



# Trinity Counseling and Consulting Services

*Malaina F. Hickey, LCSW*

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

## **Private Practice Social Media and Electronic Submission Policy**

This document outlines my office policies related to the use of electronic communication on social media. Please read it to understand 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. If you have any questions about anything within this document, I encourage you to bring them up when we meet. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, 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 and make sure you have a copy of the updated policy.

***Please read this document in its entirety, initial each section, then sign and date the signature page.***

### **FRIENDING** [Redacted] Initials

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). I believe that adding clients as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when we meet and we can talk more about it.

### **INTERACTING** [Redacted] Initials

Please do not use messaging on social networking sites such as Twitter, or LinkedIn or otherwise to contact me. These sites are not secure and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship.

Engaging with me 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 me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email to [mhickey@trinityccservices.com](mailto:mhickey@trinityccservices.com) or SMS (text messaging) is best for quick administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email/SMS section below for more information regarding these interactions.

### **USE OF SEARCH ENGINES** [Redacted] Initials

It is NOT a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare 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



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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 unusual situations and if I ever resort to such means, I will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

## **BUSINESS REVIEW SITES** Initials

You may find my practice on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, 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. 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 prohibits licensed social workers from soliciting testimonials. Their Ethics Code states under 4.07 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 of these sites 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. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with me about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that I may never see it.

If we are working together, I hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions to our work directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide we are not a good fit.

None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy with me wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that I cannot tell people that you are my client and my Ethics Code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that I'm your therapist or how you feel about the treatment I provided to you, in any forum of your choosing.

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.

## **LOCATION-BASED SERVICES** Initials

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. I do not place my practice as a check-in location

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Suite 204  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Phone: (682) 300-4158  
Fax: (214) 699-4646  
Email: [mhickey@trinityccservices.com](mailto:mhickey@trinityccservices.com)  
Website: [www.trinityccservices.com](http://www.trinityccservices.com)



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

## **COMMUNICATIONS** Initials

You are protected under the provisions of the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This law insures the confidentiality of all electronic transmission of information about you. Whenever I transmit information about you electronically, it will be done with special safeguards to insure confidentiality.

Information for claims to insurance companies is transmitted electronically.

I prefer using email, SMS text messaging **only** to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email/text content related to your therapy sessions. If you elect to communicate with me by email or text at some point in our work together, please be aware that neither is completely confidential. All emails are retained in the logs of an internet service provider and texts could be accessed through the cell provider. While under typical circumstances no one looks at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the internet service or cell service provider. **Any therapy related questions or issues will not be addressed by the therapist in any electronic communication but will be dealt with during your next therapy session.** Any email I receive from you, and any responses that I send to you, will be printed out and kept as part of your legal record. Texts are deleted after messages are received. My cell number is my contact number and it is only used in my practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on through the Internet or electronic transmissions, please bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE OF SOCIAL MEDIA and  
ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSIONS POLICY**

I acknowledge that I have been given a copy of Malaina F. Hickey, LCSW, Notice of Social Media and Electronic Transmissions Policy to read. I understand that a personal copy of this Notice is available to me upon request.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date