SOCIAL MEDIA

a toolkit for BIDLS-Funded Agencies

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ta4si
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

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Introduction

Infectious disease prevention, care, and treatment organizations are increasing efforts to integrate social media into their programs and services, such as those that focus on preventing and mitigating the impacts of HIV, HCV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and tuberculosis.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences (BIDLS) contracts with JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) to implement capacity-building activities for its service provider agencies. JSI developed this social media toolkit to help BIDLS-funded agencies develop and adapt social media messages that focus on infectious disease service integration. This toolkit is intended for users of all skill and experience levels, and includes a review of the People, Objectives, Strategy, Technology (POST) framework for planning a social media strategy, a set of sample social media messages aligned to various platforms, and recommendations for adapting messages for different purposes and channels (including social media, email, web, and newsletters).

This toolkit will support BIDLS-funded organizations to:

• Identify program goals for social media outreach and communication.

• Create effective social media content.

• Adapt sample messages for their own programs.

To start, we recommend revisiting your existing social media strategy. In June 2019, the TA4SI team at JSI conducted a webinar on Getting Started with a Social Media Strategy, which provides an overview of the POST Framework, including social media platforms, social media policy development, analytics and metrics tracking, and creating engaging content and graphics. Below is a short review, with corresponding resources.

NOTE: Many agencies consider dating apps as part of social media. Although dating apps can transfer information and call-to-action messages, it is difficult to monitor engagement in them. This resource does not focus on developing a strategy for dating apps, which require a different approach. We invite you to visit the Using Dating Apps for Health Outreach Webinar to learn more about this topic.

POST Framework

The People, Objectives, Strategy, Technology (POST) framework is a planning tool that can help agencies devise an effective social media strategy. It was introduced by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff in their book Groundswell.[1]

The POST framework below reflects its components, which are described in the content following it.

P	O	S	T
People	**Objectives**	**Strategy**	**Technology**
• Who are they?	• What do we want to achieve?	• How will we achieve this?	• What are the tools of engagement?
• Needs	• What do our tenants want to achieve?	• How can we enable our target audiences to succeed?	• What channel or technology is right for our strategy?
• Values	• What do our end consumers want to achieve?	• What is the value exchange?	• What will resonate?
• Attitudes	• Where do they overlap?	• What do successful experiences look and feel like?	• How do we measure and optimize?
• Distractions			
• Influences			
• Environment			
• Behaviors and Mindset			
• Demographics			
• Media Habits			
• Technographics			

[1] Li, C., Bernoff, J., & Groot, M. (2011). *Groundswell*. Thema.

People: Think about your audience

When working with people who have or may be at risk for HIV, HCV, latent tuberculosis infection, and/or STIs, consider those who may need tailored outreach, such as unhoused people, immigrants and refugees, people who use drugs, and other sub-populations of interest to your organization. Moreover, consider the intersectionality of identities that clients might have, such as a person who identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, is currently experiencing homelessness, and who injects drugs. Some people are able to access and use social media regularly; others access and use it sporadically or not at all. Consider how they might connect with your organization and identify with your messaging. For example, people with limited or sporadic access to social media may learn about your organization's services through word of mouth. A social media campaign can complement traditional outreach and support agencies to share information with these individuals through friends and peer networks, in-person engagement, and information posted in physical spaces. Understanding how your audience accesses and engages social media is important for developing a strategy, visuals, and messages.

Objectives and Goals: Drive your strategy based on your goals

Are your social media activities supporting your communication or outreach goals and objectives? The goals your team sets should drive your strategy and come first. Sit down with your team to determine which social media strategies will help achieve them.

When it comes to creating a social media strategy, your team should keep in mind overall program goals and associated objectives. Also consider the long-term benefits of your organization having a well-developed social media plan. For example, if your program focuses on increasing uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV testing, or antiretroviral treatment (ART) adherence, your social media goals and associated objectives must reflect this, not just aim to increase program visibility through social media.

Strategy: Develop a plan to accomplish your goals

A social media strategy is a written document that describes your organization and program's goals and objectives, the steps and strategies you will use to achieve them, and the metrics you will use to measure progress. Goals are broad, long-term outcomes, and objectives are specific, short-term actions taken to achieve a goal. Your social media strategy should list all your existing and planned social media accounts, and goals and objectives specific to each platform on which your organization is active. Remember that goals and objectives should align with your organization and program's strategy and be consistent with your policies and those of your funders. Finally, define the roles and responsibilities of each member of your team, and describe reporting frequency.

