

CONNECT PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC

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Dr. Karen O’Keeffe

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

ELECTRONICS COMMUNICATION POLICY

In order to maintain clarity regarding our 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 inform you and to increase the security and confidentiality of your treatment.

Please know that if we use electronic communications 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, these accesses are more likely than in others. Again, using communication devices create a risk to your privacy and confidentiality. Please notify Dr. O’Keeffe about your personal restriction using electronic communications. Please do not use text, email, fax, or any electronic communication for emergencies.

I use email communication and text messaging with your permission and only 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 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 and view it as your agreement to take that risk such communications may be intercepted, and will honor your choice around communication on such matters.

I do subscribe to communication services that allow us to communicate more privately through the use of 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 services or if you need to make other arrangements. If you wish to communicate with me by normal email and text message, please ask me about the potential confidentiality risks. I do have an office policy regarding Consent for Non-Secure Communications.

Email communication: 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 in 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 read your messages. Please do not email me about clinical matters because email 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 simply is much more secure as a mode of 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. 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 To protect your privacy, I communicate with people using SIGNAL. This voice and text messaging app can be used on android, iPhone and a computer desktop. It can be downloaded from the app store and I can walk you through the process. I will respond to text messages from the signal app. It is an end-to-end encrypted tool that is 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 message, you send me on this app, 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.

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 take a moment to 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 clients through social media platforms including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and YouTube. In addition, if I discover that I have accidentally established an online relationship with you, I will cancel that relationship. These types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you.

I participate on various social networks, but 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 during our time together. I believe that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact me in this way. I will not respond and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental

Website I have a website that you are free to access. I use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about me and my practice. You are welcome to view my website.

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.

Recently it has become fashionable for clients to review their health care provider on various websites. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to such comments and possible errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of me, 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. This is because it has a significant potential to impact our ability to work together.

If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss them with me. 10/22