



Using Social Media for Health Promotion: Myths and Tips

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What is the problem?

- ▶ Increasing level of social media use in New Zealand
 - ▶ Seen as a positive means by which to communicate and engage with target populations
- ▶ Relatively poor understanding how to use social media
 - ▶ Which puts pressure on health promoters who are being forced into a world they know little about
- ▶ Fear associated with doing a poor job and wasting an opportunity

Is there an easy fix?

- ▶ Well, no...not really [sorry!]
 - ▶ It is better to have no social media presence than a bad one!
- ▶ BUT, there are strategies that will make you more effective in your social media use

As always, first identify your goals

- ▶ What do you want to achieve with social media use?
 - ▶ Reach?
 - ▶ Engagement?
 - ▶ Awareness?
 - ▶ Feedback?
 - ▶ Access?
- ▶ The purpose of social media is to be *social*.

Avoid being an advertising board

- ▶ People are avoiding ads more than ever before
 - ▶ If all you do is advertise to your followers they will avoid you too!
- ▶ Use social media to be social
 - ▶ Build relationships
 - ▶ Learn about people's issues
 - ▶ Use this to help build your strategies
 - ▶ Show the human side of your organisation

Don't worry about likes!

- ▶ The number of people liking your page is meaningless
- ▶ The real metric is ENGAGEMENT
 - ▶ How often someone comments/shares your posts
 - ▶ How often people talk to you
 - ▶ How often people want to be heard by you

Encourage Dialogue

- ▶ Old school thinking says your brand should always be viewed positively
- ▶ Reality is, people aren't always positive about you
 - ▶ You can either allow this on your page and respond OR let them talk about you behind your back when you have no chance to reply
- ▶ ALWAYS encourage discourse, even about hard topics
 - ▶ Authenticity is what young consumers, in particular, crave more than anything

Post more than text

- ▶ Social media is becoming an ever more visual platform
 - ▶ Instagram has taken off; more pics uploaded on Facebook than any other platform
 - ▶ Share pictures that have meaning to your audience, not just professional shots



Reaching your audience

- ▶ Overcoming the negativity is always going to be your hardest task
 - ▶ Use Social Media to position yourself positively in the eyes of your audience
 - ▶ Find ways to connect with them
 - ▶ Find ways to engage them
 - ▶ Find ways to make you seem like the 'good guys'
 - ▶ Find solutions to NZ's health issues
 - ▶ Build bridges between you and the wider population

Know your population

- ▶ You are dealing with people who generally do not have a positive image of health and health workers.
 - ▶ Your organisation may not be as trusted as whanau, the internet, friends etc
- ▶ You are inherently dealing with topics that cause people to 'squirm'

Some of my ideas

- ▶ When using social media for health promotion, focus on building bridges into the community rather than education/behaviour change etc
 - ▶ Be the friendly supporter who wants to get to know people better, rather than the doctor telling people why they're living their lives wrong
- ▶ Break down barriers between you and your population by incorporating them into your social media use
 - ▶ The more you can show people in the community are engaging with you the stronger the trust you will have

Key takeaways

- ▶ Social media won't fix all your problems
- ▶ Social media is not a cheap advertising platform
- ▶ Social media is not about how many likes you have
- ▶ Social media IS a cheap way to build relationships
- ▶ Social media IS a great way to co-create knowledge with your audience
- ▶ Social media IS a great addition to a wider marketing strategy
- ▶ Social media IS about engagement

Over to you...