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## Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Social Media



December 9, 2014



# Overview

- **Introductions**
  - Brittany Smith, Build Social LLC
  - John Ossowski, Pathways RTC
- **Topics**
  - What is social media?
  - Who's using it?
  - How are they using it?
  - Benefits & Risks
  - Example Sites
  - Organizational Considerations
  - Platforms
  - Creative Content





**Build Social**

# Engaging Youth & Young Adults in Social Media



Brittany Smith, Build Social, LLC

# What is Social Media?



- Any online platform or channel for publishing and disseminating user-generated content.<sup>1</sup>
- Social media allows us to engage with and empower our communities.
  - Connection
  - Access to information



1. <http://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition/>

# Take it seriously!



- As of January 2014 74% of online adults use social media.<sup>1</sup>
- We spend 20% of our time on computers using social media.<sup>2</sup>
- 63% of Facebook users report using it at least daily.<sup>3</sup>
- 32% percent of 18-24 year olds use social media while in the bathroom.<sup>4</sup>

1. <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/social-networking-sites.aspx>
2. <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100275798#.http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/#>
3. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/12/30/frequency-of-social-media-use/>
4. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>

# It's About Relationships



- To connect with family and friends.
  - 2/3 say staying in touch is a major reason they use social media.<sup>1</sup>
- Most online adults describe their experiences using social media in positive terms.<sup>2</sup>



1. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Why-Americans-Use-Social-Media>  
2. <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Social-Networking-Sites>

# Positive Benefits



- The average user has more close ties and is  $\frac{1}{2}$  as likely to be socially isolated.<sup>1</sup>
- 65% of teens have had an experience that made them feel good about themselves. 58% have felt closer to another person.<sup>2</sup>
- Young adults who spend more time on Facebook are better at showing “virtual empathy.”<sup>3</sup>
- Youth who use blogs, websites and email to discuss politics and current events become more socially engaged over time.<sup>4</sup>

1. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Technology-and-social-networks>

2. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media/Summary/Majority-of-teens>

3. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/10/facebook.aspx>

4. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/02/friends.aspx>



# Millennials



- 89% of online 18-29 year olds use social media.<sup>1</sup>

- More than 74% feel that new technology makes their lives easier, and 54% feel it helps them be closer to their friends and family.<sup>2</sup>
- When asked what makes their generation unique, Millennials ranked “Technology Use.”<sup>3</sup>

1. <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/#>

2. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>

3. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>



## Social Media: Some Caveats



- Lower self-esteem correlated with more frequent visits to facebook (and longer durations of visits).
- Individuals who scored higher on a scale of narcissism also engaged in more on-line activity.
  - Self-promotion enhanced by the ability to upload selective content (i.e.: inflated desirable attributes/diminished negative attributes)
  - Facebook also offers the ability to pursue many less meaningful relationships (rather than fewer, more intimate ones)

(Mehdizadeh, 2010)



# Social Media: Access to Mental Health Information & Support



“If you tell people about your research, they look at it”.  
(Terras, 2012)

BUT – reach is not necessarily a good  
measure of impact...  
(Allen, Stanton, Di Pietro, & Moseley, 2013)



# Social Media: Access to Mental Health Information & Support

Reach

= a major benefit of using social media\*

Social media can overcome both geographic and social isolation (stigma).

(Stephens-Reicher, Metcalf, Blanchard, Mangan, & Burns, 2011)



Platforms like Twitter can instantly share public health information directly with people who need it. Actionable tweets were found to be most successful.

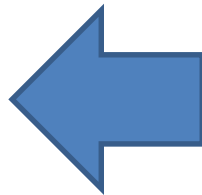
(University of Sydney, 2013)



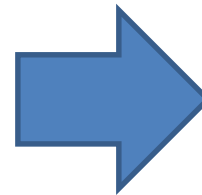
\* *Provided your intended audience has access (consider technology, disability and literacy).*



# Content: Friend or Foe?



Content



- Creating a supportive online community for youth with mental health challenges.
- Recovery-oriented messages
- Exemplars:
  - ReachOut.com
  - Text, Talk, Act

- Glamorize self-destructive behaviors
- Trigger urges to participate in these behaviors
- Offer strategies to engage in self-destructive behaviors

*“Research indicates that the Internet may represent a preferred medium for otherwise isolated youth and young adults to communicate with others—namely, others who self-injure...”*

(Lewis, Heath, Michal & Duggan, 2012)



