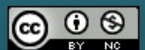Social Media Toolkit for Social Work Field Educators
by Allison M. Curington, Laurel Iverson Hitchcock
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Introduction

While social media are a topic of conversation in many educational and practice arenas, we have observed that social work professionals are often not engaged in the social media conversation loop and may be unclear about the influence of social media in the lives of 21st century employees and organizations. There are several reasons why social work educators and professionals are not having these conversations. These include generational differences, a lack of technology resources, a lack of training or familiarity with technology (technological competency), a lack of best practice guidelines or organizational/institution policy, and professional ethical concerns (Brady, McLeod, & Young, 2015; Goldkind & Wolf, 2015; Kimball & Kim, 2013).

Field Directors and Field Offices are in a precarious position when it comes to navigating discourse on social and digital media. The traditional role of Field Directors is to liaison between the educational institution and the practice world. This role has always been tenuous in balancing the competing demands of entities, best social work practices, and slow changing systems. Most difficult for Field Educators is the lack of best practice clarity and the rapidly changing context of social and digital media (Sage & Sage, 2015). In addition, Field Directors are faced with many ethical challenges presented by social work students' use of social media in field placements. The social work literature and professional social work organizations have been slow to provide updated guidance in the form of best practice and standards to help navigate (Berzin, Singer & Chan, 2015; Hitchcock & Battista, 2012; National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017a; NASW, 2017b).

We believe that Field Educators have an opportunity to begin to shape the professional landscape of social and digital media in social work and higher education. The role as liaison between the educational and practice realm places Field Directors in a position of influence in both policy development and practice. We also believe that Field Directors have an opportunity to develop best practice or policy for their institution, program, and their Field Office.

This toolkit provides social work Field Educators with tools and resources to help social work students and field instructors assess, develop, and maintain an online identity for professional purposes. There are two parts to the toolkit – an Educator's Guide and a PowerPoint Slide Deck. The Educator's Guide provides directions, descriptions, and handouts related to the content of the toolkit while the Slide Deck includes pre-formatted slides with selected content for presenting in the classroom or a workshop. See Figure 1 for an example slide. The content of this toolkit is divided into six different topics centered on how to use social media professionally as a social worker:

1. Ethical Considerations for Social Media Use in Social Work Practice
2. Reflecting on Social Media Use in Social Work Practice
3. Engaging and Self-Assessment with Social Media
4. Professional Practice with Social Media
5. Case Studies for Students & Field Educators
6. Social Media Learning Activities for Field Education

Specific content for these topic areas include learning activities about why, when, and how to use social media as a practicing social work professional; skills for managing an online identity; guidelines for developing one's own professional social media policy; and case studies to help develop professional and ethical competency.

We designed this toolkit to be practical while helping the Field Educator assess for competency related to the professional and ethical use of technology in social work practice. Specifically, the toolkit addresses the Council of Social Work Education's (2015) Social Work Competency 1 - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior, the National Association of Social Worker's (NASW; 2017b) Technology Standard 4.02 – Training Social Workers about the Use of Technology in Social Work Practice, and ethical standards from the most recent version of the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2017a). We suggest using the following learning objectives (or component behaviors) in connection with the learning activities in this toolkit:

1. Make ethical decisions with social and digital media by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and other relevant guidelines, laws and policies;
2. Use self-reflection and self-regulation to maintain and demonstrate professionalism with social media.
3. Describe how to use social media ethically and professionally to facilitate practice outcomes.
4. Demonstrate professional demeanor with social media.
5. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgement and behavior with social media.

To help assess for these learning objectives, there are different types of resources throughout the toolkit including reflection questions, social media resources, learning activities and case studies.

Figure 1. Example slide from Social Media Toolkit for Social Work Field Educators Slide Deck
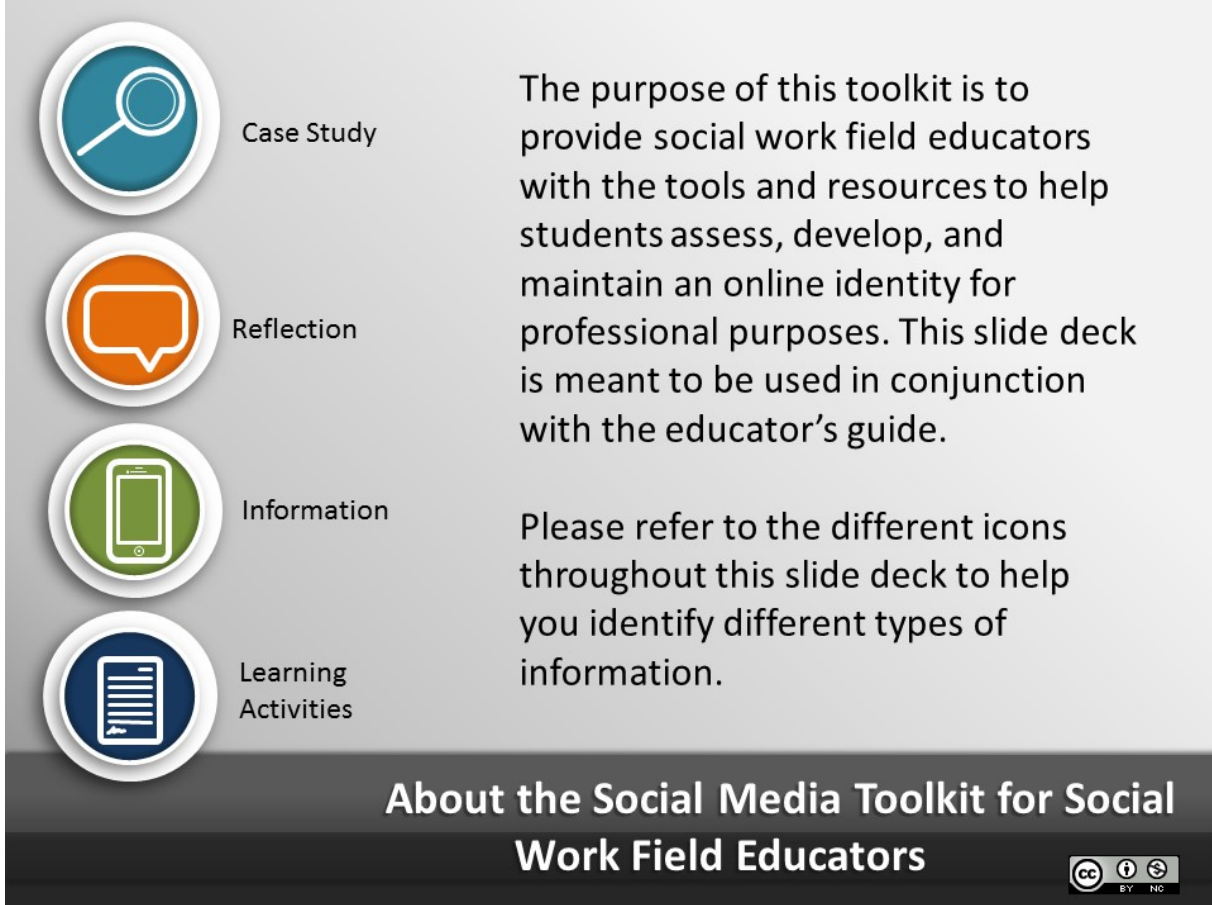
Finally, while this *Toolkit* has been designed for the Social Work Field Educator, all the content can easily be adapted for other social work classrooms or even the professional environment, and we encourage you to do so. This can be done by adjusting the text in the PowerPoint Slide Deck to use the words "social worker" or "practitioner" in place of "student" or "supervisor" instead of "field instructor." Our Creative Commons License allows for these types of adjustments for noncommercial reasons, and we would encourage you to share your modifications with us and others.

