# Managing Social Media Use and Privacy

For Indirect Caregivers

Provided by Wolters Kluwer

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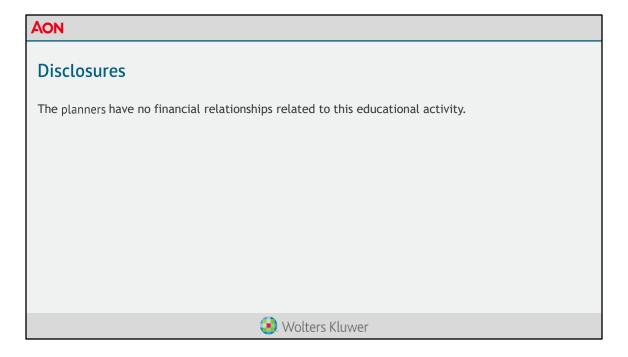
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# **Instructions**

To obtain a certificate of earned contact hours for this continuing education activity:

- 1. View the entire program.
- 2. Take the post-test. If you pass, you will be able to print your certificate of earned contact hours and an answer key. If you fail, you have the option of taking the test again at no additional cost. The passing grade is 70%.
- 3. Complete the evaluation form.



# **Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to provide indirect caregivers with an understanding of the implications of their online presence, emphasizing the importance of maintaining resident/patient confidentiality in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Practical case studies and real-world scenarios will be explored, providing healthcare workers with tangible insights into navigating the complexities of social media in their day-to-day work.



# **Learning Objectives**

After viewing this presentation and taking the post-test, you should be able to:

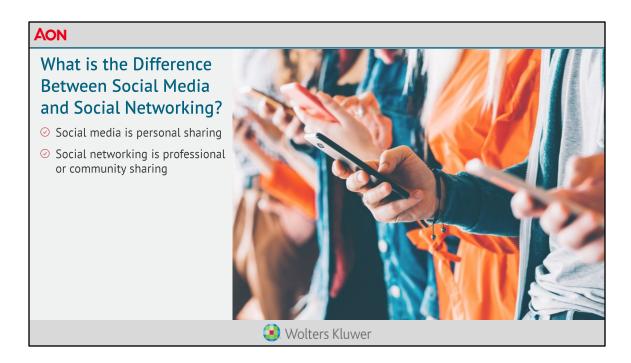
- 1. Explain residents' rights with regards to the privacy and security of their personal health information.
- 2. Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors related to social media usage for employees of senior living facilities.
- 3. Identify the consequences of improper social media usage to employees of senior living facilities.





What is social media? In simple terms, the World Wide Web is a common area to create and share information. It is also known as the internet. You connect to the internet to access the web. The internet is the connection that makes servers, computers, and personal devices work. The web is the medium we use to communicate with one another.

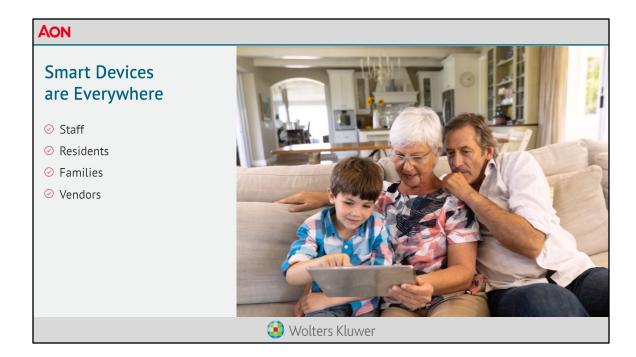
Social networking refers to using the internet to keep in touch. Social media refers to the actual websites you use to do so. Both "social networking" and "social media" mean the sites that help you stay in touch with people over the internet.



Young people are used to being online. They might not realize that there is a difference between social media and social networking. But there is.

Social media is less formal than social networking. Social media means sharing text, photos, and videos with friends and followers. In health care, social networking means online ways for professionals to share knowledge about work or health.