# ReachOut.com

The screenshot shows the ReachOut.com website. At the top, it says "an initiative of Inspire USA Foundation" and "NEED HELP NOW? 1800-448-3000". There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, and Instagram. The main navigation bar includes "REACH OUT.COM", "Get through tough times", "LOG IN", "REGISTER", "ABOUT US", "ESPAÑOL", and a search bar. Below this, there are links for "THE FACTS", "REAL STORIES", "GET INVOLVED", "GET HELP", "FORUMS", and "BLOG". A large banner features a hand with "YOU MATTER" written on it, with the hashtag "#rohffh". Text on the banner includes "Join the ReachOut High Five For Hope Fundraiser" and "Your support brings hope through connection". To the right of the hand, it says "Support ReachOut.com for #GivingTuesday" and "Donate to ReachOut.com this #GivingTuesday to help young people find support they can't get anywhere else. Donate now!". Below the banner, there are three buttons: "WE CAN HELP US HEAR FROM OTHERS REAL VIDEOS & STORIES", "NEED SUPPORT? Start talking in the forums", and a large "DONATE" button. At the bottom, there are two sections: "Where to next?" with "DEPRESSION" and "ROMANCE" categories. Under "DEPRESSION", there are links for "Depression: causes, types and symptoms" and "Myths about depression". Under "ROMANCE", there are links for "Losing your virginity" and "How do you know if you're in love?".

- Offers support via phone, text and on-line forums.
- Content relevant to young people:
  - Real-life stories
  - Videos
  - User-created content
- <http://us.reachout.com/>





# Text, Talk, Act: A National Conversation



What will you do when your friend needs help? Will you know what to say and how to respond?

Right now, across the country, people are having a conversation on mental health and how to help a friend in need. Through text messaging, groups of people are receiving discussion questions to start the conversation, and are given resources to learn how to take care of themselves and how to help a friend in need. These brave people are ending the silence and

taking to social media to encourage others to talk about the elephant in the room.

Now through the end of November, this conversation is happening nationwide. Anyone, anywhere, at any time can join this vital effort. It's easy:



- National, mobile/text driven, youth conversation about mental health (through Nov 2014)
- On-line & in-person components:
  - Youth gather with friends
  - Access text-enabled questions
  - Groups discuss and provide feedback
  - Feedback is aggregated so group can compare responses with larger national sample

<http://creatingcommunitysolutions.org/texttalkact>



# SUMMARY: Social media is a doubled-edged sword

## Benefits

- Strong appeal to young people
- Anonymity helps overcome stigma
- Overcoming isolation
- Avoiding stigma
  - Anonymity
- Effective and timely information sharing
  - Especially actionable messages
- Create a supportive community
- Recovery oriented messages



## Risks

- Strong appeal to young people
- Anonymity
  - Fostering more isolation
  - Easier exploration of potentially dangerous content
- Effective and timely information sharing
  - Glamorize and provide strategies for self-destructive behaviors
  - Trigger urges to participate

## Conclusions

- Social media is a powerful tool with great appeal to young people.
- Maximize benefits by restricting access to unmoderated content.
- Seek out and share positive on-line communities.
- On-line interactions should support recovery and real-world relationships.



# Organizational Considerations



- Define goals
- Identify your target audience
- Determine which platforms to use
- Examine organizational capacity
- Be strategic
- Develop a policy



# Mobile Optimization



- Three out of four Millennials owned a smartphone as of Q1 2013.<sup>1</sup>
- One in four teens are “cell-mostly” internet users.<sup>2</sup>
- You must be **mobile!**

1. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>

2. <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Teens-and-Tech/Main-Findings/Teens-and-Technology.aspx>

# Platforms



- 91% of Millennials are on Facebook.<sup>1</sup>
- 76% of the time Millennials spend on social media is on Facebook.<sup>2</sup>
- Instagram – 37% of 18 to 29 year olds.<sup>3</sup>
- Twitter – 31% of 18-29 year olds.<sup>4</sup>



1. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>  
2. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/millennials-technology-social-connection.html>  
3. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/12/30/demographics-of-key-social-networking-platforms/>  
4. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/12/30/demographics-of-key-social-networking-platforms/>

# Creative Content



- User generated content is 35% more memorable than other media.<sup>1</sup>
- User generated content is 50% more trusted than other media.<sup>2</sup>

1. <http://mashable.com/2014/04/09/millennials-user-generated-media/>  
2. <http://mashable.com/2014/04/09/millennials-user-generated-media/>



# In conclusion...

- Social media is a powerful tool for engaging with youth and young adults.
- Don't stretch yourself too thin - determine which platforms will give you the most bang for your buck based on your target audience(s)
- To get the most impact be strategic and make posts that are actionable, creative, and promote user generated content.
- Remember that user generated content engages young people both on and off line:
  - Examples: ReachOut.com and Meme Contest

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