



Abundant Life Counseling St. Louis LLC

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 clients on any social networking site (Facebook, Facebook Messenger, LinkedIn, etc), as 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 therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet.

Following

Abundant Life Counseling St. Louis keeps a Facebook page for its professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. As a client, you are welcome to view Abundant Life's Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there, but I do not accept clients as "Fans" of this page, as it creates a likelihood of confidentiality being compromised. In addition, the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients, and clients becoming "fans" and/or leaving messages explicitly endorsing my practice may be construed as such. Therefore, messages explicitly endorsing my practice (while appreciated!) may be deleted. 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 the page.

I publish a blog on my website, and I post information regarding mental health on Instagram and Twitter. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog, Twitter, or Instagram feeds. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter, Instagram, etc and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

Your privacy is of the utmost importance to me. There are more private ways to follow me on Twitter and Instagram (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Please note that I will not follow you back. I do not follow current or former clients on social media. Viewing your online activities outside of the therapy hour could potentially have a negative and/or confusing 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/Direct Messaging

Abundant Life Counseling St. Louis, LLC is not set up to receive SMS or mobile text messaging. Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, 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 in 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 abundantlifecounselingstl@gmail.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. Please see the “Contacting Me” section of the Confidentiality Agreement for more information regarding emailing me.

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 Abundant Life Counseling St. Louis on sites such as Yelp, Google, or other sites that 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 Psychological Association’s Ethics Code prohibits me from soliciting testimonials from clients. 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 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.

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. My goal is to create a safe environment where you feel free to share your concerns with me and advocate for your needs.

If you feel I have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, you can file a complaint with the Missouri Committee for Professional Counselors by completing the Complaint Form online:
<http://pr.mo.gov/boards/375-0195.pdf>.

Location-Based Services

If you use location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. 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.

Acknowledgement of Review of Social Media Policy

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read this document, understand my rights as a client, and accept the responsibility as stated. I understand that I may request a printed copy of the Social Media Policy, and that all questions regarding this policy have been answered to my satisfaction. This document is also available at
www.abundantlifecounselingstl.com.

Client Signature

Date