



<https://PlayfulLeighPsyched.com>

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Info@PlayfulLeighPsyched.com

PlayfulLeigh Psyched Social Media Policy

This document outlines our policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we, as an organization, including Dr. Downtin, conduct ourselves on the internet as mental health practitioners and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. If you have any questions about anything within this document, please bring them up when with a PlayfulLeigh Psyched employee.

As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when we need to update this policy. When this happens, you will be notified in writing of any policy changes, offer a printed copy of the updated policy or you can view it at playfulleighpsyched.com.

Some of the relevant ethical codes to consider in this social media policy considered here state:

- Professional counselors do not disclose client confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or where mandated or permitted by law.
- Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law.
- When providing couple, family or group treatment, the therapist does not disclose information outside the treatment context without a written authorization from each individual competent to execute a waiver.
- In the context of couple, family or group treatment, the therapist may not reveal any individual's confidence to others in the client unit without the prior written permission of that individual.
- Professional Counselors are aware of their influential positions with respect to clients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships with clients that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with a client or the client's immediate family. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists take appropriate precautions.

Emails, Cell Phones, Computers And Faxes Are Not Private

No form of client communication is 100 percent guaranteed to be private. Conversations can be overheard, emails can be sent to the wrong recipients and phone conversations can be listened to by others.

But in today's age of email, Facebook, Twitter and other social media, psychotherapists must be more aware than ever of the ethical pitfalls they can fall into by using these types of communication.

Although they add convenience and expedite communication, it is very important to be aware that computers and email and cell phone communication can be accessed relatively easily by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails are especially vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers have unlimited and direct access to all emails that go through them. Although PlayfulLeigh Psyched uses in-transit email encryption and our email addresses are HIPAA secure, our servers do not yet allow for end-to-end encryption, which has the strongest level of security. It is important to remember that data on computers not always be encrypted, and computers, including laptops, may be stolen.

Our computers are equipped with a firewall, virus protection and passwords, We also password-protect and back up all confidential information from my computers (stored in a cloud-based vault) on a regular basis.

If you need to cancel or change an appointment time; a telephone call or SMS (text) may get the message to me in a timely manner. Please notify us if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of emails, cell phones SMS (text), faxes, or storage of confidential information on computers. If you communicate confidential or private information via SMS (text) or email, we will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and we will honor your desire to communicate on such matters via email.

Please do not use email for emergencies. Due to computer or network problems, emails may not be deliverable, and we may not check emails daily. We prefer to use email to arrange or modify appointments only. If you email us content related to your therapy sessions, please note that email is not completely secure or confidential. If email communication outside of therapy requires more than 5 minutes to read and respond to, we may charge for our professional services rendered in 15 minute increments. Please

indicate if you intend to pay these charges, or we will save it for review during your appointment time.

Please do not send forwarded messages regardless of how inspirational they may seem to our professional email address(es). We use this for work related issues and do not want to risk viruses spread by forwarded emails. If you choose to communicate with us by email, be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my 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 we receive

from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your legal record and may be revealed in cases where your records are summoned by a legal entity.

Social Media Should Be Considered Public Communication

Messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn is not secure. It could compromise your confidentiality to use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with us online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. 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. We will not read these messages in a timely fashion.

If you need to contact us between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone (202) 499-9188. Or direct email at info@playfulleighpsyched.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section above for more information regarding email interactions.

Friending May Expose Our Professional Relationship and Undermine Your Privacy

This social network policy serves as your notification that being linked as friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. As in any other public context, you have control over your own description of the nature of our acquaintance, if you choose to disclose a professional relationship. For example, if one of our employees saw you at church or school and you ignored them, they would follow your lead and do the same. If you introduce them to your friends they would agree with your description of how you know them. We will neither confirm nor deny any professional relationship between us and clients on any social network sites.



