



Social Media Policy

This document outlines our office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the Internet as a mental health professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. If you have any questions about anything within this document, we encourage you to bring them up when we meet.

Following

We do not accept or solicit friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any PERSONAL networking site (Facebook or any other personal account). We 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 about it.

We have several professional social media accounts where we share information designed to empower and enrich emotional, relational, mental and spiritual wellness. We regularly write about relational or mental health on our professional blog on our website and we curate great articles and resources we find on Scoopit! (*Scoopit! is pinterest for professionals.*)

You are welcome to follow our twitter feed, facebook, google or connect on linked in as these are professional and meant only for us to share professional resources. Please know that you do this of your own accord and this may compromise your confidentiality. We have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow our blog, facebook profile or twitter stream. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on your social media profile and we happen to notice that you've followed us there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our working relationship.

If you do choose to follow a professional profile we have online, please be aware we will not follow you back. We mostly only follow other health professionals and we do not follow, like or request to connect online with current or former clients on social media. Our reasoning is that we 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 our personal curiosity. In addition, 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 us, please bring them into our sessions where we can view and explore them together, during the therapy hour.

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

A more private way to stay connected with our online profiles is through our **constant contact newsletter**. We send monthly resources and will never share your information with a third party. Please note the security of these newsletters is limited to the security of your email account, but it is not a public link viewable by others. You may sign up for our newsletter on our website, on our professional facebook profile or on the communication preferences form.

Interacting

If you are connected to one of our professional profiles on social media, please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn to contact us. These sites are not secure and we may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with us in public online if we have an already established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with us 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 us between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone. Direct email also works for quick, administrative issues such as changing appointment times. See the communication policy for more information regarding email interactions.

Use of Search Engines

It is NOT a regular part of our practice to search for clients on Google or Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions *may* be made during times of crisis. If we have a reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch with us 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 we ever resort to such means, we will fully document it and discuss it with you when we next meet.

Business Review Sites

We do list our professional information on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Google, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their providers and add reviews. If you should find our listing on any of these sites, please know that our listing is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as our client. **Our professional Code of Ethics prohibits our soliciting testimonials from clients.** Please note, any current testimonials on our website were not solicited, but were actual correspondence from former clients used with permission.

Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. But due to confidentiality, we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. We urge you to take your own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of confidentiality to you. You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with us about your feelings about our work, there is a good possibility that we may not see it.

If we are working together, we 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 us wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are our client and our Ethics Code prohibits us from requesting testimonials. But you are more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that we serve as your therapist or how you feel about the treatment we provided to you, in any forum of your choosing.

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, we hope you will keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. It is possible to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

Email

We prefer using email only to arrange or modify appointments. If you choose to email us content related to your therapy sessions please know email is NOT completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with us 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 we receive from you and any responses that we send to you become a part of your clinical record. **We do offer encrypted email correspondence to secure your confidentiality. Please indicate your email preferences in the Communications Preferences Form.**

Conclusion

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

Sincerely,

Amy Fuller PhD and Fuller Life Family Therapy Institute



Communications Policy

It may become useful during the course of treatment to communicate by email, text message or other electronic methods of communication. Be informed that these methods, in their typical form, are NOT confidential means of communication. If you use these methods to communicate with your therapist there is a reasonable chance that a third party may be able to intercept and eavesdrop on those messages. The kinds of parties that may intercept these messages include, but are not limited to:

- People in your home or other environments who can access your phone, computer, or other devices that you use to read and write messages
- Your employer, if you use your work email to communicate with Dr. Fuller or Fuller Life
- Third parties on the Internet, server administrators or others who monitor Internet traffic

If there are people in your life that you don't want accessing these communications, please talk with your therapist about ways to keep your communications confidential.

Dr. Amy Fuller and Fuller Life Family Therapy Institute use only HIPPA Compliant Secure forms of communication **unless** you indicate a desire to communicate in non-secure means via our **communication preferences form**. We offer encrypted email, a secure texting platform and all third party services with HIPPA-compliant Business Associates. While it cannot be guaranteed that these services will prevent 100% of confidentiality breaches, they are designed with the intention of supporting the confidentiality of clinical communications. The types of information transmitted may include the following:

- Information related to the scheduling of meetings or other appointments
- Information related to billing and payment
- Any other relevant item to my treatment.

If you choose to authorize non-secure email with us, it is very important to be aware that computers and unencrypted e-mail communication can be relatively easily accessed by unauthorized people and hence can compromise the privacy and confidentiality of such communication. E-mails are vulnerable to such unauthorized access due to the fact that servers or communication companies may have unlimited and direct access to all e-mails that go through them. **Our text and fax accounts are through confidential and secure HIPPA-Compliant Services.**

Disclosure Regarding Third-Party Access to Communications

Please know that if we use electronic communications methods, such as email, texting, online video, and possibly others, there are various technicians and administrators who maintain these services and may have access to the content of those communications. In some cases, these accesses are more likely than in others.

