

PRIVATE PRACTICE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR DR. MELINDA DOUGLASS

Social Media is a great tool, helping people find information and engage online. I use social media for my practice and have created this policy to be transparent with you about how I work. Please feel free bring up any questions about social media when we meet.

This policy can help protect our therapeutic relationship and your confidentiality. You are the person who decides what you want to keep confidential, while I must keep my relationship with you private unless there are extenuating circumstances (see informed consent for details). If you post on my page, people may make inferences about our relationship or ask you about how you know me. You are free to decide what you tell people or reveal online.

FRIENDING I do not accept friend requests on my personal facebook page from current or former clients or on any social networking site.

FANNING You may “like” my facebook business page, yet also be aware that you are choosing to reveal that you are connected to me in some way. My business page exists to be a forum of information and inspiration. I will not engage in conversations with you on that page. However, if you find it helpful then that is great!

FOLLOWING I sometimes publish a blog on my website or other online venues and I post psychology news on Twitter and Google+. I have no expectation that clients will want to follow my blog or news stream. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back and I mainly follow other health or news professionals . I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. If there are areas of your online life that you wish to share, bring them into our sessions and we can explore them together.

INTERACTING Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. I would not be able to respond in a timely manner as I do not check these accounts regularly. The best way to interact with me is by phone. If you post on my wall it may 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 You may have a facebook page, instagram account or twitter account. I do not “google” my clients or look up information on them for any reason. I think it is important that I know you as you are in my office.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES I do have a yelp page and other directory pages. 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 or rating from you as my client. The Board of Psychology Ethics Code states that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials.

Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. If you do post a review, I cannot respond on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. However, I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. 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 we are working together, I hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. 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.

EMAIL Email and some texts are 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 ISP.

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