Another important aspect of your strategy is timing and effort. Organizations that are developing a strategy for the first time might want to start with achievable and manageable work. For example, beginner organizations should consider how many concurrent messages they have the capacity to manage at once. Organizations with more experience using social media might be able to create and manage multiple messages simultaneously.

### Technology: Choose the most appropriate social media platforms and tools for your strategy

Not all social media platforms are the same, so it is important to understand the purpose, challenges, various features, and costs of each. Below are some tips for selecting and using social media platforms:

Know your intended audience's social media habits, including which platforms they use the most and why, which content tends to catch their attention, and when they are most likely to engage with it.

Be where your intended audience is. For example, if an organization wants to reach women, and through reviewing its web traffic and social media data it notices that the majority of this group gravitates to the visuals on the landing page, then Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest are great platforms for outreach because they are graphic-friendly.

A strategy should not be limited to one platform. Use channels that complement each other in terms of functionality and can interact with each other seamlessly. However, use each platform differently. Pushing the same content on all platforms or cross posting looks redundant and can seem lazy.

NOTE: Most social media-related content online focuses on its use for business, but you can apply most if not all of those principles to public health efforts. This blog post summarizes the different platforms to help you determine which is best for your organization. Include in your plan the platforms your organization is thinking of using, your scheduling frequency, and the content strategy that will be best for meeting your program objectives. For example, start a conversation about PrEP awareness on Facebook, and link the conversation to a video uploaded on YouTube.
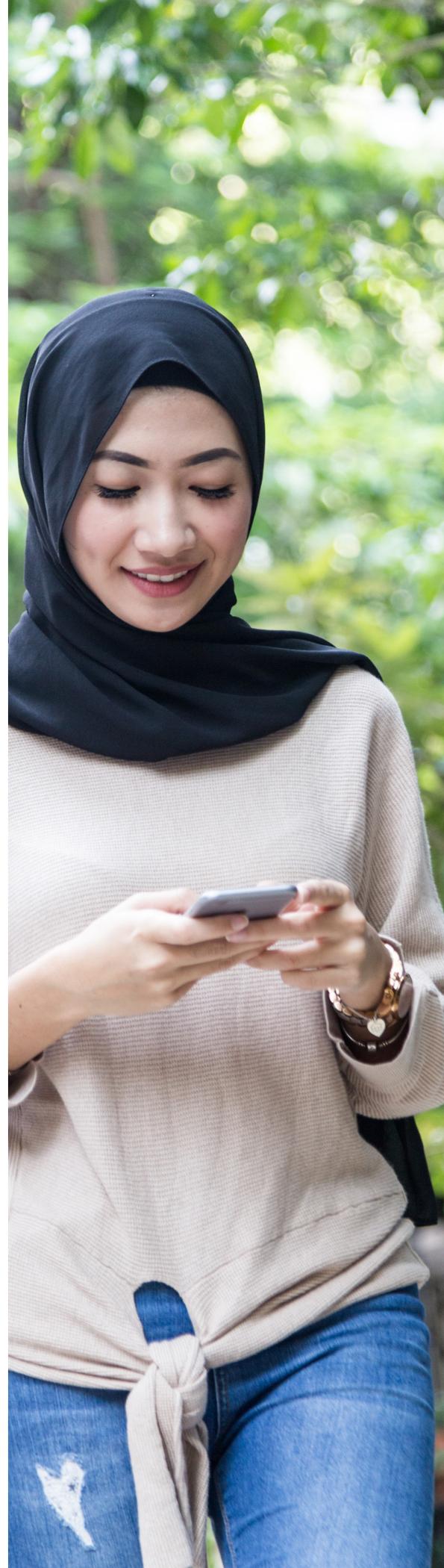
Managing and Measuring Social Media

Developing a social media strategy takes valuable time and effort from staff who most likely provide direct services to the people. While conducting interviews with local organizations, we heard loud and clear that organizations with a dedicated social media staff person are more successful than those for which a social media effort is an afterthought. This staff role involves communicating and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to understand the services and messages needed, developing those messages, managing the various platforms postings and responses, measuring success, and sharing insights and findings. See the Evaluation section of this toolkit to gain a better understanding of the level of effort and resources needed to implement a social media strategy.