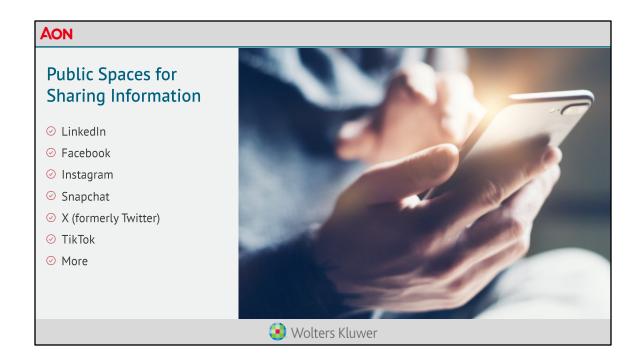
Most posts on social media are open to the public. Anyone who has an account can see the posts. Social networking posts are often limited to a chosen group.



Like everyone else, health care workers use social media. This includes indirect caregivers. Housekeepers and dietary staff use it. Security staff and office staff do too.

Online media use soared during Covid-19. In-person contact was limited. Every business and every person created an online presence. People who already had social media accounts added more. They posted and shared more too.

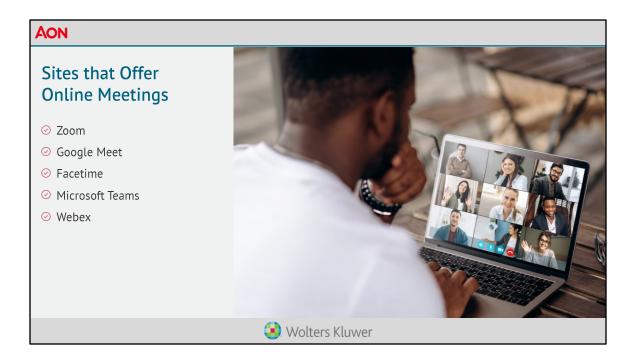
Today almost everyone owns and uses a smart device. Social media has an impact on every part of our lives. Young people are the biggest users. But even seniors rank the internet as a trusted source of health information.



The internet offers many ways to communicate. Websites like LinkedIn are networking tools. People mainly use these sites to post work-related news.

Most web users know Facebook and TikTok. They also know Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and X. People use these social media sites primarily to share personal news. Facebook and Instagram let people share messages with their own contacts.

X and TikTok offer short messages and videos intended to grab public attention. All of these platforms can be used for marketing purposes.



A virtual meeting is a good substitute for gathering in person. Zoom, FaceTime, Microsoft Teams, Webex and other apps provide real-time communication between people. Users can meet one-to-one or in a group.

People can see who is on the call or in the meeting. They can communicate via microphone and a chat feature. These platforms are very helpful when members of a group are scattered across different locations. Microsoft Teams and Zoom even allow you to leave a group and go into "break rooms" to have individual meetings.

To keep the use of these meeting platforms safe, it is important to set and uphold clear rules.

# Separate Personal from Work Social Media Use

- How important is your online presence?
- How often do you post?
- Know the difference between work and personal usage

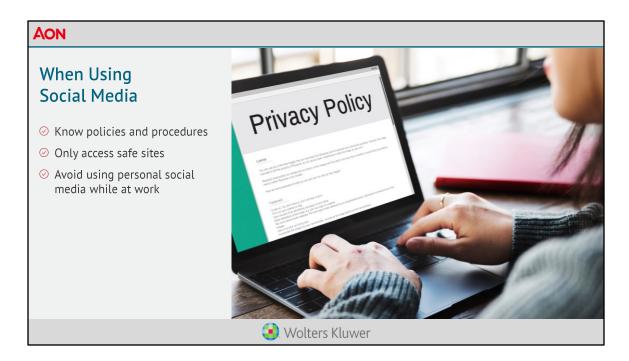


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Some health care workers post clips on TikTok, sharing moments from a day in the life of a caregiver. These videos can show the human, caring side of health care. They can bring humor to a serious job.

