SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS: BALANCING THE RISKS AND BENEFITS

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO) Sponsored Session
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

» Social media use by healthcare professionals
» Benefits and risks of healthcare professionals using social media
» Ontario Survey of Social Media use by OTs
» Principles for Good Social Media Use in OT practice
» Story of Successful Social Media in Practice
WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

“Online digital technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, experiences and perspectives, promote discussion and build relationships”

e.g. Google +, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

Email is not considered to be social media, for the purposes of this presentation
SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IS ALL OVER THE NEWS...

- In 2010, 4 nursing students expelled from university for posing with human placenta on Facebook

- In 2008 a group of dental nurses were reprimanded by their bosses for establishing a social networking group called “I’m a dental nurse and I hate patients because…”

British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009
In 2009 a group of doctors and nurses were suspended for posting pictures of themselves lying down in unusual places around a hospital. (Fox News, 2011; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2011; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009)
SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IS ALL OVER THE NEWS...

Facebook Flirts:

» A female GP sought advice from the Medical Defence Union recently after being asked out by a 30 year old man she treated for whiplash after a car accident

» Following the consultation, he sent her her favourite flowers, lilies

» He then turned up with a travel book he thought she would like

» It became apparent that he was finding this information from her Facebook site

» She was advised to improve her security settings and told to have other GPs at the practice treat the patient in the future

British Broadcasting Corporation, 2009
SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IS ALL OVER THE NEWS...

More than 40% of nurses say a colleague has inappropriately posted details of patients or colleagues on social media sites.
BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

» Professional consultation
  » eg: Interactive blogs sharing details of successful treatment strategies

» Continuing education and professional development
  » eg: OTs posting notices of clinical education courses on their professional Facepage

» Improved client care
  » eg: Clinical problem solving
RISKS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

» Privacy and confidentiality breaches
» Crossing professional boundaries
» Negative publicity
» Reputational damage
» Reduced trust and confidence in the profession
» Potential Conflict of Interest, in advertising and marketing
» Potential loss of control of information posted online
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH PUBLIC PROTECTION?

- Colleges protect the public interest by setting standards for practice and having programs in place so that OTs practice safely and effectively (College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario, 2011)

- Colleges can provide guidance for use of social media - high risk to the public
SURVEY OF ONTARIO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

- Electronic survey to all 4,926 OTs in Ontario on their use of social media
- Information Re: demographics, use of social media, privacy measures taken and concerns with using social media
- 61% of respondents used social media more for personal reasons as opposed to professional use
- 892 completed the survey (18%)
Use of social media in OT practice

- No, I do not use social media in OT practice (72%)
- Yes, I use social media in OT practice (25%)
- Not applicable (2%)
Respondents’ use of social media based on the number years they have been practicing OT

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% Based on those who answered "Yes, I use social media"

% Based on those who answered "No, I do not use social media"
Types of social media sites for personal and professional reasons

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Google +
- YouTube
- Dating sites

% Based on those who responded to types of social media used for personal reasons

% Based on those who responded to types of social media used for professional reasons

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Member’s opinions on using social media in the future in their personal life and in OT Practice

- **Not applicable** - I already use social media
- I do not currently use social media and I do not plan on using it
- I need to think about it
- I do not use it now but will consider using it in the future
- I might use it

% Based on those who responded about using social media in the future in their personal life

% Based on those who responded about using social media in the future in OT practice

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RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SURVEY

All OTs need to be informed about:

The risks and benefits to using social media

How to protect personal privacy on social media

How to use social media in a safe and professional manner
GOOD PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY OTS

1. Professionalism:
   - OTs conduct in accordance with the standards and principles of the profession in all forms of communication
   - Expectation by Colleges that OTs will conduct themselves in a manner befitting a Health Professional at all times.
2. Privacy and Confidentiality:
   - Ensure social media postings do not reveal personal health information
   - Potential for breaching confidentiality by conveying information via an anecdote
     (Cain, 2011; College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, 2010; Mostaghimi & Crotty, 2011; University of Toronto, 2010)
   - Potential for breaching privacy on social media groups
3. Risk Management:
   - Level of risk should be re-assessed on a regular basis, monitor sites regularly
   - Recognize the potential for all communication on social media sites to be public and permanent
4. Professional Boundaries
   - Avoid dual relationships with clients
   - Refrain from accepting/initiating invitations to be online friends.
     (College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, 2010)

5. Advertising:
   - Social media pages meant for advertising where the public can post freely are a risk
     - e.g. Client posts and testimonials
ELEMEHTS OF A GOOD SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM

» Be Real – authentic, honest, transparent
» Protect the Client – privacy, respect
» Respect Sensitive Information – confidentiality
» Uphold Professional Standards
» Understand Violations and Risks of SM
ELEMEENTS OF A GOOD SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM, CONT.

» Pause Before you Post
» Respect the Brand – of your employer
» Go Ahead, Engage
» Monitor your Social Media sites

» Adapted from Sutter Health Network, and Russell Herder, Ethos Business Law
CONCLUSION

» The Principles should guide OTs to continue to participate in social media while minimizing risk to the public

» Social media has the ability to evolve and grow OT practice with evolving technology, and the potential benefits for clients


References cont’d


THANK YOU
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS