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MY PRIVATE PRACTICE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document outlines my office policies related to the use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how I conduct myself on the Internet as a mental health professional and how you can expect me to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet.

If you have any questions about anything outlined in this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when I need to update this policy. If I do so, I will notify you in writing of any policy changes and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

USE OF E-MAIL

I prefer using email only to interact regarding the administrative aspects of your therapy. For instance, using email to modify an appointment, or to request a billing statement. I will not accept cancellation of your scheduled appointments via email—cancelled appointments must be called in to my phone line at (650) 697-1717. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you 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. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses I send to you become a part of your legal record.

INTERACTING

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging), or messaging on any other Social Networking sites to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall posting, or other means of engaging with me publicly online if we have already established a client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me in this way could compromise your confidentiality. 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.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email at psy@drkathyallard.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section above 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 you are in danger and you have not been in touch with me via our 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 I ever resort to such means, I will fully

document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find my psychology practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Google, 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 my listing on any of these sites, please know that my listing is NOT a request for a testimonial rating, or endorsement from you as my client. The American Psychological Association's Ethics Code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials: "Psychologists do not solicit testimonials from current therapy clients/patients or other persons who because of their particular circumstances are vulnerable to undue influence." Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, I cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you.

You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that I may never see it. If we are working together, I hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide we are not a good fit. None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy with me wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people that you are my client and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that I'm your therapist or how you feel about the treatment

I provided to you, in any forum of your choosing. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, I hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum.

If you feel I have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with me, you can always contact the Board of Psychology, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

Board of Psychology
1422 Howe Avenue, Suite 22
Sacramento, CA 95825
1-866-503-3221
bopmail@dca.ca.gov

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, do bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.