

Charles Brinamen, Psy.D.

Social Media Policy

This document outlines my policies related to 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 within 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.

FRIENDING

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions, we can discuss them when we meet.

FOLLOWING

Note that I will not follow you or befriend you on any internet forums. The casual viewing of clients' online content outside of therapy can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of treatment or to satisfy my personal curiosity. In addition, viewing towards a specific purpose could have a negative influence on our working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together.

INTERACTING

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on 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 postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship.

Engaging with me 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 drcharles@hushmail.com is second best for quick, administrative issues like changing appointment times. **If you are cancelling an appointment with 24-hour notice, please leave a message on my voice mail. Do not use email for 24-hour cancellation.**

See the email section below for more information regarding email.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google, Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during 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.

GOOGLE READER

I do not follow current or former clients or share articles on Google Reader. If there are things you want to share with me relevant to your treatment whether news items or things you have created, please bring these items to our sessions.

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BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find my psychology practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places listing businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate and review their providers. These sites comb search engines for business listings and automatically add listings regardless of the business' wish for inclusion. If you 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 Principle 5.05 states it is unethical 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 whether 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 therapy. This can be an important part of the process, 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.

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

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 and they will review my services.

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

LOCATION-BASED SERVICES

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, please be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. I do not place my practice as a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, etc. However, if you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may surmise that you are a therapy client due to check-ins at my office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally "checking in," from my office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

EMAIL

I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. 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, the logs are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider.

Any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become a part of your legal record.