



## **Social Media Policy**

This document outlines my office policies related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how I conduct myself on the Internet as a mental health professional and how you can expect me to respond to interactions that may occur between us on the Internet. Please discuss any questions or concerns you may have with Alexis.

Alexis James Virtual Counseling (AJVC) has various social media accounts (ie: Facebook, Instagram and Google+), allowing us to share practice information, news and event updates with other social media users. This document outlines our practice's policy related to use of Social Media. Please read it to understand how we conduct ourselves on the social sites as mental health professionals and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may occur between clients and clinicians on the Internet. This policy is not meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy at AJVC or with a particular therapist wherever and with whomever you like. Confidentiality means that we cannot tell people that you are a client. You are encouraged to take your own privacy as seriously as we take our commitment of confidentiality to you.

### **Separate Accounts**

Alexis James, MS, LMHC holds separate and isolated accounts to be used for the sole purpose of professional matters regarding Alexis James Virtual Counseling. These accounts are separate from any personal accounts held by Alexis James as an individual.

### **Email**

Please use email to contact me for administrative reasons only (modifying appointments, billing information, etc.). Please do not email content related to our counseling sessions, unless otherwise discussed. Email communication is not completely secure or confidential. Any emails I receive from you and any responses I send to you become a part of your legal record.

### **Text Messages**

Text messages received to the company phone are welcomed, please keep in mind any text message I receive from you becomes a part of your legal record. Please do not use wall posting, @ replies, messaging on Social Networking sites in order to contact your therapist.



## **Friending**

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram.). Adding clients as friends on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our therapeutic relationship.

## **Following**

I will not follow any client on Instagram, blogs, or other apps/websites. If there is content you wish to share from your online life, please bring it into our sessions where we can explore it together.

## ***More about Liking/Following***

You are welcome to “like” or “follow” our social media feeds and read or share articles we post; however, because social media sites are public spaces, anyone who can see our social media pages can see your post or comment. In addition, when you post, comment, or “like” a page, it will be published on your page as well. Our primary concern is your privacy. You are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow our practice. In order to maintain ethical boundaries, therapists are not permitted to follow you back. 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 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 the therapeutic relationship.

## **Search Engines**

It is not a regular part of my practice to search for clients on Google, Facebook, or other searchable sites. An exception could be during a crisis. If I have reason to suspect you are a danger to yourself or others and I have exhausted all other reasonable means to contact you and/or your emergency contact, then I may use a search engine for information to ensure your welfare. If this ever occurs, I will fully document the search and discuss it with you at your next session.

## **Location-Based Services**

Please be aware if you use location-based services on your mobile phone you may compromise your privacy while attending session at my office. My office can be found as a Google location. Enabled GPS tracking makes it possible for others to surmise you are a counseling client due to regular check-ins at my office location.



## **Business Review Sites**

You may find AJVC on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, 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 AJVC on any of these sites, please know that this listing is not a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client. The American Counseling Association's Ethics Code prohibits clinicians from requesting testimonials for marketing purposes. If you are using these sites to communicate your feelings about your therapeutic experience with your therapist, the communication may not be seen by your therapist. You have a right to express yourself on any site you wish; however, due to confidentiality, we cannot respond to any review on any of these sites whether it is positive or negative. Our hope is that you will bring your feelings and reactions concerning your treatment directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of treatment, even if you decide to go elsewhere. If you do choose to write something on a business review site, please keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum. If you feel your therapist has done something harmful or unethical, and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your therapist, you should contact the New York or Florida Counselor Board, which oversees mental health licensing in New York and Florida, and they will review the situation you have identified. Their addresses and numbers are:

New York State Education Department  
Office of Professional Discipline  
1411 Broadway, Tenth Floor, New York, NY 10018  
800-442-8106

Department of Health  
Mental Health Professions  
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin C-08  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3258