HIV PREVENTION COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT
Partner Services - Linkage to Care - Counseling & Testing
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
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FOREWORD

“Find us on Facebook!” “Be sure to hashtag us on Instagram!” “Don’t forget to retweet!” You have probably heard one of these phrases at least once in the last five years. You’ve probably also seen that big white “F” with the blue backdrop, a little light blue bird fluttering about, and the front of a retro Polaroid camera posted on practically every advertisement that has passed through your hands, been seen online, or been noticed on a storefront.

Social media is everywhere. The Internet has allowed us to access practically anything we desire. It serves as a never-ending resource for people living with HIV, people working in the field of HIV, and people looking for more information on HIV. Over the last decade or so, emerging technology has been harnessed in social media. Whether you’re into it or not, social media is now the most accepted way to reach mass audiences with numerous backgrounds and tastes. Social media gives us the opportunity to reframe HIV prevention programming, outreach, and linkages to care and their benefits and to build a supportive online community for each of the populations we engage. You may dismiss social media as a fad, but it isn’t. (More about that later.) Social media is becoming a non-negotiable in every aspect of our personal and professional lives, especially in HIV prevention.

So, what is social media? There are many conventional definitions of social media. But, everyone has their own unique take on it...

“Social media is a shift in how we get our information. It used to be that we would wait for the paper boy to throw our news on the doorstep, and we’d read the paper, front to back, with our morning coffee before going to work. Now, we get information, 24/7 and on the fly, from anywhere — in the more traditional senses, online, on our phones, and through social platforms. Social media allows us to network, to find people with like interests, and to meet people who can become friends or customers. It flattens out the world and gives us access to people we never would have been able to meet otherwise.”

Gini Dietrich, Arment Dietrich, Inc.

“Most literally, social media would be any object or tool that connects people in dialogue or interaction — in person, in print, or online. In common usage, social media has come to mean a specific category of practices, technology, tools, and online sites that involve social relationships, participation, and user-generated content.”

Liz Strauss - SOBCon

http://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition/
INTRODUCTION

The idea for this toolkit arose as a result of a series of regional meetings and focus groups with HIV staff throughout the state of Michigan. Throughout those meetings, one of the recurring themes was a growing interest in using social media as a resource for HIV prevention work. We listened carefully, and this toolkit is the result of those conversations.

We realize that social media training is not “one size fits all.” Everyone learns differently. Some local HIV staff may already use social media, while others may never have done so. If you would like to develop and implement a local campaign, but are new to social media and not sure where to start, MDHHS can help you. To request assistance, just complete and submit the short online form at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Social_Media_Technical_Assistance_Request_Form_506697_7.docx.

Okay. Let’s get started. Here’s what you will find in this toolkit:

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**Why Create a Social Media Presence?**

Creating a social media communications plan to promote Partner Services (PS) can increase visibility, understanding and delivery. Social media is a great tool to clarify exactly who you are and what your program does. You want to be able to reach a wide audience that includes: potential clients, local health departments, community based-organizations, healthcare providers, community stakeholders, and grantees.

Your *main goal* is to make the benefits of Partner Services known as a proven intervention tool to your at-risk populations, address the misconceptions around Partner Services participation, and get them into care in the way that works best for *them*. Secondly, you also want to keep communities informed with the most up to date and pertinent information on HIV/STD prevention and care.

**Before we get started, here’s some food for thought...**

- Nearly 2.1 billion people have social media accounts.
- 71% of adult Internet users are on Facebook, 23% are on Twitter, and 26% are on Instagram.
- The average social media user spends approximately 2 hours and 25 minutes per day using social networks.
- If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest in the world.
- Users upload 300 million photos to Facebook via Instagram every day.
- Twitter has more than 650 million registered users.
- Users in the 55-64 age group are Twitter’s fastest growing demographic. (They’ve increased by 79% since 2012.)
- 40% of cell phone owners access a social networking site on their phone; 28% do so every day.
- 25% of smartphone owners ages 18-44 say they cannot recall the last time their smartphone wasn’t next to them.

*Sources:* [Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/); [We Are Social](https://wearesocial.com); [GlobalWebIndex](https://globalwebindex.com); [JeffBullas.com](http://jeffbullas.com)
HOW TO CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

**STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR GOAL.**

What do you hope to accomplish with your Partner Services Social Media Plan? We know there are misconceptions about Partner Services and what we do. We need to address those misconceptions by clearly outlining the benefits of Partner Services and explaining how the program really works; we can take these two pieces and elaborate from there. Ask yourself the following:

- Where can your local HIV Prevention/Partner Services do better?
- Do you want to increase your program visibility?
- Do you want to use a great deal of data to deliver your messages?
- Do you want to increase the efficiency of clients getting referred into treatment within a certain timeframe?
- Are you looking to make Partner Services a routine part of prevention counseling?
- Are you having issues identifying partners?

These are the types of things you can address with social media. As you start setting your social media goals, look at the strengths and weaknesses of your organization, and what resources are out there to help you achieve your goals.

**STEP 2: IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE.**

To accomplish your goals, you must first have an audience. It’s important to go where your people are. Today, that place would be social media. Typically, audiences are diverse relative to HIV/STDs, so some of your specific messages may look to reach men who have sex with men, while others may be designed to reach at-risk sex and needle-sharing partners, adolescent youth, or other at-risk populations.
If you're looking to reach more than one audience, then you may want to prioritize them. What can you do to tap into each specific audience? Learn as much as you can about influencers and motivators and then expand from there. Don’t be afraid to experiment and see how well some test messages do before you decide which way to go. The power that social media wields can certainly help your organization promote prevention and linkage to care efforts and services, and it’s up to you to harness that power.

