



## Andrea Morganstein, LPC LLC

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### COMMUNICATIONS POLICY:

In reflection of contemporary, widely used forms of communication in our modern lives, I have decided to make texting and emailing, in addition to phone contact, available to my clients, as a part of my practice. Below are details regarding these various methods of reaching me, should you choose to do so, and when each method would be ideal, as well as when to skip me and just go to the ER.

**\*\* Do not text or email for any emergency issues. \*\***

**\*\* I cannot guarantee that I will see/have access to email or texts at the time you send them. \*\***

1. In cases of immediate risk, call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency room. ONLY CONTACT ME WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT AS YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY TO, OR HAVE ARRIVED AT, THE ER.
2. For urgent matters, you can try texting me or call me on my work number, 610-314-0799, and leave me a confidential voicemail message. If you send/leave your message during business hours, I will strive to get back to you ASAP within that business day. During non-business hours, I may or may not be available to the phone. I will return your call within the first few hours of the next business day. If I am away, I will make arrangements for a colleague to monitor my calls in my absence. DO NOT EMAIL ME IN THIS CASE.
3. For non-emergency issues please call/leave me a voicemail at my phone, 610-314-0799, OR, if you have signed a release form regarding the use of texts or email ([andrea@andreasideas.com](mailto:andrea@andreasideas.com)), you may try to reach me by those methods. I monitor my phone during weekday business hours and the evenings that I'm in the office. On days off and weekends, I will check this number at least two times a day. I do not monitor email or texts messages when I have taken a "day off." In that case, please leave me a message and I will get back to you upon my return.

## Electronic Communications

### How we can use texting:

- I find that most people prefer to use texting when scheduling, canceling, rescheduling, or confirming appointments.
- Realistically, it is the method of contacting me that is likely to get the quickest response, though I do monitor my email and voicemail with close to the same frequency.

### How we can use email:

- I can send you copies of forms or links to things on the internet that we have discussed in session.
- I can send receipts and bills.
- We can schedule, cancel, and reschedule appointments.
- You can use this as a way to record some of your thoughts and send them off to me for us to discuss at your next session.

Per my state licensure guidelines as well as the policies of this practice, Andrea Morganstein, LPC, LLC, **I am required to print all emails and texts that are sent or received and include them in the confidential chart that is maintained in your name here in the office.**

Please be aware that use of email, unless it is done within therapy time, is not a service that you can receive reimbursement from an insurance company for. I offer this as a light supplement to the work that we do and, primarily, as a tool that YOU can use as we work together. I will strive to keep the amount of time that I spend on email to a minimum. My goal is to read your email within a day or two and send a short response back to you, so that you know that I have read it. We can then discuss it further at your next appointment.

## Other Forms of Contact

### Social Media:

Per the ethical guidelines of my profession and the state licensing board, **we can't have contact over social media such as Facebook or Twitter**. This is because it blurs the boundary between a professional relationship and a personal one. Such "Dual Relationships" have been found to be problematic for clients and can negatively affect you and the work that we do.

### Seeing Me in the Community:

Additionally, because of professional ethical requirements regarding protecting your confidentiality, it is my policy, should we encounter each other in public, to **not acknowledge knowing you unless you signal to me that you are comfortable with my doing so**. If you would like to approach me, I would happily welcome that and will follow your lead, but I would also understand if you don't want to be in the position to explain who I am.

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY: The Nerdy Details

### Phone & Texting Details

My practice, Andrea Morganstein, LPC, utilizes a phone system that is provided through a company called **Spruce**. Spruce is a company that uses the internet to provide both phone and text options for my phone number. I have selected Spruce because they can deliver their services in an encrypted/secure manner that meets current HIPAA standards, and they have signed a business associates agreement with me certifying that they will do so, with one notable exception, texting.

