

## **Vickie DeBuhr, MS, LMHP**

### **Electronic Communication Policy**

This policy has been implemented in order to maintain clarity regarding our use of electronic modes of communication during your treatment. The use of various types of electronic communications is common in our society, and many individuals utilize this as the preferred method of communication with others, whether their relationships are social or professional. **MANY OF THESE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION ARE NOT HIPAA COMPLIANT, AND THEREFORE PUT YOUR PRIVACY AT RISK. THEY CAN ALSO BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE LAW, AND WITH STANDARDS OF MY PROFESSION.** Consequently, this policy has been prepared to assure the security and confidentiality of your treatment and to assure that it is consistent with ethics and the law.

#### **Email Communications**

I DO NOT use email communication as it is not HIPAA compliant. If you contact me via Email, I will respond, but I will not initiate contact in this form. It should be noted that my Email is not encrypted or HIPAA compliant. I use Cellular Phone only with your permission, and only for administrative purposes, unless we have made another agreement. That means that email exchanges and cell phone messages with my office should be limited to matters such as; setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other related issues. Please do not email me about clinical matters as email is not a secure way to contact me. If you need to discuss a clinical matter with me, please feel free to call me on my office phone so we can discuss it, or wait so we can discuss it during your therapy session. The telephone or face-to-face context simply is much more secure as a mode of communication. Please be aware that both of these items have possible storage in “the cloud” and this is not HIPAA compliant or regulated from me.

#### **Cellular Phone and Text Messaging**

Communication through text messaging is a very nonsecure and impersonal mode of conversation, therefore I do not text message anyone in treatment with me. The only communication through text would be to confirm, reschedule, or cancel an appointment. Please DO NOT text message me unless we have made other arrangements. I do not store client's phone numbers in my phone, and I do not have control over who may receive your text message on your end. It should be noted as well that Cellular phones do not have the security of landlines, and while in wide and regular use, are not 100% guaranteed to be confidential.

#### **Social Media**

I participate on various social networks, both personally and in a professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter me by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with me during our time together. I believe that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact me in this way. I will not respond, and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental. I do not communicate with, or contact, any of my clients through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. In addition, if I discover that I have accidentally established an online relationship with you, I will cancel that relationship. This is only because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you. Ethically, I am bound by my Standard of Ethics not to have outside relationships with my clients as to protect your privacy and your interests. If you comment or interact with my professional profiles, you should identify the risk that others may perceive or wonder about your relationship with myself as a professional and must judge the risk of your own security in doing so. If you use any of the current “check in” apps, you should be mindful of it “checking in” when you attend sessions at my office to protect your privacy.

**Websites**

I have a website that I use it for professional purposes to provide information to others about me and my practice. You are welcome to access and review the information that I have on my website and we can discuss any questions you might have during your therapy sessions.

**Web Searches**

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission, as I believe that this violates your privacy rights. However, I understand that you may choose to gather information about me in this way. There is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, some of which may be inaccurate or unknown to the person. Unfortunately, mental health professionals cannot respond to comments and/or related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. In order to assess any potential impact on your treatment and our therapeutic relationship, please discuss with me any information you encounter about me through web searches or by any other means, during our sessions together.

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