Defining Social Media for Social Work Practice

Understanding the terms and functions of social and digital technologies is essential to appropriate and competent use of these technologies in social work practice. Many of the social work ethical standards and best practice guidelines in the United States recommend that all social workers who use technology in their practice have knowledge and skills necessary to provide competent services (NASW, 2017a; NASW 2017b). Additionally, digital technology is grounded in other professional disciplines such as computer science and engineering, which may include jargon and values that are very different from social work. Taking the time to understand the basic definitions and practical application of digital tools is the first step in ethical social work practice with technology. In this section, we will provide some basic definitions of social media, grounded in the practice of social work, and a basic discussion of digital literacy, which is having the knowledge and skills need to understand and use social and digital technologies.

So what are social media? They are digital communication tools, as services for social networking like Facebook and microblogging like Twitter, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. The key part of this definition is that social media promote communication between people, groups, organizations, and institutions. Examples include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter.

Digital media is digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. These can include text, audio, video, and graphics. Social media can be used to share digital content. For example, you might take a picture of a double rainbow after a rainstorm on your phone and share it with friends via Facebook. The smart photo is the digital media and the social media is Facebook.

Mobile devices are portable electronic devices that have computing capabilities such as a smart phone, tablet or laptop. Mobile devices are integral to understanding social and digital media as many people use mobile devices to access and use social media, and to create digital content. Consider the example of our photo of the double rainbow. Without the smart phone, you would not have been able to create the photo and share it via Facebook.

Because the number and brands of social media change rapidly, we encourage you to think about social media in terms of function, rather than brand names. Understanding the function of social media will help you to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of social and digital media. Here are some examples of social media functions:

- *Social Networking*: The first and probably most popular type of social media platform are for social networking, which are designed to help people connect with each other, share information, and view information about each other. Users share information about themselves, follow each other, and respond to each other's comments. Examples are Facebook or LinkedIn, a professional networking site.

- *Publishing & Collaborating*: A second type of social media includes software for creating, publishing, and collaborating on content. For example, Google Docs includes web-based word processing software that allows more than one person to access and edit at the same time. This means that multiple users can write and edit one document together. This content could then be published on a website using blogging software such as WordPress or Blogger.

- *Microblogging*: Microblogging is creating short posts with text and/or images to be shared with others. There is usually a word or image limit to the posts. Twitter is the most popular of these platforms.

- *Bookmarking & Aggregating*: Another type of social media platform is bookmarking and aggregating apps. These services allow a user to collect, organize, and then share content around specific topics. This is also known as digital curating. Pinterest is a great example as it allows users to create virtual bullet boards with images and text on content such as recipes, fashion ideas, and more. Professional groups such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Association of Social Workers also have boards that share information about current issues.

- *Media Sharing*: There are numerous media sharing platforms that allow users to upload content that is created by the user to share publicly or privately with others. Examples include Flickr and Instagram for photos and YouTube for videos.

- *Commenting & Sharing*: Because the nature of social media is to promote public sharing, users can follow other users (known as friends, followers, etc.) with most of these sites, and like or comment on content or posts. Thus, writing and posting comments can be considered another important function of social media.

It is also important to note that the National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) *Code of Ethics* (2017a) considers social media as tools that can be used to provide services to client systems. This is referred to as "technology-assisted social work services", and it is defined as any service that is provide through the use of:

> "computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail, and emerging digital applications (NASW, 2017a, para. 10)."

The *NASW Code of Ethics* goes on to say that social workers who use social media as part of their practice, need to have the knowledge and skills to provide services competently, including the benefits and challenges of using social media in social work practice. This where the concept of digital literacy is useful.   Broadly defined, digital literacy refers to having the knowledge and skills to use social media appropriately. For social workers, being digitally literate means having the knowledge and skills to use social media not just proficiently, but also within the ethical framework of the profession. For example, a social work needs to understand how to use Facebook and also how to protect client and colleague privacy when using the platform, both on the web and on the app for a mobile device. There are several ways that scholars have conceptualized digital literacy such as media literacy and competency with information and communication technologies (ICTs). Table 1 offers a list of practical digital literacy skills developed by scholar Cathy Davidson (2011) in her research with college students. This list can easily be adapted to social work practice.

Table 1 – Digital Literacy as defined by 21st Century College Students
- Using online sources to network, knowledge-outreach, publicize content, collaborate and innovate   - Collecting, managing, and interpreting multimedia and online data and/or content   - Appreciating the complex ethics surrounding online practices   - Engaging successfully in an "Innovation Challenge," an exercise in simultaneous multi-user, real-time distance collaboration, on deadline   - Developing a diversity of writing styles and modes of communication to best reach, address, and accommodate multiple audiences across multiple online platforms

- Demonstrating technical and media skills: Web video, WordPress, blogging, Google Docs, Livechat, Twitter, Facebook Groups, Wikipedia editing

- Participating successfully in peer leadership (*without* an authority figure as the leader to police, guide, or protect the collaborators), peer assessment, peer self-evaluation; making contributions to a group on a coherent and innovative project

- Cultivating strategies for managing the line between personal and professional life in visible, online communities

- Understanding how to transform complicated ideas and gut reactions about technology into flexible technology policy

- Learning how to champion the importance of the open Web and 'Net Neutrality

- Collaborating across disciplines, working with people from different backgrounds and fields, including across liberal arts and engineering

- Understanding the complexity of copyright and intellectual property and the relationship between "open source" and "profitability" or "sustainability"

- Excelling in collaborative online publishing skills and expertise, from conception to execution to implementation to dissemination

- Incorporating technology efficiently and wisely into a specific classroom or work environment

- Leading peers in discussing the implications and ethics of intellectual collaborative discourse and engagement online and beyond

- Using the superior expertise of a peer to extend my own knowledge

(Source: Davidson, 2011).

Here is a list of readings for further information about digital literacy:

- Hill, A., & Shaw, I. (2011). Social work & ICT. London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Davidson, C. N. (2014, February 17). Cathy Davidson – 4.2 - 1) Practice Digital Literacies. Retrieved September 4, 2015, from http://genius.com/Cathy-davidson-42-1-practice-digital-literacies-annotated
- Quinn, A., & Fitch, D. (2014). A Conceptual Framework for Contextualizing Information Technology Competencies. *Journal of Technology in Human Services, 32*(1–2), 133–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228835.2013.860367
- Rheingold, H. (2010). Attention, and Other 21st-Century Social Media Literacies. *EDUCAUSE Review*, *45*(5), 14.

