



International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses Social Media Guidelines

Overview

This document was developed to provide a set of guidelines in the use of external and internal social media applications when acting on behalf, or as a member, of the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (ISPN). The applications include, but are not limited to, the ISPN listserv, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The rapid growth of social media technologies combined with their ease of use make them excellent relationship-building tools. However, these tools also hold the possibility of a host of unintended consequences, especially when the topics discussed are sensitive or controversial.

To help you identify and avoid potential issues we have compiled these guidelines. Indeed, there is every chance that your employer, regulatory body, or other professional body you subscribe to, will expect similar standards in the use of social media.

Things to Consider When Beginning to Use Social Media

Applications that allow you to interact with others online (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) require careful consideration to assess the implications of “friending,” “linking,” “following” or accepting such a request from another person. For example, there is the potential for misinterpretation of the relationship or the potential of sharing protected information. Relationships such as faculty-student, supervisor-subordinate and staff-student merit close consideration of the implications and the nature of the social interaction. If your employer has specific policies in place, become familiar with and follow them.

General Guidelines

Sharing ISPN news, events or promoting the organization, its members, residents and student work through social media tools is an excellent, low-cost way to engage the community and build our brand. Members, Officers, volunteers, and The Rees Group staff are encouraged to repost and share publicly available information (press releases, journal articles, internet news, etc.) with their colleagues. The best way to share ISPN news is to link to the original source. When sharing information that is not a matter of public record, please follow the guidelines below.

Maintain Confidentiality

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the ISPN or its members. Use good ethical judgment and follow federal or local regulatory requirements. This is particularly true for ISPN members that work for the U.S. government or have separate policies in place at the institution where they are employed.

Maintain Privacy and Patient Confidentiality

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

Do No Harm

Let your internet social networking do no harm to ISPN, to yourself or your professional standing whether you are navigating those networks on the job or off.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility

ISPN members are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated content. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

Be Aware of Liability

You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Increasingly, employers are conducting Web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

Maintain Transparency

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred: Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as an ISPN member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of the ISPN.

Correct Mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

Respect Others

You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Be a Valued Member

If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don't hijack the discussion and redirect by posting self/organizational promoting information. Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.

Think Before You Post

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (e.g., current and future colleagues, employers, etc.).

Use a Disclaimer

If you publish content to any website outside of ISPN and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with ISPN, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent ISPN's positions, strategies or opinions."

Don't Use the ISPN Logo or Make Endorsements

Do not use the ISPN logo, or any other ISPN marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use ISPN's name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

Don't Use Pseudonyms

Never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

Protect Your Identity

While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Don't list your home address or telephone number. It is a good idea to create a separate email address that is used only with social media sites.

Does it Pass the Publicity Test?

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now?

Respect Your Audience

Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the ISPN community. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive—such as politics and religion.

Seek Approval

Any messages that might act as the "voice" or position of ISPN must be approved by the Executive Board.

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