

# CONNECT PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC

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## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY AND SOCIAL MEDIA DISCLAIMER

This document outlines my office policies related to electronic modes of communication and social media. Please review it to understand how I respond on the internet as a psychologist and what you can expect in our interactions. Many individuals use the internet and social media as their 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 inform you and to increase your security and confidentiality. Technology is ever evolving, and I will update this policy as needed and post it on my website at [www.connectpsychologicalservices.com](http://www.connectpsychologicalservices.com). Please discuss any questions or concerns you have with me.

**Privacy Risks** Using electronic devices, the internet, and social media to communicate creates risk to your privacy and confidentiality. Please do not email or text me about clinical matters; it 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 contact is much more secure as a mode of communication. Please do not use text, email, fax, or any electronic communication for emergencies.

**Disclosure Regarding Third-Party Access to Communications** Please know that if we use electronic communication methods, such as email, texting, online video, and possibly others, there are various technicians and administrators who maintain these services and may have access to the content of these communications. In some cases, the accesses are more likely than others.

Of special consideration are work email addresses. If you use your work email to communicate with me, your employer may access our email communications. There may be similar issues involved with school email or other email accounts associated with organizations that you are affiliated with. Additionally, people with access to your computer, mobile phone, and/or other devices may also have access to your email and/or text messages. Please consider the risks involved if any of these persons were to access the messages, we exchange with each other.

**Social Media** I do not communicate with, or contact, any of my current or former clients through social media platforms including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and YouTube. I do not accept friend or contact requests because I believe it may compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. In addition, if I discover that I have accidentally established an online connection with you, I will cancel that online connection. These types of casual social contacts can create significant concerns, including blurring the expectations or our therapeutic relationship that many negatively impact your therapy. If there is something you would like to share with me on your social media, I welcome you to show it to me during our time together.

I participate on various social networks, but most often not in my professional capacity. 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. I believe that communications with clients online may have a potential to compromise the professional

relationship. Please do not try to contact me on social media. I will not respond and will remove myself from direct online contact, in the ways that I know how, even when it is accidental.

Any personal comments or material in the form of blogs or online sites are for educational and informational purposes only. This material is not professional advice, therapy, or constitute a recommendation for medical care. None of my material is intended to be a substitute for professional psychological, psychiatric, or medical advice, diagnosis, and/or treatment. This includes my website, or any other sites linked to it in any way. I do not assume any responsibility or risk for your use of any online or social media posts I create or respond to. I do not recommend, endorse, or make any representation about the efficacy, appropriateness or suitability contained or available on my sites or pages for individual users.

I cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of anyone who follows me on any professional social media sites. Anyone who follows me on any social media site is hereby put on notice that you may be perceived by others to be one of my clients. You may risk breaching your privacy and confidentiality by following, liking, re-posting, commenting, and engaging on social media with mental health professionals. If you are a current or former client, I will not communicate with you directly on these sites. Also, I do not check these sites when people raise clinical issues and I do not provide psychotherapy advice through these sites.

**Mitigating Risks** Again, using communication devices and social media to contact me creates a risk to your privacy and confidentiality. There are ways to reduce risk, but risk is never eliminated. I do subscribe to communication services that allow us to communicate more privately using encryption and other privacy technologies. None of them will cost you money, but each requires some setup before they can be used. Please ask if you would like to use these modes of communication.

I use email communication and text messaging with your permission and for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. **That means email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments and other related administrative issues.** Unauthorized access, human error, and other possibilities exist that may compromise your privacy. Therefore, if you communicate confidential or private information through electronic means, it will be assumed that you have made an informed decision; it will be viewed as your agreement to take that risk and know such communications may be intercepted. I will honor your choice around communication on such matters.

**Email communication** If you need to send me a file or other digital documents, please do so only through a secure email service. Contact me to ensure how to get this information to me securely. My email is encrypted through Paubox. Please remember that even when I use encrypted email, you are responsible for the safety and security of the information on your end.

**Text Messaging** I communicate with people using SIGNAL. This voice and text messaging app can be used on android, iPhone, and computer desktop. It can be downloaded from the app store. I will respond to text messages from the signal app. It is an end-to-end encrypted tool that is more secure and useable. By using this app, we may *decrease* the risk that others outside the conversation can hear or see our communications. If I do not respond to a signal message, please leave me a voicemail message. I have had experiences where the messages are delayed or do not come through in certain locations.

**Teleconference tools** The telehealth platform I use is Google Meet which is a HIPPA compliant video conference tool. I will send you an email link prior to the session. Click on the link, allow camera use, and I will admit you to the session. Contact me through the signal app or phone if you do not receive a link or have technical issues.

**Website** I have a website that you are free to access. I use it for professional reasons to provide information about me and my practice. My paperwork and policies are there.

**Web Searches** I will not use web searches to gather information about you. I believe that this violates your privacy rights. If safety or someone's welfare is at stake, I may make a rare exception to this policy. Any other exceptions are done with informed consent and a clear clinical purpose. I understand that you might choose to gather information about me in this way. There is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may 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 so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on our work together.

**Business Review Sites** There are many business review sites on the internet, such as Healthgrades and Yahoo, that list businesses such as mine. Some sites allow users to rate their providers and review them with commentary. I have not put myself on any of these sites. Many of these sites gather businesses information through search engines regardless of whether the business has agreed or not. Please know any listing s you may see is NOT a request for a rating, testimonial, or endorsement from me. My professional Ethic's Code states it is unethical for me to solicit testimonials from current clients.

Due to confidentiality, it is generally accepted that psychologists do not respond to any reviews on these sites whether it is positive or negative. If you encounter such reviews of me, please share it with me so we can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy. You have the right to express yourself on the internet. Please be aware that if you do write something, it is likely that I will not see it. When you have feelings and reactions about our work, I welcome you to talk to me about them in therapy. Positive and negative responses are an important and welcome part of the therapy process.

All clients are offered this electronics policy to be reviewed prior to the start of therapy.

Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking medical treatment because of something you have read about or accessed through any social media pages. If you are looking for personalized help, contact a therapist to schedule an appointment. If you are in a crisis, please contact the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 and/or go to your local emergency room.