Some people post clips online both to inform and entertain. Most use social media to connect with family and friends. Others may post to make a personal or political statement. Still others strive to be influencers by getting lots of followers.

Getting a large number of "likes" is a way to be noticed. Know when to share and what to share in both work and personal settings. Know your audience, the rules of your professional organization and what postings are in violation of your profession's code of conduct. Always maintain privacy controls and follow privacy regulations.



Most senior living facilities have guidelines about social media use.

Many staff members carry personal cell phones with them at work. This is a way for them to get help in an emergency. It also lets them stay in contact with supervisors, coworkers, and family.

Facility policies should be clear on the use of personal devices at work. They should spell out what sites staff may access through the work server. Gaming, texting friends, and scrolling should not be done on the job.

Employees should also follow ethical and privacy guidelines. These rules guide workers on texting, friending, and posting anything that has to do with residents.

# Uses for Social Media in Senior Living

- Getting feedback
- Marketing
- Recruiting staff and residents
- Education



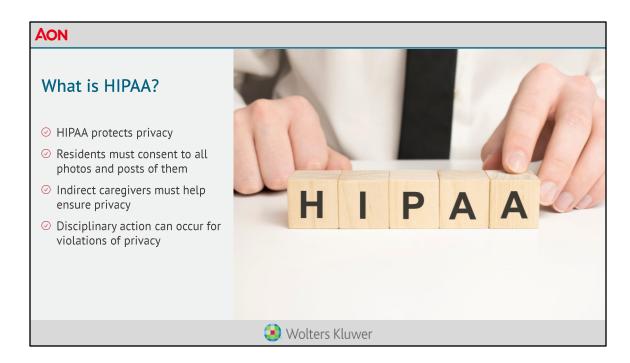
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Social media has many valid uses in senior living. It can be a great way to market a facility. It can help showcase the services offered in a community.

Social media can also help gather feedback from residents and staff.

Blending social media with the senior living website is a great idea. This type of marketing can attract new staff and residents. Social media also has a role in e-Health, the use of tech to support health. Social media can even be used to teach the public about aging and health.

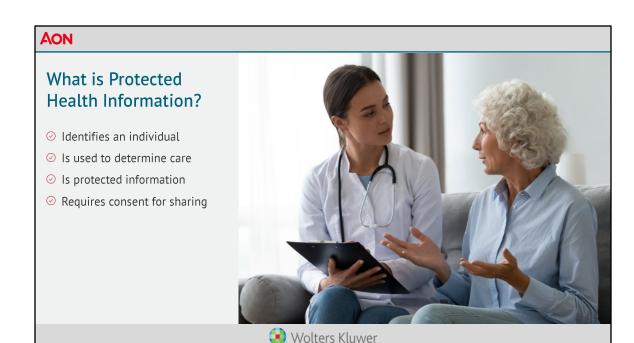
But senior facilities must use social media with care. They must always protect the privacy of residents and staff.



HIPAA is a law that protects patient privacy. It requires all medical providers to get consent before sharing private health information. That includes sharing on any form of media.

Posting about residents without consent violates their privacy. It can be a cause for disciplinary action. It can also cause legal problems for both the facility and the staff member resulting in litigation.

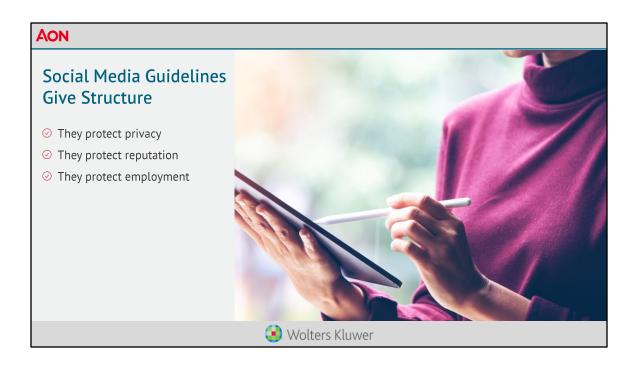
Even a post that is meant to be caring can be revealing. Imagine a Facebook photo of a dining room server and a resident. The post reads, "This sweet lady thanked me for her low sodium diet today." A post like this violates HIPAA rules. It gives clues about the identity of the "sweet lady," her location, and her health.



Under HIPAA, people must give consent to share their protected health information. PHI includes medical history, diagnosis, and most other health and personal data. It also includes names, photos, and locations.

Anything that can identify the resident or their health conditions is PHI. Sharing any PHI requires consent. The person must be able to give consent, or resident's Attorney-in-Fact under the Power of Attorney or the resident's Guardian. A person with dementia, for example, is not able to give consent.

Any time a resident agrees to be included in photos, videos, or posts, he or she must complete a new consent form. The form should include the reason for sharing, such as marketing or teaching.

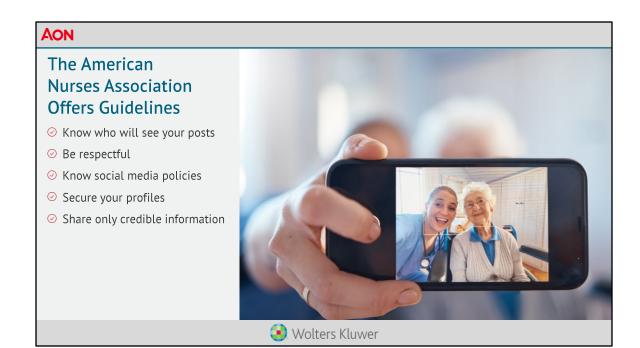


Almost all staff members have smartphones. Most use social media. Staff should keep their personal devices and profiles separate from their work.

Professional groups have guidelines for social media use. Staff should know the guidelines for their jobs. They should also know policies at their workplace.

When staff shares on social media, they can break privacy laws. They can also harm the facility's reputation. If inappropriate posts are found, like appearing intoxicated wearing facility logos, employment can be at risk.

Employees may not be allowed to use personal devices at work. Texting and scrolling can distract from work. Studies have shown that about 9.5 percent of employee productivity is lost every day when workers spend 45 minutes a day on social media. However, using phones for scheduling and alerts may be approved.



The ANA offers helpful guidelines for social media. The list shows the basic ideas. Know who will see your post. Be respectful. Secure your profile and share only credible information.

These rules apply no matter your job. If you are a security guard, a finance worker, or a dining room server, you should only post appropriate content.

Every post should be suitable for the people who will see it. It should also be fine for people they may share it with.

Never post inappropriate content. This includes photos or videos of residents. Never post content that is insulting, racist, or homophobic, not even jokes.

These types of posts violate policy. They reflect badly on you and on the organization. All staff members should know and follow the facility's social media policy.



More and more health care workers are building an online presence. Some want to be influencers. Some want to share knowledge. Some just want to be entertaining!

Some online presences, like #seniorliving and #seniorlivingstories, share stories of residents and caregivers.

Other posts showcase residents. All have given their consent to be recorded and posted. Some residents have even become online celebrities.

All of these posts must follow strict HIPAA guidelines.



Indirect caregivers can misuse social media. This misuse includes making negative posts about the workplace, residents, or coworkers.

Words have power. And words can destroy the feeling of safety at work. An employee who is the target of online comments may feel unsafe at work. A hostile working environment can have an impact on care and services.

Posting false information about the workplace or a coworker is inappropriate. Posts made about residents can hurt the resident, the family, and the workplace.

Do not speak to reporters or police. Your facility should have an official spokesperson. Refer all questions to this spokesperson.