TA4SI developed these helpful webinars: Managing Your Social Media in About 2 Hours Per Week and Measure What Matters.

Social Media Content Tips for Success

The following best practices can help your agency make the most effective use of social media. We also invite you to review our Getting Started with a Social Media Strategy Webinar.

If your organization is just getting started with social media, be sure to familiarize yourself with the Social Media Legal Guidance Toolkit, from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, as there are legal implications that must be considered when using virtual channels to reach communities.

When brainstorming what your strategy might look like, consider the following:

Engagement: Social media's success relies on audience engagement. Therefore, think about sparking a conversation. How can you get your audience to engage with you? Can you ask questions? Can you request feedback? Engagement is an active task and for this reason, we recommend setting aside time each week to respond to comments on your posts.

Include a call to action: When writing content, ask yourself what you'd like people to do after viewing the post. Would you like them to visit your website for additional information about a topic, or make an appointment for testing? That's your call to action! We recommend using a call to action in the majority of your posts.

Be visual: More than ever, visuals matter on social media. Posts with visuals, including graphics or videos, have higher engagement than those with text alone. Free tools for creating graphics include Canva, DesignWizard, Piktochart, PicMonkey, and Pixlr.

Measure what matters: Use metrics like views, reach, likes, and comments to measure your outreach efforts and guide content creation. You can use tools like Hootsuite or Sprout Social to track your metrics, but many social media platforms have their own metric tracking tools too. We recommend tracking your metrics on a routine basis (e.g., weekly or monthly). (See the Evaluation section of this document for more information.)

Sample Messages

Organizations often have a need that they are trying to meet with social media. It is good practice to start with the question:

What problem are you trying to solve?
Then consider the following to develop effective and relevant messages for your audience.

People: Identify the intended audience and sub-populations of interest to your program. Who do you want to impact?

Objectives: Define your goals and objectives. What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?

Strategy: Develop your plan of action. How will you achieve it?

Technology: Select your tools, platform, and channels. What tools will you use?

While we strongly recommend developing messages that align with your organization and program's goals and intended audience(s), we have provided the following sample messages that you can use or tailor to the needs of your program. The Tailor Messages section in this tool can guide you through the adaptation process.

> NOTE: All sample messaging, campaign titles, and data provided in this resource are for demonstration purposes only and are not factual. Please check (and consider incorporating) up-to-date statistics and information for your area while developing and before posting messages on social media and elsewhere.

If you will be adapting any of the following examples, make sure you follow the template, add data from your own research, incorporate the logo of your program or organization, and adapt the post to Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, or Twitter formats. In addition, think about which content can be replaced with images, which can be presented in text, which can be interpreted through moving images or video, which links need to appear on screen, and which should be provided as part of the message body.

HCV testing

What problem are you trying to solve?
Based on data collected by our agency, we found that some individuals were sharing syringes and supplies with their partners. This increased the risk of HCV acquisition and transmission among people who identify as transgender Latina women 18 and older in the Roxbury area. Some local testing sites and syringe service programs relocated during COVID-19, limiting opportunities for this community to receive testing and to access additional prevention and support services.

People: Who do you want to reach?
Transgender Latinas and Latinx individuals 18 and older residing, working, or socializing in Roxbury, who share injection equipment, and who tested negative for HCV in the past but have not been re-tested since March 2020 (the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic).

Objectives: What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?
By July 2023, program staff will see a 30 percent increase in the number of HCV tests and client counseling services conducted through the integrated testing and linkage program (at-site, on-demand, etc.) among the intended audience after launching a campaign we are calling Sister-to-Sister.

Strategy: How will you achieve it?
Develop **one social media post in English and Spanish per month** as part of Sister-to-Sister about resources, including HCV testing, for transgender Latinx adults.

Technology: What tools will you use?
Our intended audience tends to use TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. We will aim to develop **posts for Facebook and Instagram**.

Instagram

Sample messaging:
- When [organization name] closed because of COVID, my sisters and I didn't know what to do. But it's reopened and is offering services over the phone, so we can talk to someone who understands our needs. [Organization name] is offering free HCV testing and consultations over the phone for you and me. Call [phone number]; we deserve to know, we deserve our health.

