

Hope Goss, M.A., MFT
Marriage and Family Therapist
MFC 53029
5199 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., #510
Long Beach, CA 90804
Phone: 1-310-896-5399
Fax: 1-866-668-5831

My Private Practice Social Media Policy

This document outlines my office policies related to use of 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 this updated policy.

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

FANNING I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice and allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. All of the information shared on this page is available on my website. I encourage you to protect your own privacy and confidentiality by not “liking” my page. You are well come to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there. Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without “liking” it and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

INTERACTING Please do not use messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn 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 me in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with me in 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 at Hope@HopeGossTherapist.com or a phone call is best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions. Please be aware that the fact that I am a therapist is part of my email address, and protect your privacy accordingly.

GOOGLE READER I do not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and I do not use Google Reader to share articles. If there are things you want to share with me that you feel are relevant to your treatment whether they are news items or things you have created, I encourage you to bring these items of interest into our sessions.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES You may find my psychology 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 not that my listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as my client. The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist’s Ethics Code states that it is unethical for MFTs to solicit testimonials. Of course, you have the 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 to confidentiality to you. You should 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 will 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 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 you, in any forum of your choosing.

If you do chose 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. I 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 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 Examiners, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided. Board of Behavioral Sciences at 1625 North Market Blvd., 2nd Floor, Suite S-200, Sacramento, CA 95834, (916) 574-7830 or email BBSWebmaster@dca.ca.gov or file a complaint at https://app.dca.ca.gov/bbs/complaint_ssl.asp

EMAIL I prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not email me content related to your therapy sessions, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate to me 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.

CONCLUSION Thank you for taking the time to review my 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 my attention so that we can discuss them.

I _____ have read and understood the above document.
(Print Name)

Client signature

Date