**Step 3: Develop your message.**

So, now that you have identified your target audience, what will resonate with them? You want to elicit an emotion or feeling from your audience with regard to your Partner Services programming. Good message development will support your overarching goal. How we come off in a message is very important, especially when we’re talking about HIV/STDs. We never want to tell anyone to *do something*. Instead, be friendly and positive, and suggest a certain action — a main point of message development is thought provocation.

**Example:** *Making sure my partners know of their possible risk and getting tested is a sure way to help everyone stay safe.*

**Example:** *Help keep everyone safe and build trust. Notify your partners of their possible risk.*

**Example:** *Testing makes us stronger. We all have reasons to get tested for HIV. What are yours?*

Always start by making a positive statement.

**Step 4: Choose your tool(s).**

How does your audience receive and share particular information? What is the best way to deliver your message? Think about the different mediums of communication and
decide which would work best for your audience and for the messages you want to put out there. We’ll discuss this in more detail later.

**Step 5: Create an action plan and a timeline.**

You have your strategies, now you have to combine them into an action plan and a timeline. This is the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of your social media plan. It is extremely important to set realistic goals for this particular part of your plan. Things change, and your timeline may change accordingly with them. A great deal of media work can come at the spur of the moment, so make sure your plans can adapt to change!

**Step 6: Decide how to evaluate your efforts.**

Before implementing your plan, make sure you have solid benchmarks and a method to measure the outcomes for evaluation. Does your communications plan address your program goals? How will you measure its success? How will you determine where to improve it?

**Finding Your Audience**

Although our audience varies greatly, we do have a pretty good idea of who we’re trying to communicate with. Our primary audience would be the persons engaging in high-risk activities. This could include men who have sex with men, or injection drug users. Our secondary audience would be our stakeholders that have a vested interest in HIV prevention and linkage to care (community-based organizations, other local health departments, universities, physician groups, etc.). Since we have two major audience groups, we must prioritize our goals for each of them, and work that into the timeline we discussed.
So, now we know **who** we want to reach. The **where** involves the service regions of the 16 local health departments offering Partner Services. How about the **what**? What do your audiences think about Partner Services? **What do you want them to think about Partner Services?**

A main objective for Partner Services is to notify partners of their possible exposure and link them into treatment. Not everyone knows that Partner Services is an option, so we need to do some educating. We don’t want to just give persons in our audience a link to a Facebook page with some information, or hand them a print-out with some data on it. We want to continue the conversation beyond our first contact, and to do that, we have to join *their* conversations. Listening is a greater service than speaking. Listen to what members of your audience are saying about prevention, treatment and partner services, claim a stake in that conversation, and create your messages accordingly. We’ll learn how to do that in the next part of this toolkit.

### Developing Messages for Partner Services

- **Why do you want to frame it?**
  - What do you want to achieve with your messaging? If you have an objective in mind, think about what you have to do to reach that objective. Are there some pre-requisites to achieving that goal? For every goal, there is another behind it.
  - Let’s say you want to increase general awareness around Partner Services. That’s your main goal, but there can always be a more articulated goal behind that one, for instance, clarifying how Partner Services programming actually works, and what it entails. (Other examples could include: privacy and confidentiality, options available for notifying partners, benefits of programming, etc.) Use this approach to narrow your goals down to something specific.

- **Who will see it?**
  - Your audience might get larger or smaller, depending on the message you’re putting out. Different audiences will need different messages to pique their interest and engage with your cause.
If your audience is too diverse, their interests could very well be too diverse, and their knowledge of your cause could be all over the place. To have a message reach an audience effectively, you need to know what your audience cares about, what they already know, why it matters to them, and what makes them engage. **Make sure you post content for everyone you're trying to reach.**

- **Active voice and tactics in messaging**
  - When you see an advertisement on television or online that *tells* you to do something you have no interest in, what is your first thought? Of course, it’s “no.” The lesson here? Using the active voice in messaging, especially around a touchy subject like HIV, can make or break engagement for your program. Instead of telling someone to *do* something, be mindful of crafting your message as a friendly reminder or suggestion. Remember what was mentioned earlier: Be sure your messaging includes a positive statement.

  - **Example:** “Help keep the community healthy. Make sure your partners know about their possible risk. Get tested, and stay safe!”

  - **Example:** “Responsible relationships start with trust. Let your partners know about their possible risk, and stay safe!”

**Barriers to Social Media Use**

With social media implementation, there are bound to be barriers. Partner services has its share of challenges. For some, Partner Services may be associated with negativity, as some members of the community view health departments as the “sex police,” prying into people’s privacy. You are most certainly not the “sex police,” so consider how you can change this perception.

There is a great deal of misinformation floating around about Partner Services programming, and HIV in general, so it is your job to correct that information and establish some common ground with your audience. When a program doesn’t have a great perception, for whatever reason, if you do not address it, that perception becomes accepted. If you don’t take corrective action, it’s almost like telling your population “whatever you’ve heard is true.” A good solution in this situation is to create some type of media material that plays on a “fact
vs. fiction” theme. You’re taking action to correct misinformation, you’re inviting your audience to weigh in on the conversation, and you’re asking your audience to be a part of the conversation, so you can understand where they’re coming from. Persuade your audience to consider your messaging, and go from there.

Make sure your message gives a concise idea of the potential relationship between your program and your audience without the barriers.

Getting the “Buy-In” from Your Agency

There is another barrier you need to consider: buy-in from the rest of your health department.

For some health departments, in-house capacity is an issue. A study conducted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials noted that knowledge among staff and department, funding issues, and lack of access to technical support are all common barriers for organizations. The study also noted lack of support from leadership, and issues with policies to inform program development and platform use.

Here is a list of notable quotes from health department employees who were interviewed for the study:

- “It doesn’t matter if an account is free if you don’t know how to use it well, and if no one knows about it.”
- “In a small district with limited resources, learning from others can catapult me years ahead.”

Make Your Case!

The Wellington–Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Social Media Toolkit includes some great points supporting public health’s use of social media. Social media can help you...

- improve loyalty, trust and confidence in your organization;
- be seen as accessible, approachable and current;
- strengthen brand awareness, allowing your health department to be considered a trusted voice;
- capture public sentiment on health topics and correct misinformation;
- increase interactions and build relationships with others, including the public and your partners;
- improve reach and accessibility, and increase access to health information;
- support health behaviors and provide peer/social/emotional support;
- tailor messages to specific audiences;
- influence policy;
- respond in an emergency;
- enhance surveillance;
- raise awareness of the breadth of topics and activities public health is involved in;
- amplify messages; and
- educate within each interaction.
“Use of social media has to be encouraged from the top down.”
“We don’t want to set everything up only to have it all shut down by the legal department.”
“Guidelines and policies are needed because everything we produce through social media is a public, discoverable document.”

Do some of these statements sound familiar? Keep them in mind.

Some solutions for these specific issues would be to share best practices and advance an evidence-based approach, as well as sharing and discussing existing policies with other local health departments. Legal and security issues have also been identified as barriers to social media implementation.

If your department staff is stretched too thin, one possible solution would be to hire a social media intern. Interns can be a great investment for the following reasons (Forbes):

1. Interns challenge the stale “because that’s the way we’ve always done it” mentality and bring fresh, new ideas to your organization. Interns are good at questioning processes and often can see a better way of doing things.
2. Social media, computer programs, iPads — these are a piece of cake for young professionals.
3. An internship is a great way to see how much potential a student or recent graduate has in the field. You’ll get to see their skills and work ethic in a temporary position, and you might choose to bring them on as a paid employee down the line.
4. An interested candidate takes on an internship in hopes of accomplishing something to use on their resume or in future interviews. Give them real, meaningful work that will help your organization run smoother, accomplish more, or be more successful.
5. Hiring an intern helps spread the word about your company, whether you mean to or not. If you’re an impressive internship supervisor and mentor, your interns will probably talk about their experience with peers, friends, and family members, essentially providing free advertising for your organization.
FEELING OVERWHELMED YET?

By now, you might have a million things running through your head about social media. But, take a step back, and let’s go through things one step at a time. New technology, new rules, new content... It may seem like a lot to take in all at once, and just like all the other trusted networks and connections you’ve built, it obviously takes time and effort to cultivate an online presence. But, know this: You aren’t starting from scratch. In fact, you already have a lot going on for you, including existing materials, knowledge of the community you serve, and a history of helping people to stay HIV negative or, alternatively, helping those who are living with HIV to get the support and help they need. None of that expertise you’ve built goes away. Rather, it provides a foundation for getting started with social media. The trick is taking what you already have and applying it in different ways.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, ETHICS, & CONFIDENTIALITY

Ok. You have your idea, and you have your strategy. Now, ask yourself: Is your organization ready to engage in social media? Successful use of social media requires a certain level of openness and transparency, not to mention the possibility that you may lose some control of your message, since being social means listening as much as talking. Be honest with yourself when thinking through how to integrate social media into organizational planning.

- What can be learned from other new initiatives?
- Who are the right people to involve from the start?
- How should you address concerns over using social media in general?
- What is the best way to respond to feedback you’ll receive, both positive and negative?

One way to help address these questions is to create a social media policy to define how employees can — and should — use social media in the workplace. Having clarity in how social media should and should not be used can help protect everyone involved. But, how you involve your organization in social media is completely up to you. If you aren’t sure where to start in creating an internal policy, take a look at the policy generator tool located at www.socialmedia.policytool.net. All you need to do is answer a few questions, and it will help you create a comprehensive tool. From there, you can edit it as needed to reflect your specific needs.
Although they do not specifically deal with HIV prevention, and are more based towards local/state government, the links below are good examples of comprehensive social media policies:

- **Kern County (CA) Public Health Services Department Social Media Policy:** [http://kernpublichealth.com/social-media-policy/](http://kernpublichealth.com/social-media-policy/)

**Social Media Best Practices**

**Keep your content constant!**

How does your organization look if six months pass between each of your social media posts? It makes your organization look like you aren’t engaged in your mission. If you don’t keep current with your posts, you will lose audience and support. Keep your content constant to grow your audience/support base!

**Collaborate online with influencers in your field.**

Watch what your neighbors in your county, as well as in other counties, are doing. If there is an opportunity to work together to tackle an issue, do what you can to make it happen! Use the resources produced by the CDC and other leaders in the HIV/STD Prevention to your advantage. If you see something you like, don’t be afraid to ask questions, or for guidance.
Transparency is important!

Partner Services needs a confidence booster. To do that, you must remain as transparent as possible and answer all inquiries and comments (regardless of whether they are good or bad) in a timely fashion. If someone has an issue with a post or wants to know more, what kind of picture does it paint if you don’t respond to them quickly?

Keep an eye on health literacy.

More often than not, health information is presented in a way that is not usable by a majority of adults. According to the CDC:

- Nearly 9 in 10 adults have difficulty using the everyday health information that is routinely available in health care facilities, retail outlets, media, and communities.
- Without clear information and an understanding of the information’s importance, people are more likely to skip necessary medical tests, end up in the emergency room more often, and have a harder time managing chronic conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure.
- About 1 in 2 adults has below-basic health literacy skills, which means they would find it difficult to read and follow instructions on a prescription medicine label.
- Plain language is important. Use it!

Use verbs in your messages to promote a specific behavior/action. We identify the problem, connect with our audience, and hope to create engagement/change in behavior.