# Other Examples of Misuse of Social Media

- Taking pictures of residents or staff
- Posting any information that could violate HIPAA rules
- Posting work-related content without approval or consent



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Many staff members use their personal cell phones with the best intentions. But they may still be violating HIPAA and workplace policies. Indirect caregivers should know the organization's rules about social media.

Taking a selfie with a resident using a staff member's phone is inappropriate. What do you do if a resident asks for a photo with you? Use the resident's phone to take the picture. That way, the resident keeps control over the image.

Taking a picture of residents and sharing that photo on social media goes against HIPAA. This is true even if it is a work activity or social event. Residents must give consent to have their photo shared online.

# Use Social Media Controls Know controls for staff and residents Limit commenting on organizational sites Protect privacy and security settings

Many facilities have social media controls for both staff and residents. All staff should know what the controls are. They should also understand why the controls are needed.

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Some organizations block access to Facebook and other sites on the server. Only marketing staff can use these sites. This helps protect both staff and residents. It safeguards security.

Many residents and workers post or share content without bad intent. However, comments and visual clues can identify the resident and the facility. All workers must protect the privacy of residents.



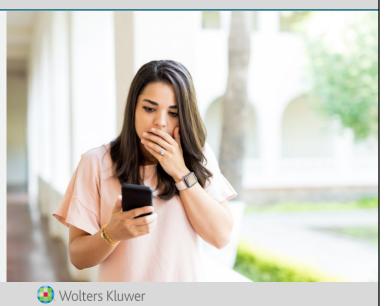
Inappropriate use of social media can be shocking. In one case, two nursing assistants posted a livestream. It showed them abusing an elderly resident with dementia. They posted this video on Snapchat. A viewer reported it to the police.

Police arrested the workers. They charged them with abuse of an elderly person, video voyeurism, and other crimes. The county sheriff said what they had done was vile. He called the assistants "disgusting." Leaders at the facility did not know what had been happening. When they learned about it, they fired the two assistants.

Any staff member who sees someone recording a resident should report it immediately.

# Indirect Caregivers Should not Misuse Social Media

- O Do not post off-color remarks
- Do not post confidential details
- Do not badmouth others
- O Do not post inappropriate photos
- Do not create animated videos of your coworkers
- Do not talk badly about your boss
- Do not play hooky and post about it



Even without access to residents, indirect caregivers can misuse social media. When they do, they risk getting fired.

This list covers some possible misuses. There are many more. Use common sense before you post. Is your post mean or hurtful? What would happen if your boss saw the post?

Posting off-color remarks is unacceptable. Sharing confidential information is, too. Badmouthing coworkers or vendors can also be grounds for dismissal.

Do not play hooky—like calling in sick when you are not sick—and then post about it. Do not post inappropriate photos. Do not create videos that make fun of your coworkers.

All of these are misuses of social media. They will lead to consequences for both the employee and the facility.

# Other Examples of Inappropriate Use of Social Media

- Taking photos without consent
- Sharing photos of residents publicly
- Posting identifying information without consent
- Violating workplace standards and policies



There are many examples of inappropriate use of social media. These cases violate resident privacy, public trust, and federal laws. Some cases involve photos of people with cognitive problems. Cognitively impaired residents are not able to give consent.

A housekeeper in a nursing home posted a picture of a resident. She wrote, "This is my friend." She gave the resident's first name.

This was a HIPAA violation.

When alerted, the worker apologized and quickly removed the post. She said she was not aware that she needed consent. Facility leaders also apologized to the family and the resident. The facility now conducts social media training.