Of special consideration are work email addresses. If you use your work email to communicate with us, your employer may access our email communications. There may be similar issues involved in school email or other email accounts associated with organizations that you are affiliated with. Additionally, people with access to your computer, mobile phone, and/or other devices may also have access to your email and/or text messages. Please take a moment to contemplate the risks involved if any of these persons were to access the messages we exchange with each other. **Please indicate your choice of preferred communication on the Communication Preferences Form with the intake paperwork.**

Contacting Us

When you need to contact your therapist for any reason, these are the most effective ways to get in touch in a reasonable amount of time:

Fuller Life Family Therapy Institute

- By phone 855-245-LIFE (5433). You may leave messages on our HIPPA Compliant secure voicemail.
- By secure text message (see below for details.)
- By secure email. Email is therapistsfirstname@fullerlifefamilytherapy.org
- Secure Fax: (832) 706-3829

Amy Fuller PhD

- By phone (832) 848-0870. Option 1 will connect you to the scheduling service anytime of day or night. You may leave messages on the HIPPA Compliant secure voicemail.
- By secure text message to Dr. Fuller directly (713) 893-3669
- By secure email. Email is amy@amyfullerphd.com
- Secure Fax: (832) 699-1414
- By the secure form on the website (<https://cryptnsend.com/amy/Fuller.php>)

If you need to send a file such as a PDF or other digital document, you may opt to use our HIPPA-Compliant Secure fax lines or choose "secure reply" from an encrypted email we have sent. Clients may use www.emailyourdoc.com to send a secure email to amy@amyfullerphd.com. If the email is for a resident therapist at Fuller Life please indicate so on the subject line to ensure your therapist receives the document.

If you wish to communicate by normal non-secure email, please inquire about the potential confidentiality risks of doing so and complete the Communication Preferences Form where you may provide Consent For Non-Secure Communications with non-secure email.

We subscribe to the following service(s) that can allow us to communicate more privately through the use of encryption and other privacy technologies.

- Encrypted email through office 365 (Fuller Life) and MD Office Mail (Amy Fuller PhD)
- Secure text messaging via our 8X8 phone service. This service can be used on a computer or smartphone.
- Secure fax

If a couple is participating in couple's therapy, please include (carbon copy) your partner on any email to the therapist regarding your treatment or scheduling.

Please refrain from making contact with me using social media messaging systems such as Facebook Messenger or Twitter. These methods have very poor security and we are not prepared to watch them closely for important messages from clients.

Response Time

We may not be able to respond to your messages and calls immediately. For voicemails and other messages, you can expect a response within 3 days (weekends are excepted from this timeframe.) We may occasionally reply more quickly than that or on weekends, but please be aware that this will not always be possible. Be aware that there may be times when we are unable to receive or respond to messages, such as when out of cellular range or out of town.

Emergency Contact

If you are ever experiencing an emergency, including a mental health crisis, please call and indicate the emergency clearly in your message. If you need to talk to someone right away call Psychiatric Emergency Services. In the event of a psychiatric emergency: Dial 911, go to your local emergency room or request a Crisis Intervention Team at the MHMRA Neuropsychiatric Center by calling 713.970.7070. Please do not use email or faxes for emergencies. Amy Fuller PhD does not always check her email or faxes daily.

If you need to contact us about an emergency, the best method is:

- By phone Fuller Life - (855) 245-LIFE (5433) Amy Fuller PhD (832) 848-0870 – option 1
- If you cannot reach us by phone, please leave a voicemail and follow up by email.

Text Messaging:

Texting with our clients is limited to conversation about scheduling related items ONLY. Please include your name if you do text us. To ensure greater confidentiality, we do not store your contact information in our personal devices so if you have consented to text messaging on the communication preference form, please let us know who you are if you text with a scheduling question.

Please note that SMS (normal phone text messages) are not designed for emergency contact. SMS text messages occasionally get delayed and on rare occasions may be lost. So, please refrain from using SMS as your sole method of communicating with us in emergencies.

Please notify Amy Fuller PhD if you decide to avoid or limit, in any way, the use of e-mail, texts, cell phones calls, phone messages, or e-faxes. If you communicate confidential or private information via unencrypted e-mail we will assume that you have made an informed decision, will view it as your agreement to take the risk that such communication may be intercepted, and will honor your desire to communicate on such matters. Please do not use texts, e-mail, voice mail, or faxes for emergencies.

It is important that we be able to communicate and also keep the confidential space that is vital to therapy. Please speak with us about any concerns you have regarding these communication policies