

Sallie Lowman, LMFT
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist AL #321
205.613.3282 shlowman@bellsouth.net

Communications and 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. There may be times when I need to update this policy, and if so, I will notify you in writing of any changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated version.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone at 205.613.3282.

Texting

Please do not send text messages, unless otherwise agreed upon as means of confirming or rescheduling appointments. Any text messages I receive may become part of your record.

Email

Please use email to contact me for administrative reasons only (modifying appointments, billing information, etc.). Please do not email content related to our counseling sessions, unless otherwise discussed. Email communication is not completely secure or confidential.

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 may become a part of your legal record.

Use of Search Engines

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Facebook, Google or other internet 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) 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.

Interacting

Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. Do not use wall postings or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. These sites are not secure, and 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.

Friending

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). This may compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

Following

I publish a blog on my website and I post news about mental health and wellness. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Please be aware that I will not follow you back. I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or any social media. 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.

Business Review Sites

You may find my psychotherapy practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, Google or other places which list businesses because many of these sites comb search engines for business listings and automatically add them 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 this is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as my client because my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. Due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative, and I may never even see the review to begin with. Of course, you do have a right to express yourself on any site you wish, and if you do choose to do so, please keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. I encourage you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you.

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. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in,” or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

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.

I have read the preceding and consent to the above policies.

Date: _____

Client: _____ Client: _____

Counselor: _____