

Issues to Consider

Social Media use (like most things in life) brings both potential benefits and risks.

Some of the reasons why people who use our services have told us they use Social Media include:

- # Entertainment
- # Self-education
- # Supporting their recovery (sharing information and strategies)
- # Developing support networks
- # Maintaining social connections and making new contacts

Some of the potential problems people who use our services have encountered include:

- # It becomes too time-consuming, sometimes overwhelming with the amount of information or the feeling of needing to be connected 24/7
- # Jealousy or depression – ‘Everyone else’s lives look so perfect online. Why isn’t my life like that?’
- # Privacy breaches – people monitoring you without your knowledge
- # ‘Memories’ posts (automated posts using your pictures from a few years ago) can be major triggers
- # People misunderstanding your posts or getting drawn into public disputes
- # Unwanted contacts e.g. friend requests from bosses

Like anything else in life, if you find that your social media use is having a negative impact on your life (including your treatment or recovery), it might be time to make some changes. Speak with your worker (or a support person) about what changes might help the most.

ReGen Contacts

For more information, see our website:
www.regen.org.au/resources/social-media



Twitter: @ReGenUC



Facebook page: ReGenUC



Instagram: regenic



YouTube: ReGen



LinkedIn: regenic

Useful Resources

Learn about how to stay safe online – libraries often run free workshops.

There are also lots of great resources available online. Some include:



Privacy & Safety

<https://esafety.gov.au/>

<http://www.smartsafe.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/about/basics>



Parenting

<http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

<http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/>

<http://www.connectsafely.org/>



(Developed in partnership with people who use ReGen services)

Why ReGen Uses Social Media

There are a few reasons we think engaging with Social Media is important for our work.

It provides us with opportunities to reach new audiences with our advocacy to challenge stigma and help build community support for evidence based drug policies.

It allows us to share our resources and knowledge with other services (in Victoria and around the world) to support improved practice and support the professional development of our own staff.

Most importantly, it provides us with new opportunities to increase the transparency of our services and extend the supports we are able to offer to people affected by AOD use.

Our Commitment to Safe Practice

Our Duty of Care to the people who use our services (and our staff) extends to our Social Media practice.

We understand the stigma that is associated with AOD use and with services like ours.

We recognise that we cannot provide the same sorts of privacy protections online as we do in our treatment services, but are committed to doing what we can to help people make informed decisions about what (and how much) information they make available on social media.

We take what steps we can to protect the privacy of people who use our services. We do not tag people in posts, do not include links to their Social Media accounts and will only post images of them with their specific consent.

For those people who do choose to engage with our Social Media accounts, we ensure that they provide a safe, welcoming space for people who use our services, our staff and community members who are interested in our work. Our online practice upholds the same standards of behaviour as in our face-to-face services.

If you have any concerns about our online practice, please let us know. As with all other consumer feedback, what you say will not affect your rights within our services.

Strategies for Safe Practice



Do some planning

Think about what you want to get out of your social media use and what sort of posts you are comfortable making. Ask yourself the following questions:

- # What level of privacy is important to you?
- # What sort of posts would you be comfortable for your friends, family, employers (current or future) being able to see?
- # Are you going to post about your AOD use/treatment/recovery?
- # Think about how you will respond to any unwanted contact
- # Have a plan for possible lapse/relapse – do you want to be able to reach out for support or keep what's happening private?



Tips for protecting your privacy

There are many things you can do, but here are some ideas to consider:

- # Use a different name and/or non-identifying photo for your profile(s)
- # Get to know your privacy settings and check them regularly (they change a lot)
- # Keep your contacts/friends numbers down. Don't follow people you don't already know
- # Protect your passwords. Make sure you fully log out of your accounts if you use public computers
- # Protect your smartphone with a passcode

- # Be careful about using hashtags in your posts. Using them may mean that anyone searching for that tag can see your post, not just your friends or followers.



Other strategies for safe practice

- # Know your limits and practice in moderation. Keep track of how much time you're spending on social media and how it's affecting you. Take some time out if you need to.
- # If you're trying to make a fresh start, do an audit of your friends and contacts. You may want to delete/block/unfriend some of them.
- # Don't tag people without their permission. It provides people with a direct path to their account.
- # Don't post anything about someone you wouldn't say to their face.
- # Don't post when you're angry (or intoxicated). Remember, you can delete your posts, but that doesn't guarantee that people can't still see them elsewhere.
- # Be aware of potential triggers e.g. ads for gambling or bridal dresses.
- # Beware of scams, competitions and pop-ups. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- # If you have children, discuss safe online practice with them. They might teach you something.

'Remember, everyone has the right to be safe online. If you're posting about someone else, consider how it might affect them. If you're not sure, ask them. If someone else is making you feel uncomfortable, they may not be aware of what they're doing. Contact them (privately, if possible) and explain what you'd like them to change.'