

Building An Online Presence

Using Online Media to Promote Community Inclusion



Temple University
Collaborative

On Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

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This manual provides suggestions for promoting community living and participation of individuals with mental health conditions through social media. It was written by:

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Building an Online Presence: Using Online Media to Promote Community Inclusion

As social media becomes a more prevalent and expected aspect of everyday communication, it is important for both traditional mental health programs and peer-operated services to take advantage of online and social media opportunities. By taking advantage of these opportunities, agencies can further their reach, awareness, and engagement. This can in turn strengthen community inclusion efforts and the participation of those living with mental illnesses. Developing an online and social media presence will not only strengthen the visibility of your program but it will also highlight consumer participation in local community activities; further promoting community inclusion. This guide provides an initial consideration of how local agencies can build, implement, and maintain an online media presence through the use of agency websites, electronic newsletters, and social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Frequently, people ask whether or not social media strategies are worth the effort. To that, it is important to look at what the data has to say. According to The Pew Charitable Trusts report, about 75% of the US adult population now regularly uses at least one social media account. Roughly two-thirds use Facebook, while roughly one third use Instagram and one quarter use Twitter¹. More and more, all age groups are taking advantage of the technology: kids, working adults, and even seniors. In the past, those with serious mental illnesses have not used social media as much as the general public; however, this gap is closing. This poses a tremendous opportunity for mental health programs to use social media and online communications to promote community inclusion and help people with mental illnesses connect with and contribute to their communities.

This document provides a review of different online platforms and how they can be used to promote community inclusion. The following topical areas are included: traditional online platforms (i.e., Websites and Newsletters) and social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). As social media is ever evolving, there are additional platforms that could be used. These platforms were selected as they are well-established and may already be used by agencies. While some terminology may be different based on the platform, many of the strategies can be adopted across platforms.

Across recommendations, there are two broad themes: first, how can social media be used to raise awareness of opportunities for community participation, either facilitated through agency programs *or* independent opportunities for consumers to identify and

¹Anderson, M., and Smith, A. *Social Media Use in 2018*. [Pew Research Center](#). March, 2018.

participate? Second, to increase public awareness that individuals with mental illnesses are integrated members of the community, participating in meaningful activities “just like everyone else.”

As you review the document, we encourage you to take note on your agency’s current practices. There may be some strategies that only require targeted modifications, while other strategies may require more effort to implement. It is not our suggestion that all of these strategies be used. Rather, we hope that agencies will consider what approaches would be most useful and efficient to achieve desired outcomes. Before the review of different platforms, a self-assessment worksheet is included. This worksheet provides agencies with a guide to assess current strategies and set goals for using online platforms to promote community inclusion and participation.

Community Inclusion Online Presence: Self-Assessment & Goals

Use this worksheet to assess your current strategies and identify goals for using online platforms to promote community.

Please complete the following table. This will help you identify platforms and resources you may need to implement your social media plan.

Platform	Current/ Planned use (Y/N)	Designated staff responsible for maintaining (Identify position)	Information on platform is current (Y/N)	Plan to use to promote Community Participation (Y/N)
Website				
Newsletter/ Blog				
Facebook				
Instagram				
Twitter				
Other:				
Other:				

Things to consider: Maintaining a social media site can be a major commitment. If you do not have the resources to keep it current, it may be better to not have a site. If you do not have a designated staff person, avoid posting information that is date-specific. That way, you can have more time between posts without appearing outdated.

Look at the table you completed. For the platforms that you plan to use to promote community participation, make a note if you want to use that platform to 1) raise awareness that people with mental illnesses are participating in the community; 2) promote agency services that facilitate community participation; 3) promote independent participation; or 4) a combination of these.

Use the table below to make note of how you plan to use these platforms. Place an X in each of the boxes that you plan to focus on.

Platform	1) Raise awareness	2) Promote agency services that facilitate community participation	3) Promote independent participation
Website			
Newsletter/ Blog			
Facebook			
Instagram			
Twitter			
Other:			
Other:			

Things to consider: Sharing photos and stories

One of the great things about social media is the opportunity to share pictures and stories of fun events. However, as a human services organization it is important to know what you can share. If you plan to share pictures or stories of your participants, you will, at minimum, need a waiver from those who are photographed. You should take the time to meet with agency administrators to develop policies around what you will share. An example of an image waiver is included in the appendix. When developing your own waiver, please have a legal representative review it prior to posting images of participants.

Things to consider: Accessibility

Consider the delivery of media through multiple forms. Captioning videos, providing transcripts, and describing photos ensures the information is more accessible for individuals with disabilities. [This resource](#), produced by digitalgov provides tips for making your social media accounts accessible.

Ideas: As you read through the rest of the document, take note of what you might want to implement. There is a box for notes at the end of each section.

Using Traditional Online Platforms to Promote Community Inclusion

It is important for your agency's community inclusion initiatives to maintain an online presence. In the world we live in today, being online is typically expected of all organizations. It increases awareness, accessibility, and impact of your agency. This can be through social media platforms as well as traditional online platforms. We focus here on two traditional online outlets that are more regularly used by businesses - websites and newsletters – and offer some suggestions for using them to promote community inclusion.

Websites

Since the turn of the millennium, all organizations and businesses are expected to have a web presence. Often, the first thing someone does when hearing about an agency is to look at their website. A webpage is a vital platform for an agency to tell the world who they are, what services they offer, and how to connect with them. It is often the first, or second point of contact one will have with your agency thus making it extremely important. Websites also communicate information to other stakeholders, family members, staff, consumer advocates, and policy makers, among others.