Sample imagery:
- Two transgender Latina women (early- to mid-late 20s) smiling. One is handing a card to the other. The card depicts a red ribbon, the organization's logo, or other visual significance to HIV, HCV, and STI testing.
- A transgender Latina woman wearing a mask and walking toward a testing site.
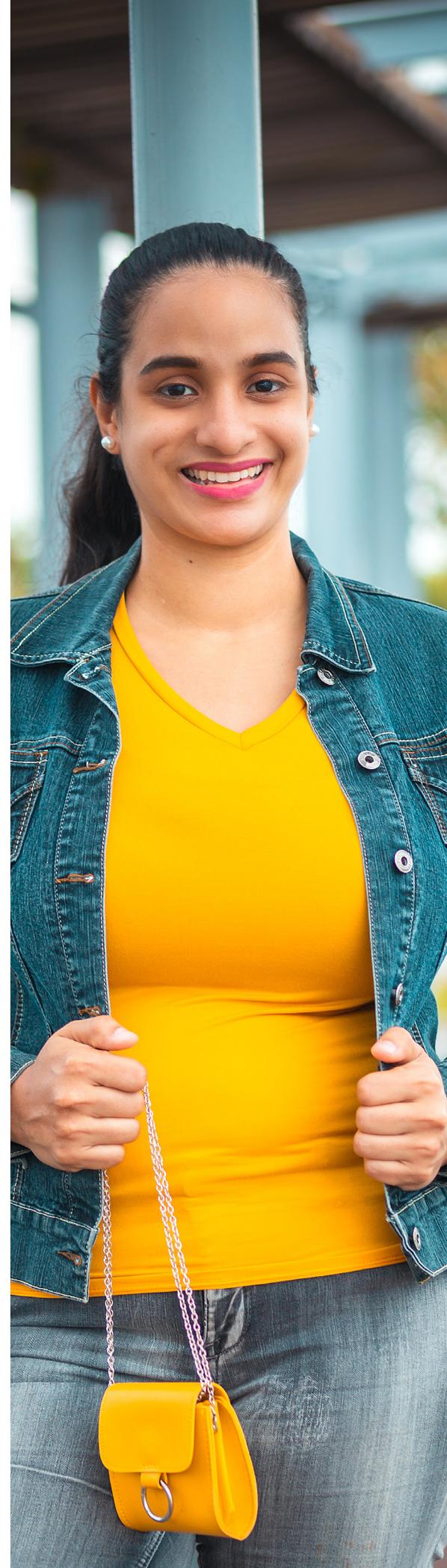
Get help paying for oral PrEP

What problem are you trying to solve?
Based on our agency data, we found that in 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 caused many people to lose their jobs and consequently their health insurance. Many PrEP clients at our agency could not afford their prescriptions consistently. Some considered discontinuing PrEP to reduce out-of-pocket payments, and some stopped taking PrEP altogether. At the same time, they continued to engage in sexual activity that increased their HIV risk.

People: Who do you want to reach?
HIV-negative Portuguese-speaking working people ages 25–35 who have stopped taking PrEP due to loss of employer-sponsored insurance.

Objectives: What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?
By December 2023, after launching the My PrEP-Position campaign, program staff will see a 15 percent increase in the number of individuals in the priority population who come in or contact a PrEP Navigator.

Strategy: How will you achieve it?
Develop **two social media posts per month** as part of the My PrEP-Position campaign about financial assistance programs, such as PrEPDAP, that are available to help clients with the cost of PrEP.

Technology: What tools will you use?
This population tends to use Facebook and Instagram. We will aim to develop **one post for Facebook and one for Instagram, twice per month.**

Instagram

Sample messaging:
• (In Portuguese) There was a lot of uncertainty in 2020 and 2021 but we can still control our health. When I lost my insurance, I was worried about losing PrEP. After I was retested at [organization name] for HIV, I talked with a PrEP Navigator who helped me apply for financial assistance to pay for PrEP. I am in control of my health. [Location address]

Sample imagery/video:
• A heterosexual Portuguese couple in their 30s having a conversation in bed.
• A same-sex Portuguese couple in their late 20s having dinner and laughing.
• A person who looks like the intended population swiping left and right on a phone, a vague profile that "matches," the person switching to a mobile app or page that highlights PrEP assistance, and clicking on the phone number, which auto dials through the phone.

