

Therapy Etc

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Electronic Communication Policy

June 1, 2018

In order to maintain clarity regarding use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment, Therapy Etc has prepared the following policy. This is because the use of various types of electronic communication 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 the counseling profession. Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your/your child's treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law

If you have any questions about this policy, please feel free to discuss this with your therapist.

E-mail & Text Messaging Communication

E-mail and texting offer easy and convenient ways for communication between clients and the therapist. In some cases, they have advantages over office visits or telephone calls. However, e-mails and texts are not to be used as a substitute for therapy sessions. Additionally, your therapist may not check their e-mail or text messages daily, and you cannot be certain when your message will be read. The therapist may be in session with another client, out of the office, away from their computer or phone, or on vacation. Nevertheless, the use of electronic communication can be beneficial. Below are some guidelines for contacting your therapist using e-mail and texting.

- E-mail and texts are never appropriate for urgent or emergency problems! Please call 911 or go to your local Hospital Emergency Room for emergencies.
- E-mail and texts are appropriate for asking short questions that do not require a lot of time or discussion, such as appointment scheduling requests.
- **E-mail and texts are not confidential.** Therapy Etc cannot guarantee the privacy of electronic communication. You should also know that if sending e-mails from work, your employer has a legal right to read your e-mail if he/she chooses.
- E-mail and texts should not be used to communicate sensitive medical information, such as information regarding sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS/HIV, mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse. Nor should they be used by clients to share information that you want kept private from other family members.
- E-mail and texts may become part of the client record when we use it in therapy; a copy may be printed and put in the client's chart.
- E-mail and texts are not substitutes for seeing your therapist. If you think that you or your child need to be seen, please book an appointment.
- Clients will be billed for time spent reading lengthy e-mails and those that require lengthy responses (beyond 15 minutes; see Financial Policy Form).
- Either party can revoke permission to use electronic communication at any time.

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Social Media

Therapy Etc does not and will not communicate with, or contact, any of their clients through social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook or Instagram. In addition, if it is discovered that there is an accidental established online relationship with the client or the client's parents, that social relationship will be cancelled immediately. This is because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for the client.

Your therapist may participate on various social networks, but not in their professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter your therapist by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with your therapist during your time together and terminate the connection. Therapy Etc believes that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact your therapist in this way. Your therapist will not respond and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental.

Websites

Therapy Etc has a website that you are free to access. The use of this website is for professional reasons to provide information to others about the Therapy Etc team and the practice. You are welcome to access and review the information on the website and, if you have questions about it, please discuss this during your therapy sessions.

Web Searches

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. Therapy Etc believes that this violates your privacy rights; however, Therapy Etc understands that you might choose to gather information about your therapist 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 your therapist through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with your therapist during your time together so that you and your therapist 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 related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of your therapist or any professional with whom you are working, please share it with your therapist so that you and your therapist can discuss it and its potential impact on your therapy. Please do not rate your therapist's work with you while in treatment together on any of these websites. This is because it has a significant potential to damage your therapist's ability to work with you.

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If Yes:

I DO want to communicate with Therapy Etc electronically. I have read the above information and understand the limitations of security on information transmitted. I understand that Therapy Etc may not be able to communicate with me electronically about my specific condition if there are concerns regarding confidentiality.

It is acceptable for Therapy Etc to contact me via email and text regarding scheduling.

If No:

It is NOT acceptable for Therapy Etc to contact me via email.

Signature of Client (if 12 years or older)

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

Witness

Date