Along with the concept of digital literacy, the principles of connected learning provide a useful framework for social work field educators seeking to incorporate social media into their pedagogy. Connected Learning is an educational model that suggests learning in the 21st century is driven simultaneously by the interests of the learner and the academic or professional requirements of the learning context, and must occur in an environment that supports openness, sharing and feedback with peers and others (Ito et al., 2013). For example, if the goal is to develop life-long learning skills among social work students, then the ideal educational experience includes one where a social worker can focus on a topic or issue that is professionally interesting to them, and then allows the social worker to share their work, ideas and feedback with each other

both in and outside their work setting. It is the openness and sharing with others, that social media displays its usefulness for social work practice. First, a social worker can demonstrate their knowledge and skills of professional social work practice through the content they create, curate and/or share via social media platforms. Second, social media opens up a learning environment that includes others beyond their immediate place of employment such as researchers and officials at national and international governmental agencies. Applying connected learning to social work students means that social media offers the opportunity to connect to the world of practice earlier in their academic training. The following resources offer more information about the theory of connected learning:

- Connected Learning Alliance. (n.d.) Homepage. Retrieved from: https://clalliance.org/about-connected-learning/
- Ito, M., Gutiérrez, K., Livingstone, S., Penuel, B., Rhodes, J., Salen, K., … Watkins, S. C. (2013). *Connected learning: an agenda for research and design*. Irvine, CA, USA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub. Retrieved from http://dmlhub.net/

Ethical Consideration for the use of Social Media in Social Work Practice

There are many ethical considerations with the use of social media in social work practice, and an entire book could be written on the topic. For this *Toolkit*, we focus on three considerations – client privacy, boundaries, and the presentation of the professional self in online environments.

Client Privacy

Perhaps the biggest ethical concern that social workers have around the use of social media is maintaining client privacy and confidentiality. There are many potential ways that client privacy could be breached on social media including:

- Social workers share details about their work on a social media platform in a way in which may identify a client or community.
- Social media platforms are often for-profit ventures and therefore anything shared on social media is data owned by the for-profit entity.
- Some social work practice settings use social media to search for clients online for the benefit of information discovery.

To help inform students about how to ensure client privacy with social media, please refer to the following content in the *Toolkit*:

- Reflecting on the Use of Social Media in Social Work Practice
- How to Post on Social Media
- Case Studies for Students & Field Educators

Boundaries

Professional boundaries in social work require the student and/or practitioner to recognize the power they hold over another in a working relationship, which helps to inform where and when the social worker needs to maintain personal boundaries with those they serve. Examples of how this applies to the use of social media in social work practice include following clients on social media, accidental contact with a client via social media (usually through another user), and friending or following an employee as a supervisor or a student as

an instructor. To help inform students about how to ensure appropriate boundaries when using social media, please refer to the following content in the *Toolkit*:

- Engaging and self-assessment with social media
- How to professionally share and communicate on social media
- Develop your own professional social media guidelines
- Case Studies for Students & Field Educators

Presentation of Professional Self

Even when using social media for personal reasons, a social worker is still a representative of the profession. Most ethical codes for social work are designed to protect the rights of client systems, not the rights of individual social workers. Thus, it is an ethical concern if a social worker makes personal statements that interfere with their professional roles. Any comments or affiliations made by a social worker on social media may be viewed by clients or employers in negative or positive ways. For example, a child welfare worker who makes disparaging comments about clients on personal their personal Facebook account may be fired by their employer or be considered biased by the family court judge and unable to testify in court, should these comments be made public. Conversely, social workers who are aligned with the core social work values and present themselves professionally and ethically on social media have the opportunity to participate in the public discourse around the social work profession, even have the ability to correct misinformation about the profession. Additionally, social workers may be worried about clients finding a social worker's personal information online. Because clients are not bound by ethical standards to keep them from searching for a worker's information online, it is the responsibility of the social worker to assess and ensure their own information remains private in online platforms. To help inform students about how to ensure appropriate boundaries when using social media, please refer to the following content in the *Toolkit*:

- Engaging and self-assessment with social media
- How to Develop an Online Professional Identity
- How to professionally share and communicate on social media
- Develop your own professional social media guidelines
- Case Studies for Students & Field Educators

Reflecting on the use of Social Media in Social Work Practice

One of the best places to start when considering the incorporation of social and digital technologies into the classroom or field education is to reflect on one's personal and professional values about the use of technology in social work practice. Critical and reflective thinking about technology's role in social work practice gives practitioners an opportunity to understand their own preferences and comfort-level with technology as well as begin to explore how cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and constituents may affect the use of technology in practice. The NASW Code of Ethics advises practitioners to consider "cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services" (NASW, 2017a, para. 9).

Brady, McLeod, and Young (2015) have developed a series of questions that can be used by instructors and students when developing social media practices and policies for the classroom or field seminars. Key to this process is reflecting across the different stakeholder categories (dimensions), which allow students and practitioners to identify when and where using social media is practice would not only be appropriate, but even beneficial to themselves and client systems. Educators can use the questions in Table 2 to facilitate

discussions in the classroom, a workshop, or even a meeting about the value and knowledge associated with social media in social work practice.

Table 2: Guiding Ethical Questions for Developing Social Media Policies in Social Work Education

Dimension	Questions
Instructional	1. How do you feel about using social media in the classroom? 2. What is your own comfort level with various social media technologies? 3. In what ways do you see yourself using social media in your classes, for what purpose, and with what anticipated learning outcomes for students? 4. What concerns do you have about using social media technologies in social work classes? 5. Are your concerns applicable to the digital world and common practices in communications there?
Student	1. What is your personal comfort level with social media technologies? 2. How do you, if at all, make use of various types of social media technology in your own life? 3. What has been your experience with using social media in educational settings? 4. What concerns do you have, if any, about having social media used in a social work class? 5. Have you ever used or thought about using social media technology in the context of professional social work; if so, how do you envision using it?
Institutional	1. Does your institution, school, or department have formal policies related to social media/technology use in the classroom? 2. What is the institutional culture like in regards to social media use in the classroom? How do your colleagues and administrators seem to feel about social media use in the classroom? 3. How much of the curriculum for each class and overall is predetermined or mandated by the school (How much freedom do you as an instructor have to revise, change, and create assignments)? 4. How much does your institution use social media technology?
Professional	1. How might some uses of social media technology in social work courses potentially violate social work ethics/policy? 2. How do you see social media technologies in social work classes helping to prepare professional social workers? 3. What professional social work values could be in conflict with one another in a social media classroom policy? 4. How might you negotiate or resolve these potential conflicts between professional values in order to create a useful and ethical policy for using social media in the classroom?

Source: Brady, McLeod, and Young (2015).

Engaging and Self-Assessment with Social Media

After reflecting on one's values related to social media, the next step is to self-assess one's social media accounts for the quantity and quality of content as well as basic metrics such as followers, re-posts of comments, and privacy settings. The goal of self-assessment is to understand how, when, and what one is doing with social media. This also has the added benefit of identifying any potential conflicts within one's social media accounts such as unintentionally following a client on Twitter or locating personal content that is potentially embarrassing or inappropriate. There are several ways to do a self-assessment and we have included three examples:

- **Single social media account audit**: This type of self-audit focuses on just one social media account and requires an in-depth review of one's posts and images associated with the account (Teaching Sam & Scout, 2014). Criteria for assessment include the quality of language used in posts, level of professionalism in posts, and types of photos connected with the account.

- **Multiple social media accounts audit**: This self-assessment considers multiple accounts and asks one to assess for trends in their social media use and then compare with other users.

- **Self-assessment checklist for a practitioner**: Adapted from Visser, Huiskes, and Korevaar (2012), this checklist provides a series of questions related to ethical and professional practice. Criteria include accessibility of personal information and quality of network connections and posts.

