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| Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC | POLICY # AM-014 |
| TITLE: Electronic Communication Policy | EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/22/2015; Rev: 04/16/2017; 12/26/17; |

Statement of Purpose, Scope, and Applicability

Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC is committed to high standards of professionalism and desires that the use of electronic communications and social media will be handled in such a manner as to be consistent with that professionalism. Electronic communication and social media is so integrated into everyday life that it is often assumed and expected that certain communications would take place. Where that may be the case in the personal lives of employees and clients alike, there are some special considerations as it relates to the business of behavioral health and specifically Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC.

It is further the desire of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC to communicate through this policy how Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC plans to use such electronic communications and social media to reduce potential misunderstandings.

This policy is applicable to all clients, employees, interns and volunteers of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC. If there are questions by clients, it is encouraged to bring them into session for discussion or at least place a phone call in order to gain clear understanding as to rationale for such policy.

Policy

It is the policy of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC to make use of electronic communications and social media which includes, but is not limited to: cell phone, email, text, website, Electronic Health Record (EHR), Facebook, and other social media in a professional manner with goal of effective and efficient communication that meets the needs and preferences of clients and maintains confidentiality and therapeutic effectiveness within reasonable limits.

It is the policy of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC to NOT accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) whether personal or professional. If someone has been accepted prior to becoming a client, the “friending” or contact will be discontinued or blocked upon coming to the attention of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC. This is not to be interpreted as a rejection or disrespect, but just the opposite as these relationships can compromise your confidentiality, our respective privacy, blur the boundaries of our therapeutic relationship and potentially interfere with therapeutic benefit.

It is the policy of Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC to avoid casual viewing of current or former clients’ online content outside of the therapy session. If there is online content that clients wish to share, this is to be shared within the therapy session encounter. In potential crises or emergencies exceptions may be made in order to make contact with client, family of client or friend of client in order to ensure your well-being. These exceptions will be documented in EHR and discussed at next appropriate therapeutic encounter.

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Procedures

Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC staff may have personal pages and accounts on social media, but these are to adhere to this policy. Discretion is to be used in order to maintain integrity of the provider’s professional presence and effectiveness. It is understood that much interpretation cannot be foreseen, so consultation and openness to answer questions will be expected by staff.

Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC does have a professional website (www.markdebord.com) where there is a blog section that allows feedback. Clients who wish to make comments may make them in person, but if clients desire to make comments on the website, they are encouraged to develop a pseudonym (“nickname”) in order to protect their privacy as the name can appear on the website. Clients may subscribe to the blog via RSS without creating a visible public link to the website, but there is no expectation to do so. Blog posts may include the following topics: behavioral health, relationships, health, general topics of interest and Christian.

PHONE CALLS ARE THE PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION. Since there is no administrative staff routinely available, voicemail may be left and the call will be returned at the earliest available time by Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC. Calls will not be accepted while in session. The business phone for Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC is passcode protected cell phone and is only accessed by Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC staff and voicemails are deleted routinely.

Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC will make no responses to instant messages or posts through personal social media sites to current or former clients. A phone call may be made to the current or former client, however, if a response is deemed necessary.

Text messaging has come under much scrutiny as it is not HIPAA compliant; thus, it is to be avoided. However, if clients originate texts, it will be interpreted as the client’s preference and permission to respond by text. The content of texts should only contain information about appointments, cancellations, administrative questions, or the like. **NO THERAPEUTIC CONTENT IS TO BE COMMUNICATED THROUGH TEXT.** Please make a phone call for anything therapeutic. A phone call may be made to the current or former client if a response is deemed necessary. Please note that text messages may not be viewed in a timely manner as there are times messages are not immediately delivered and there are times provider may not be available to view.

Email is not to be used for therapeutic purposes either. Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC does not check email immediately, so much time may pass prior to being read. The content of email should only contain information about appointments, cancellations, administrative questions, or the like. **NO THERAPEUTIC CONTENT IS TO BE COMMUNICATED THROUGH EMAIL.** Please make a phone call for anything therapeutic. A phone call may be made to the current or former client if a response is deemed necessary.

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Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC may be listed on online business lists which may or may not have been solicited/ listed purposefully by Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC. Anyone is free to comment or respond, but please note that your name will likely appear and could compromise your confidentiality, so a pseudonym may be wise. Also note that finding a listing for Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC on one of these sites is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating or endorsement. Also note that comments made on these sites may never be seen by Mark S. DeBord, LCSW, LLC.

AUTHORIZED BY: _____ Mark S. DeBord, LCSW