



Social Media Policy (SMP)

New Horizons Counseling Center, L.L.C.
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Social Media

The use of social media and electronic communication is a convenient and often preferred way of communicating. However, privacy and confidentiality are not guaranteed in these forms of communication. The clinical staff, i.e., counselors and the nurse practitioner from New Horizons Counseling Center, do not communicate with or contact clients through social media or networking platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.

Additionally, if they discover that they have accidentally established an online relationship with you, they will cancel that relationship. This is due to the significant security risk these types of casual social contacts can create for you.

Our clinical staff may participate on various social networks for personal and marketing purposes but not in their professional capacity as a counselor. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter them by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with your counselor during your next session. We have researched this issue and concluded that social media communications with clients have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. Please do not attempt to contact counselors in this way.

If you have any questions about anything in this policy, please bring them up with your clinical staff member. As recent technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when New Horizons Counseling Center may need to update this policy. Clients will be notified in writing of any policy changes. The website will also be updated to reflect any changes.

"Friending"

Our clinical staff members do not accept invitations from current or former clients to participate in their online social networks, nor do they invite clients to participate in their own personal online social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). The practice of adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites

can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. If you need to contact your clinical staff member between sessions, please email, phone or text (depending on the preference of yourself and your clinical staff member. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when with your clinical staff member in your next session.

Following

At times, New Horizons Counseling Center posts articles related to wellness and psychology on our website, the New Horizons Counseling Center (<https://www.nh-cc.com>) and may make other posts on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. We have no expectation that you will follow these posts. Our primary concern is your privacy, so comments have been disabled on our website. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow New Horizons Counseling Centers posts.

New Horizons Counseling Center's clinical staff do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with your clinical staff member, please bring them into your session where we can view and explore them together during the therapy hour.

Interacting

Please do not use messaging on social media or networking sites to contact your clinical staff member. These sites are not secure, and the messages may not be read in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with your clinical staff online if you have an established therapeutic relationship.

Engaging with your clinical staff in these ways can compromise your privacy and may also create the possibility that the exchanges will need to be documented and archived in your client records, becoming a part of your legal medical record.

Our clinical staff recognize that viewing clients' online activities without their consent, and without explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose, could potentially have a negative influence on the working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with your clinical staff, please bring them into your sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

Text Messaging/SMS

Because text messaging is not a secure mode of communication, New Horizons clinical staff will not text message nor will they respond to text messages from anyone in therapy, with any clinical staff, concerning any matters other than scheduling or rescheduling appointments. So, please do not text message me unless we have made other arrangements.

Websites

New Horizons Counseling Center has a professional website that you are free to access to obtain information about our practice. You are welcome to access and review the information on the website, and if you have questions about it, please discuss them with your counselor during your therapy sessions. The website includes a contact form to use if you do not have your counselor's New Horizons email address.

Please include your counselor's name and the word 'confidential' in the subject field. The email will then be forwarded unread to your counselor. For example: Attn: Counselor Joe, Confidential.

Use of Search Engines

Counselors will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. It is our belief that this violates your privacy rights; however, we understand that you might choose to gather information about your counselor in this way. There is an incredible amount of information available about individuals online, much of which may be known to that person and some of which may be completely inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about your counselor through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with your counselor during a session so that you can discuss its potential impact on your treatment.

Although it is not a regular practice for our counselors to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines, extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis if they have a reason to suspect that you are in danger or if it becomes necessary as part of ensuring your welfare. These are unusual situations, and if counselors ever resort to such means, they will fully document it and discuss it with you in person as early as feasible.

Business Review Sites

You may find New Horizons Counseling Center on sites such as Yelp, Google, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their 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.

You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. Please note that by posting publicly about your counselor or counseling experience, you may inadvertently expose your confidential information. We urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as we take the commitment to confidentiality. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with your counselor about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that they may never see it.

The therapeutic alliance is essential to the success of therapy. The relationship is so important in counseling that there must be a good fit. Not every

counselor is a good fit for every client. What works for one person in therapy may not work for another.

Counseling Is a Subjective and Unique Experience.

If you have a concern about a counselor, clinical staff member or a session, the best approach would be to discuss that concern in person with the counselor or clinical staff member. Discussing reactions with the counselor or clinical staff member, whether they are positive or negative, can be an important part of therapy.

Even if you choose not to return to a counselor or clinical staff member, it is important to let that individual know directly why you felt it was not a good fit. By doing so, you may provide helpful information to the person, and they may also gain a sense of closure.

Sometimes clients may not feel safe or able to speak directly to their clinical staff member. They then have the option of contacting the New Horizons Counseling Center at admin@Newhorizons.com. If there is an ethical issue or a client feels that something wrong has occurred after all other options have been exhausted, a complaint can be filed with the counselor's or nurse practitioner professional association or the regulatory body that registers that counselor. The regulatory body will investigate and act if they deem it necessary. Please note that when filing a formal complaint, it is possible that details of therapy may be revealed in the investigation. Information on our counselors' registration numbers and register body are found on receipts and on the website.

Protecting your confidentiality means that our clinical staff members cannot tell people that you are a client. But you are welcome to tell anyone you wish who your clinical staff member is or how you feel about the treatment provided to you in any forum of your choosing. But please do not rate or review your clinical staff members' work with you on any of the above-mentioned websites while you are still in treatment. Doing so has a significant potential to damage your ability to work together and may jeopardize your own privacy.

Location-Based Services

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. New Horizons Counseling Center is placed as a check-in location on sites such as Foursquare, Facebook, Google, Gowalla, Loop, etc. If you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may conclude that you are a therapy client due to your location.

Thank you for taking the time to review the New Horizons Counseling Center social media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions online, please bring them to the attention of your counselor so that you can discuss them

The parties agree that this document may be electronically signed. The parties agree that the electronic signatures appearing on this agreement are the same as handwritten signatures for the purposes of validity, enforceability, and admissibility.

Thank you.

Client Name

Client Signature