While these assessments are designed to be completed by the user of a social media account, they can be adapted to be used by another person for peer assessment or by a field supervisor with a student or employee. Quick peer assessments in the classroom (such as do an internet search on a classmate's name, review the first page of search results, and repeat for images) can provide information and awareness for classroom discussions. A worksheet for each of the three self-assessments are available in the Worksheet Appendix (pages 20-24 of the toolkit).

Professional Social Work Practice with Social Media

In this section, we offer three best practices for social workers who use social media for professional purposes. These practices include: 1) developing and maintaining a professional online identify; 2) posting content via social and digital media for professional reasons; 3) creating a social media policy, and 4) developing a professional learning network.

How to Develop an Online Professional Identity

An online identity is a social identity used to access and interact with others via social media platforms. It includes personally identifiable information such as name, photo, place of employment, and professional status. To create a professional online identity, a student or social worker must determine what personally identifiable information about themselves should be shared with other users of the platform. Dennen (2014) offers the following steps to help develop and manage your online identity:

1. Assess your current online status by conducting an Internet search for your name, and then an image search with your name and answer the following questions:
   - How many results on the first page are really about you?
   - List the sites that come up for you.
   - How many of the images are really about you?
   - Describe the images that come up for you.
   - What do you like and what do you not like?

Note: The Social Media Self-Assessment Worksheets can also be used here.

2. The next step is to decide when to use your real name and image and when you need to use a pseudonym. Consider the following questions:

   - Identify all the different roles you might have online (i.e. professional, parent, or sports fan) and determine if the roles are public or private.

- Which roles will you allow to intersect and why?
- Which roles do you not want to connect?

3. Use the following guidelines to set-up your online accounts:
- Fully Revealing = Full name and an actual photo
- Semi Revealing = First name only with actual photo or avatar
- Unrevealing = Pseudonym or avatar

4. Find social media platforms to fit your different roles. For example, Facebook tends to be use by more people for private needs and LinkedIn for professional needs.

5. For a professional online identity, students and social workers should use their real name and photo. The most commonly recommended social media platforms for a professional online presence include accounts with LinkedIn, Twitter, and an electronic portfolio such as a blog or website.

How to Professionally Share and Communicate with Social Media

Generally, the NASW Code of Ethics (2017a) in the United States encourages the following practices when social workers share and communicate via social media:

1. Avoid sharing or communicating via social media with clients for personal or non-work related reasons (1.6e).
2. Never share any client information online that is identifying or confidential (1.7q).
3. Be mindful of when and how posting one's personal information, including online personal affiliations may create boundary confusion and/or inappropriate dual relationships with clients (1.6f & g).
4. Treat all clients and colleagues with respect and positive regard when sharing and posting comments on social media (2.1b).
5. Engage with colleagues about unethical use of social media in social work practice settings with the goal of preventing or correcting ethical violations (2.10a).

Professionally sharing content via social media: We would suggest that the sharing of some client information is permissible with the client's authorization, and social workers should avoid oversharing and ask the client to approve content prior to sharing. For example, social work educational programs like to share successes of their students such as winning an award or graduating. This would be okay with student permission, preferably with written consent.

Kimball and Kim (2013) suggest that social workers consider the following five questions as a guide for posting information on social media:

1. *What information do you want to share?* - Consider the type of information to be shared. Is it public or private information? Text, data or images? Is it fact-based, a professional judgement or personal opinion?

2. *Why do you want to share this information?* - Think about the reasons for sharing this information. What are the benefits or deterrents of sharing? Is there an expected outcome from sharing this information?

3. *Who needs to see this information?* - This is when you consider the audience or reader. Who will read this information and how will they benefit from it? If personal, will clients or supervisors see this information?

4. *Where do you want to share this information?* - Reflect on which social media platform would be the best venue for sharing or if you want to share across multiple platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn.

5. *How does the NASW Code of Ethics or other organizational policies guide sharing this information?* - Always examine and reflect on the NASW Code of Ethics, the NASW Technology Standards for Social Work Practice, and other policies that may affect the sharing of this information.

Robb (2011) also suggests using the following guidelines when posting on social media:

- Blog about your passion, but be prepared to handle comments and feedback from others, which may contradict your comments or be negative.
- Be consistent and authentic with your comments. Clients and supervisors may be upset if you post content that does not reflect your professional role as a social worker.
- Think about which groups or causes that you want to like or endorse on social media.
- Be culturally sensitive, respectful and polite when posting.

Other helpful resources in helping social workers determine what to post on social media are:

- Netiquette guidelines (http://www.albion.com/netiquette/): These guidelines provide an understanding of what is polite and respectful communication on the internet and online environments.
- NASW Code of Ethics (https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English): The values and standards in the Code of Ethics can be applied to online communication, and the Code was recently updated in 2017 to address the use of technology in practice.
- NASW, ABSW, CSWE & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice (https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf): These standards offer general guidelines for using technology ethically in social work practice.
- Association of Social Work Board's *Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice*: https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ASWB-Model-Regulatory-Standards-for-Technology-and-Social-Work-Practice.pdf: These standards are designed for state-level licensing boards in the United States.

Additionally, students should identify professional social workers who are using social media ethically and professionally as role models. Platforms to search include LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and blogs.

Communicating with clients via social media or texting: Communicating with clients via social media or texting via a mobile device can be very convenient and even preferred by some clients who may not have an email address or telephones. Several options exist for direct messaging within a social media platform such as using *Facebook Messenger* or "Messaging" via *LinkedIn*, creating a private channel or group to communicate with a client (i.e. a closed group in Facebook), or texting from one mobile device to another mobile device and/or via a texting app such as *WhatsApp* or *GroupMe.* It is important to understand that when communicating via social media or texting apps is that you cannot guarantee privacy and confidentially for clients, and the correspondence may not comply with rules of HIPAA or other client privacy legislation. There are a few reasons for this:

1. These platforms and apps are maintained third party providers who have access to the content of communications.
2. The platform's company may or may not store the data from the communications in a secure manner.
3. Mobile devices are easily lost or stolen allowing others access to confidential information.

To help protect a client's privacy and their confidential information via social media or texting, social workers should incorporate the following practices:

1. Seek guidance from your supervisor and/or agency about organizational-level policies related to communicating via social media and texting.
2. Obtain a client's permission to communicate via social media or texting, using informed consent to explain the benefits and risks as well as setting parameters for how the communication will work (i.e. limited time periods such as between 8 AM – 5 PM, what topics are appropriate for texting). Document your conversation and the client's preferences in your case records.
3. Avoid disclosing personal health information or any other sensitive content about the client in your messages. Inform your clients about the types of communication you will have over devices (i.e. logistic, such as scheduling, but not clinical, such as it relates to suicide ideation).
4. Use HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) or FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) compliant communication tools or apps for your communication.
5. Always use password protection on your devices.
6. Have a plan to lock and deactivate your mobile device in the event of loss or theft.
7. Do not share your digital devices.
8. Advocate for HIPAA or FERPA compliant digital communication tools at your agency, such as those that offer encrypted and secure messaging and are designed for sharing secure information. Examples include Tiger Connect (https://www.tigerconnect.com/), *TextUp* (https://www.textup.org/) or *Remind* (https://www.remind.com/). There are many other tools available and social workers should explore all the options.

