

MESSAGES THAT CANNOT BE UNSENT:

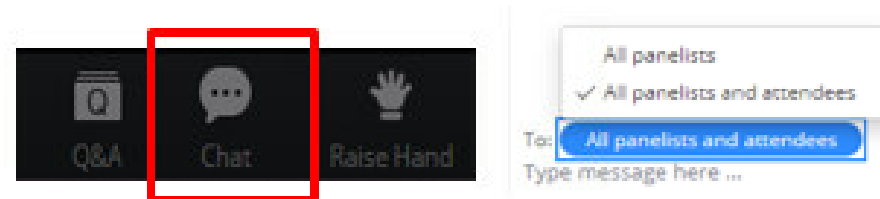
**GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO AVOID
ETHICAL PITFALLS WHEN USING
SOCIAL MEDIA IN HEALTHCARE.**

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Webinar Housekeeping


- ▶ Everyone will be muted except the host and moderator
- ▶ Ask questions through the Zoom chat box



- ▶ All webinars will be recorded and posted on [Regional Ethics Network](#) website
- ▶ Evaluation to follow



We are privileged to provide care on lands that Indigenous peoples have called home for thousands of years.



IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL

- Learn about the extent, functions and benefits of social media usage in health care
- Understand the ethical challenges that arise from social media usage in healthcare
- Learn practical tips to ensure that we engage in ethical social media use.

REFLECTION

- What do you use your social media platform for?

MANY HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (HCP'S) ARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO:

- Share their thoughts or content
- Connect with other HCP's and everyone else
- Find and engage with relatable content.
- Educate other HCP's and the general public (promoting public awareness)
- Learn
- Brand and advertise
- Report and comment on issues like discrimination in the workplace.

RELATABLE CONTENT



ADVANTAGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN HEALTHCARE

- Extending care into the community
- Demystifying health care content, literature, terminologies and themes
- Fosters learning
- Empowering patients and the public to be in charge of their own healthcare by having access to information from seasoned HCP's

SPECIAL ISSUES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BY HCP'S

- Medutainment (Online skits, Tik Tok content, YouTube Vlogs etc.)
- Providing medical advice or online consults
- Online “friendship” with patients/clients.

MAJOR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

I. Consent

- Patients/clients have the right to decide when and if their personal health information should be shared outside of the primary care team.
 - ❖ Were you given informed consent to share the information that you are about to share?
 - ❖ When and how did you receive consent from your patient/client?

MAJOR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

2. Privacy and Confidentiality

- Healthcare workers and organizations have a legal and ethical responsibility, whether in the workplace or outside of it, to protect the private information of patients with which they are entrusted.
 - ❖ Are you protecting your patients/client's information?
 - ❖ Have you taken extra measures to protect their privacy and ensure that they cannot be identified?

MAJOR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

3. Veracity

- Also known as truth-telling, is defined as ‘accurate, timely, objective and comprehensive transmission of information, as well as to the way the professional fosters patients understanding’ (Beauchamp and Childress, 2009. P.303).
 - ❖ Are you sharing accurate, evidence-based medical information with the public?
 - ❖ Are you truth bombing the public and creating unnecessary panic?
 - ❖ Is it necessary to share the information you have when you did?

MAJOR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

4. Professionalism

- Professionalism refers to the skills and attributes required or expected of members of the medical profession (Canadian Medical Protective Association, 2021).
- Among the attributes expected from HCP's include integrity, honesty, respect for others, accountability, compassion, excellence and altruism.

Examples of professional breaches:

- Crossing professional boundaries with patients/clients
- Using covert or overt discriminatory language or undertone in your contents or making disparaging remarks about your patients and colleagues
- ❖ Is your content clashing with your professional obligations?
- ❖ Are you able to maintain and separate your personal and professional identity if and when necessary?

MAJOR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA USE

5. Fidelity (Trust)

- Fidelity involves building trusting relationships between patients/public and healthcare providers/ organizations.
- It speaks to trust and loyalty between HCP's and patients/clients.
- This involves acting in the best interest of your patients/clients and the public.
- Breaches of professional and ethical expectation by HCP's on social media will lead to an erosion of trust in the patient-HCP relationship and the public-healthcare system relationship.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

I. Privacy

- Sharing Personal Health Information (PHI) of Patients and Clients without proper consent, measures and guides is a breach of privacy.
- PHI is protected under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).
- When found guilty of sharing PHI on social media irresponsibly, one could be subject to institutional review, resulting in job suspension or loss or even legal action.

