIKING
I keep a Facebook page for my professional practice to allow people to like and share my practice updates with other Facebook users. I encourage you to protect your own privacy and confidentiality by not “liking” my page. You are welcome to view my Facebook page and read or share information or articles posted there.

FOLLOWING
I also have Pinterest and Google+ accounts for my professional practice and allow people to follow my practice updates. I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my professional pages. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Facebook, Pinterest, or Google+ and I happen to notice that you’ve followed or liked me, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship. My primary concern is your privacy.

Please note that I will not follow or like you back. I mainly follow other health professionals on social media and I do not follow current or former clients. My reasoning is that 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 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 Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, etc. 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. Instead, direct email at ashley@perfectharmonysolutions.com. Refer to the Email Communication Authorization policy for more information regarding email interactions.

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) 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 psychology 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 client.

The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics Code states that it is unethical for MFTs to solicit testimonials.

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.

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, even if you decide we are not a good fit. 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 and protection.

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 Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

Division of Professional Licensure
Attn: Board of Allied Mental Health & Human Services Professions
1000 Washington Street, Suite 710
Boston, MA 02118-6100
Email: leija.t.meadows@state.ma.us
Phone: 617-727-3080

CONCLUSION
If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential on the Internet, please bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.

I have reviewed the Social Media Policy and understand its contents. I have retained a copy for my records.

__________________________________________________________________
Client's Signature                Date
__________________________________________________________________

Therapist's Signature                Date

Adapted from Keely Kolmes, Psy.D., 2010. ©