Develop your own Professional Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of a social media policy is to inform clients, constituents, colleagues and others about when, how and why you use social media in a professional capacity. This is not a policy for your agency, but one that you employ as an individual practitioner, professional, and/or educator. This is a recommended practice per NASW Tech Standard 2.10 – Social Media Policy (NASW, 2017b) and fits with the NASW Code of Ethics (2017a) standards of informed consent with clients (1.3e-i), respect with colleagues (2.1), and when conducting supervision and consultation (3.1). While there are no set standards for what should be included in a social media policy or how it should be communicated with clients, colleagues, or constituents, we encourage students, educators, and practitioners to include the benefits of social media as well as potential challenges. The following steps provide a guide for developing a social media policy that can be used by students or practitioners:

1. Conduct an internet search for examples of social media policies for other professions such as nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, etc., and select two or three that you like and one that you do not like. Compare and contrast the policies and identify points that you would like to include in your own policy.

   One example is Sean Erreger's (2015) social media policy available on his blog *Stuck on Social Work*: https://stuckonsocialwork.wordpress.com/social-media-policy/. Alternatively, you could ask students to review and assess one or two policies that you have already selected.

2. Ask students to complete the *Develop your Professional Social Media Policy Worksheet* which takes them through the following questions:
   - What sources or standards do you need to consider?
   - Whom are you informing with your policy?
   - What ethical concerns does your policy need to address?
   - How do you want to engage in common online activities?

3. After completing the worksheet, students can then write their own social media policy. This can be an assignment or part of their learning contract for field education. We encourage incorporating peer and supervisor reviews as part of the writing process.

Note: Field Educators should model this practice by writing their own social media policies. This is also considered a best practice per NASW Tech Standard 4.04 (NASW, 2017). See our examples in the following blog post, *My Guidelines for using Digital & Social Tech in the Classroom and Beyond*, which is available at: http://www.laureliversonhitchcock.org/2016/02/12/my-guidelines-for-using-digital-social-tech-in-the-classroom-and-beyond/ (Hitchcock, 2016).

Additional resources for developing a social media policy:

*   *Netiquette Guidelines*: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/
*   National Association of Social Workers' *Standards for Technology & Social Work Practice*: https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf
*   *My Private Practice Social Media Policy* by Dr. Keely Kolmes: http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf
*   Association of Social Work Board's *Model Regulatory Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice*: https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ASWB-Model-Regulatory-Standards-for-Technology-and-Social-Work-Practice.pdf
*   *Social Worker's Guide to Social Media* from the University of Buffalo's School of Social Work: https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/social-media-guide.html
*   *Social Media Ethics (part 2): Developing Your Social Media Policy* by Dr. Julia Hanks: http://www.drjuliehanks.com/2012/08/05/social-media-ethics-part-2-developing-your-social-media-policy/
*   Karpman, H. E., & Drisko, J. (2016). Social Media Policy in Social Work Education: A Review and Recommendations. *Journal of Social Work Education, 52*(4), 398-408. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2016.1202164
*   *Social Media: What is the policy where you work?* by Dr. Ellen Belluomini: http://socialworksdigitaldivide.blogspot.com/search/label/policy

Develop a Professional Learning Network

For any practicing social worker, maintaining competent skills and knowledge over one's professional career is an ethical obligation to clients and colleagues. Social media allows users to access and share almost any type of information, essentially shifting learning from an individual effort to a community process. When social workers use social media to collect information related to professional interests, share this information with other practitioners, and collaborate with colleagues on projects, the resulting effort becomes a professional learning network (PLN). Key to this practice of life-long learning is effectively using the digital tools within social media platforms to curate information and then actively engage with other users to share and network. For example, a social worker's PLN might include the use of email alerts from online newspapers, blogs, and scholarly journals to receive updates about research in their area of practice. Then, the social worker chooses quality bits of this information, say a recent finding from a governmental agency and engages in conversation via Twitter, a microblogging tool, with another social worker about what these findings mean for their particular agencies or areas of practice. It is important to note that social workers have been networking for lifelong learning prior to the explosion in online content and social and digital tools in the form of print versions of journals that were photocopied and mailed to colleagues. The advantages of using social media to expand one's learning includes access to a larger variety of professionally relevant information in digital form,

opportunities to connect with professionals and researchers from around the world, access when it is most relevant, and contributing to the public discourse about pressing societal problems. Disadvantages also exist when using a PLN, such as managing the volume and quality of the digital content. As social media allows for quick and easy sharing of almost any type of text, photo, or video, social workers must also maintain digital literacy to critically assess and reflect on quality, source, and ethical considerations of online content, not only for their professional consumption, but also to best inform clients and colleagues about harmful or unethical content.

To create a PLN, Hitchcock, Sage and Smyth (2017) suggest reflecting on the following questions using the *Professional Learning Network (PLN) Worksheet*, which is available in the worksheet appendix:

- What do you want to learn? (Objectives)
- How do you want to participate? (Activities)
- What digital tools do you want to use? (Toolbox)
- How will you manage it? (Planning)
- How will you connect it with your face-to-face network? (Integration)

Additional resources for developing a professional learning network:

- Hitchcock, L. I. & Sage, M. (2018). Professional Learning Networks for Social Workers in the Digital Age. *Social Work Today, 18*(2), 22-25. http://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/MA18p22.shtml
- Hitchcock, L. I., Sage, M. Singer, J., & Smyth, N. J (2017, October 21). #APM17**–** Harnessing Technology for one's own Good: Professional Learning Networks in Social Work [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.laureliversonhitchcock.org/2017/10/21/apm17-harnessing-technology-for-ones-own-good-professional-learning-networks-in-social-work/
- Smyth, N. J. (2016, October 14). *Online Connections for Professional Learning*. Retrieved from https://socialworksynergy.org/2016/10/14/online-connections-for-professional-learning/

Case Studies

The following case studies are designed for use with students in field education, and are based on real-world scenarios, although names, locations and other details have been changed to protect confidentiality. These case studies can be easily adapted for students across the social work curriculum or for practitioners in community-based agencies.

Case Study #1 - It's My Prerogative

You placed a social work student in a child welfare agency to complete their field placement. You met with the student and field instructor for their initial visit, which included developing the learning plan and activities for the semester. As part of your discussion, you learned the agency does not have a social media policy and the student must rely on the social media content provided by the field office in orientation.

Several weeks into the placement, you receive a recorded snapchat video of the student. In the video, the student states that she does not want to go to her internship today because it is so chaotic. She also attaches a picture of the child welfare agency with its name and location. The student indicates that she is considering calling in sick for a mental health day because her school promotes self-care and she cannot deal with "crazy clients today." The student who sent you the recorded snapchat video requests anonymity.

Questions for students:

- How does this affect your professional digital presence?
- How could this posting affect the agency and/or the clients it serves?
- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Using the Social Media Account Inventory, assess this scenario. Are you satisfied with the results of the assessment? Explain.
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Case Study #2A - Picture Perfect

Carrie is a 20-year-old social work student placed in an elementary school. One of Carrie's clients is five year-old Jake. During a meeting with Jake and his mother, Carrie asks Jake if she can take his picture. Jake immediately consents and Carrie snaps his picture with her personal cell phone. Carrie then posts his photo on her Instagram page with this caption: "This is my 5-year student who is overcoming great challenges every day! He is the reason I am so proud to be a social worker! #specialeducationrocks." The name of the elementary school is visible in the picture.