- The audience will want to know what they’ll be getting out of your message, so make sure you address that!
- Respect your audiences.
- Encourage change.
• Connect your message with a service or an opportunity (testing locations, etc.).

**Time Management Considerations**

Before you finalize your social media plan and start delving into social media, make sure you are well prepared and have all your bases covered.

• What social media tools are people already familiar with?
• Can at least one (or potentially more) key people be asked to learn a specific tool and teach it to others?
• Who will moderate the social media channels being used?
• Do you plan to start by monitoring social media, by creating new media from the get go, or both?

**Useful time management tips:**

• **It gets easier the more you write.**
  o It’s always in your best interest to keep your social media posts brief and concise. Shoot for fewer than 500 words.
  o Having writers block? Try posting a photo with a short caption instead to drum up some discussion.

• **Share the work with your team.**
  o Make sure everyone gets a chance to write an entry. Look for community members to volunteer, as well!

• **Plan accordingly.**
  o Brainstorm a large list of topics you want to cover over time. Revisit this list to refresh your ideas.

• **Establish your voice.**
  o Your posts should reflect the personality of your organization, and epitomize your cause. As you write, think about how you want to be perceived. Your organization’s tone and writing style will evolve over time as you continue writing posts.
• **Be relevant.**
  o Fresh content keeps your audience coming back for more. Set a schedule and stick to it for two or three months. At the end of that time period, go back to your plan and see if it’s working and where adjustments can be made. Do you want to share some information from a conference? Post it within two days of the event taking place so it’s fresh!

• **Cultivate a conversation.**
  o Don’t do all the work for your audience. Invite them to contribute, share and ask questions!

• **See what others have posted.**
  o Search using keywords around HIV to see what is going on in the social community. This is an excellent research tool, as well as being a great way to identify and connect with other key players in the field.

## Social Media Options and More on Creating Content

**Facebook** ([https://www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com))

The white ‘F’ with the blue background that you see everywhere, the one you probably use the most, the one that has over 1.15 billion monthly users. This is Facebook. If you aren’t familiar with Facebook, it is a very popular and free social networking site that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

As proof that social media has become non-negotiable in this day and age, most businesses, corporations, non-profits, universities, health organizations, government organizations, and any other entities you can think of are on Facebook. Why? It gets them out there, gives them free PR, encourages engagement, and advances their mission. Think about all of the social media statistics listed earlier; an absolutely massive amount of people are on social media. You’d be shooting yourself in the foot if you decided to not utilize it!

**Listen to conversations on Facebook.**

A basic form of engagement is to use social media to identify the health information needs of users. This can be accomplished through the use of social media monitoring (on Facebook, in this case).
• Public health organizations should use social listening to identify what people are saying on social media channels about priority health topics such as Partner Services. Find gaps in messaging, and understand what people care about to help your health department form a cohesive communications strategy.

• Take a look at a community-based organization in your committee (AIDS Partnership Michigan, or the Grand Rapids Red Project, for instance). See what they are saying and doing and, if you can, join their conversation!

Engage with influencers and their conversations.

By monitoring social media, public health organizations can also identify key partners and influencers driving online conversations and develop mutually beneficial relationships with them.

• Influencers can include both organizations and individuals. They exhibit the characteristics of credibility, persistence in convincing others, and ability to drive conversation so that others take notice of the topic and show support. One effective way to engage on Facebook would be to identify and reach out to a community-based organization that discusses HIV topics that align with your organization’s Partner Services priorities and is considered an influencer.

• You can work with influencers to strategize and promote messaging on shared communication goals and increase the reach of your public health communications.

• Identifying and determining appropriate ways to engage with influencers and establishing a reciprocal social media relationship can be a simple and powerful way to increase the reach of your messaging and align with other public health influencers.

Respond to questions and comments received via social media channels.

Social media channels are a powerful tool for customer service and can demonstrate that organizations are paying attention to the conversations. At the public health organization level, this should include responding to health-related questions and comments — BOTH negative and positive — received through organizational social media channels.

• Organizations should fully embrace this aspect of social media engagement and encourage quick replies. Establishing a responsive infrastructure allows an organization to thoughtfully and efficiently provide time-sensitive feedback while retaining transparency.
Create opportunities for your audience to really engage with your organization AND with each other.

Your organization should identify opportunities to connect directly with your audience and to elicit conversations between you and your users.

An example would be public health organizations hosting a Facebook forum on Partner Services perceptions. This is a scheduled social media event that lets you have a real-time conversation between you, your audience, and potentially, leaders in the field. These types of events allow your followers to directly connect with you, share with each other, and attain new resources.

- Keep it simple! Ask users a question in your post, or have a fill-in-the-blank game. (“I feel __________ when I get tested.”) This shows a commitment from your organization to the population you serve. You are opening the floor to your audience and letting them take control of the conversation so they can discuss what is important to them.
**Local Successes:**

**ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Many local health departments have department-wide Facebook pages on which they post information on all the services they provide. That means if you’re looking for something specific to HIV, it might not be easy. So, how can HIV be better represented at the local level? Allegan County Health Department has found a unique and creative solution.

Allegan County’s strategy was to offer a supplemental resource called “Nurse Cindy” exclusively for HIV and STD work. The Nurse Cindy Facebook page is monitored by Allegan’s public health nurse, who is also named Cindy. (Surprise, surprise.) Note that the Nurse Cindy Facebook page is set up as a personal profile (notice the “add friend” option in the photo to the left), as opposed to a profile for a business or organization, such as the Allegan County Health Department. Doing this gives a more personal element to the work done by both Nurse Cindy and Allegan County Health Department.