# More Misuse of Social Media by Indirect Caregivers

- Residents must give consent for every photo
- Know facility policies and follow them

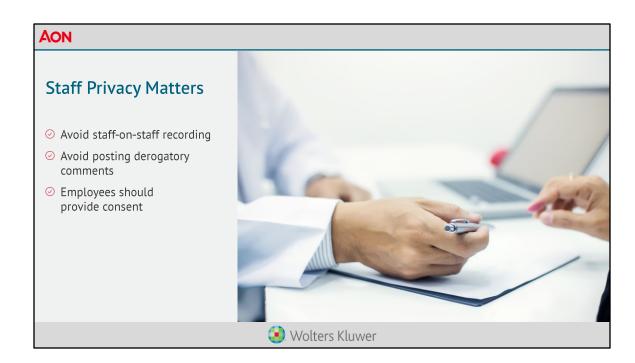


A housekeeper posted a photo of a resident in a nightgown. The woman was sitting on the edge of her bed. There was a heart emoji under the photo. The comment under the picture said, "Trying to escape from bed!"

A different housekeeper posted a photo of a resident. The picture showed the woman's face. It also had her name. The comment said, "A picture is worth a thousand words, and worth a million memories."

In both cases, family members saw the post. They notified the facilities.

Both housekeepers deleted the posts and apologized. Policy at both facilities banned use of phones with cameras at work. Both workers could have been fired for not following the policy. Residents must give consent for every photo and they should know the facility policies and follow them.



Young people often share photos and videos of friends online. But no one should share images of coworkers on the job.

Taking photos of coworkers on the job and posting them is misuse of social media. Coworkers must give consent for their photos to be posted.

Any post with cruel or unkind comments is inappropriate.

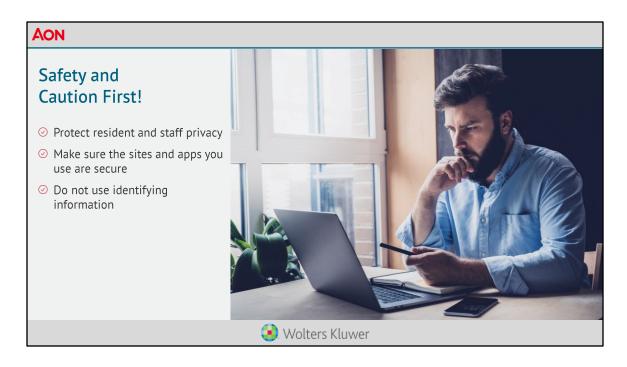
Employees who are photographed for marketing purposes must give consent. Only then can the images be used for promotion. Of course, no one should take videos or post photos of coworkers who are undressed or in another embarrassing situation. These photos could lead to warnings and other actions.



Accreditation is key for senior living facilities. It helps to attract new staff and new residents. To keep accreditation, nursing homes are reviewed by government agencies, Medicare and Medicaid specifically.

These reviews make sure that clear policies are in place. Staff members must know and understand these policies. The goal is always to protect the privacy of residents.

All employees should get training. Tech staff, housekeepers, and others may meet with agents during reviews. They should be ready to answer questions about facility policies.



When in doubt, always safeguard resident and staff privacy first. Make sure that the sites and apps you use are secure.

Be sure that everything you post follows your facility's policies. Do not use identifying information. All posts should also follow federal laws and regulations.

# What if an Indirect Caregiver Violates Policies? O Counseling Termination Fines for the agency Damaged reputations Lawsuits from the resident and family Lower facility ratings Higher future insurance premiums

There are consequences when a staff member violates resident privacy. These can include counseling for the employee. The employee may be fired. The facility can be fined. Reputations can be damaged or destroyed. Facility ratings may fall and insurance premiums go up. There may even be lawsuits.

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All employees must protect the privacy of residents. Think before you post. A simple Facebook post might reveal the name and health condition of a resident.

A staff member might post, "I had a horrible day because you-know-who was on my shift." That could make a coworker feel bullied. Posts like these promote an unsafe workplace for everyone.

Think before you post, every time.

# To Help Prevent Negative Posts in Public Media Voice issues that concern you in a constructive way Inform supervisors of residents' complaints in a timely way Take corrective action if you can Focus on the positive Wolters Kluwer

Indirect caregivers can help prevent negative posts. Listen to residents and families. Are they frustrated? What are their complaints?

