

## Social Media Policy

This document outlines policies related to the use of Social Media or other Internet/electronic/digital tools by Families Forward. Please read it to understand how we use social media and other internet, electronic, or digital tools as mental health professionals. After reading this policy, you will also know how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. If you have any questions about anything within this document, we encourage you to bring them up with your specific provider.

### DIGITAL/ONLINE COMMUNICATION OR INTERACTIONS

**Friend Requests or Contact Requests:** In order to protect your confidentiality and to preserve the boundaries of our provider and client/patient relationship, we do not accept friend or contact requests from any current or former clients/patients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc).

**Following Former or Current Clients/Patients Online:** We will not make any social networking contact requests of former or current clients/patients. We also do not follow your blogs, tweets, or other social media or internet postings. If you would like to share aspects of your online life with your provider, please feel free to bring these to your sessions to discuss them.

**Contacting Me Online or via Text Message:** Please do not use text/media messaging or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact your provider. These sites are not secure and we may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Your provider will not be able to respond to any requests or responses via these sites or via text message. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with your provider in public online if you have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with us 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 your provider between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone.

**Business/Provider Review Sites:** You may find our psychology practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, 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. If you should find Families Forward on any of these sites, please be aware that we are not requesting a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as our client/patient. We are ethically and legally obligated to protect your confidentiality. Also, to protect confidentiality, we will not respond to any such postings/reviews. However, please feel free to discuss your thoughts and feelings about our work during your sessions with your provider.

**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. We do not place our 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 regular check-ins at this office

on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in,” from this office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

Email: Our office uses a confidential and encrypted email system, hushmail. While you may use this method of communication to communicate with your therapist between sessions, it cannot be guaranteed that email will be checked daily. If you have an urgent clinical issue please call your provider to discuss the issue by phone. Email contact should be reserved for non urgent issues related to patient care. You should also know that any emails we receive from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your legal medical record.

Online Searches and Exceptions to Policy: Our providers do not regularly search for clients/patients online, using Google or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If your provider has reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with them via our usual means (coming to appointments, phone, etc.) there might be an instance in which using a search engine or other online way 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 your provider ever resort to such means, this will be fully documented and discussed with you when we next meet.

#### Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review the Social Media Policy for Families Forward. Again, our goal is to protect your privacy and the work we do together. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions, do bring them to our attention so that we can discuss them.