Nurse Cindy provides a means for confidential questions and answers in regards to all things HIV/STD related, as well as a direct source of general information that some may find difficult to locate through Allegan County’s website or its more general Facebook page. Nurse Cindy also serves as a resource for counseling and testing, care services, and case management.

If this is a strategy you are interested in proposing to your administration, remind them of the social work-centric nature of HIV prevention and care; this can illustrate the need for a supplemental resource. Local health departments do amazing work over a number of fields. But, HIV work has very unique social work aspects, compared to other services health departments render.

To check out Nurse Cindy, visit [www.facebook.com/nurse.cindy.52](http://www.facebook.com/nurse.cindy.52).

To check out Allegan County Health Department’s Facebook page, visit [www.facebook.com/Allegan-County-Health-Department-173353932685678](http://www.facebook.com/Allegan-County-Health-Department-173353932685678).
Twitter (https://twitter.com)

“Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. It’s an easy way to discover the latest news related to subjects you care about.

“Twitter contains information you will find valuable. Messages from users you choose to follow will show up on your home page for you to read. It’s like being delivered a newspaper whose headlines you’ll always find interesting — you can discover news as it’s happening, learn more about topics that are important to you, and get the inside scoop in real time.”

— from Getting started with Twitter

This is hands down, the easiest way to describe Twitter. Although your message is limited to 140 characters, a good Twitter presence is a force to be reckoned with.
A few years ago, Bufferapp.com listed “5 Misunderstood Great Benefits of Twitter.” Three of them are pertinent to our HIV Prevention Partner Services work:

1. **Twitter gives EVERYONE and anyone a support network.**
   - a. Anyone who takes time to connect with the right people on Twitter can build an amazing network. If you have a cell phone or an Internet connection, it doesn’t matter if the nearest town is 1,000 miles away, you can connect with millions of other people.
   - b. Twitter doesn’t fall under the guise of other social networks like Facebook where already established, real-world relationships are the basis for connection. On Twitter, anyone can connect with anyone for any reason.
   - c. By sharing the right topic at the right time with the right people, you can reach millions of Twitter users.
   - d. It doesn’t take a whole lot to gain a good following on Twitter. Check out this link for some tips to increase your visibility: http://blog.tweetsmarter.com/twitter-influence/how-anyone-can-become-incredibly-popular-on-twitter/

2. **Twitter lets you see what the WHOLE world is thinking and doing.**
   - a. Twitter lets you find out what people are thinking and doing at any moment.
   - b. “While politicians want to find out what voters are thinking, and business people want to find out what their customers and competitors are saying, the rest of us can take a look at whatever topics are interesting to us.”
   - c. Try not to limit yourself. Remember, when you’re trying to find people or organizations talking about a particular topic, you’re looking for people you want to follow, and ultimately connect with.

3. **Twitter gives you an outlet like no other.**
   - a. Tweet what you’re thinking! It might end up being a connection to someone who can help your cause, or vice versa!
   - b. There are dozens of companies that read through all public tweets to try to figure out, in one way or another, what the world is thinking. What does this mean for your tweets? Even if you don’t have a lot of followers, your voice is being heard.

1. **Pay attention to account set-up.**
   - Profile name — Be descriptive and indicative of what your organization does. For example WayneCoHealthDept would be a good Twitter handle. It would appear as @WayneCoHealthDept.
   - Biography — You get 160 characters, use them wisely.
   - Image — Make sure you have a logo or graphic for your profile image that clearly represents your organization.

2. **Keep content concise.**
   - Write tweets of 120 characters or less so your messages can be easily retweeted without editing.

3. **Promote your profile.**
   - Provide links to your Twitter profile on other materials you have prepared, or on Facebook. Also, work with other Twitter profiles to build your audience base.

4. **Keep followers engaged.**
   - Setting a regular schedule to post messages will increase audience engagement.

5. **Post relevant content.**
   - Develop a strategy for retweeting posts from your partners, stakeholders, and followers.

6. **Search Twitter for comments about a specific topic or organization.**
   - Use search.twitter.com ([https://twitter.com/search-home](https://twitter.com/search-home)) to monitor Twitter. You can use it to listen to conversations about health topics, learn perceptions about your organization, and monitor how audiences are responding to messages.
**Twitter Glossary**

**Handle:** This is your Twitter username, and it’s always preceded immediately by the @ symbol. For instance, the handle for the Statewide Homeless/HIV Integration Project is simply @HomelessHIV. Other Twitter users will use your handle to mention you in Tweets, send you a message, or link to your profile.

**@Mention:** Using the @username, you can contact specific users and they will be notified of your tweet. Use the @ symbol, followed by a valid Twitter username (for example, @CDCgov for the CDC) to mention that user in your tweet. Using an @ mention is a great way to start a conversation!

**#Hashtag:** The pound sign is also referred to as a hashtag, and it is used to identify specific topics. “Tagging” a tweet you post with a hashtag (for example, #KnowYourStatus) allows other users to find what you have posted via a search for the term.

When you create a hashtag and use it in a tweet, Twitter automatically creates a clickable hyperlink that will take you to a results page that shows tweets (including photos and videos) that use that specific hashtag. This is a great way to monitor who is talking about what! Use hashtags as much as possible to maximize your visibility on Twitter.

**Retweet:** Retweeting is another word for forwarding a message you like on to the Twitter users in your account’s list of followers. To use this feature when reading tweets from someone else, simply click the “retweet” option next to that tweet.

**Follow:** Subscribing to a Twitter account is called “following.” To start following, click the Follow button next to the user name or on a profile page to see that user’s Tweets as soon as they are posted. Anyone on Twitter can follow or unfollow anyone else at any time, with the exception of blocked accounts.
**Instagram** ([https://www.instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com))

Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr.

Or as Instagram describes itself, “Instagram is a fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Snap a photo with your mobile phone, then choose a filter to transform the image into a memory to keep around forever.”

