



## Friend Requests from Clients

**Question:** Recently I logged into my personal Facebook profile and saw a friend request from the mother of one of my minor clients. I don't want to insult her by not accepting the request, but I'm not sure if it is appropriate to do so?

All ACSLPA regulated members are bound by the College's *Code of Ethics* to "avoid real or perceived conflict of interest in which their professional integrity, professional independence, or the provision of professional services can be influenced or compromised".

'Friending' a client can blur the distinction between personal and professional relationships and can therefore create a potential for conflict of interest. Personal connections between a provider and their client could lead to the perception of preferential treatment by others. The regulated member also has a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the therapeutic relationship, which can be impacted by information on a person's personal social media profile.

For these reasons, it would be best for regulated members not to accept friend or follow requests from clients on any of their **personal** profiles on any social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc.). Regulated members in this position may also want to explain to their clients why they are not able to friend or follow them on their personal social media profiles, by stating that personal relationships (even on social media) may place the regulated member in a conflict of interest.

Some regulated members may use business profiles on Facebook and other social media sites to promote their businesses, provide information about their businesses for established and potential clients (e.g., location, opening hours), and to provide general educational information. These regulated members should also be aware of the potential for conflict of interest in the management of their business social media profiles. Clients may choose to follow a regulated member's business page, but regulated members may not want to use their business profile to 'follow' or 'friend' a client, as it creates a potential for a conflict of interest as above.