Share complaints with your supervisor as soon as possible. Work to make things better when you can.

Always show residents and their families that you care about them and will protect them. Focus on the positive.

Whether you are cleaning a room, changing a bulb, or greeting visitors at the front door, focus on the positive. All these actions support good care. They help minimize angry or negative posts from residents, families, and staff.

# Social Media can have a Positive Impact for Staff and Residents

- Creates connections
- Facilitates connecting with family and loved ones
- group activities



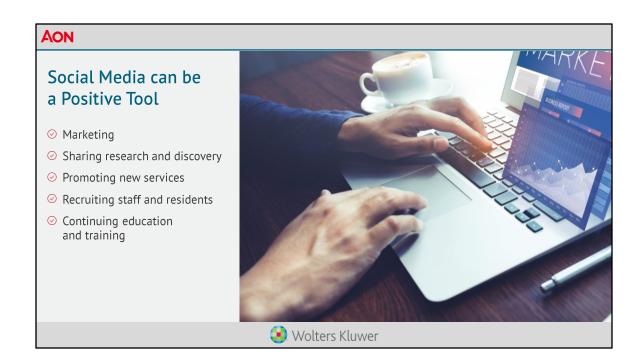
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We have talked a lot about the pitfalls of social media. But there are many good points about it, too.

Social media helps people connect. It helps people feel seen. It is very useful for people who have difficulty getting out.

Social media can also improve social interaction. Zoom and FaceTime can connect a senior to a book club. With these tools, seniors may enjoy a bridge game or a family birthday party. They can attend a support group or a religious service.

Technology staff and engineering staff may be in a position to help residents with online access. They protect both staff and residents by putting privacy controls in place.



Social media can be a very positive tool. It lets senior facilities share new ideas and research. It can be a good way to promote health and wellness.

The facility can use social media for marketing. Sharing programs and services can attract interest and goodwill. Good marketing can also help bring in new staff members.

Social media lets people see the services and programs offered at the facility. This can help bring in new residents.

All workers can support the facility's social media use. One way to do this is by sharing marketing posts on their own accounts. Another way is to attend continuing education and training offered at the facility.

# When Using Social Media to Highlight **Facility Activities**

- Restrict commenting on the site
- Obtain feedback



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Facilities that post on social media or their own websites can set privacy limits. These limits may allow readers to comment. Or they may not allow readers to comment.

Negative comments can reflect poorly on the organization. On the other hand, positive comments can show the facility's strengths.

If the facility wants public feedback, it can post a survey. Surveys help gather comments in one place. Surveys of staff can also be helpful.

Senior leaders will decide the best ways to interact with the public. They will find the best ways to support the facility's goals and mission. Indirect caregivers should understand and support the approach.

# How Should Seniors and **Senior Living Agencies Use Social Media?**

- Post photos, videos, and vignettes
- Share stories that are inspiring or humorous
- Promote programs and services
- Highlight residents and staff



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Some senior living facilities use social media to highlight their residents, staff, and programs. Some have thousands of followers. And some of the seniors have become beloved celebrities.

On Instagram, search for #seniorlivingstories. Several sites will come up. Select a site and click on "View profile," and you will see posts from a number of senior living agencies.

These posts are informative, inspiring, and humorous. All are created and posted with resident consent. They all follow facility social media policy. Some posts highlight staff and the good work they do.



All senior living facilities must adopt clear social media policies.

These policies are a code of conduct. They spell out what is appropriate and what is not allowed. They put safeguards in place. They list consequences for misuse of social media.

Indirect caregivers should know the policies and follow them. Attend media training as required. Usually this training begins right after you are hired. Then there should be an annual training session. There may be more training when there is a major tech update.

Knowing your facility's policies, and following those policies, helps keep you safe. The policies also protect your coworkers, the residents, and the facility.

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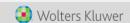
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