You might be thinking, “Okay. A photo-sharing app. How can that possibly help with our HIV prevention programming?” Well, for starters, people on social media LOVE seeing photos and video. Secondly, there are over 300 million users on Instagram, so you have a pretty good sized potential audience with this app.

Match that potential audience up with the capability to share your photos on your other social networks, and you might find that Instagram can be a great resource for your HIV prevention programming.

### 4 Unexpected Benefits of Instagram

1. **Connect with audiences.**

   While most people think about sites like Facebook and Twitter when it comes to connecting with fans and engaging with customers/audiences online, you may be surprised to hear that Instagram has one of the most active and engaged user bases. In fact, one report from Forrester Research found that Instagram generates [120 times more engagement per follower](https://www.forrester.com/blogs/90/120-times-more-engagement-per-follower) than Twitter. With such high engagement, Instagram is the perfect platform to connect with customers, listen to their feedback, and build relationships through the conversations you’re able to spark. You can share a photo of something (for example, an outreach event), or give them a sneak peek at new media materials and see if they have any input.
2. **Learn what people like.**

You may not realize it, but your audience could already be sharing photos and talking about your organization and programming on Instagram. This is especially true if your organization has a brick-and-mortar location that customers visit on a regular basis.

With Instagram, your audience can share a photo and let their followers know where they are by tagging your location. People love sharing a variety of images from lots of different locations. When they tag your location, their friends will see it, giving clients the chance to market your business/organization/programming on your behalf.

The best way to see if people have shared photos at your location is to snap a photo at your business and tag your location. After you share the photo, you will see a link above the photo that you can click to see all the photos that have been shared at your organization/business. This is a great way to see what people like about your organization, and what information they're sharing about you.

3. **Reach new audiences.**

Instagram makes it easy to discover new photos, new people, and new businesses. One of the ways that people discover new content on Instagram is through hashtags. Similar to other social platforms, when someone includes a hashtag in a post on Instagram, a link is created and you can view all of the photos that have been shared using that hashtag.

You can also use hashtags to proactively find potential customers. You can use hashtags to find people sharing photos of things related to HIV and HIV prevention nearby and connect with them. In addition to hashtags, Instagram also has a Discover tab, dedicated to helping users find photos and connect with other users that share content relevant to them.
4. Fuel your other marketing channels.

One of the great things about the content you create in Instagram is that it can easily be shared across all of your different marketing channels. Within your Instagram settings, you can enable social sharing to Facebook and Twitter, so that your photos will share automatically when you post them to Instagram. Even if you don’t want to share your photos on different networks right away, you can save your photos to your phone’s camera roll and easily access them when you’re ready to post.
Making the Case for Instagram

Pulp Strategy recently published a list of 5 Reasons Why Instagram is Important for Your 2015 Digital Strategy.

1. Visuals are preferred.

Instagram as a visual medium lures more users. Audiences enjoy visuals, not just because they are more appealing, but also because they send across a message more clearly as compared to text only.

Instagram is a repository of almost 70 million photos and videos on a daily basis, which makes it a great place to market your brand or organization. Including an engaging Instagram strategy in your digital marketing plan will help you drive engagement and maximize your social media efforts.

2. The “all ages” social medium.

Instagram is a medium that caters to one and all — it breaks any barriers by uniting different sets of people with the power of visuals. Who doesn’t love pictures? You can find people from almost all walks of life on Instagram.

3. A noiseless experience.

Some people say Twitter is crowded with links and Facebook has too many twists and clauses. Instagram, however, creates a more realistic and understandable picture of communication. Twitter is about trends, but Instagram propagates visualization of those trends. Instagram gives you the power to express everyday things beautifully using images and videos.
4. **The power to really use hashtags.**

Most of us are familiar with hashtags and how to use one. Twitter has already educated us on how to make the most of hashtags to gain maximum reach. Instagram gives users the power to use the hashtags like in any other medium, but with a twist.

The three-hashtags-per-post rule doesn’t apply to Instagram. In fact, you can actually use as many tags as you like. However, make sure that you choose astutely and use relevant words while tagging, because that is what will help you gain traction and reach maximum numbers of ‘relevant’ users.

To reach the maximum target audience on Instagram, make a list of the most used hashtags and tally it with the hashtags your target audience is using. Use these hashtags when uploading your photos. You can also create and use a few brand-related hashtags, including ones you already are using on Twitter.

Ensure that you don’t use hashtags that are not relevant to the photo or video you are sharing. Also, don't overdo it: Limit yourself to 5 to 10 hashtags at a time.

5. **An emphasis on quality, not quantity.**

With millions of images being shared on Instagram every day, brands get a little panicky and tend to share more images than required, sometimes compromising on the quality. However, as a brand/organization, each image and video that you share must be thoughtful, flawless, and of the highest quality if it is to catch attention and drive audience engagement.
Measuring Your Social Media Success

In the business world, return on investment (ROI) is an important metric. A similar approach can be designed for social media efforts. It’s good practice to set goals that are meaningful for your organization or program, and then review on a regular basis whether the resources you are investing are helping you accomplish those goals. This is often referred to as your return on engagement (ROE). It’s a traditional concept, adapted for a new approach.

Key indicators depend on your goals and strategy. If you are trying to increase awareness about your organization, you might focus on growth in the number of followers, or website traffic. If you are looking to influence a specific behavior or outcome, however, you might focus on metrics such as increases in HIV tests or in the use of condoms. Among the possibilities for measuring ROE:

- influencing people to take a specific action;
- increasing fans or followers on one or more social sites;
- the number of two-way conversations in a given period of time;
- change in website traffic trends; and/or
- successfully raising a certain amount of funds.

