UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems
UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences

School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems
Social Media Guidelines

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

The UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems (SNMHS) Social Media Guidelines ('Guide') has been created to ensure that all those associated with SNMHS ('the School') are aware of the appropriate standards to uphold in relation to the use of social media for:

● work and study related purposes

● personal and social purposes

Definition:

"*Social media can be defined as the constellation of Internet-based tools that help a user to connect, collaborate, and communicate with others in real-time.*" (Ressler and Glazer, 2010).

Examples of social media can include:

● X (formally Twitter)

● Facebook

● LinkedIn

● Instagram

● YouTube

● TikTok

Social media also includes instant messaging like WhatsApp and Snapchat, Blogs, Wikis, Boards and other similar online forums.

2. WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?

These guidelines are applicable to;

Employees

● All full-time, part-time, fixed term and joint appointment employees, employed by the School are covered by this Guide.

Students

● All students undertaking programmes and research at the School at undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral level.

● Student Societies representing students associated with the School.

Community

● Wider School community including all alumni / School graduates

3. NURSING AND MIDWIFERY BOARD OF IRELAND (NMBI) 6 P'S OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The NMBI has provided a useful guide to nurses and midwives regarding appropriate behaviour on social media. Namely, the 6 P's of social media. This can be applied in both academic and clinical settings and forms the basis for good conduct online.

1. **Professional**

    Act professionally at all times.

2. **Positive**

    Keep posts positive.

3. **Person-free; patient-free**

    Keep posts patient and person free.

4. **Protect yourself**

    Protect your professionalism, your reputation and yourself.

5. **Privacy**

    Keep your personal and professional life separate. Check your privacy settings and respect the privacy of others.

6. **Pause before you post**

    Consider the implications of what you're posting. Avoid posting in haste or in anger. Don't respond to other posts in haste.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTE AND TIPS

In addition to the NMBI 6 P's of Social Media, School employees and students should take note of the Health Service Executive 'Social Media etiquette' tips (HSE, 2020), sometimes referred to as "Netiquette" (NMBI, 2013).

- Respect others' views and opinions. It is understandable that you may not always agree with opinions online, however, do not engage in a public disagreement.
- Aim to add value to what others are doing and saying with your knowledge and insights.
- Act professionally at all times.
- Be quick to correct your own mistakes and admit when you are wrong.
- Refrain from using ethnic or religious slurs, insults or obscenities at all times.
- Never engage in conduct that would be viewed as unacceptable online.
- Be considerate of others' privacy and topics that could be considered personal, such as religion or politics.
- Never engage with trolls whose aim is to engage you in negative conversation.

- Share information that you know to be true and to be careful of fake news and sharing misinformation.
- Refrain from sharing information about friends or colleagues without their prior consent.
- Speak in the first person, remembering that you are publishing content in your own name and not that of your employer, Clinical Placement site or the School (i.e. 'I' not 'we').

5. LINKING TO YOUR PLACE OF WORK OR STUDY

In some cases, staff and students of the School may wish to mention or indicate their connection to their place of work or study in their social media profiles. This can be of benefit to both the School and the individual when the content posted is primarily relating to the individual's work, research, publications or studies. However, it is important to be conscious that by association, any negative, derogatory or threatening comments posted by an employee or student can be damaging to the School. You should exercise common sense and good judgement in relation to what you post.

Remember: Remarks made in the name of the School about individuals, organisations or groups which are of an offensive, derogatory or threatening nature on social media may result in disciplinary action being taken.

6. DATA PROTECTION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) introduced in May 2018 is an EU law on data protection and privacy of personal data. Personal data can be anything that makes you personally identifiable, for example, your name, address, picture, PPS number, contact details, medical history, etc.

It is important for employees and students of the School to ensure you do not share personal data, which can include rich media like photos/videos, without the prior written consent of the individual. Please note, that consent can be withdrawn at any time by the individual.

Employees should also note, as per the terms and conditions of your employment you shall not discuss or disclose any information of a confidential nature except in the proper course of your employment.

Remember: You are legally liable for anything you publish on your own social networks.

7. REPORTING ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS

Bullying, harassment, and trolling

If you experience bullying, harassment, trolling or other derogatory or inflammatory behaviour online, it is important to understand the mechanisms in place to protect yourself. In the first instance, you should not engage. You should take screenshots of the behaviour and then block and report the offending users account through the social media application.

If you wish to take further action, you should meet with your Student Advisor Anna Scully anna.scully@ucd.ie, your Programme Director or your Line Manager who will discuss with you the options available under the UCD Dignity and Respect policies.

Concerns regarding the online behaviour of others.

If you note unusual, negative, bullying or any worrying behaviour online of a colleague or fellow student, you should in the first instance raise the concern with the individual directly and privately. It is important at all times to be conscious that the individual may be experiencing a difficult time in their lives which has caused an out of character behaviour.

If this option is not appropriate or the behaviours persist, your next course of action is to raise your concern with your Student Advisor Anna Scully anna.scully@ucd.ie, your Programme Director or your Line Manager who will deal with your concerns confidentially.

Complaint/concerns regarding the School social media accounts.

If you wish to raise a complaint or concern over the content posted on the School's social media accounts, please contact the School Marketing and Communications Manager Emily Watts emily.watts@ucd.ie.

The School currently has a verified and active Twitter (@ucdsnmhs) and YouTube account (www.youtube.com/c/ucdschoolofnursingmidwiferyandhealthsystems).

8. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Below you will find some helpful examples of real situations that staff, students, nurses and midwives have experienced and how you can apply good practice in relation to social media usage.

Example 1. A student experiences bullying behaviour online from a fellow student.

