

Social Media Policy

This document outlines the office policies related to use of Social Media for the psychotherapy practice of David Braham MS, LMFT-S and Sound Mind Austin P.L.L.C. Please read it to understand my online presence 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 with me. As new technology develops and the Internet changes, there may be times when I may need to update this policy. If so, you will be notified in writing of any policy changes and you will receive 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, Google+, 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 the therapeutic relationship. If you have questions about this, please feel free to bring it up to me at any time.

Liking & Fanning

Sound Mind Austin keeps a Facebook Page to allow people to share my Shift Happens Blog posts, practice updates, and share information and resources that may be educational, psycho-educational, motivational and inspiring. I may also post resources related to healthy and mindful living and personal growth (among other related topics). It is my hope that through this medium you will gain resources that will assist you towards safe, healthy, successful, and meaningful relationships, as well as increased personal growth. Although I intend to use these outlets to educate, entertain, and encourage the development of insight, it is important to note that this is not therapy, and encourage you to contact me through my practice any time you have personal therapeutic needs.

You are welcome to view, like, or share articles and resources from my Sound Mind Austin Facebook Page, Website (www.SoundMindAustin.com), and Shift Happens Blog understanding your risks to compromise issues of client privacy and confidentiality. I believe having clients follow my Facebook accounts creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and feel it is best to be explicit to all who may view the list of Fans to know that they will not find client names on that list. In addition, the American Counseling Association's Ethics Code prohibits the soliciting of testimonials from clients. I feel that the term "Fan" comes too close to an implied request for a public endorsement of my practice. Note that you should be able to subscribe to the page via RSS without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to the Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

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Following

At this time Sound Mind Austin does not utilize social media through Twitter. However, if in the future I move into this form of communication and social media, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter and I happen to notice that you've followed me there, I 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 the content. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow me. Note that I will not follow you back. I will only follow other health professionals on Twitter, and I will not follow current or former clients on blogs or Twitter. The reasoning is that I believe casual viewing of clients' online content outside of the therapy hour can create confusion in regard to whether it's being done as a part of your treatment or to satisfy personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your consent and without an explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with me, please bring them into your sessions where you can view and explore them with me, during the therapy hour.

Interacting

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure and your messages may not be read in a timely fashion. Do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with me in public online if you 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 at (512) 810-8031. Direct email at Dave@SoundMindAustin.com is second best for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

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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 reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with me via your 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.

Google Reader

Sound Mind Austin does not follow current or former clients on Google Reader, and does 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, you are encouraged you to bring these items of interest into your sessions.

Location-Based Services

If you used location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. I do not place my 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 my office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk if you are intentionally “checking in” from my office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

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 our 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.

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Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review the Social Media Policy of David Braham MS, LMFT-S, Braham Counseling and Sound Mind Austin. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding my potential interactions on the Internet, do bring them to my attention so that we can discuss them.

Signatures

I have read and received a copy of the Social Media Policy form provided by David Braham MS, LMFT-S and Sound Mind Austin P.L.L.C. David Braham has addressed all of my questions pertaining to this document. My signature below indicates my acceptance of these policies.

Client Name (please print) _____

Client Signature

X _____

Date: _____

David Braham MS, LMFT-S _____

Date _____

*Last updated 1/17

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