Staying healthy post-isolation

What problem are you trying to solve?
Based on data collected by our agency, we found that isolation due to COVID-19 concerns has taken a toll on our social, emotional, and physical health. Some people, especially people who are aging with HIV, have struggled to re-integrate into work, school, social events, and even their own health care. Re-engagement in care and prevention activities can be different post-pandemic.

People: Who do you want to reach?
People who are aging with HIV, especially those with diagnosed HIV in the last three years, who are concerned about accessing services and navigating the HIV system.

Objectives: What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?
By the end of 2023, after launching the Re:Engagement campaign, case managers will see a 15 percent increase in the re-engagement of the intended population.

Strategy: How will you achieve it?
Develop **one social media post per month** as part of the Re:Engagement campaign about the relevance of continuing with care services and treatment conversations with providers via email, phone, or in-person.

Technology: What tools will you use?
Most people who are aging with HIV use Facebook in our area to socialize. We will aim to develop **one post for Facebook**.

Facebook
Sample messaging:
- If it's been a while, it might be a good time to check in with your doctor to ensure you stay healthy. Give us a call or send us a message here; we care for your health too. [Case manager's contact information]

Sample imagery:
- Hands of a health care provider on a tablet communicating virtually with an unrecognizable but visibly happy person in their 60s.
- Over-the-shoulder image of an adult talking via FaceTime or phone with who seems to be a doctor or case manager while holding a pill box in the other hand.

Tapping into local priorities: STI testing and treatment

What problem are you trying to solve?

Based on data collected by our agency, we found a need for health-related social media posts in the context of local priorities, news, and culture. This can increase uptake of actions that support healthy behaviors, in particular those that relate to preventing sexually transmitted infections, especially chlamydia, among Asian-American young women living, studying, working, and accessing services in Somerville, MA.

People: Who do you want to reach?

The Somerville suburb of Boston is experiencing an increase in the number of chlamydia cases. This city has a large Asian-American population, from which women ages 18–24 are being disproportionately affected.

Objectives: What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?

By the end of June 2023, after posting six locally relevant social media posts as part of the I am Important campaign, infectious disease staff at our Somerville location will see an increase in the number of chlamydia tests conducted among the intended audience.

Strategy: How will you achieve it?

Develop **one social media post** per month from January–June 2023 about the importance of getting tested for chlamydia that incorporates messaging highlighting local culture, events, and communities.

Technology: What tools will you use?

This community tends to use TikTok and Instagram. We will aim to develop **three posts for TikTok and three reels for Instagram**, alternating each month.

TikTok

Sample messaging:
- I value my health. I am important. Chlamydia is on the rise in our community. Get tested confidentially at no cost at [location], or talk to a counselor to get more information at [phone number].

Sample imagery:
- A group of Asian-American girls laughing in front of a Somerville landmark. One turns to another and says, "I just went to get tested. I am OK. I didn't know there was an outbreak in the neighborhood. Thank you for telling me to do it. You made me feel important." The friend smiles and responds, "You are important."
- An Asian-American mom consoling her young daughter. The daughter looks up, wipes the tears from her eyes and says "You are important to me!" Mom says, "You are important to me too; I am glad you got tested. Now you can get treatment."

Sexual health during COVID-19

What problem are you trying to solve?
Based on data collected by our agency, we found a decrease in the number of clients attending appointments related to their sexual health care due to COVID-19 concerns. While many had concerns about their general health and were wearing masks to go out, data also informed us that people were not applying practices that reduce risk for acquisition or transmission of HIV. In particular, data for young Black men who have sex with men (MSM) indicated a decrease in using condoms, taking PrEP, testing for HIV, HCV, and STIs, and a gap in knowledge on how COVID-19 could affect their sexual health.

People: Who do you want to reach?
Black MSM ages 18–24.

Objectives: What outcome do you hope to achieve through your social media efforts?
By the end of 2023, after launching the Re:Engagement campaign, HIV program staff will see a 25 percent increase in intended audience members who come for an annual check-up, routine testing, and/or counseling appointment or resources.

Strategy: How will you achieve it?
Develop **one social media post per month** about the importance of accessing available services and promoting our agency's counselors for resources and recommendations.

Technology: What tools will you use?
This community tends to use TikTok and Instagram. We will aim to develop **one post for TikTok and one for Instagram** per month.

TikTok
Sample messaging:
- Are you ready to close your social distance? HIV, HCV, STI, and COVID tests will help. You can get them at … [location].
- If it's been a while, now is a good time to check in with your doctor to ensure you stay healthy. Come to [location] for your routine test for HIV, HCV, and STIs, and get a COVID test at the same time.
- There was a lot of uncertainty in 2020 and 2021, but we managed. One thing you can know for sure is your HIV, HCV, STI and COVID status. Let's get confident and get tested. [Location]

Sample imagery/video:
- A young Black man on his phone with a mischievous smile. He appears to be talking to someone on a dating site. As he gets ready to leave for his date, he stops by the clinic or searches on his phone for the nearest testing site.
- A young Black man washing his hands, using hand sanitizer, grabbing his face covering, heading out the door, arriving to an unmarked place, looking at a menu of options that includes COVID, HIV, HCV, syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea tests; PrEP information; condoms; HIV medication initiation, etc. He begins to check off the options. A statement appears "get it all done; link in bio to know where to go."

Additional message ideas

There are a multitude of messages that you can develop or tailor for the community you serve. Again, consider the people you intend to reach, your objectives, the strategy, and the platform. The following are ideas and phrases that we hope spark approaches and messages that will help your program reach its community.

Should you choose to use any of the following messages, make sure they align with your organizational values, funder protocols, and local policies and procedures.

1. Did you know...?
2. STIs are treatable, come ask us about it...
3. Prioritizing COVID doesn't mean deprioritizing sexual health. Get tested, know your status, and take action. Prevent, test, treat.
4. Whether you are living with HIV ... or not!
5. Flu season; get your shot and ask for HIV, STI, HCV testing, and HAV, HBV, and COVID immunization information.
6. There is treatment for HCV; wanna learn more?
7. For you and for your partner...
8. Before you plan to start PrEP...
9. PrEP is preparedness, ART is for living healthy lives.
10. Social isolation has taken a toll on our mental health. Talk to a professional about your concerns and options for feeling safe and confident about socializing and dating. Our mental health is as important as our sexual health.
11. Prevention at your fingertips (image of hand sanitizer, PrEP pill, face covering, HIV, STIs, HCV test, condom, smartphone).
12. Before, during, and after testing!
13. 2020 taught us we cannot take things for granted. Maybe it's time to start PrEP.
14. Enable phone notifications if you are exposed to COVID-19. When it comes to our sexual health and meeting others, share your HIV, STIs, HCV, and COVID status and ask about theirs.
15. As places reopen, it's a great time to get re-tested for HIV, HCV, STIs, and COVID. You can get it done all at once at ... [location].
16. 2020 and 2021 was a tough time, but we managed. Let's come back confident; get tested for HIV, HCV, STIs, and COVID. [Location]
17. Let's stop COVID, HIV, HCV, and STIs altogether. Ask us how. [Location]
18. There are many places to get an HIV, HCV, STI, and COVID test safely, confidentially, and in your language. [Location]

Tailor Messages

In this toolkit, we emphasize identifying people, objectives, strategy, and technology before developing your messages. You need to do this to know what messages your community is seeking, following, heeding, and lacking. Even if you find a message that you want to replicate, listen to your intended audience to understand how to tailor those messages.

The Project Listen tool can help you start this process, and the POST tool can help with message development and tailoring. Both of these documents can be found in the Appendix of this toolkit. The Project Listen tool includes questions for you and your team to consider:

• What types of content or information are people/organizations sharing?

• What types of information are people/organizations seeking?

• What types of content are people/organizations retweeting or liking?

• What do you like/dislike about the way other people have written their tweets or posts?

• What did you learn?

• What can you use for your agency?

JSI | HEALTH COMMUNICATION

PROJECT LISTEN

If you're new to social media, listening to the conversation first – before you start talking – will help familiarize you with how your peers and clients are using social media. What are they saying? What are they sharing? This listening activity will help you to learn more about the people you want to connect with.

STEP 1: DETERMINE WHO YOU WILL LISTEN TO.

Who is your target audience?
(e.g., Black men at risk of HIV, peer organizations)

What is the demographic of this audience?
(e.g., age, gender, geographic location)

Which individuals or peer organizations would you like to follow online?
*(e.g., an agency that also serves your target audience)*

STEP 2: DETERMINE WHAT YOU WILL LISTEN FOR.

What key words are related to your organization, work, or mission?
(e.g. HIV, testing, USCA)

It is important that your messages be consistent in use of logos and hashtags so your intended audience can identify each as part of a series of messages from your campaign, program, and/or organization.

