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POLICY FOR USING EMAIL/SMS TEXT DURING COUNSELING

E-mail and texting are often fast and convenient way to communicate. However, there are some issues to consider when using e-mail or text to communicate confidential therapy related information. Below is my policy regarding using email or text during counseling. If you have any questions about this practice, please do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with your therapist during your sessions.

I may check e-mail/texts from either the computer in my office, my personal computer or my mobile device. I **cannot guarantee** the physical security or privacy of my personal computer. Therefore, I **cannot ensure** that individuals other than myself will be prevented from seeing your e-mails or text messages. E-mails and text messages are not intentionally saved to any hard drive. If you are participating in couple’s or family counseling, e-mail or text exchanges with your counselor cannot be kept secret from other members of the client system.

I will not attempt to install cookies on your computer, and will not attempt to collect data about you through the Internet. If you decide to begin an e-mail or text exchange with me, I will obtain your e-mail address or phone number. That address or number will not be shared with any third party unless I am required to do so by law.

Although the risk of a cyber “eavesdropper” accessing your e-mails or text messages is relatively small, you should be aware that **e-mail sent from standard email providers and text messages are not encrypted** and could be read by anyone who does intercept them.

The decision about whether to engage in an e-mail or text exchanges with your counselor from your place of employment is entirely up to you. However, you are encouraged to **be aware of your employer's policies** regarding private use of computer and Internet facilities, as well as conducting private business during work time. Employers may assert a right to read any and all emails that pass through their system. Even taking the precaution of printing all emails once received and then deleting local copies may still leave a copy on an employer's mail server, which could be retrieved by the employer at a later date.

If you undertake an email or text exchange with your counselor from **shared environments** like internet cafes or libraries, you should take particular care to guard your privacy. Web browsers used to access web-based email accounts should not be left logged-in to the web-based email service, and likewise, usernames and passwords should not be stored in cookies. When in doubt, log out -- and when prompted to save user information in a cookie, ‘just say no’.

Please sign and date this form at the bottom, indicating that you have read and understand this policy. We will place a copy of this document in your file. An additional copy of this policy will be given to you with your client information sheet.

I have read and understand the above policy.

Client signature: _____

Date: _____

Client signature: _____

Date: _____