Questions for students:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws (i.e. FERPA), that affect this scenario?
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, school policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Case Study #2B - Check Me In

Kimberly, a social work intern at a local homeless shelter, contacts the field office to inform them her field agency posted a picture of her on Facebook while she was assisting with their fundraiser. Kimberly is concerned that the agency used the "check in feature," which identifies where she was located. The student explains to you that she does not want her location revealed to the public as she is concerned for her safety. She wants to know her rights as a student intern.

Questions for students:

- Using the Social Media Account Inventory, assess this scenario. Are you satisfied with the results of the assessment? Explain.
- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Case Study #3 - First Impressions

You receive a call from an agency field instructor stating they will not interview the student selected for their agency due to the content of the student's social media page. After careful consideration, you decide to search the student on social media. When you locate their Facebook account, you find two videos of the student containing inappropriate language and content. When you address the inappropriate videos with the student, she tells you that those are old videos and that she had indeed cleaned off her social media sites per your request in preparing students for field.

Questions for students:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Case Study #4 - Be My Friend

Your student, John, asks to meet with you about a concern he has with his field instructor. John tells you that his field instructor has requested to be friends on social media platforms. Currently he has not accepted his field instructor's friend request, but is feeling pressure to do so. John reports that his field instructor makes "joking" comments that he must not like her because he hasn't accepted her friend request. John prefers to keep his social media sites private and does not want to interact on social media with supervisors. He is concerned that his grade may suffer due to not accepting her friend request.

Questions for students:

- What standards, values, and/or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Case Study #5 - Freedom of Speech

Allison is a second year MSW intern who is very active in the political landscape and uses her social media platforms to voice political views, advocate, and disseminate information. While Allison's political ideology aligns with social work ethics, principles, and values, she resides in a region that does not support similar beliefs. She was matched with a private adoption agency due to her interest in international adoptions. The agency reports they will not accept her after screening her social media platforms. The field instructor is concerned that her active political participation will not be consistent with their administrative and private donors' views.

Questions for students:

- Using the Social Media Account Inventory, assess this scenario. Are you satisfied with the results of the assessment? Explain.
- What standards, values, or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- What next steps would you take as a student?

Questions for field supervisors/agency employees:

- What standards, values, or principles from the NASW Code of Ethics relate to this scenario?
- Are there field policies, agency policies, or laws that affect this scenario?
- Are there any next steps you would take as a field educator or agency representative?

Learning Activities to promote Professional & Ethical use of Social Media among Social Work Students

The following table includes examples of low-stakes & high stakes learning activities that can be incorporated into regular curriculum to support use of social media in field education. Low-stakes activities are those tasks that can be done by students without having an active social media presence or on their own, while high-stakes activities require a student to complete a task online with social media or working directly with a client system to complete the assignment.

CSWE Social Work Competencies (2015)	Social & Digital Technology-based Learning Activities	
	Low-Stakes Activities	**High-Stakes Activities**
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	1. Be familiar with ethical standards that address dilemmas related to the use of digital and social technology in social work (such as ASWB Model Regulatory Standards for Technology, NASW/ASWB Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice, NASW Code of Ethics). Write-up a case study of one possible ethical dilemma. (K, V) 2. Write a personal *digital and social technology policy* that reflects your professional use of social & digital technologies in social work practice that could be shared with a client to let them know how to contact you and your policies about use of technology with clients. (K, S, V, CA)	1. Conduct an audit of one's personal and professional social media accounts by creating a spreadsheet that lists all your accounts, description of your profile and your activity with each account. Include your assessment of what a client or prospective employer might conclude about you if they viewed accounts associated with your name. (K, S, CA). 2. Search for information about yourself on the Internet including websites, social media accounts and other online resources, and review the content, including words and images, for quantity, quality, and accuracy. Write down what you find in a brief 300-word reflection. (S, CA)

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	1. From the Pew Research Center's website, search for information about the use of social media in the United States based on age, race, gender, SES, etc. and then create a one-page digital handout for staff at your practicum agency, focused on one of the agency's populations served. (K, S, V) 2. Interview an adolescent, older adult, or client or another professional (social work or from another discipline) at your agency about their use of social media. and then write a paper comparing their use of social media to your own use of social media. (K, V, CA)	1. Develop a list of hashtags used by a specific population served by your practicum agency such as LGTBQ youth or Black Americans, and explain the context of each hashtag in a blog post. (K, S, V) 2. Join an online group for a specific population served by your practicum agency such as LGTBQ youth or Black Americans, and is different from your own demographic. Observe the group culture and norms. Write a two-page paper about what you learned from your observations. (K, S, V).
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	1. Choose a specific client population, and describe five ways that social media can be used as an advocacy tool for this population. Give an example of current efforts to use social media for advocacy for this population. (K, S, V) 2. Write a case study about using social media with a diverse and/or vulnerable population that can be used for your field seminar or next department meeting. (K, S, V)	1. Create a Twitter List of all your local, state, and federal elected officials online and send them tweets about a social justice issue related to your field practicum agency. 2. Plan, implement and evaluate an educational group for clients or workers at your practicum agency, informing them about digital rights such as privacy with electronic data, open access, and transparency. (K, S, V)
Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	1. Search for a peer-reviewed article about research conducted via social media with a vulnerable population. Read the article and write a 300-word annotation to share with your supervisor or instructor. 2. Read the following articles: *Social Media Policy in Social Work Education: A Review and Recommendations* by Karpman & Drisko and *Social Media policies at US Medical Schools* by Kind et al. Write a one-page paper that compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between social media policies for the professions.	1. Identify a social media use research question based on a problem experienced by the staff at your practicum agency, and design a research study to answer the question. (K, S, V) 2. Create and implement a survey about social media use by employees at your practicum agency. Compile the results and share with your practicum supervisor. (K, S, V, CA)

Competency 5 – Engage in Policy Practice	1. Read blog post *Social Media: What is the policy where you work?* by Ellen Belluomini and then analyze your practicum agency's social media policy. (K, S, CA) 2. Review and analyze at least 10 different social media policies from non-profit or governmental agencies from the Social Media Policy Database: http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies/, and then create a list of best practices for your practicum agency. Consider how these practices would affect clients, employees and community constituents before sharing with your supervisor. (K, S, V)	1. Review your agency's website for compliance with access for individuals with disabilities using one of the checklists from the US Department of Health & Human Services: http://www.hhs.gov/web/section-508/making-files-accessible/checklist/index.html. Share your results with your practicum supervisor. (K, S) 2. Create a Twitter list of national and state advocacy and policy-based agencies focused on issues affecting clients at your practicum agency. (K, S, CA)
Competency 6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	1. Develop a list of questions for clients at your agency about their digital communication preferences, such as email, texting, and video calls, which can be used on a referral questionnaire form or during the first session with a client. (K, S) 2. Create a digital list of articles, videos and/or blog posts about how social workers at your practicum agency can best use social media to engage with clients or communities served by your practicum agency. (K, S)	1. After writing your own professional social media policy, practice discussing it with clients at your agency as part of your informed consent process. (K, S, V, CA) 2. Create a professional social media profile on a social media site such as Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Connect with other professionals and share resources. (K, S, CA)