Pros

Websites allow the agency to determine and display its own content. A website is a place where information can be shared about your agency by your agency. The information displayed can vary across multiple agencies, but the core foundation for all agencies includes a mission statement, services that are offered to consumers, and contact information. A successful webpage allows for users to quickly and easily find the information they want.

Cons

Webpages can be often be static (contain the same information after every visit), due to lack of staff and budget requirements that are needed to maintain and update a website regularly. Another downside of a webpage is the one sided communication: while an agency can share a lot about itself on its website, there is usually little opportunity for others to contribute or respond. Websites also assume that users are motivated to seek out the information needed, and this requires regularly assessing what website users might be most interested in looking for on your website.

Suggestions

Add a section specific to *Community Living and Participation*. This might be its own tab on the title bar or a section that is clearly labeled and linked on the website's homepage. The *Community Living and Participation* section should clearly define

community inclusion and its importance to your agency and to individuals with lived experiences. This section should also list the services and supports your agency can provide to help individuals better connect to the community activities of their choice, adding contact information for those who want to learn more about community inclusion services available at your agency.

In your 'community living and participation' section you can:

- Include a calendar of events and pictures from events that service recipients attend as part of your website's community inclusion efforts.
- Add pictures that highlight individuals having a great time in the community. If your site has a blog section, this is a great place to add and update this type of information!
- Highlight client stories of success in the community by interviewing people who want to discuss the impact your agency has had on their success in connecting to others and activities in the community. Include a focus on how they respond to being better engaged in community life. Connect their positive experiences to the services available at your agency. You can either post entire interviews or selected quotes.
- Include information about other community organizations and agencies that can aid community inclusion and participation
- Consider a special "consumer voice" section with short quotes and photos from service recipients. This can also include a link to the entire interview. (But remember to adhere to privacy and confidentiality standards that are outlined at the end of this document.)

Notes:

Newsletters

Like webpages, newsletters are a common feature of many mental healthcare agencies. A list of email addresses (a listserv) is collected and newsletters are emailed regularly (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly). These documents typically provide recent news about the agency, its staff, and its service recipients, along with upcoming events.

Pros

A newsletter offers an opportunity for agencies to share current information with people who are interested. It is not uncommon for newsletters to use both formal and informal writing styles. Newsletters can increase the friendly face of an agency with stories and pictures which might not have a place on a website. Agencies can also ask service recipients to develop some of the content for the newsletter. This provides opportunities to tell stories of community participation.

Cons

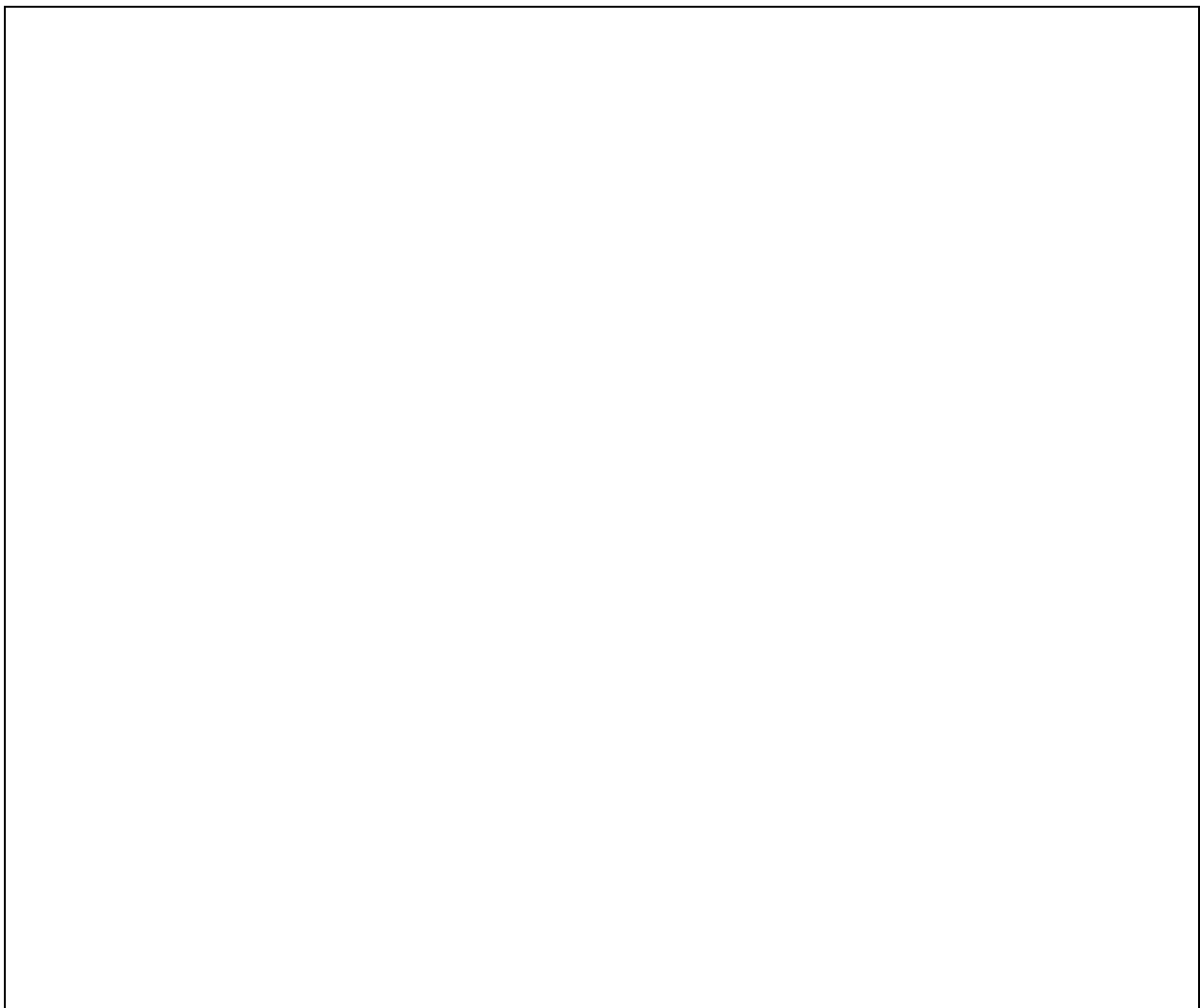
Newsletters only reach the people on your listserv. It will take some effort to expand the number of your readers, because newsletters usually require people to sign up for them. Newsletters can also take a lot of staff time and effort to write, edit, and approve, and these should be formal job responsibilities rather than mere add-ons. In some agencies, this becomes the responsibility of the 'development' office.

