

## **Kimberly Sandstrom, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist MFT#80011**

### Social Media and E-Mail Policy

This document outlines my policies related to the use of Social Media. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, I will update this policy accordingly.

#### FRIENDING

I do not accept friend requests from current or recent former clients on any social networking site. I believe that adding clients as friends on these sites can compromise client confidentiality and client's respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.

#### FANNING/LIKING

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice, to allow people to check out my blog posts, events, and topics of concern to my practice. I do not accept clients as Fans of this page. I believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans/Likes to know that they will not find client names on that list. In addition, my professional ethics code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients. The term "Fan/Like" comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of Kimberly Sandstrom.

Note: Current or recent former clients should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a Fan which creates a visible, public link to my Facebook Page.

#### FOLLOWING

In the future I may publish a blog or post on Twitter, I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my blog or Twitter stream. However, if clients use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, I will discuss accordingly with current or recently terminated clients. My primary concern is protecting client privacy. For those clients who wish to follow me on Twitter in the future, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate having a public link to my content. Clients are welcome to use their own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. I will not follow clients back. I mainly follow other health professionals, health media, health advocates and colleagues on Twitter and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. I 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 treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing clients online activities without consent and without explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the therapeutic relationship. If it would be meaningful, current clients can bring items from their online life to discuss in session.

## INTERACTING

Clients are not to use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, 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 this way could compromise confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of my client's legal medical record and will need to be documented and archived in their chart. If clients need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone or direct email: [therapy@kimberlysandstrom.com](mailto:therapy@kimberlysandstrom.com). See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

## 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 a client is in danger and I have not been able to connect with a client via our usual means (coming to appointments, phone, or email) there might be an instance in which using a search engine becomes necessary as part of ensuring client safety. These are unusual situations and if I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with my client when we next meet.

## GOOGLE READER

I do not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and I do not use Google Reader to share articles. If there are things clients want to share with me, I encourage clients to bring these items of interest into our sessions or e-mail me directly.

## BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

Kimberly Sandstrom, MFT Intern may be listed 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 a client 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 my current or former clients. The BBS code of ethics states it is unethical for therapists to solicit testimonials. Of course, my current and former clients have a right to express themselves on any site they wish. But due to confidentiality ethics and laws, I cannot respond to reviews (positive or negative) on any of these sites. For those who use these sites to communicate indirectly with me about their work with me, there is a good possibility that I may never see it. My hope is that current clients will bring their feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy. None of this is meant to keep clients from sharing that they are in therapy with me wherever and with whomever they like. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people who my clients are and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. Clients are of course free to tell anyone that they work with me. For those who do choose to write something on a business

review site, my hope is that individuals will be mindful, for their own sake, they may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. Creating a pseudonym that is not linked to regular email address or friend networks may help protect privacy.

If clients feel I have done something harmful or unethical and do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, individuals can contact the Board of Behavioral Services, [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov), which oversees licensing for my license.

#### EMAIL

E-mail is not completely secure or confidential. For those who choose to communicate with me by email, be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. E-mails I receive from clients and former clients along with any responses that are related to treatment and diagnosis may be printed out kept in respective treatment records. I do have a newsletter that goes out regularly and I often send out other information re: upcoming events, groups, etc that may be of interest to my current and former clients in addition to the community at-large. Clients will be given a chance to opt-in to receive these e-mails. Anyone on this e-mail list can always opt out of receiving this information. Current and former client e-mail information is always kept secure and not shared with any third parties.

#### CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to review my Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, please bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.

Updated 4.24.14