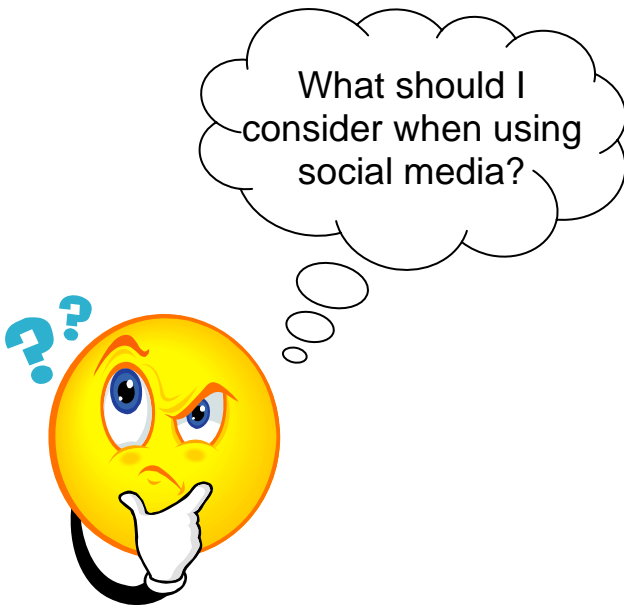




## Tips for Mentoring Program Staff and Those Who Represent Them

*Boundaries that are normally distinct are easily blurred in a virtual world. Many people are used to operating in an environment where their personal and professional lives are separate and what they do privately is less likely to impact their public life. Social networking has the potential to bring two formerly separate worlds into one place – which can have both positive and negative ramifications.*



- What would my supervisor think about this content?
- What message would it send about me as a role model to our program's mentees?
- What message would this send to our mentors?
- Could this potentially have a negative impact on a relationship with one of our partners?

Consider these pros and cons of connecting your personal and professional networks:

### **Pros:**

- Social networking allows mentoring program staff to be more intimately connected to colleagues, mentors and mentees and therefore more effectively support them.
- Learning more about one another can enhance relationships and create new opportunities for building common ground.
- When used wisely and strategically, social networking can be used to recruit volunteers, increase awareness of your program or cause, and even result in donations!

### **Cons:**

- Information is often visible or easily replicated and can be easily taken out of context
- Once an individual makes the decision to connect his or her social network with his or her professional one, that individual is no longer representing solely him or herself. While this may seem unfair, perception is reality – especially when the safety of children is involved. For example, if staff person is “tagged” in a photo doing something that might make a parent or guardian question his or her judgment, could that potentially make that parent question whether or not participation in the mentoring program is good judgment? It is important to not only consider what the individual him or herself posts on their page but also to think about what one's friends might post publicly.