

## **Social Media Use**

Use of Social Media: Students engaging in clinical services with clients, patients, or other service users must refrain from engaging in or acknowledging relationships with these individuals in internet-based environments and/or social networking platforms. Students may not “friend,” “follow,” “message,” or otherwise engage in online relationships with service users from any of their practicum placements. Inviting or allowing a client to view a student’s personal user profile may place students in an ethical dilemma, especially regarding clients’ right to privacy/confidentiality, duty to warn/protect, and professional conduct. Never post content online regarding therapy sessions, even if personally identifiable information is concealed. Posts that reference or include information regarding therapeutic services undermine the trust the public and clients place in mental health providers and may be damaging. It is also important that deleting information does not always remove it permanently. Content posted (even if deleted) may be owned by the site administrator and shared with other parties.

In addition, it is an important component of professional development to consider student personal use of social networking and social media. Student online profiles may reflect their professional identity as a student therapist and aspiring psychologist. Current clients, prospective clients, prospective employers, and others may use social media and other online networks as part of their discovery process, so post wisely and consider carefully to present information as a professional.