Suggestions

- Develop a special Community Inclusion Newsletter, or add a community inclusion section to an existing newsletter. In this newsletter/section, highlight your community programming, both the successes you experience and your ongoing plans for the future, making clear that community living and participation are now an essential aspect of your program's support for service recipients. You can use this platform to showcase, for instance, how you use leisure and recreation to enhance the quality of life and independent community activity of service recipients, and how all of this promotes key life skills - such as socialization, physical health, planning/time management, coping skills, developing a positive identity. Be sure to include contact information for those who want to learn more about community inclusion services available at your agency.
- Share photos and stories from consumers who are eager to talk about the impact your agency has had on their lives. Focus stories on their experiences in the communities. Ask service recipients to talk about how they overcame their own fears of community participation and how they overcame adversity. Stories that have an emotional impact can also provide an example of the benefits of being involved with your agency and in the community.

- Feature upcoming community events in a calendar section. The events featured could be selected by service users and follow up event reviews could also be featured.
- Work to increase your readers. In addition to people who register for your newsletter, send it to similar organizations and representatives of mainstream organizations. Post it on social media. Add it to your website. If noteworthy events are happening, you might even consider sending it to local news outlets. And, make sure the “sign up for newsletter” option on the website or social media page is easy to use.

Notes:



Using Social Media to Promote Community Inclusion

Social media provides an opportunity to engage with your audience in a more dynamic way than traditional websites and newsletters. It is clear that social media impacts the way we communicate, learn, and interact with the community. Think about how you use social media personally. Often, individuals use social media to post pictures of fun events, share stories and opinions that are personally meaningful, and to learn about opportunities in the community. Similarly, agencies can use social media to redefine their identity: who they serve and what supports they provide. Social media provides an opportunity to share stories of community participation and to connect with other individuals and organizations within the broader community. Social media may be a powerful tool to create a *new normal* where individuals with mental health conditions are seen as active members of their communities. The more often service recipients, loved ones, service providers, and agency administrators see and hear about individuals with mental illnesses participating in community life – holding a job or going to college, joining a gym or taking knitting classes at the YMCA, going to the movies with friends or volunteering with a local religious congregation – the more it becomes clear that this is the way communities can and should function.

Connect individuals to mainstream, community resources

Social media can also advertise opportunities to participate in the community. Too often, people are unaware of what activities are available in their own neighborhoods. Social media is a great tool to announce upcoming events and to invite people to participate. For example you may want to share the local library's "Free Microsoft Excel Training" event on your page.

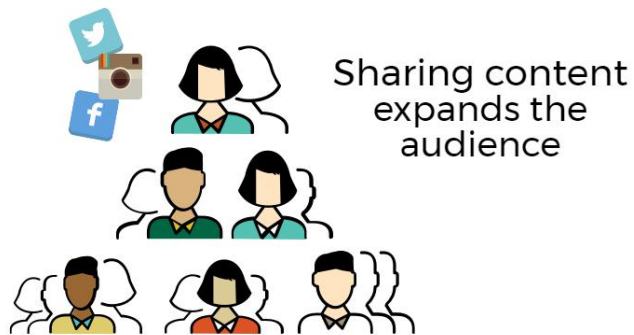
Demonstrate that community inclusion is already occurring

Agencies can tell the world what they are doing and attract new consumers to their services and supports. In this way, social media can be used as a recruitment vehicle that – because of the nature of social media – is less likely to focus on illness and treatment and more likely to emphasize individuals living as a part of their local communities.

The following sections provide some suggestions on how specific platforms might be used. It's not possible to include an exhaustive list of social media platforms, however, the suggestions here can likely be transferred to other platforms as you become familiar with their features.

General Suggestions for Social Media

Social media platforms provide an opportunity to promote community inclusion and to attract new service recipients to community inclusion services and supports. A great benefit about social media is that this type of marketing is free, and it allows users to gain an organic (unpaid, unsolicited) following. Think of social media as wildfire: it spreads as it gains momentum. Having people share your posts, tag themselves in photos, tag your organization in statuses or photos expands your overall audience.



Encourage staff and consumers to share your posts and tag themselves in photos. This can expand your audience and their engagement in your work. Potential service recipients may see things that interest them (particularly if they saw it on a friend's post) and then take the initiative to seek out the same opportunities and supports.

Below are some general suggestions for ways to best use social media.

Schedule Your Posts

Use a social media service like Hootsuite ([Hootsuite.com](https://www.hootsuite.com)) where you can schedule posts on your sites to save time and stay active.

Select a Consistent Name (Handle)

Try to have the same handle (platform username) on all of your social media platforms if possible (such as the Temple University Collaborative's which is @TUCollab on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/TUCollab), and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TUCollab) and @TU_Collab on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/TUCollab)).

Include Contact Information

All information from the agency should have a link to the website, an email address, and a phone number. This should also be included in postings if they need to contact someone to sign up for an outing or want to attend an event with support.

Post Enough to Have an Impact

Remember to use social media daily.

Add Hashtags

Hashtags are indexed phrases that social media websites use as another form of connection. For example, when you hashtag #communityinclusion on Twitter, Twitter

indexes your tweet with all other tweets that have the #communityinclusion in them. This gives users an opportunity to search through Twitter for all tweets that have #communityinclusion. Keep an appropriate number of #Hashtags for engagement. Although you may use more or less, based on some social media research the suggested number of hashtags for premium engagement per post are:

1. Twitter: 1# (One is enough here; sometimes more looks like the page is trying too hard to get engagement)
2. Instagram 11+# (VERY hashtag oriented)
3. Facebook: 0, possible 1# (As of the writing of this document, hashtags on Facebook are not very effective)

Stay Relevant

Use recent events or trending topics to relate to your tweets or social media posts. These can be silly or funny connections that may not be completely parallel, but will garner more acknowledgement from the public.

Shorten Website Addresses

Shorten website links with sites like bit.ly to decrease link length. This is easy. Copy the website address that you want to shorten. Then go to <https://bitly.com> and post the address into their *shorten bar* and click *shorten*. Almost immediately, you'll receive a shortened website address that you can post on social media.

Be Public

Make all agency accounts public for better engagement.

Other Content Suggestions for all platforms:

- **Giveaway/Contest:** Giveaways (offering an inexpensive reward for participating online) often seem costly, but the benefits can outweigh the cost. They can be an effective way to get more centers to refer clients to you. This allows for a broader consumer base, and higher volume of conversation surrounding community participation. Announcing the contest or giveaway early and often before it is scheduled is vital as you want to let many people become aware of it so no one misses it. Announcements should be days, if not weeks, before the scheduled event. There are also plenty of options for community participation contests/giveaways! Give away movie tickets for participation stories, hand out museum tickets for followers who take a picture of themselves in the community and more - the options are endless.
 - *For example:* Announce a contest that will be held next week for followers, requesting them to post stories of community participation. After a few days or weeks, all of the story entries will be put in a hat and a winner will be picked at random to win a pair of tickets to the upcoming Trans-Siberian Orchestra show.
- **Tag a Friend:** These posts are always on social media feeds, especially Instagram and Facebook. Usually these are in the form of memes but they can

also be as photos or large print quote. The “tagging a friend” concept is important because it encourages people to involve their friends on your page and in doing so, increases your exposure to consumers. This can be great when trying to raise awareness for specific community events.

- *For example:* In this case, you could create photos that say “Tag a Friend that would want to do yoga” “Tag a friend who is creative” to get people to “refer” their friends to certain outings or events.



- **Joining in on Conversations:** Joining in conversations across social media is a great way to reach a broader base of consumers and peers. This can give you a greater level of insight into what others are doing to promote community participation. Twitter Chats, for instance, are conversations hosted by twitter users that all include the same hashtag, so they are easy to follow. They usually are at a set time - weekly or biweekly - and are announced long before they start so followers can mark the date on their calendar. These are usually question-and-answer discussions in which the host asks a list of questions to fellow twitter users surrounding a topic.
 - *For example:* Join in on a #CIChat Twitter chat in which the Temple University Collaborative is asking followers to answer various questions about how they implement community inclusion policies into their programs, using the hashtag #CIChat

Facebook

Facebook, used by young and old alike, is by far the most popular social media site. It is also widely used by businesses and nonprofits to promote themselves using shared photos, status updates, documents, and announcements of upcoming events. Facebook is a great way to connect with similar organizations, consumers, and people with the same interests or in the same geographic location as your agency. It can also be a great opportunity to advertise to people who you want to reach.

Pros

With so many users, Facebook is a great way to reach people. Facebook offers several options for agencies to highlight community inclusion programs. A Facebook page can be created for the greater organization and include programs and events. Or a page can be specifically created for community inclusion programs.

Cons

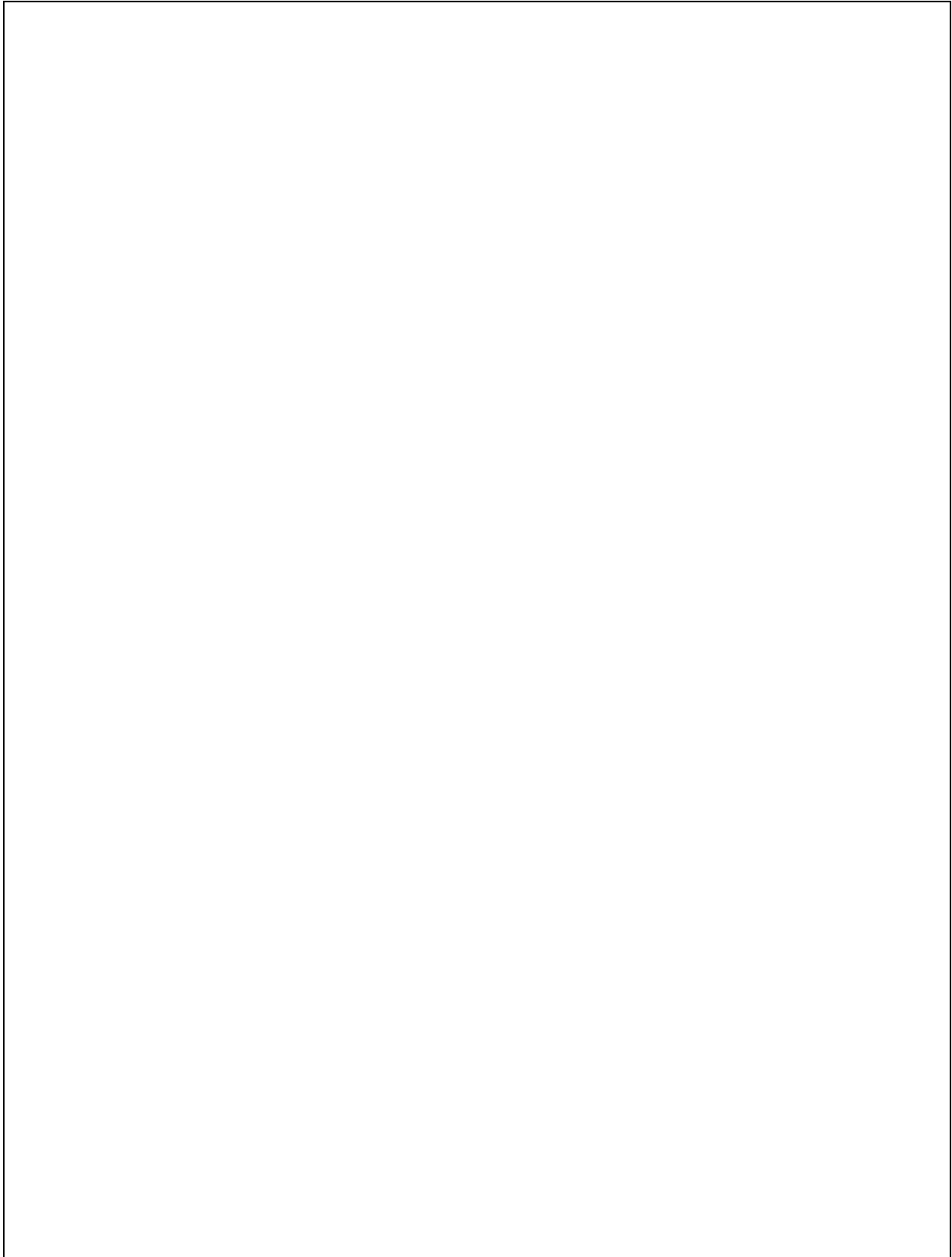
While Facebook does offer several options for privacy, it is meant as a platform for shared communication and is best used by agencies that allow others to comment, tag, and share information. While you may lose some of your control over content, you gain opportunities for consumers and others to share information and feel a part of your media. When allowing others to comment on your posts, it becomes critical that staff monitor the account.



Suggestions

- A Facebook page should include a basic description of the agency's mission and community inclusion services and supports, as well as contact information.
- You can add photo albums to a Facebook page that highlight community engagement of consumers and staff.
- You can create events on Facebook that showcase future opportunities for community participation and inclusion. This allows you to reach more people when planning events.
- Form groups that can be hosted by your Facebook page that are based on community participation. These should be joinable by anyone who is interested and can act as a meeting place for individuals to find peers to participate in the community with.
- Encourage people to tag themselves in photos and to share community participation opportunities on your Facebook page.
- Include other organizations in your page, tag other agencies and businesses. If you attend a class at a local community center or YMCA, tag them in your pictures and comments. This can increase the attention you receive for a post and inspire relationships with community organizations. Often, others will respond by sharing your posts that include them. *For example:* The Temple University Collaborative posted about our bike project with Cycles PHL and Performance Bicycles, tagging them in all photos where their bikes were. We also were sure to tag the locations of the places we rode to.
- It is recommended that a staff person be given responsibility for posting content and scanning what others post to the site.

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Twitter

Twitter remains a powerful way to communicate and is the main communication platform for many celebrities and news media. It provides the opportunity at wide-spread reach that is unrivaled in most websites and social media platforms.

Pros

Short posts mean that your agency can share quick and specific updates on community inclusion without taking too much time. Twitter is very hashtag oriented, and topics and conversations revolve around hashtags. This allows for a greater reach to various organizations, consumers, and academics who are also interested in and tweeting #communityinclusion.

Cons

Posts are limited to 280 characters, which can limit the amount of information that can be shared but forces users to narrow down their posts which results in a focusing on specific topics.

Suggestions

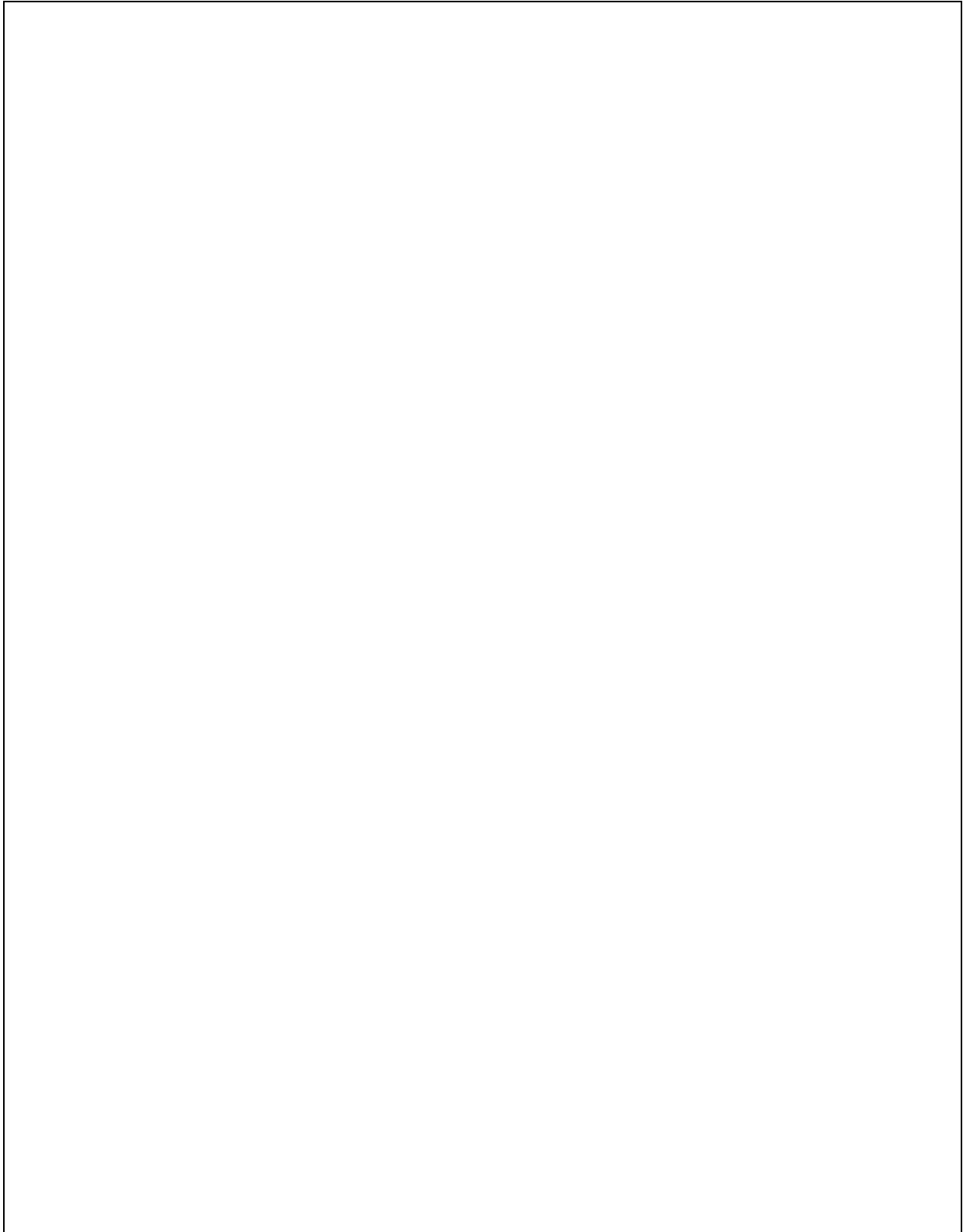
- Your agency can hold a community inclusion program that can have its own social media campaign where regular posts of activities and accomplishments can be made, further heightening awareness of the program and inviting service recipients to seek out the program's resources for themselves. Individual service recipients should also be encouraged to use their own Twitter accounts to promote their achievements and the program. This can easily be done by branding your own hashtag when talking about community inclusion, and encouraging others to do the same. *For example:* #TUCollabCommunity in which every Sunday the TUCollab posts pictures of employees being involved in the community.
- To be effective, Twitter relies on a fairly regular stream of posts, so make sure a designated staff member is prepared to keep your own Twitter account lively and up-to-date. This will include regular posting about your agency and their community inclusion efforts as well as consistent retweeting and interacting with other community organizations. Staff may consider forming a team to contribute to these updates.
- Hashtags are important on Twitter. Using trending or time-sensitive (such as #MondayMotivation on Mondays) hashtags will get more engagement on twitter, so be creative on ways to incorporate them.
- GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format images, or images that move) are great additions to tweets, particularly if add a humorous or relatable angle to them,

which can promote more engagement with your twitter, and therefore your center.



- Tag (include other Twitter accounts with the “@” symbol), and communicate with other organizations to gain attention, and further develop a conversation around community inclusion. This is a way to get the attention of larger organizations so that they will engage or share your information. *For example:* The TUCollab tagged @Frommers to increase engagement, and reach a larger audience.
- Sometimes web addresses are very long, which prohibits their use on Twitter. Thankfully there is a simple solution. Use sites like bit.ly which simplify website links and make them shorter. This will help you to have more space for community inclusion content.
- Host or participate in Tweepchats. Tweepchats, hosted by people or organizations, are discussions that are held weekly, biweekly, or monthly at the same time and day in which a specific topic is covered. *For example,* every Wednesday at 3pm EST there is a #MHChat on Twitter where various topics surrounding mental health are covered. These are great opportunities to expand the reach and awareness of your organization while also learning and contributing to the topic of community participation.

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Instagram

Instagram is extremely popular with younger people (18 – 29 years of age), but its popularity is not limited to this age group. Users of all ages post pictures of themselves with their friends at places they attend. Many share pictures that they find online. When posting a picture, Instagram allows users to add descriptions of the photos. These descriptions can be very brief or can include several paragraphs of information and hashtags. You can also tag other Instagram users in photos. Instagram is a perfect tool to document past community participation and highlight future community participation opportunities.

