Social Media Policy

Health Counseling and Student Wellness (HCSW) has various social media accounts (ie: Facebook, Instagram, etc), allowing us to share practice information, news, and event updates with other social media users.

You are welcome to “like” or “follow” our social media feeds and read or share articles we post; however because social media sites are public spaces, anyone who can see our social media pages can see your post or comment. In addition, when you post, comment, or “like” a page, it will be published on your page as well. Our primary concern is your privacy. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow our practice. In order to maintain ethical boundaries, clinicians are not permitted to follow you back or “friend” you. We believe casual viewing of clients’ online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it’s being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the therapeutic relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with your clinician, please bring them into the sessions where those things can be viewed and explored with your clinician, during the therapy session.

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging), wall posting, @ replies, or messaging on Social Networking sites in order to contact your clinician. HCSW does not monitor the comments on social media accounts. Engaging with your clinician in this way could compromise your confidentiality and the clinician may not even receive your message. 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. Clinicians will not communicate with you via social media.

If you use location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. If you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may surmise that you are a client due to regular check-ins at our office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in” from our office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

We recommend that you do not communicate confidential information through the use of e-mail. All emails within the university are potentially available to a public request of records. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at or requesting this information, and they are, in theory, available to be requested and or read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. Should you choose to send an e-mail we recommend using encryption. You should also know that any emails we receive from you and any responses that are sent to you become a part of your record.

If you feel your clinician has done something harmful or unethical, and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your clinician, or the clinical director, you should contact the clinician’s licensure board. Each specific clinician’s licensure board is listed under the about us page on the HCSW website at: <https://inside.nku.edu/studentaffairs/departments/hcsw/about-us/meet-the-staff.html> or by going to: <https://oop.ky.gov/lic_search.aspx> and <https://elicense.ohio.gov/oh_homepage>

If you have any questions about anything within this document, you are encouraged to bring them up with your clinician or contact our administrative office. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when this policy needs to be updated. Any updates or changes will be posted in our office and on our website: <https://inside.nku.edu/hcsw.html> You are encouraged to take your own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of confidentiality to you.