

DIGITAL POLICY

This document acknowledges the complex world of digital media and tries its best to address issues that may impact the therapeutic relationship in an effort to keep it as safe as possible. I ask that you read these not as rigid rules but more as guidelines which may develop and change.

Keeping Boundaries:

The nature of the digital world can blur or stretch interpersonal boundaries, so it is important to be as clear as possible about how these may be compromised and take the steps we can to protect our work together.

Data Protection:

If we begin therapeutic work together you will be asked to review a GDPR compliant data protection statement, a copy of which is available on request.

Email:

By engaging via email we both accept the risks this entails including the fact that emails may be vulnerable to viruses or human error. For this reason, it is best to be thoughtful about what you include in emails and which email address you choose to send emails to me from. For your protection, please do not use email addresses related to other digital projects I am involved in to communicate with me about therapy.

The safest email account I have is sianamcgarvey@protonmail.com. Therapy clients may also receive emails from the secure database and recording platform I use (Writeupp). This is a “no reply” address however it is now set to redirect to my general email account at sianamcgarvey@outlook.com. I have chosen not to close this account because it is linked to several professional and

marketing contacts and platforms. While this one is not encrypted I have never encountered any security breaches with it.

Usually it is best to rely on email for non-confidential communications for logistic such as setting up appointment times. In an effort to keep confidential and psychological material safe and contained I feel it is best avoided in emails unless we discuss it beforehand.

I check emails only at certain times during office hours and not at weekends or holidays. Emailing me is never appropriate in the event of an emergency, in which case you should contact emergency services.

Text messages:

Please feel free to contact me by text message to alert me if you are running late for a session or for similar reasons. I generally check my phone for messages in between sessions during office hours.

Phone calls:

Please be aware that my phone is permanently silenced, unless I have a prearranged call. I do not take referrals by phone.

Video conferencing:

When engaging via video conferencing, we both agree not to record sessions. It is also crucial that we both ensure that our environments are safe, secure, and private. This forms part of the contract we both sign if we begin therapy together.

Media Activities:

It is important for you to be aware that part of my working life is in the public domain. I ask my clients and supervisees to give mindful consideration in

advance as to whether you choose to listen to / read / join / follow any public content and I encourage you *not* to if you have concerns about the impact on our therapeutic relationship for you. You are very welcome to discuss any aspect of this with me as relevant, at any point. This extends to former clients or supervisees who may come across information at a later date. Please do reach out and I will make space to discuss with you.

Social Media:

I have private social media accounts. While I do not accept “friend requests” from clients I realise that there can be some overlap across social networks, and that this sometimes comes to light online. If this were the case it would be something I would like us to discuss in session.

I am also a member of a number of online groups many of which are related to therapy and neurodiversity. I do not post on social media under pseudonyms. If there is anything which comes up in relation to this I am very open to discussing it with you in session.

I do not normally (knowingly) follow, link to, or engage with current or former clients on social media unless this is something we have discussed.

Google:

I have found it is best to avoid encountering information about you that does not come directly from you, therefore I do not “google” my clients. I am aware, however, that clients will often google prospective therapists as part of their process in choosing one. If you did so with me and this produced any questions, I would be happy to address them with you.

... Policy adapted with permission from Aaron Ballick Nov 2023...

<https://www.aaronballick.com/>