Engagement is the most important measurement. It shows how many people cared enough about what you shared to take action.

- Low level of engagement:
  - One-way audience — they receive the information that you push.
    - Includes the number of followers, and the amount of content you post.
- Medium level of engagement:
  - Two-way audience — they respond to your information.
    - Includes follows, shared messages, retweets, etc.
- High level of engagement:
  - Engaged users — they become active partners in the campaign.
    - Provides insight on how to improve, or participate in campaign.
    - Includes activities like posting new user content, contributing pictures, blogging (taking some physical action, such as getting an HIV test, and then blogging about the experience).
### What Can be Measured on Facebook?

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<td>- Changes in attitudes and/or behavior</td>
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<td>- Define presence and impact</td>
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<td>- Traffic driven to your site</td>
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<td>- Contribution to overall goals</td>
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*Connecting Partners in Public Health*
Demographic/Geographic Breakdown of Facebook Post Reach
Monthly Active Users and Interactions on Facebook
**The Science Behind Facebook**

Since its inception in 2004, Facebook has gone through a number of major changes, namely the aforementioned force of businesses, organizations, and government entities claiming their stake on the site. When you run a Facebook page for an organization, you get to see the analytics of your page, including all of the demographics of your visitors, the times at which they’ve visited, the number of clicks on each post, etc. Here, from [www.jeffbulas.com](http://www.jeffbulas.com), are some really good examples of Facebook data that can show us how we can shape our posting habits to get the most engagement from our followers.

- Posts made between 6 PM and 7 AM receive **20% more** user engagement.

- On Wednesdays, fan engagement is **8% above average**.

- Posting one to two times per day produces **40% higher** user engagement.

- Posting one to four times per week produces **71% higher** user engagement.
Here are three of the HIV-related Facebook pages here in Michigan. Take a look at them, take some notes, reach out, and even collaborate if you’d like to!

- **Lansing Area AIDS Network**

- **Michigan AIDS Coalition**
  - [www.facebook.com/MIAIDS](http://www.facebook.com/MIAIDS)

- **AIDS Partnership Michigan**
  - [www.facebook.com/aidspartnership](http://www.facebook.com/aidspartnership)

**What Can be Measured on Twitter?**

Twitter measures many of the same things as Facebook, but on a much more intricate level. Measurables on Twitter include:

- followers;
- demographics;
- geographical locations;
- who is mentioning you;
- how many times are your posts re-tweeted;
- who is re-tweeting your posts;
- hashtags;
- reach; and
- key influencers.


Twitter also offers its own analytical services at [https://analytics.twitter.com/about](https://analytics.twitter.com/about).
More Tips for Getting the Most from Social Media

As mentioned, you can reuse your existing content (presentations, videos, pamphlets, and other printed material) when you are working in social media. You can also take advantage of content and campaigns produced by others, such as the CDC. This is referred to as **repurposing**, and it is not only a time saver, but a great way to share what you or others are already doing with a broader audience. Repurposing allows you to leverage existing content, maximize your reach, and make the best use of limited time and resources.

“**While repurposing content** is an expedient and valuable way to build content through social channels, it’s also important to present unique content. Reusing content between Twitter and Facebook is a great way to increase traffic, but don’t feel that you have to post the same content to all of your social media channels. Think about how your audience on Facebook differs from your Twitter followers.”

— HIV Prevention Goes Social
AIDS.gov

“**Social marketing is rooted** in the belief that greater audience engagement translates into more powerful solutions and interventions. Social networks help facilitate engagement, and with the advent of social media networks online, people’s participation in social marketing interventions is now greater than ever.

“Public health programs have leveraged this growth, and are successfully adopting platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to influence and change people’s behaviors for the better. Feeling that we have the right information to live healthier, more fulfilling lives is empowering, and social media can fuel that sense of empowerment.

“But not all of us are ‘e-patients’ connected to a vast social network of public health information online.

“If social marketing is truly about protecting and improving the wellbeing of others, we must identify ways to reach and engage those who are not actively seeking public health information through the web. Perhaps giving providers and consumers an equal share of voice in the development of public health messaging and interventions will help us overcome this challenge. Social marketers will undoubtedly be using social media technologies to seek and find the answer.”

— Using Social Media Platforms to Amplify Public Health Messages
Ogilvy Washington & The Center for Social Impact Communication at Georgetown University
Learning from the CDC

The CDC offers a number of popular social media campaigns that can give you plenty of content and ideas. Consider just three of them: 1) GYT: Get Yourself Tested; 2) Start Talking, Stop HIV; and 3) We Can Stop HIV, One Conversation at a Time.

GYT: Get Yourself Tested

Target Audience: Gay and bisexual men

The GYT: Get Yourself Tested campaign is a youthful, empowering social movement to encourage young people to get tested and treated, as needed, for STDs and HIV. The campaign is a partnership between the American College Health Association, Kaiser Family Foundation, National Coalition of STD Directors, MTV, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Technical consultation for GYT is provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

GYT increases awareness about STDs and how to prevent them, links young people to STD testing services, and promotes a more open dialogue with partners and health care providers. After all, sexually active young people account for half of the 20 million new STDs occurring in the U.S. each year — and most don’t know they are infected.

Although GYT is a national campaign, schools, community organizations, health care providers, and health departments across the country have adapted GYT to fit their local demographic and host testing and awareness events.

To learn more about the Get Yourself Tested campaign, check out the website at https://npin.cdc.gov/STDawareness/GYT.aspx.

CDC also offers an evaluation toolkit that can be used to measure the campaign’s engagement and success. Check it out at https://npin.cdc.gov/STDawareness/EvaluationToolKit.aspx.
Start Talking, Stop HIV

Target Audience: Gay and bisexual men

Start Talking, Stop HIV — a new phase of the CDC’s Act Against AIDS initiative — seeks to reduce new HIV infections among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men by encouraging open discussion about a range of HIV prevention strategies and related sexual health issues between sex partners.

