

**REBECCA STANWYCK, LCSW, BCD**

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## **"What (and how) should I call you?" - Policies on Client Communications**

Here is some additional information about how I prefer to communicate with my clients, and how I prefer that clients communicate with me. And by the way, please call me "Rebecca", as I am not a doctor.

### Phone, voicemail and text messages

I do use a "smartphone" as my business phone, so that I am available to answer calls from either office during my work day, which is normally Monday - Friday, 8 am to 8 pm. I make every effort to return calls promptly, usually the same day. My smartphone also allows me to send and receive text messages and email (as well as video), however I don't use it in the ways most people do.

First, I usually turn it off at the end of my work day, which means that you can leave me a message after hours without concern that you will be interrupting my evening or weekend. Secondly, I do not enter or store client names in my contacts, which means that if you leave a voicemail or send a text, you need to identify yourself! And finally, I usually delete all voicemail and text messages after a couple of weeks. My phone is also password-protected. I prefer calls and voicemail to texts, however I realize that texting is easier in some circumstances, for example to let me know you're running late for your appointment.

If I should need to contact you, for example to let you know that I am running late or must cancel our appointment (*which almost never happens!*), my preference is to call you at a number where I can either reach you directly or leave you a private voicemail message. If I call your home number and someone other than you answers, I will usually either not leave a message at all, or simply leave my first name and phone number, to protect your privacy.

Please let me know what your personal preferences are for me to contact you (e.g. home phone or mobile, voicemail or text?) and I will note them in your file.

### After-hours support

Typically, I *do* check for messages regarding appointment requests and cancellations over the weekend, but unless we have made arrangements in advance, please *do not* expect me to return your call in the evening or during the weekend. If you are in crisis and it is after-hours, please *do* leave me a message, and *then* call the County Crisis Hotline for support. The number is on my voicemail greeting: **800-309-2131**.

*(continued on back)*

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**Rebecca Stanwyck, LCSW**

Email and my website

You may also contact me via email: [mail@rebeccastanwyck.com](mailto:mail@rebeccastanwyck.com). Please be aware that I do not check email as frequently as voicemail, so I prefer that you call or text if you need to inform me you're running late to our appointment or have to cancel. I also want to remind you that email is not as confidential as voicemail, so I prefer that you only use it to arrange or cancel appointments, or for other routine matters like requesting a statement. For your own privacy, I recommend that you do not use email to tell me everything that's going on with you! (If you do that, I will print it out and it does become part of your client record.)

There is a great deal of useful information, including articles I have written and links to other resources, on my website, [www.rebeccastanwyck.com](http://www.rebeccastanwyck.com). Please take a look!

Tele-therapy

I have a strong preference to conduct counseling or therapy face-to-face, and some health insurance plans may not pay for phone or video sessions. Please let me know if you would like to be able to do phone or video sessions, and we can discuss.

Social media

I do not accept requests from clients to connect on Facebook, LinkedIn, or any other social media, as I believe that this is potentially a boundary violation (please ask me to explain if you're not familiar with this concept).

If you see me walking down the street . . .

Or at the grocery store, or anywhere else that people who live and work in the same community are likely to meet, please know that I will always choose to respect your privacy first, and worry about being perceived as rude later. In other words, if I see you first, I'll probably look away or walk away. However, I'll take my cues from you, so if you smile and say "hello," I will respond the same way.

Vacation coverage

I do take vacations, typically a few weeks a year, with plenty of advance notice given, and normally I do not check voicemail and email while I'm on vacation. I usually have a colleague provide coverage, which means I will leave their phone number on my voicemail greeting (and out-of-office email notice). If you call and speak with them, they will inform me of this when I return. If you choose to schedule a session with my colleague while I'm on vacation, you will be asked to sign a release so they can inform me of what was discussed. And please be aware that your health insurance or EAP may not cover the session.

Updated January 1, 2020