Competency 7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	1. Read blog post *Technology Ecomaps* by Ellen Belluomini and then create your own technology ecomap. (K, S, CA) 2. Create a list of questions that assess cultural, environmental, and linguistic issues related to social media that social workers could ask clients or constituents from your practicum agency. (K, S, CA)	1. Develop a work plan for your practicum agency to establish and maintain a social media account such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram that will inform clients and the community about the agency. (K,S) 2. Using the Nonprofit Social Media Policy Template by Idealware (https://www.idealware.org/creating-social-media-policy-3/), create a draft social media policy for your agency and then share with your supervisor and three other employees at your practicum agency for feedback. Write a report for your supervisor that discusses how you used the tool, your policy and the feedback from others about the policy. (K, S, V, CA)
Competency 8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	1. Write a proposal that outlines a private Facebook group for a client population at your agency that incorporates best practices. (K, S) 2. Write a proposal that outlines a live Twitter chat for social workers about a topic relevant to a client population at your agency. (K, S)	1. Create and manage a private Facebook group for a client population at your agency that incorporates best practices. (K, S,) 2. Develop and facilitate a live Twitter chat for social workers about a topic relevant to a client population at your agency. (K, S)
Competency 9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	1. Use an online survey instrument to create a client satisfaction survey about your practicum agency's use of social media. (K, S) 2. Research social media best practices for non-profit agencies, and create a list of ten best practices. (K, S, CA)	1. Using your online survey instrument, evaluate the client satisfaction of practicum agency's use of social media. Compile the results and share with your supervisor. (K, S, V, CA) 2. Using your list of best practices, evaluate how your field agency is using social media and make recommendations for improvement. Summarize your research and recommendation in a report to your supervisor or a multimedia presentation to your supervisor and other agency staff. (K, S, CA)

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Worksheet Appendix

- Single Social Media Account Inventory Worksheet
- Multiple Social Media Account Inventory Worksheet
- Social Media Self-Evaluation Checklist for Social Work Practitioners
- Develop your Professional Social Media Policy Worksheet
- Social Media Policy Checklist for Social Workers Worksheet
- Professional Learning Network (PLN) Worksheet

<u>Single Social Media Account Inventory Worksheet</u>

Directions: Identify one social media account that you use either personally or professionally such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Then, use the following directions to assess the content and use of the account with the checklist to complete your audit:

- Analyze at least 100 of your own posts on the social media account that you selected.
- Using the checklist, assess each post for the criteria in the checklist, adding a tally mark for each occurrence. Please be honest with yourself.
- After completing the assessment, decide if you are okay with your results. If not, write three action steps about how you will change the content you post on this account.
- Assess at least once a year. Consider creating a spreadsheet from the checklist to graph your social media use over time.

Name of Social Media Account:	Use of Account (Personal or Professional):
Describe the privacy settings used with this account:	
Date of Audit:	**Time Frame of Content:**
Criteria (Content of posts):	**Frequency (Tally the number of posts):**
Language is positive (happy, thanks, etc.)	
Content is mostly professional (ethical, topical, etc.)	
Content is mostly personal	
Language is questionable (negative, offensive, etc.)	
Wouldn't want a friend or family member to see	
Wouldn't want college or future employer to see	
Spelling or grammatical mistakes	
Includes a photo (selfie, etc.)	

Reference: Teaching Sam & Scout (2014). Social Media Inventory for High School Students. Retrieved from: http://www.samandscout.com/social-media-inventory-for-high-school-students/

Multiple Social Media Account Inventory Worksheet

<u>Directions:</u> For this self-assessment, you will need to create a spreadsheet of all your social media accounts. Locate and document all your social media profiles, professional and personal, and include all this information in the spreadsheet such as account name, your username and if the account is used for professional or personal reasons.

1. <u>Examine your social media profiles</u>
   - Profiles: Check for completion of all details on the user profiles and for consistency in images and message. Consider both your professional and personal accounts.
   - Review your metrics such how often you are posting and how many connections. Examples of metrics can include:
     1. How many followers, friends, or connections do you have and who are they? (Individuals, Organizations, etc.)
     2. How many users are you following and who are they?
     3. How often are you posting, and what are you posting? (Photos, videos, articles, etc.)
     4. What are you liking? What posts of yours are other users liking? How often? You may also want to consider other categories such as love, wow, sad and/or angry.
     5. What are you sharing? What posts of yours are other users sharing? How often?
     6. Any other criteria you want to assess or track. This may depend on the type of social media accounts you are reviewing.

2. <u>Examine those who do it well</u>
   - Find four to eight professional influencers related to your area of expertise/interest and examine how they manage their identity on social media.
   - Observe images and written content on each of their profiles.
   - Measure key metrics like followers and number of posts.

3. <u>Create an Action Plan</u>
   - Make an action plan for any changes you want to make to your social media profiles based on your assessment. Examples include:

     1. Connect and communicate with social workers in my areas of interest
     2. Increase visibility of my professional expertise
     3. Challenge stereotypes about social work presented in the traditional media

   - Implement your plan and review at least once a year.

Reference:

Dennen, V. (2014). *Florida State University, Massively Open Online Course titled Social Media for Active Learning*, Spring 2014. Retrieved from: http://meme.coe.fsu.edu/smooc/

Social Media Self-Evaluation Checklist for Social Work Practitioners

Adapted with permission from Visser, Huiskes, and Barrett (2014)

1. Assess your personal information and accessibility:
- Purpose: Is your online profile for professional or personal purposes?
- Profile: Does the personal information (e.g. photographs, videos, hobbies) shown on your profile fit with your image as a professional social worker?
- Accessibility: Are you aware of who has access to your personal information, based on your privacy settings?
- Memberships: Are you a member of any group that might be considered offensive or otherwise derogatory?
- Online reputation: Are you satisfied with the results shown on major Internet search engines about yourself?

2. Assess your connections to your networks:
- Clients: Do you have an online connection with a current or former patient that is not based on psychosocial or clinical care?
- Colleagues: Do you have an online connection with a colleague, where you have a dominant position, which might interfere with assessment? (e.g. educator-student, employer-employee, supervisor-employee)
- Conflicts of Interest: Do you have an online connection with a commercial or for-profit company, which might raise questions about your integrity and independence?

3. Assess the content of your posts:
- Clients' privacy: When discussing a case, is the client unidentifiable, even without the sum of information from other posts or websites?
- Libeling: Do your postings contain defamatory comments about colleagues that might damage their status?
- Clients' trust: Are there any postings on your profile that might harm clients' trust in you, your colleagues or your practice setting in general?
- Evidence base: Is the information and advice in your postings based on up-to-date evidence?
- Copyright: Do you infringe the copyrights of other people or institutions?
- Disclaimer: Do you accompany your postings with a disclaimer about the information?

Source: Visser, B. J., Huiskes, F., & Korevaar, D. A. (2012). A social media self-evaluation checklist for medical practitioners. *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, *9*(4), 245–248.

Develop your Professional Social Media Policy Worksheet

1. What sources do I need to review and/or incorporate into my social media policy?

2. Whom do I need to target in my social media policy?

3. What ethical concerns do I need to address in my social media policy?

4. How do I currently handle the following online activities at work or professionally? Using the table below, briefly note if you engage in the online activity for work and why. If you do not engage in the online activity professionally, note why not.