- Is talking with me on my phone confidential/secure? **YES**
- Is leaving me a voicemail on my phone confidential/secure? **YES**
- Is sending or receiving texts with me confidential/secure? **MAYBE**
  - **YES** if you are texting me directly using the Spruce app.
  - **NO** if you are texting me using your phones text message app.
    - One reason is, unless otherwise noted, all data that passes through the a typical cell phone company's servers do so in an **unencrypted** manner (like a postcard through the mail). These servers DO NOT meet HIPAA guidelines to insure your privacy. In other words, it is technically possible that employees of other internet companies or phone companies could look at the text messages that go through their servers, or for this data to be intercepted at other points within the internet, depending upon the type of text message service you are using.
    - Additionally, the messages are potentially insecure if you allow someone else to use your phone, your phone is not protected by a password and someone else has access to it or it is stolen, or if you receive notifications that show up on your phone's lock screen where anyone could read them.
- Finally, you should ask yourself whether you have a private space to read and respond to text messages.

### Email Details

(READ THIS IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN UTILIZING EMAIL AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION.)

- Think about a regular email as being like a postcard that is sent in the mail. It is possible for people, the ones who are responsible for the delivery of this postcard/message, to read the contents as the message passes through their care. Encrypted email is like putting that postcard into a box with a special combination lock and only the sender and the receiver know what the combination is.
- I have a signed contract with **Hushmail** for an email service that meets HIPAA standards as being reasonably secure, if used in specific ways.
- The email contents cannot be read by anyone besides the sender and the receiver of the email, **provided that the sender and receiver's passwords are kept secure and**
  - **the email exchange is between two Hushmail accounts** (this is when the postcard is being sent through the internet inside of a combination lock box and the users' hushmail phone app knows the secret combination)

- **OR the email exchange is between a Hushmail account and the Hushmail Web Interface** (this is when the postcard is stored in a combination lock box online and waiting for a person with the right password to go onto the Hushmail website to open it)
- Though it is not necessary to have a Hushmail account, if you should choose to create one, they are available in two forms: free & subscription. I have no financial connection to Hushmail (besides my own subscription) and will not benefit financially in any way should you choose to purchase a subscription, though you probably won't find that to be necessary.
- Note that, **should you reply to me in any other way** (besides having a Hushmail account or using Hushmail's online web interface) **it is NOT confidential**. Replying to me via your regular email is definitely NOT confidential, as it is sent through insecure parts of the internet like a postcard. However, it is up to you about whether you reply to me in this way (or at all).
- Other things you should factor into your own sense of privacy is:
  - Whether you are the exclusive user of the computer or phone that you view and/or write your emails on.
  - If anyone else has your email password.
  - If you are using a work email (employers can monitor email traffic in their own systems).
- Participation in an email exchange with me is **completely optional**. I am happy to provide therapy without using any form of electronic communication. I am offering this service for either your convenience or for therapeutic purposes but **participation is strictly voluntary**.

Hushmail's "Threat Index", published on it's [website](#) as of the review of this document.

Threat	Protected?
Attacker is listening to your Internet connection	✓
Attacker gets access to email stored on the server	✓
Attacker obtains data from the server's databases	✓
Attacker compromises webserver after you have accessed your email	⚠*
Attacker controls webserver while you are accessing your email	✗
Attacker has access to your computer after you have accessed your email	✓
Attacker has access to your computer before you access your email (and can install programs such as key loggers)	✗

⚠\* there is a chance some sensitive data could remain in memory on the server

#### How to Access Your Email From the Link You Receive

When I send you an email, it will be stored online on Hushmail's website. Hushmail will then send you a notification email with instructions for getting to their website so that you can view and reply to my email. When you click on this link, you will be prompted to create a passphrase. Please make a note of this as you will be able to use it again, for future emails. After you create your passphrase, you will then be prompted to answer the security question that we have previously discussed, to ensure that only you can read the email that I have sent you.

**If you have any questions about the information in the document,  
I am happy to discuss them with you.**