

Social Media Policy

INTRODUCTION:

This document outlines our policy related to use of Social Media. Please read it carefully to learn how **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** professional staff shall conduct ourselves on the Internet and how you can expect us to respond to various interactions that may or might occur between us on the Internet.

FRIENDING:

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) does not accept “friend” or “contact” requests from current or former “clients” on any social networking site (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). Adding current, former or potential clients as “friends” or “contacts” on these sites could potentially compromise your confidentiality, as well as, our respective privacy. Additionally, it could blur the boundaries of our professional relationship and thereby create the potential for a “dual relationship”.

FANNING:

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) may, in its sole discretion, maintain a Facebook Page for professional practice purposes and allow interested people to share its blog posts and practice updates with other Facebook users. Any and/or all of the information shared on the Facebook page is available, in whole or in part, on the **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** website.

You are welcome to view **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** Facebook Page and read articles posted there, but, again, we cannot accept clients as Fans of this Page because having clients as Facebook Fans creates a greater likelihood of compromised client confidentiality and it is best to be explicit to all who may view any **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** list of Fans to know that they will not find **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** client names on that list.

Note that you should be able to subscribe to the Facebook page via RSS without becoming a Fan and without creating a visible, public link to **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** Facebook Page. You are more than welcome to do this.

FOLLOWING:

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) may, in its sole discretion, publish a blog on our website and may post news and information either on Facebook and/or other social media outlets. **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** has no expectation that you will necessarily want to follow our blog, etc., however, if you do and you use an easily recognizable name and we happen to notice that you’ve followed us there, we may possibly discuss it and its potential impact on our relationship.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) is concerned about your privacy. If you share this concern, there are more private ways to follow us (e.g., on Twitter, such as using an RSS feed or a locked Twitter list), which would eliminate your having a public link to **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** content.

While you are welcome to use your own discretion in choosing whether to follow **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**, we cannot follow you back because even a seemingly innocent and casual viewing of a client's online content outside of a "clinical" psychological services context can create confusion in regard to whether it is being done as a part of your legitimate psychological services or to satisfy the "follower's" personal curiosity. In addition, viewing your online activities without your informed consent and without our explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the "clinical" psychological services working relationship. If there are any issues and concerns from your online life that you wish to share with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff, please bring them to the "clinical" psychological services session where they can be addressed openly with your knowledge and consent.

INTERACTING:

Please do not use SMS (mobile phone text messaging) or messaging on Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn to contact **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** personnel. These sites are not secure. Also, there is no guarantee that **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff will read these messages in a timely fashion, if at all.

Please do not use Wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with any **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** personnel in public online if a previous or current established client/therapist relationship. Engaging with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** in this way could compromise your confidentiality.

If you need to contact **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone at 1-815-455-6736. Directing email communications to: admin@nicapc.com is the second best method *for administrative issues only* such as changing appointment times.

See the email section below for more information regarding email interactions.

USE OF SEARCH ENGINES:

It is not a regular part of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** internet practice to search for any clients on Google, Facebook or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions may or may not be made, in the sole discretion of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**.

GOOGLE READER:

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) cannot and does not follow current or former clients on Google Reader and does not use Google Reader to share articles. If there are things you want to share with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff that you think are relevant to your "clinical" psychological services, simply bring these items of interest into your "clinical" psychological services sessions.

BUSINESS REVIEW SITES:

You may find **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** on sites such as Yelp, Yahoo Local, Bing, or other places which list businesses. Some of these sites include forums in which users rate their service 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 or discover any listing of and/or by **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**, and/or any of its staff, on any of these sites, please know that such listing is not a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client and/or as a user of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** rendered “clinical” psychological services.

You should also be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate indirectly with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff about your feelings about any previous and/or current “clinical” psychological services, there is a good possibility that our staff may never see it. Of course, none of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in a “clinical” counseling and/or consultative relationship with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** staff wherever and with whomever you like.

Confidentiality means that **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** cannot tell people that you are its client, but you are always more than welcome to tell anyone you wish that you are receiving “clinical” psychological services at **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** or that a particular staff member is your clinical psychologist or even how you may feel about the quality of “clinical” psychological services provided to you, in any forum of your choice

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** encourages you to keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing information in a public forum to an unknown audience. If you proceed, consider using an unidentifiable pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection.

LOCATION-BASED SERVICES:

If you use location-based services on your mobile phone, you may wish to be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** does not place its practice as a check-in location on various sites such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, etc. However, if you have GPS tracking enabled on your device, it is possible that others may surmise that you are a recipient of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** “clinical” psychological services due to regular check-ins at **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** office on a regular basis. Please note this risk if you are intentionally “checking in,” from a **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** office or if you have a passive LBS app enabled on your phone.

EMAIL:

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA) professional staff cannot and will not use email for *clinical* matters. Please do not email any personal content related to your clinical consultation sessions, through **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**, as email is not

completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** administrative staff by email, be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of our respective 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 **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** may receive from you and any responses that it sends to you may become a part of your **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** record. (However, please note that email communication is an acceptable form of communication only for “non-clinical” personal mentoring services).

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for taking the time to review the Social Media Policy of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**. If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies and procedures or regarding our potential interactions on the Internet, please do bring them to the attention of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** professional and/or administrative personnel at your earliest opportunity by contacting us at: admin@nicapc.com

All policies subject to change in the sole discretion of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The Social Media Policy of **NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNSELING ASSOCIATES, P.C. (NICA)** has been adapted from the Social Media Policy of Keely Kolmes, Psy.D. – Social Media Policy© – 4/26/10. Her original work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA. <http://www.drkkolmes.com>