Common Online Activities	How used for work or professionally
Connecting via Social Networking Sites (Friending, following, etc.)	
Facebook	
LinkedIn	
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
Other:	
Communicating (emailing, texting, etc.)	
Email	
Texting	
Phone calls	
Instant or direct messaging	
Online Activity (searching, commenting, etc.)	
Internet searches	
Use of smartphone apps	
Use of business review sites for self or others	
Comments published on others' sites	
Creating or Sharing Digital Content (Photos, podcasts, blog posts, etc.)	
Text (Blog posts, comments on posts, etc.)	
Photos	
Videos	
Audio files	
Content is accurate, respectful, etc.?	
Managing Accounts & Online Presence	
Do you regularly check your accounts?	
Aware of and/or change privacy settings?	
Aware of encryption software and firewall settings?	
Boundaries between personal & professional?	
Other:	

5. Review with a colleague or supervisor and discuss what works well. Consider this question - Do I need to change my practices and if so, how? List professional practices you plan to include in your social media policy in the table below.

Common Online Activities	Current Practice
Connecting via Social Networking Sites (Friending, following, etc.)	
Facebook	
LinkedIn	
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
Other:	
Communicating (emailing, texting, etc.)	
Email	
Texting	
Phone calls	
Instant or direct messaging	
Online Activity (searching, commenting, etc.)	
Internet searches	
Use of smartphone apps	
Use of business review sites for self or others	
Comments published on others' sites	
Creating or Sharing Digital Content (Photos, podcasts, blog posts, etc.)	
Text (Blog posts, comments on posts, etc.)	
Photos	
Videos	
Audio files	
Content is accurate, respectful, etc.?	
Managing Accounts & Online Presence	
Do you regularly check your accounts?	
Aware of and/or change privacy settings?	
Aware of encryption software and firewall settings?	
Boundaries between personal & professional?	
Other:	

Next Steps:

6. Commit to writing your professional social media policy by signing the following statement:

I commit to writing and implementing my own professional social media policy by _____.

(Insert Date)

_____   _____

Signature   Date

7. After writing your policy, use the *Social Media Policy Checklist for Social Workers* to assess your policy for gaps. Revise as needed.
8. Implement your policy at work by sharing with clients, co-workers and supervisors. Review your policy annually.
9. Encourage colleagues to write their own professional social media policies. Advocate for this ethical practice in your place of employment.

Social Media Policy Checklist for Social Workers Worksheet

The purpose of a social media policy is to inform clients, constituents, colleagues and others about when, how and why you use social media in a professional capacity. This checklist serves as a guide to help you in creating your own social media policy to use in professional environments and situations. To use this checklist, answer the questions:

Does my social media policy incorporate the following guidelines? (Identify your sources)	Yes	No	Notes:
NASW Code of Ethics			
NASW Technology Standards for Social Work Practice			
Netiquette			
Relevant agency-level or Practice setting Policies			
Relevant State-level Licensing Laws or Policies			
Other:			
Does your social media policy inform the following individuals or groups? (Who)	Yes	No	Notes:
Clients			
Colleagues			
Constituents			
Others:			
Does your social media policy address the following ethical concerns? (What)	Yes	No	Notes:
Confidentiality and Privacy			
Dual Relationships			
Conflicts of Interest			
Other:			
Does my social media policy address the following common online activities? (How)	Yes	No	Notes:
Connecting (Friending, following or accepting other types of contact requests)			
Communicating (Emailing, texting, direct messaging and other forms of interaction via social media and mobile devices)			
Commenting (Blogging, writing posts or comments, and other forms such as online reviews)			
Searching (Using an internet search engine to find information)			
Sharing Digital Content (Photos, videos or audio clips)			
Managing your accounts and online presence			
Other:			

References:
- Kolmes, K. (n.d). *Articles for Clinicians using Social Media*. Retrieved from: http://drkkolmes.com/clinician-articles/
- National Association of Social Workers (n.d.) *8 Social Media and Technology Tips for Social Workers.* Retrieved from: https://www.socialworkers.org/nasw/ethics/ethics8series/social_media.asp?back=yes

Professional Learning Network (PLN) Worksheet

The Professional Learning Network Worksheet is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#) by Laurel Iverson Hitchcock, Melanie Sage and Nancy J. Smyth. Questions: [lihitch@uab.edu](#).

STEP 1: What do you want to learn? (Objectives)

What to Learn - Defining your Learning Eco Map
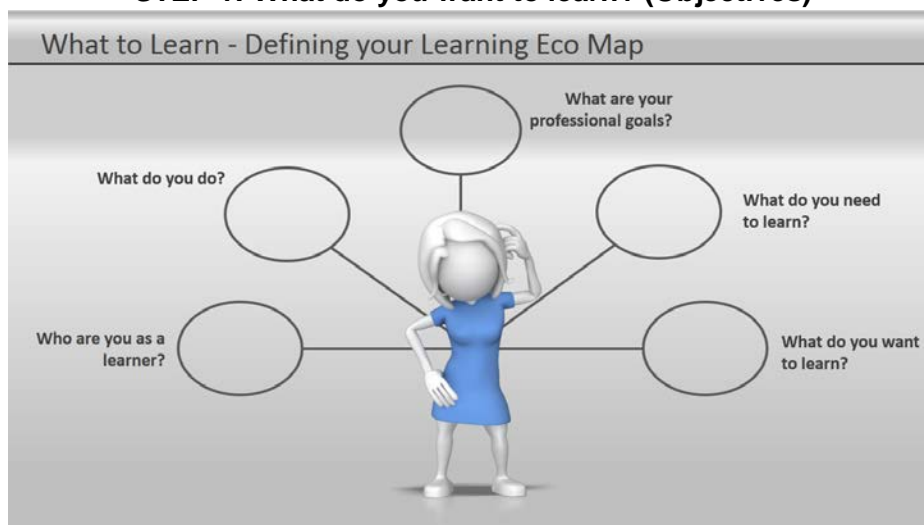
Who are you as a learner? _____

What do you do? _____

What are your professional goals? _____

What do you need to learn? _____

What do you want to learn? _____

STEP 2: How do you want to participate? (Activities)

How do I want to participate?

What is a quality connection to online you?
_____

What would be diverse connections for you? _____

The Social Media Toolkit for Social Work Field Educators is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#). Contact Laurel Iverson Hitchcock ([lihitch@uab.edu](#)) or Allison Curington ([amcurington@sw.ua.edu](#)) for questions.

What would you want to share? _____

STEP 3: What digital tools do you want to use? (Toolbox)

What tools do you already know how to use? _____

What tools would you like to learn? _____

STEP 4: How will you manage it? (Planning)

How often do you want to engage online for work? _____

What is one possible reflection question you could ask about your PLN? _____

_____

How much do you want to participate in your PLN? _____

STEP 5: How will you connect it with your face-to-face network? (Integration)

Identify three people you would like to add to your personal learning network and how:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

CREATE YOUR ACTION PLAN:

What are three things you can do following this workshop to expand your digital PLN? How can you make it a SMART goal? How will you evaluate/ know if your plan is working for you?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Resources:

Hitchcock, L. I. (2015, July 2). Personal Learning Networks for Social Workers. Retrieved from
http://www.laureliversonhitchcock.org/2015/07/01/personal-learning-networks-for-social-workers/

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transform education*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Smyth, N. J. (2016, October 14). *Online Connections for Professional Learning*. Retrieved from
https://socialworksynergy.org/2016/10/14/online-connections-for-professional-learning/

Whitby, T. (2013, November 18). How Do I Get a PLN? Retrieved April 5, 2017, from
https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-do-i-get-a-pln-tom-whitby

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