



Internet and Social Media Policy

A primary concern at A Vital Life/A Good Night's Sleep (below written as AVL/AGNS) is your privacy. These policies are designed to keep your confidential information confidential. Please take your privacy as seriously as I take my commitment of confidentiality to you.

With any kind of text messaging, please keep in mind that there is no way for someone who is out of cell phone range to indicate that they are not able to receive text messages. If Dr. Stone or her Designee is away and not able to receive messages, there will be an outgoing phone message to indicate this fact, making a phone call a better way for you to reach out.

Interacting electronically

Unfortunately, email systems can be hacked, and currently, many email providers comb through the body of emails in order to figure out what ads to serve. At AVL/AGNS, I do not use email to communicate with clients, because it is not secure or confidential. Some secure, encrypted text messaging or online therapy platform apps do allow for the confidential exchange of documents.

I request that you do not use messaging over any Social Networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn to contact Dr. Stone/ AVL/AGNS. These Social Networking sites are not secure or confidential. It will also be likely that no one reads your message in a timely fashion. Dr. Stone does not friend or follow clients (more details below). If you try to engage with Dr. Stone over Social Media, it could compromise your confidentiality. It could also create the possibility that these exchanges become a part of your legal medical record and will need to be documented and stored in your records at AVL/AGNS.

For Dr. Stone/AVL/AGNS to view your online activities without your consent and without explicit arrangement towards a specific purpose could potentially have a negative influence on the working relationship. If there are things from your online life that you wish to share with a therapist, please bring them to your therapy sessions.

If you need to contact Dr. Stone between sessions, the best way to do so is by phone.

Location-based services on phones

If you use location-based services on your mobile phone, please be aware of the privacy issues related to using these services. Facebook, for example, has been known to make friend suggestions based on two people's phones being close together on a regular basis. GPS data makes it possible that others could know that you are a therapy client at AVL/AGNS due to regular check-ins at our office on a weekly basis. Please be aware of this risk, and know that it may be more private to turn off location/GPS before you come to the office.

Use of Search Engines

Is it *not* a regular part of Dr. Stone's/ AVL/AGNS's practice to search for clients on Google, DuckDuckGo, Bing, Facebook, or other search engines. Extremely rare exceptions *may* be made during times of crisis. If there is reason to suspect that you are in danger and you have not been in touch via our usual means (phone, coming to appointments), then there *might* be an instance in which using a search engine to find you, find someone close to you, or to check on your recent status becomes necessary as part of ensuring your welfare. These are unusual situations, and if Dr. Stone/AVL/AGNS ever has to resort to them, the search will be fully documented and discussed with you at the next in-person appointment.

Business Review Sites

Dr. Stone has not added AVL/AGNS to any business review websites. You may find psychology practices on sites such as Yelp, Healthgrades, Yahoo Local, or other sites 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 Dr. Stone/A Vital Life/ A Good Night's Sleep on any of these sites, please know that such a listing is there without our consent and is NOT a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client. **The American Psychological Association's Ethics Code states under Principle 5.05 that it is unethical for psychologists to solicit testimonials.**

If you do choose to write something on a business review site, keep in mind that you may be sharing personally revealing and confidential information in a public forum. Of course, you have the right to express yourself on any site you choose. I urge you, if you do choose to write on such a site, to create a pseudonym that is not linked to your regular email address or friend networks for your own privacy and protection. Due to confidentiality concerns, Dr. Stone/AVL/AGNS will not respond to any review on any such site whether it is positive or negative, and there is a good chance we will never see what you write.

If you have feelings that you want to share about your work with Dr. Stone, please bring your feelings and reactions directly into the therapy process. This can be an important part of therapy, even if you decide you and your therapist are not a good fit. None of this is meant to keep you from sharing that you are in therapy wherever or with whomever you choose. Confidentiality means that your therapist cannot tell people outside of the therapy relationship that you are a client, without a signed Release of Information, except in rare, emergency instances covered in the disclosure, polices, and consent form.

Social Media

Dr. Stone/ AVL/AGNS does not accept personal Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and/or other friend/connection/follow requests via any Social Media. Any such request will be denied in order to maintain professional boundaries. Dr. Stone/ AVL/AGNS has, or may have, a business social media account page, which she checks probably twice a year. There is no requirement that you "like" or "follow" this page. If you "like" or choose to "follow" Dr. Stone's/ AVL/AGNS's business social media page, others will see your name associated with "liking" or "following" that page. This same provision applies to any comments that you post on Dr. Stone's/ AVL/AGNS's page/wall as well. Any comments you post regarding therapeutic work between you and your therapist will be deleted as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read these policies. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand this document, and agree to the following:

I agree that I will refrain from discussing, commenting, and/or asking therapeutic questions via any social media platform.

I agree that if I have a therapeutic comment and/or question that I will contact my therapist through the communication methods I consented to and not through social media.

Client signature

Date