Pros

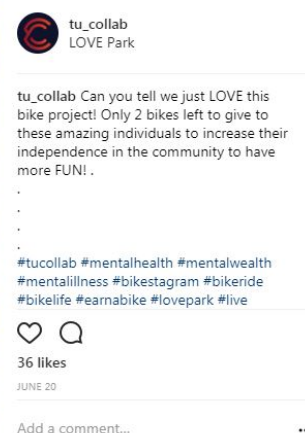
Instagram is a user-friendly site which allows users to either share content with everyone or limit their posts to people they are comfortable sharing information with. Instagram also has an interesting element to their platform - Instastory - which allows users to take photos and post them to Instagram so their friends, or the general public can see them for 24 hours. The instastory can even be recorded and published live. This allows users to be more 'in the moment' in their story and post more related content on their page.

Cons

Instagram primarily reaches a younger people and it is harder to gain engagement of others outside your circle of friends. Using hashtags can help increase your reach, but you may not be reaching the right audience viewing your content. Also, Instagram is not an ideal platform to share links, as they cannot be directly included in posts.

Suggestions

- Since Instagram is all image and video sharing, encourage service recipients to take photos or videos of themselves doing things in the community. As with Facebook and Twitter, tagging the agency or location is important.

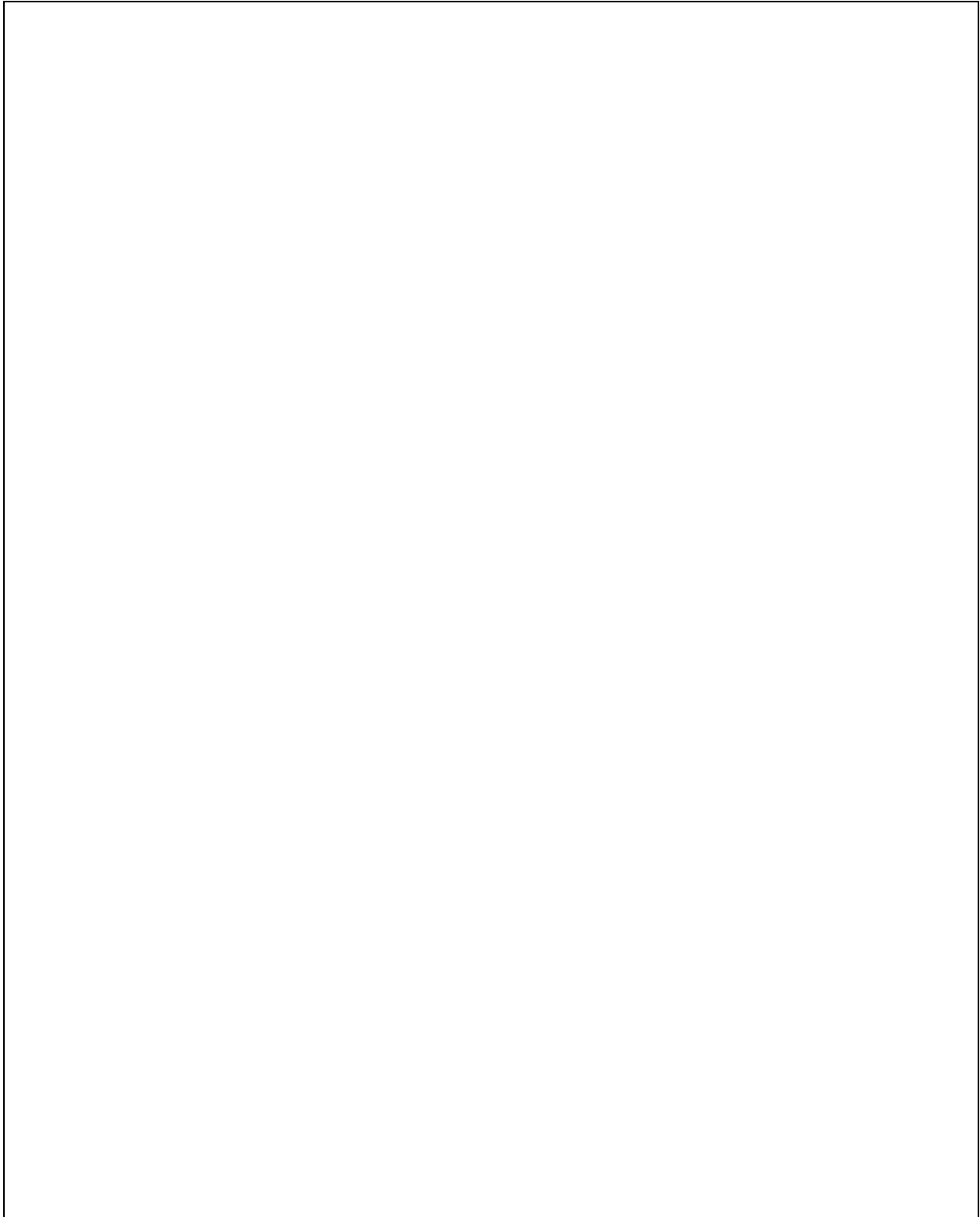


- Make captions fun and engaging! Short and sweet is easy to read for other users. But, if you would like to share a longer story, Instagram is able to have longer captions.
- Use hashtags (11 or more)! Find relevant and trending hashtags (for example #MondayMotivation posts) or have staff at mainstream organizations (e.g., the YMCA, a local congregation, a community college) or other agencies participate in a #TakeoverTuesday where they post from their organization for 24 hours. This can be done by making a temporary password for them to use, or by having the produce and send the content to you to post.