HARD LINE (CASE I)

- Florida nurse is fired for posting photos of a newborn with birth defect on Instagram- <https://nypost.com/2021/10/01/nurse-fired-for-posting-photos-of-newborn-with-birth-defect/>



The image shows the top portion of a news article from the New York Post. At the top is a red navigation bar with a white hamburger menu icon on the left and the "NEW YORK POST" logo in white, bold, italicized font. Below the navigation bar is a white bar containing six social media sharing icons: Facebook (blue), Twitter (light blue), Facebook Messenger (red), WhatsApp (green), Email (red), and Print (red). Below this is a white section with a red "NEWS" tag on the left. The main headline is in large, bold, black font: "Florida nurse fired for posting photos of newborn with birth defect on Instagram". Below the headline, the author's name "By Joshua Rhett Miller" and the date and time "October 1, 2021 | 9:55am" are displayed in a smaller, grey font.

“My night was going great them boom!” one post by Samuels read, showing a photo of the newborn taken inside the hospital’s newborn intensive care unit.

“Your intestines posed to be inside not outside baby!” Samuels’ sickening post read, **WSVN reported last month.**

ETHICAL BREACHES FROM CASE I

- Consent, Privacy and confidentiality
 - ❖ Disclosing patient identity and location without consent
- Professionalism
 - ❖ Unprofessional comments about the patient
- Fidelity
 - ❖ The nurse's actions could reduce trust between parents with children in the ICU and the HCP's.

BLURRED LINE (CASE 2)

- ❖ A surgical resident in a rural community surgery clinic has a very interactive YouTube channel where he vlogs about his daily life as a resident.
- ❖ After scrubbing in on a very interesting “once in a lifetime” surgery, he talked about this case on his vlog.
- ❖ He mentioned that the surgery was performed on a woman in her 40’s and was done “yesterday”, but he did not reveal any other information about the patient.
- ❖ The patient stumbled upon the vlog and complained to the clinic administrator that she would have not signed up for the surgery if she knew her case would be discussed on a public platform. She believes that her close family members would be able to identify her based on the little description given and that her right to privacy has been breached.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR HCP'S

1. Follow your college professional guidelines on social media usage.
2. Pause and reflect on your content before posting.
3. Remember to strip your content of every type of PHI there is. After doing that, avoid using dates and posting on the same day the situation/procedure occurred.
4. Avoid discussing unusual cases on social media if you practice or work in a small community.
5. Try modifying information that is generalizable.
6. Do not be tempted to treat or diagnose patients online. Refer to the appropriate resources.
7. Endeavour to post only clear and verified information
8. Create professional and personal accounts e.g Insta-Finsta.
9. Manage disagreements with others online by keeping things respectful and quote facts to counter mistruth.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS TO FACILITATE ETHICAL USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Perform continuous review of the social media landscape and adjust guidelines to fit.
- Educate staff and learners about work place social media policies.
- Create safe spaces for workers (Team Huddles, Monthly meetings) where sharing and venting can occur.
- Provide real, helpful and compassionate structures that can help health care workers report issues like discrimination without fear of punishment or revenge.

KEY POINTS

- The use of social media by healthcare Providers is powerful and has the ability to drive change
- Social media usage can also be fraught with challenges
- Endeavour to use social media ethically
- Enjoy

COLLEGE GUIDELINES AND ACTS

1. The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers-
<https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/OCSWSSW-Social-Media-Terms-of-Use.pdf>
2. College of physicians and surgeons of Ontario position statement on social media use-
<https://www.cpso.on.ca/Physicians/Policies-Guidance/Statements-Positions/Social-Media-Appropriate-Use-by-Physicians>
3. College of Nurses Ontario Position statement on Social Media use-
<https://www.cno.org/globalassets/docs/prac/incr-social-media-use-common-expectations-for-nurses.pdf>
4. Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, S.O. 2004, c. 3, Sched.A-
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/04p03/v38>

REFERENCES

1. Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2001). Principles of biomedical ethics. Oxford University Press, USA.
2. Canadian Medical Protection Association (2021). Professionalism in practice. Link- https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/serve/docs/ela/goodpracticesguide/pages/professionalism/Professionalism_in_practice/being_professional-e.html

