



Diane Coté, LCSW

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This document outlines my office policies related to the use of Social Media. It speaks to 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. Technology and the Internet change at a very fast pace. 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.

USE OF E-MAIL

I prefer using email only to communicate regarding the administrative aspects of your therapy. For instance, using email to modify an appointment, or request a billing statement. I will not accept cancellation of your scheduled appointments via email. Canceled appointments must be called in to my phone line at (415) 366-8830. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions. Email is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with me by email, know that all emails are retained in the logs of Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses I send to you can become a part of your legal/medical record.

INTERACTING

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) as a regular form of communication or to schedule appointments. Please do not use messaging on any Social Networking or Career Networking sites to contact me. These sites are not confidential. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal/medical record, and might need to be documented in your chart. If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email at dianecotelcsw@gmail.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section above for more information regarding email interactions.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES

It is not a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google, Facebook or other search engines. Extreme exceptions may be made during times of 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 rare situations and if I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.



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BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find my private practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Google, Bing, etc. 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 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 National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics states that it is unethical to solicit testimonials from clients. Section 4.07 Solicitations:

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people 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 on any site whether it is positive or negative. I urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you. None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy with me with whomever you like. The important part is the forum in which you choose to have this discussion. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, I hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum.

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 Behavioral Science, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

Board of Behavioral Sciences

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BBSWebmaster@dca.ca.gov.

BBS Main Phone Line: (916) 574-7830