

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY HOW WE MAY COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER

In order to maintain clarity regarding my use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment, I have prepared the following policy. This is because the use of various types of electronic communications is common in our society, and many individuals believe this is the preferred method of communication with others, whether their relationships are social or professional. Many of these common modes of communication, however, put your privacy at risk and can be inconsistent with the law and with the standards of my profession. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law.

If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss this with me.

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Generally, I do not communicate with patients by email. It is my preference that we do not use email with each other. The only exception to this general rule may be in rare instances where scheduling is difficult and I give you my email address solely for you to schedule an appointment. However, please limit your communications in the email to only include dates and times of the appointments. Also, please do not identify the patient in the email and please do not include clinical matters in the email. **Email is not a secure way to contact me or communicate with me. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with me, please feel free to call me so we can discuss it on the phone or wait so we can discuss it during your therapy session. The telephone or face-to-face context is much more secure as a mode of communication.**

TEXT MESSAGING

Because text messaging is a very unsecure and impersonal mode of communication, I do not text message patients with identifying or clinical information. The only exception to this general rule is with scheduling. If there is a scheduling issue and you need to contact me to cancel, schedule, or reschedule an appointment, and if text is the only way to reach me, you may text me. However, please limit your communications in the text to only include dates and times of the appointments. Please do not include clinical matters in text messages to me. **Text is not a secure way to contact me. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with me, please feel free to call me so we can discuss it on the phone or wait so we can discuss it during your therapy session. The telephone or face-to-face context is much more secure as a mode of communication.**

SOCIAL MEDIA

I do not communicate with clients through personal social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. If I discover that I have accidentally established an online relationship with you (e.g., Facebook friend, LinkedIn connection), I will cancel that relationship. This is because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you.

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I do have a professional Facebook page and a professional twitter account, which can be accessed via my website. With these accounts, I can provide the community, including clients, direct links to books, services, search tools, and programs. It is stated on my professional Facebook page:

In the interest in protecting their own privacy and the privacy of their families, my patients and their families have been asked to refrain from commenting about their relationships with me here in this public venue. However, colleagues, business associates, and community members who know me from the community and are familiar with my business practices will, at times, provide feedback here. Prospective patients (and their families), please note that the evaluations/rankings here are from such sources and not from my patients or their families.

The main idea behind the professional Facebook page and professional twitter account are to offer resources, but not to interact in that space with clients. Please only use the professional Facebook page in the way I am recommending (to access resources if you wish) so that I can keep that resource available to the general public. If you comment on the professional accounts, I would need to terminate the accounts in an attempt to protect patient privacy.

If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter me by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with me during our time together. I believe that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. Please do not try to contact me in this way. I will not respond and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental.

WEBSITES

I have a website that you are free to access. My website is karinhodges.com

You are welcome to access and review the information that I have on my website and, if you have questions about it, we should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

WEB SEARCHES

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. I believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, I understand that you might choose to gather information about me in this way. In this day and age there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about me through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with me during our time together so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on your treatment.

ONLINE REVIEWS

Recently it has become fashionable for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of me or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with me so we can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy. Please do not rate my work with you while we are in treatment together on any of these websites. It has potential to damage our ability to work together.