Some common time-sensitive hashtags that can be used in your community participation programming include:

- **#MondayMotivation** – (Posted on Mondays) A great opportunity to highlight examples of participation, stories of consumer participation, and goals for future community participation. (i.e. – Here is a picture of John Smith who participated in last week’s Broad Street Run! #MondayMotivation)
- **#TuesdayThoughts** – (Posted on Tuesdays) An opportunity to highlight some quotes, feelings, or attitudes toward community participation. (i.e. – Community participation and inclusion is a basic human right. #TuesdayThoughts).
- **#WednesdayWisdom** (Posted on Wednesdays) and **#DidYouKnow** or **#DYK** – An opportunity to provide evidence-based reasoning behind community participation and inclusion. (i.e. – #DYK 50% of people with psychiatric disabilities report that going to a school group in the community is important to them #WednesdayWisdom).
- **#ThrowbackThursday** or **#TBT** – (Posted on Thursdays) An opportunity to highlight past organization community events or consumer participation (i.e. #ThrowbackThursday to last year’s Temple University Collaborative’s Summer Institute on Community Inclusion).
- **#FridayFeeling** or **#TGIF** - (Posted on Fridays) an opportunity to share feelings, or moments regarding past, present, or future community participation. (I.e. Here is a picture of our team celebrating the recent successful inclusion efforts! #FridayFeeling).

Notes:

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Considerations

Disclosure and Confidentiality

Every service recipient has the right to privacy: you need to be sure you have the permission of any individual to include them – their words, pictures, or reports of their activities – in your website presentations. Maintain any confidentiality and adhere to your agency's policies. In addition, you should be prepared to talk with service recipients about the implications of being identified on the agency's website or newsletter as someone receiving their services: most service consumers are comfortable with this type of disclosure, but it is important to make sure each individual understands – and has time to consider – the implications of this before they sign a waiver. You will need to make sure that service recipients are aware of the power of the internet. When photos are shared or service recipients are tagged, they will be on the internet where people can associate them as service recipients of your program. This will be an issue not only for the webpage but also for any community inclusion publicity you develop.

Develop a Social Media Plan.

Take some time to develop an overall plan: who is going to prepare materials for the website and develop a regular newsletter? Who is going to oversee Facebook and Twitter and Instagram posts – and how often? Social media accounts should be moderated and maintained. There should be a designated employee in charge of checking social media on a set schedule, and responding to any follower comments or posts. This will require some work, but should be coordinated and timely.

Resources

You will need to devote some staff time to do this: to develop webpage materials and regularly update them; to produce a newsletter; and to manage social media content. This should be part of an overall plan to make the best of the social media possibilities you have. Again, there should be a designated staff member assigned to these responsibilities, and if necessary there may even be consideration to hiring someone specific to social media and online content.

Collaborate with Community Groups

You may want to work with some interested community groups more closely – the library, the community college, the YMCA, etc. – where the community group is interested in being identified and in drawing more customers to their activities. Some community groups may want to even takeover your social media pages to trumpet their own services.

Stay Relevant, Frequent, and Consistent

Use recent events or trending topics to relate to your community inclusion social media posts. These can be direct or indirect connections. The more interesting and current your content is, the more public interest you will garner.

Get Clients Involved

With adhering to confidentiality and disclosure policies, encourage your clients to share your posts, tag themselves in photos, and share events. Have clients be a part of social media goals: include them in the takeovers and give them access to the account with supervision. Highlight client's goals or achievements regularly by sharing their story. Offer regular opportunities for service recipients to talk with staff about the implications of their individual participation in campaigns.

Notes:

In Conclusion

Online communications are a vital tool in spreading the message of community inclusion by your agency. Building an online presence is a great way to increase the reach of your agency and is a perfect platform to promote community living and participation. Traditional platforms such as websites and newsletters allow for your agency to have a mainstay presence online, and keep others up-to-date with the latest agency news and events. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow you to reach, and interact with a broad spectrum of agencies, organizations, consumers, and peers. This allows you to magnify your community inclusion efforts and include a multitude of dimensions into your community inclusion programming. The online element to community inclusion is not only a strong asset, but a vital tool that is only continuing to grow as we move closer and closer toward a fully interconnected world.

Action Plan

Below is a table that summarizes your goals for using social media to promote community living and participation. Look back at the notes you took in each section and at the goal planning table on pages 3 and 4. This sheet will help you to summarize your plans and prepare action steps, along with assigning tasks to staff. Below is an example of how you might use this table.

If you have questions about developing your plan, please contact us at TUCollab@temple.edu. We love to help!

Platform	Community Inclusion/Participation Goals	Actions	Responsible Staff and Timeframe
<i>Example: Twitter</i>	<i>Raise awareness of individuals with mental illnesses participating in the community.</i>	<i>Platform: Host a monthly “Take-Over-Tuesday.”- Have an opportunity for consumers to apply to host the takeover, sharing their community participation activities on your social media.</i>	<i>Dave who runs the “Community Living Group” will introduce this activity to consumers, provide an application, and give guidance to individuals interested in hosting the takeover. The first 3 hosts will be identified in the next month.</i>

Community Participation/ Social Media Action Plan

Platform	Community Inclusion/ Participation Goals	Actions	Responsible Staff and Timeframe
Website			
Newsletter/ Blog			
Facebook			
Instagram			
Twitter			
Other:			