



Connections

Social Media Policy

The purpose of this Social Media Policy is to outline the guidelines and expectations for the use of social media platforms by employees, associates, and clients of Connections to ensure professionalism, privacy, and confidentiality in alignment with ethical counselling standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and clients who engage with Connections on social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others. It includes the practice's official accounts and any personal accounts used to interact in a professional context.

Professional Boundaries

Client and Therapist Interaction:

- **No Therapeutic Engagement:** Social media platforms should not be used for therapeutic interactions, scheduling, or discussing clinical issues. All professional communications must occur via approved channels such as secure email, phone, or the practice's official website.
- **No Friend Requests:** Therapists should not accept or send friend/follow requests to clients on social media to maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

- **Client Confidentiality:** No personal or identifying information of clients should ever be shared on social media, even if a client posts about their experience with the practice. This includes images, testimonials, or any reference to therapy sessions.
- **Anonymized Content:** If the practice wishes to share educational content based on common themes in counselling, it must be entirely anonymized to protect client identity and privacy.

Content Guidelines

Ethical Use of Social Media:

- **Professional Representation:** All posts from Connections must reflect the values and ethics of the counselling profession. Avoid posting content that could be perceived as inappropriate, misleading, or harmful.
- **Health Information:** Only share health information or counselling resources that are accurate, evidence-based, and align with professional standards.
- **Crisis and Emergency:** Social media is not an appropriate platform to provide emergency or crisis intervention. In emergencies, clients should be directed to contact emergency services or call the practice's crisis number.

Personal Accounts:

- Employees and contractors of Connections must ensure that their personal social media accounts do not compromise their professional image. When in doubt, personal social media accounts should refrain from commenting on or engaging with content related to clients or the practice.

Engagement with Followers:

- **Comments and Messages:** The practice may allow public comments and direct messages on its official social media platforms. However, these channels should not be used to discuss private matters, therapy sessions, or offer medical advice.
- **Positive Engagement:** All engagements with followers should be respectful, neutral, and avoid giving specific clinical advice.

Client Expectations

- **Privacy Considerations:** Clients are encouraged not to share personal information on the practice's social media platforms. If a client chooses to follow or comment on the practice's posts, their engagement will remain public, and the practice cannot control how third parties may view or use this information.
- **Communication:** Clients should use official communication methods (e.g., email, phone) for any inquiries or to request appointments rather than relying on social media.

Advertising and Testimonials

- **Ethical Marketing:** All advertising and marketing done on social media should comply with local laws and ethical guidelines. Any claims made should be factual and avoid promising guaranteed outcomes in therapy.
- **No Client Testimonials:** Soliciting or sharing client testimonials on social media violates the ethical codes of most counselling boards and will not be done by the practice.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Compliance: Connections will comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the privacy of health information, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or relevant local regulations, in its social media usage.

Breach of Policy

- Consequences: Employees and associates of Connections who violate this Social Media Policy may be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment.
- Reporting Violations: Any concerns regarding breaches of this policy should be reported to Ian Nicholson-Kapasi

Updates to the Policy

- Connections reserves the right to update this policy at any time to reflect changes in the law, technology, or professional standards. All employees, contractors and clients will be informed of any updates.

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