We reserve the right to discontinue any social network connection without prior notification, and we encourage you to do the same. We discourage the use of social network sites for any communication about our therapeutic relationship, including scheduling issues, due to the lack of privacy protections. 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 our working relationship.

If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with us, or your therapist, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

Our current treatment agreement states that I keep patient information private and do not share it with others unless there is reason to believe that the patient or another individual is at risk and using information for teaching purposes (for mental health trainees and admin). It is easy to forget that when we type names into a search engine or a field on a social network, we are also sharing information with others. If you have questions about this, please bring them up when you meet with your therapist and the two of you can talk more about it.

Location-based Services Reveal Your Location

We currently operate as a online practice only. The following session are the policies that we will adopt if we open a physical practice in the future.

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. We will not place our practice as a check-in location 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 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 Do Not Use Search Engines to Learn About You

It is NOT a regular part of our practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may be made during times of crisis. If we have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with us 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 unusual situations and if we ever resort to such means, we will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

Fanning/Liking Our Professional Page May Imply Endorsement

We keep an Instagram account for our professional practice to allow people to share our blog posts and practice updates with other Instagram users. Currently, this account is managed by Dr. Dowtin but periodically changes to an administrative assistant. Much of the information shared on this account is available on our website. You are welcome to view our Instagram account and read or share articles posted there, and may comment on them. However, referrals from other clients are one of our best sources of business.

Our website and Instagram account page are intended to let others know who we

are as professional and to make it easy to refer those you feel would benefit from our services. We will never confirm nor deny any professional relationship between clients on any social network site. This social media policy was constructed to inform you of the risks involved with associating on a social network. American Counseling Association Ethics Code states counselors do not use their professional relationships with clients to further their own interests. We will not ask you to “like” our page, endorse us on other business pages, or follow any other employees.

Tweeting And Following Promote Our Professional Services

We periodically publish a blog on our website and may post news about services offered in our practice, such as upcoming workshops and presentations, on Twitter. We have no expectation that clients will want to follow our blog or Twitter feed. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and we happen to notice that you’ve followed us there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship. Our primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow us on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to our content. Please use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

We do not follow current or former clients on blogs or any social media site. Casual viewing of clients’ online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion regarding whether it’s being done as a part of your treatment. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent or without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially influence our working relationship. If there are things

from your online life 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.

Business Review Sites Are Ineffective Places To Voice Your

Complaints

You may find our psychotherapy 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.

No one at PlayfulLeigh Psyched endorses any of those listings.

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. If we are working together, we 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 a clinician at PlayfulLeigh Psyched wherever and with whomever you like. In addition, we have a Feedback form on my website that allows you to

provide anonymous feedback through Google Forms. This is administered by my assistant, so you can provide feedback privately.

Confidentiality means that mental health professionals cannot tell people that you are their client and our Ethics Code prohibits us from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that who is your therapist or how you feel about the treatment provided to you, in any forum of your choosing.

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.

If you feel we have done something harmful or unethical and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with us, you can always contact the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists or Florida, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services we have provided.

Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists
<https://health.maryland.gov/bopc/Pages/complaintold.aspx>

While PlayfulLeigh Psyched is a registered business in the state of Maryland, if you are a client of Dr. Dowtin's and you live in Florida, you would file a complaint with

The Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/licensing-and-regulation/enforcement/index.html>

Summary

In brief, the following means of communication are acceptable for scheduling, cancellations, and notifications:

- SMS Text for notifications and changes to appointments, text (202) 499-9188
- Phone call (including voice mail) for notifications, brief conversations (<15 minutes), changes to appointments, call (202) 499-9188
- Email for changes to appointments only. Email your therapist directly or: info@playfulleighpsched.com

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, do bring them to our attention so that we can discuss them.

Acknowledgement of Review of Social Media Policy

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read this document, understand my rights as a client, and accept the responsibility as stated. I have been offered a copy of the Social Media Policy and all questions regarding these policies have been answered to my satisfaction. This document is also available at <https://playfulleighpsyched.com>