

Professional Psychological Associates
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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Please read to understand how PPA conducts business over the Internet and how you can expect therapists to respond to various interactions that may occur.

If you have any questions within this document, you are encouraged to bring the topic into session for discussion with the therapist. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times the policy will be updated. Please return to the PPA website as needed to review any updates.

A therapist does not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). When a therapist adds clients as friends or contacts on these sites it can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It can also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship.

PPA does not make it a regular practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. There *may* be an extremely rare exception during times of crisis. If a therapist has reason to suspect a client is in danger and the client has not been in touch via the usual means (attending sessions, phone, text, email) there *might* be an instance in which using a search engine (to find a client, find someone close to the client, or to check your recent status updates) becomes necessary as part of ensuring client welfare. These are unusual situations and if a therapist ever resorts to such means, the therapist will fully document the occurrence and discuss it with the client in the immediate next session.

You may find PPA on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other sites that list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their therapists/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 a PPA listing on any of these sites, please know that this listing is not a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a PPA 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, a client has the right to express themselves on any site they wish. But due to confidentiality, we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. PPA urges clients to take their own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with a therapist about your thoughts/feelings about your therapy work, there is a good possibility the therapist may never see it.

This social media policy is not meant to keep a client from sharing with chosen others that they are in therapy. Confidentiality means that the therapist cannot tell people that you are a PPA client and our Ethics Code prohibits a therapist from requesting testimonials. But a client is more than welcome to tell anyone they wish that we are your therapist or how you feel about the treatment PPA provides to you, in any forum of your choosing.

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, we hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. PPA urges you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

Thank you for taking the time to review our Social Media Policy.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, do bring them to a therapists attention so that the concern can be discussed.

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