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## **Office Policies - Confidentiality & Social Media**

*Payment for Service:* Fees for services are due at the time they are rendered, unless other arrangements have been made. Please notify me if any problem arises regarding your ability to make timely payments.

*Appointment Scheduling and Cancellation Policies:* Sessions are typically scheduled to occur one time per week at the same time and day if possible. I may suggest a different amount of therapy, depending on the nature and severity of your concerns. Your consistent attendance greatly contributes to a successful outcome. In order to cancel or reschedule an appointment, you are expected to notify me at least **48 hours** (2 business days) in advance of your appointment. If you do not provide me with at least 48 hours notice in advance, you are responsible for payment of the missed session. Please understand that your insurance company will not pay for missed or cancelled sessions.

*Therapist Availability/Emergencies:* Telephone consultations between office visits are welcome. However, I will attempt to keep those contacts brief due to my belief that important issues are better addressed within regularly scheduled sessions. Phone calls that extend beyond approx. 10 minutes **will be charged** on a pro-rated basis.

You may leave a message for me at any time on my confidential voicemail. If you wish me to return your call, please be sure to specify this in your message. Non-urgent phone calls are returned during normal workdays. In the event of a medical or psychiatric emergency or an emergency involving a threat to your safety or the safety of others, please leave a message for me and then call *911* or the 24-hour crisis line for *Suicide Prevention, (415) 781-5090*. **Please do not use e-mail for emergencies**. Also, please be sure to inform me if you do not wish to be contacted at a particular time or place, or by a particular means.

### **Confidentiality & Social Media**

*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.

*Fanning:* I keep a Facebook Page for my professional practice to allow people to share my blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. 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 and I feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view my list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. In addition, the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients. I feel that the term "Fan" comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of my practice.

*Following:* I publish a blog on my website and I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog. My primary concern is your privacy. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me (such as using an RSS feed). In addition, my 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 me, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

*Interacting:* Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as 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 file.

If you need to contact me between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email at [info@holistictherapysf.com](mailto:info@holistictherapysf.com) is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. *See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.*

Use of Search Engines: 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 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: You may find my therapy practice on sites such as Yelp, 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. Again, the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) Ethics Code prohibits my soliciting testimonials from clients.

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. 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 Sciences, 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. If you choose to communicate with 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. 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.

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 been given and read the Office Policies - Confidentiality & Social Media for Nick Venegoni, MFT. I understand and agree to comply with these policies.***

Client Name - Printed	Signature	Date
Client Name - Printed	Signature	Date
Psychotherapist	Signature	Date