Effective partner communication about HIV can reduce HIV transmission by supporting HIV testing, HIV status disclosure, condom use, and the use of medicines to prevent and treat HIV.

Although they only represent 2% of the overall population, gay and bisexual men — including those who inject drugs — account for over half of the 1.1 million people living with HIV in the United States (57%, or an estimated 657,800 people), and two-thirds of all new HIV infections each year.

A 2011 study in 20 U.S. cities with high AIDS prevalence found that 18% of gay or bisexual men had HIV. That’s about 1 in 6 men. Of those men, 33% did not know they had HIV.

Your life matters, and staying healthy is important. No matter the type of relationship, communication can be key to finding the right prevention strategy that works for you and your partner.

For more information and campaign materials for Start Talking, Stop HIV, check out www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids/campaigns/starttalking/materials/index.html.
We Can Stop HIV, One Conversation at a Time

Target Audience: Hispanic/Latino men and women

The One Conversation at a Time campaign encourages Hispanics/Latinos to talk openly about HIV/AIDS with their families, friends, partners, and communities.

Hispanics/Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States and also one of the groups most heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS.

More than 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the United States, and about 50,000 people become infected each year. Hispanics/Latinos account for 21% of these new HIV infections. At some point in life, an estimated 1 in 36 Hispanic/Latino men and 1 in 106 Hispanic/Latina women will be diagnosed with HIV.

It may not always be easy to talk about HIV/AIDS, but we must talk openly about it to protect our community. By learning the facts about HIV and talking about ways to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community, we can help increase HIV awareness, decrease stigma and shame that are too often associated with HIV, and play a part in stopping HIV in the Hispanic/Latino community.

We all have a role to play. We can stop HIV, one conversation at a time. Together, all of our conversations can help protect the health of our community and reduce the spread of HIV.

For more information and campaign materials for We Can Stop HIV, One Conversation at a Time, check out www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids/campaigns/oneconversation/index.html.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING

If you’ve gotten this far in our toolkit, you already have learned quite a bit about social media. But, we recognize everyone still will not be on the same page in terms of social media.

Some of you are beginners, learning about social media for the first time. Others are intermediates, with some exposure to social media before this toolkit. Still others are experts, using social media in their daily lives at work and at home.

This toolkit is not intended to be an end-all, be-all resource that will answer all of your questions and take care of everything for you. That would be impossible. So, to ensure that all of your concerns are addressed, MDHHS offers one-to-one or small-group social media technical assistance as a supplemental resource of this toolkit.

If you have questions about crafting messages or engaging audiences, or if you just need more information about Facebook or Instagram, we have you covered. Just fill out and submit the Social Media Technical Assistance Request Form on our website. You’ll find it at www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Social_Media_Technical_Assistance_Request_Form_506697_7.docx.

Please note: Although we understand that your organization may want to have a large number of people trained in social media, in order to best serve you, we limit the size of each social media technical assistance training group to a maximum of five persons.
References & Resources

- CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social Media

- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey Communications Toolkit

- Getting Started With New Media

- HIV Prevention Goes Social: Using Social Media to Create, Connect, and Come Together

- AIDS.gov Communication Strategy Internal Working Plan

- The Health Communicator’s Social Media Toolkit

- Using Social Media Platforms to Amplify Public Health Messages

- 33 Social Media Facts and Statistics You Should Know in 2015

- 10 Powerful Tips to Increase Fan Engagement on Facebook
• Heidi Cohen – Social Media Definitions
  http://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition/

• Social Networking Fact Sheet
  www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/

• Policy Tool for Social Media
  www.socialmedia.policytool.net

• Marin County (CA) Social Media Use Policies

• Kern County (CA) Social Media Policies
  http://kernpublichealth.com/social-media-policy/

• Quick Guide to Health Literacy
  http://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm

• Social Media Toolkit for Ontario Public Health Units

• Nurse Cindy
  www.facebook.com/nurse.cindy.52

• 5 Reasons Why Instagram is Important for Your 2015 Digital Strategy
  www.pulpstrategy.com/5-reasons-instagram-important-2015-digital-strategy/

• CDC National Prevention Information Network
  https://npin.cdc.gov/disease/hiv
MDHHS-Funded Community-Based Organizations

- ACCESS
  www.facebook.com/ACCESScommunity/timeline/?ref=ts

- AIDS Partnership Michigan
  www.facebook.com/aidspartnership

- Advantage Health Care Services
  www.facebook.com/AHCDetroit

- Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG)
  www.facebook.com/Community-Health-Awareness-Group-132850433717874/timeline/

- CARES
  www.facebook.com/CARES-287247564637833/timeline/

- Gospel Against AIDS
  www.facebook.com/Gospel-Against-AIDS-217181268322763/timeline/

- Grand Rapids Red Project
  www.facebook.com/RedProjectGR

- Hearth Home/Health Delivery Inc. (HDI)
  www.facebook.com/healthdelivery?ref=ts&fref=ts

- Henry Ford Health System
  www.facebook.com/HenryFordHealthSystem
• HIV/AIDS Resource Center (HARC)
  www.facebook.com/HIVAIDSResourceCenter

• Lansing Area AIDS Network
  www.facebook.com/Lansing-Area-AIDS-Network-179562632113636/timeline/

• Michigan AIDS Coalition
  www.facebook.com/MIAIDS

• Ruth Ellis Center
  www.facebook.com/RuthEllisCenter

• WSU Horizons Project Prevention Services
  www.peds.med.wayne.edu/horizons/
Notes...