CNA Webinar Series: Progress in Practice

Pause before you post!
Exploring the ethics of social media

Lorelei Newton, RN
Instructor, University of Victoria

Virgil Guitard, RN
Nurse Practice Consultant
Nurses Association of New Brunswick
Margot McNamee, RN, BA, MHN  
Senior Nurse Advisor  
Professional Practice & Regulation  
Canadian Nurses Association

Lorelei Newton, RN  
Instructor, University of Victoria  
Camosun Undergraduate Program  
Doctoral Candidate

Virgil Guitard, RN, II  
Nursing Practice Consultant  
Nurses Association of New Brunswick
What is ‘social media?’

Describes a group of internet based applications and technologies that allow users to interact and collaborate with each other online in the creation and sharing of information, ideas and opinions.

Difficult to define because it is always evolving.
Examples

- LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest
- Moodle, Blackboard
- Podcasts, webcasts, RRS feeds
- Flickr, Twitter, Youtube
- Blogs and even email

*The Nurse’s Social Media Advantage*

(Robert Fraser, RN)
Central Issues

- Public vs. Private
- Patient confidentiality and privacy
- Professional boundaries
Further considerations

Social media itself is not the issue but a way of documenting unprofessional, unethical or illegal conduct in a public and often permanent way.

An increasingly important way to connect but we need to be thoughtful and careful.
Social Media Etiquette

- Frame posts and responses respectfully.
- Sometimes a particular platform is not the best way to get your message across.
- Don’t access personal social network sites and games during work time.
- Think about social media the same way you think about personal phone calls.
- Social media cannot replace in-person professional interactions.
Issues and Opportunities

- Education
- Enhancing patient care
- Social Justice
Education

- Augment both academic and continuing education
- Tremendous opportunity to connect with and share information with students and colleagues
- Through professional application of social media in education, ethical use can be modeled and emerging issues can be identified
Enhancing Patient Care

- Inevitably, social media will be integrated into private and professional lives
- Patients will demand such access
- Important avenue for synthesis and dissemination of nursing knowledge
Social Justice

Is ‘connectivity’ a social determinant of health?

Builds capacity in patients, organizations, communities and ourselves

Collective voice to address inequities
‘Managing’ Social Media

- Work together to ensure responsible professional use of social media

- Collaborate and take control of our use of social media or others will do it for us

- Social media represents an opportunity for collective action in Canada and globally
Thank you

& thank you to Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship program
Applying the Ethics of Social Media

A RN Regulator’s Perspective
Nurses Association of New Brunswick’s Mandate

A professional regulatory organization that exists to protect the public and to support nurses by promoting and maintaining standards for nursing education and practice, and by promoting healthy public policy.
Three-pronged Approach

- Promotion of good practice.
- Prevention of undesirable practice.
- Intervention in situations of unacceptable practice.
What do we know?

- Social media can benefit nursing practice.
- Social media use is not a Gen Y phenomena.
- Part of our personal and professional world.
- Workplace concerns around professionalism & use of social media.
What do we know?

- Impact on nurse-client relationship.
- Documented court decisions and disciplinary actions against RNs around inappropriate use of social media.
- Media-reported cases of patient privacy and confidentiality of health information breaches.
Characteristics of Professionalism in Nursing

- Integrity and Trustworthiness
- Responsibility and Sense of Duty
- Accountability and Initiative
- Continuous Learning and Personal Growth
- Self-Care and Professional Image
- Teamwork and Professional Demeanor
- Compassion and Respect for Others

Professionalism
Standards & Code of Ethics

Authoritative statements that articulate CONDUCT or PERFORMANCE required of registered nurses. They further define ACCOUNTABILITIES set out in LEGISLATION AND REGULATION.

The purpose is to identify the LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE expected of nurses in their PRACTICE, against which actual performance can be measured. Standard statements provide a BENCHMARK below which performance is UNACCEPTABLE.
What do the Standards say about?

- Privacy & confidentiality.
- Duty to respect and protect clients’ trust.
- Collegial professional relationships.
- RN’s responsibility to uphold values and beliefs of the profession in professional conduct.
- Therapeutic nurse-client relationship & RN’s responsibility to maintains appropriate boundaries with clients.
- RN’s accountability for own actions and decisions.
Privacy & Confidentiality

- When we combine technology with social connections, the line between what we think of as “private” and “public” is blurred or blended.
- Permanence of information, reputation damage, professional and organizational credibility.
Maintaining Professional Boundaries

“Boundaries are the defining lines which separate the therapeutic behaviour of an RN from any behaviour which, with well intentions or not, could reduce the benefit of nursing care clients”
Social Media and Nursing Opportunities

- A tool for the sharing of nursing knowledge and information,
- An engaging platform to support continuing education, organizational information and policies,
- A means to share with others what it is nurses do and why it is so important.
Ethics in Practice Paper: When Private Becomes Public: The Ethical Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media

For more information
lorelei@uvic.ca
vguitard@nanb.nb.ca