

## **Wyandot Counseling Associates (WCA) Social Media Policy**

### **Friending**

Therapists are not permitted to accept “friend” requests from current or former clients on their personal social networking sites (Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). Adding clients as “friends” on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship and impact the effectiveness of our work together.

### **Email**

Please know that email is not considered a secure form of communication and sharing detailed or personal information in this format may compromise your confidentiality. Any email communication made with WCA can/will become a part of your legal medical record.

### **Liking/Following**

Please know that liking, following or commenting on a therapist's social media accounts will result in blocking your access to view these accounts and your therapist will follow up with you regarding confidentiality and ethical boundaries.

Additionally, In order to maintain ethical boundaries, therapists are not permitted to follow clients. We 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 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 the therapeutic relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with us, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together.

### **Texting/ Messaging**

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging), wall posting, @ replies, messaging on Social Networking sites, etc. in order to contact your therapist. Engaging with your therapist in this way could compromise your confidentiality and the therapist may not receive your message. 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.

### **Use of Search Engines**

It is NOT a regular part of our practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Due to the fact that therapists are mandated reporters, extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If a therapist has reason to suspect you are in danger and you have not been in touch with your therapist via 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 your therapist resorts to such means, the information will be fully documented and discussed with you during your next session.

### **Business Review Sites**

You may find WCA on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which 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 WCA on any of these sites, please know that this listing is not a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client. The American Counseling Association's Ethics Code prohibits clinicians from requesting testimonials for marketing purposes.

If you are using these sites to communicate your feelings about your therapeutic experience with your therapist, the communication may not be seen by your therapist. You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish; however, due to confidentiality, we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. Our hope is that you will bring your feelings and reactions concerning your treatment directly into the therapy process. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, please keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum.

### **Location-Based Services (LBS)**

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 client due to regular check-ins at our office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally "checking in" from our office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to review our Social Media Policy. If you have any questions about anything within this document, you are encouraged to bring them up with your therapist. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when this policy needs to be updated.

Any updates or changes will be posted in our office and on our website:

[www.wyandotcounseling.com](http://www.wyandotcounseling.com)