

Dr. Kay Towns, DPC, LPC, MAC, MTS

## Towns Counseling

www.TownsCounseling.com

KT Counseling, PLLC

# Social Media Policy

This document outlines office policies for Dr. Kay Towns, Towns Counseling (KT Counseling PLLC) related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the Internet as Mental Health Professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet.

As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when we need to update this policy. If we do so, we will notify current clients in writing of any policy changes and make sure they have a copy of our updated policy.

### FRIENDING

We cannot accept friend or contact requests from current or former patients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) We believe that adding patients 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.

### FANNING

We keep a Facebook page (Towns Counseling). This allows individuals to follow information that we find particularly helpful and/or inspiring.

You are welcome to view and read this page. You can also “like” the page from our website or your Facebook and share anything that you wish to share. We will not “friend” or “like” you in return. Be aware that if you like our Facebook page, you may show up on a list of friends. This may be a compromise to your confidentiality, which is totally up to you.

### PRIVACY

Our concern is your privacy. There are more private ways to follow us which eliminate you having a public link to our content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow us or not.

### INTERACTING

Please do not use SMS, social media messaging, or unsecure/unencrypted email to contact us. Do not use Wall postings, replies, or other means of engaging with us in public online. Engaging with us in this manner could compromise your confidentiality. It may also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical/mental health record and will need to be documented and archived in your chart.

## USE OF SEARCH ENGINES

It is not a regular part of this practice to search clients on Google or Facebook or any other search engine. Our reasoning is that casual viewing of patient's online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regards to whether it's being done as part of your treatment or to satisfy personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without our explicit arrangement toward a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on our working relationship. If there are things online that you wish to share with us, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together during the therapy hour.

Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If we have reasons to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with us through approved means (attending appointments, phone calls) there might be an instance in which using a search engine (to find you, find someone close to you, or check on your recent status updates) becomes necessary as part of ensuring your welfare. These are unusual situations and if we ever resort to such means, we will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

## BUSINESS REVIEW SITES

You may find our 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 our listing on any of these sites, please know that my listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you.

We will not solicit reviews from you. Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. We urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with us about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that we may never see it.

We hope that you will bring your feelings and reactions to us 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 at Towns Counseling wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are a patient here and my ethics code prohibits me from requesting testimonials. However, you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that you are a patient here or how you feel about the treatment provided at our center.

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, we hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. We urge you to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

## LOCATION-BASED SERVICES

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 other

may surmise that you are a psychotherapy patient 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, tablet, or laptop.

#### EMAIL

We prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments or to address billing issues, all of this is to be done directly with Dr. Kay Towns at [DrKayTowns@TownsCounseling.com](mailto:DrKayTowns@TownsCounseling.com). Please know that email is generally considered not secure or confidential. Your emails are retained in the logs of your Internet Service Provider. 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 ISP. You should also be aware that any emails we may receive from you and any responses we may send to you become a part of your legal record in certain matters.

If you need to contact Dr. Kay Towns between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone at 832-791-3511. This is a secure HIPPA-compliant phone and is answered by Dr. Towns during regular office hours. Phone messages left will be returned within one business day by Dr. Towns. Dr. Towns only answers after-hour phone calls in cases of emergency with current clients. NOTE: If you are not an established regular client of Dr. Kay Towns and are having an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest hospital emergency room.

#### CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to review our Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, please discuss them directly with Dr. Kay Towns at 832-791-3511 or by email at [DrKayTowns@TownsCounseling.com](mailto:DrKayTowns@TownsCounseling.com).

