

## **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, 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.

### **Friending**

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.

I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to 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. You are welcome to view my Facebook Page and read or share articles posted there, but I do not accept clients as Fans of this Page. I believe having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality. In addition, the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients. It is possible to subscribe to the page without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to my Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

### **Following**

I publish a blog on my website and I post psychology news on Twitter. I have no expectation that clients will or should follow my blog or Twitter. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

My primary concern is your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow me on Twitter (such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to my content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me.

Note that I will not follow you back. I only follow other health professionals on Twitter and I do not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. My reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion about the boundaries of the therapy relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into our sessions where we can discuss them together, during the therapy hour.

# Megan E. Pietrucha, Psy.D., LLC

## Licensed Clinical Psychologist & Sport Psychologist

[www.drpietrucha.com](http://www.drpietrucha.com)

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### **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 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 outside of sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. You may use SMS text messaging to contact me about immediate administrative issues, such as if you are running late to an appointment or changing an appointment time. Direct email at [dr.pietrucha@gmail.com](mailto:dr.pietrucha@gmail.com) is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. Please note that neither text messaging nor emails are encrypted forms of communication and therefore are not the most private or protected means of communication. Please exercise caution in what kind of information you choose to share in these mediums.

### **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. I do not add my private practice to these sites. Many of these sites automatically add listings from search engines 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 it is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as my client. Choosing to submit a review should be done at your own discretion and with awareness of the risks to your confidentiality.

The American Psychological Association's Ethics Code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials: "Psychologists do not solicit testimonials from current therapy clients/patients or other persons who because of their particular circumstances are vulnerable to undue influence."

You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. However, 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 seriously. 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 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. I urge you to consider means of sharing information that is not linked to your email address or internet social networks for your own privacy and protection.

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[www.drpietrucha.com](http://www.drpietrucha.com)

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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 Psychology in Illinois, which oversees licensing, and they will review the services I have provided.

## **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. You should also know that any emails I receive from you and any responses that I send to you become a part of your legal record.

Also note that I do not maintain 24 hour access to my email account. In cases of emergency, please do not email me. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please call me directly, call 911 or go to your local emergency room.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to review my Social Media Policy. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, please bring them to my attention so that we may discuss them.

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