Sophie, a 2nd year nursing student attended a party with other nursing students in her class. At the party, Sophie and her friend had a falling out. Over the next number of weeks Sophie notices that the friend has started posting derogatory comments and GIFs on her social media account about the incident. The friend does not tag Sophie in the posts, but it is obvious to Sophie and their mutual friends online that it is about her. Sophie is hurt and it has started to affect her attendance and course work.

Guidance.

This case is about online bullying. In the first instance Sophie should approach the friend to talk to her about the posts and if a resolution can be reached. If the resolution is not forthcoming and/or the bullying continues, Sophie should approach her School Student Advisor Anna Scully anna.scully@ucd.ie or her Programme Director to discuss the issues and what supports are available to her. As set out in the UCD Student Code of Conduct, violent, abusive, threatening, offensive or unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, harassment sexual misconduct and sexual harassment whether face-to-face or online is totally unacceptable and can be reported under the Student Discipline Procedure.

Example 2. A fellow colleague has posted confidential information on their research project.

Jenny is working on a research project with a team of colleagues in the School. The subject of the research project is one of a confidential nature dealing with medical diagnosis and patient medical history. Jenny has noted that her colleague has set up a social media account for the project and has been posting images of fellow colleagues working on the project on site and at their desks. Jenny has noticed that in the images you can make out details relating to patient medical history on some of her colleagues computer screens. Jenny is concerned that this is a breach of data protection and privacy.

Guidance

This is a case of breaching UCD ethics commitments (confidentiality) and GDPR which can result in fines and withdrawal of research funding. Posting identifiable information like medical history notes

is against these regulations and is a serious offence. In the first instance, the colleague may not be aware they have posted this information and Jenny should approach her to note the mistake. The posts should then be deleted immediately and the data subject notified of the breach and the actions taken. The [UCD Data Protection Commissioner](#) should be notified of the breach and they will provide advice if further action is required. In this case, Jenny's colleague should not have posted in haste without reviewing the content in more detail and thinking about the potential implications.

The following examples were developed by the NMBI (2013) and are based on real scenarios that nurses and midwives have experienced. These examples are particularly applicable to students who are on practice placement.

Example 3. A student nurse posts pictures of a patient on their personal social media account.

Patrick is a fourth-year nursing student and describes his recent clinical rotation in a hospital emergency room on his Twitter account. He tweets about a shift where he was involved in caring for victims in a road traffic accident and posts a graphic image of a patient with a severe leg injury in the tweet. He shares that he has learned a lot about emergency nursing. A fellow nursing student concerned about this posting brings it to the attention of their nursing lecturer several days later.

Guidance

This example highlights some key issues for using social media appropriately and acting professionally even in a student role. Patrick demonstrated a lack of respect towards patients as he did not maintain confidentiality of care. Taking photos without consent, then uploading them for public viewing using a personal phone in the clinical setting are also other serious acts of irresponsibility. These breaches of care need to be discussed with Patrick and should involve the clinical placement coordinator and tutors from the particular clinical setting as appropriate.

Example 4. A nurse receives a friend request from a patient they are treating.

Aisling is an asthma nurse working the outpatient respiratory clinic in a Cork hospital. A service-user finds her advice and support invaluable to managing his symptoms. He also develops a close rapport with her in the clinic. At home, he looks for her on Facebook. He sends her a 'friend' request. Aisling is in a dilemma. Should she ignore the request and seem unfriendly, or accept the request which means the service user would see personal information about Aisling that she normally only shares with friends?

Guidance

This case is about professional boundaries and maintaining a professional relationship with the service user. Online contact can blur these important boundaries and a nurse's professionalism may be compromised. Aisling should decline the friend request. This does not send a message to the person who has sent the request. If the service user asks at the next appointment, Aisling can explain it is a personal account for keeping up to date with personal friends. One way to keep your private life private and maintain professional boundaries is to use separate professional and personal pages on social media sites.

9. SETTING UP A SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT: ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Setting up a social media account can be a positive thing to do to communicate and engage with your peers, colleagues and organisations. If you are thinking about setting up an account you should answer some basic questions, namely:

1. Will this account be a personal or work related account?
2. What is my intention for the account e.g. chat with friends, post about my research, etc.
3. How often will I be posting? Do I have the time to commit?
4. Do I know about the platforms privacy and security settings?
5. Do I understand that what I post will be permanently on the internet? Have I thought about any long-term implications of this?
6. Will I enjoy using the platform as a healthy way to engage with people and organisations?

Remember: If you are in doubt about certain social media platforms or would like some general advice or guidance, please contact the School Marketing and Communications Manager Emily Watts emily.watts@ucd.ie.

10. REVIEW DISCLAIMER

This Guide is based on the best available evidence, legislation, regulatory requirements and quality standards with regard to social media usage and is designed to assist staff and students in using social media in carrying out the function of their posts and studies. The Guide also extends to future developments in internet capability and social media usage.

This Guide is not intended to be followed in isolation and should be read in conjunction with other related policies and guides, namely:

- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Social Media and Social Networking [here](#).
- Health Service Executive (HSE) Social Media Staff Use Guidelines [here](#).
- UCD Student Code of Conduct [here](#).
- UCD Data Protection Policy [here](#).
- UCD Dignity and Respect Policies [here](#).

This Guide will be periodically reviewed by the School to ensure its continued relevance and accuracy.

11. REFERENCES

Health Service Executive, (October, 2020), "Social Media Staff Use Guidelines". Available at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/digital/social-media/social-media-and-digital-policy/ (Accessed 16th May 2022).

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (June, 2013), "Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Social Media and Social Networking". Available at: https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/More-Standards-Guidance/Social-Media-Social-Networking (Accessed on 12th May 2022).

Ressler, P., Glazer, G., (October 22, 2010), "Legislative: Nursing's Engagement in Health Policy and Healthcare Through Social Media" *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Vol. 16 No. 1.