Think about what your campaign will look like to plan how to develop, adapt, and reuse messages to connect stories to each other or continue them.

Considerations for different platforms

Think of the layout and central components of each platform, including:

- title
- description
- image
- placement of main subject in the image (rule of thirds; see graphic below)
- shares
- mentions
- likes
- use of tags

- call to action
- categories
- URLs
- punctuation
- how it will look on a desktop versus a tablet versus a smartphone
- availability of live chat with a staff member

Lastly, always take into account the best times that each platform increases visibility for your intended audience.

When you post on social platforms, optimize the posts for each different platform. Know the formats and limitations of each to head toward the success side of the spectrum and getting the biggest bang for your effort.

The following snapshots, designed by [mycleveragency](#) can help identify how each platform is different and provide different considerations to take during the development of a post.

See the social media platform infographics and full descriptions at [The Recipe for Perfect Social Media Posts blog from Hubspot](#).

FACEBOOK

KEEP THINGS POSITIVE
Positivity breeds engagement and sharing. It will help inspire and excite your users.

PROVIDE INFORMATION
The most appealing updates are ones that offer something, but don't disclose everything, make fans want to click...

PROVIDE A LINK
If you're going to provide a link, make sure you Bit.ly it so you can track how many people are clicking through from Facebook.

STATUS UPDATE
HTTP://BIT.LY/12ABC45

INCLUDE IMAGES
Posts with images get the highest amount of engagement on Facebook, so make sure to include one when you can... perfect size 800x600.

MOBILE FRIENDLY
Use simple imagery that will be easily seen on mobile devices as 80-85% of your fans will see posts on their phone.

ENGAGE WITH USERS
Posts don't just grab attention, comments and responses do. Engage with people and build relationships through conversational dialogue.

LIKE · COMMENT · SHARE
COMMENTS

BE AVAILABLE
Post when the audience is listening not just when your business is open. This will ensure more engagement from users.

YOUTUBE

CATCHY TITLE
This is what will get people to click and watch your video so make sure it is attention grabbing, but also informative as to the subject of the video.

UPLOADING
You want your video to be searchable, so when you upload your file to YouTube make sure it has the catchy title you're going to use rather than MOV1234.mp4.

TITLE

DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION
Describe your video further including any keywords to help viewers find it easily. Use the description to add links to your website and social channels.

CALL TO ACTION
Within the description remember to let viewers know what you would like them to do next, you may want to add a link back to your website.

CALL TO ACTION
SHARE
CATEGORY   TAGS
COMMENTS

USE TAGS
Get your video in front of more people by adding tags and using keywords, this will help your video appear in more searches.

INSTAGRAM

EDITING
Use other apps, such as Camera+ and Snapseed, to enhance your photos. Once you get used to editing your feed will have a consistent look and feel.

RULE OF THIRDS
Putting the subject of the photo in only two thirds of the screen makes it more attractive to the eye.

CAPTIONS
Use relevant photo captions to grab the attention of people and include questions to drive comments.

DESCRIPTION · COMMENTS

USE HASHTAGS
There's always some random hashtags that come round once a week or so, so maybe be aware of them if you want loads of engagement.

REPLY
Send notes to people who have liked/commented to drive two way conversations. Keep the comments to a conversational level rather than pushing sales.

LIKE · COMMENT · TWEET

OPTIMUM TIMING FOR SOCIAL POSTS

	BEST	WORST
BLOG POST	11AM	6AM
YOUTUBE	1PM - 3PM	3AM - 7AM
FACEBOOK	1PM - 4PM	8PM - 8AM
TWITTER	1PM - 3PM	8PM - 9AM
PINTEREST	2PM - 4PM	5PM - 7PM
	8PM - 1AM	
GOOGLE+	9AM - 11AM	6PM - 8AM
LINKEDIN	7AM - 9AM	10PM - 6AM
	5PM - 6PM	
TUMBLR	10PM	6AM

Hashtags: Users can follow hashtags across different social media platforms to tag their own content. Hashtags can be used both in the content produced, and to get a pulse on what types of posts intended audience members are looking for. They are useful for highlighting the most important ideas in a post, and for making content more discoverable. As users follow hashtags, content will appear in their feed if it has been labeled with that key word or phrase. The more specific the hashtag, the more specific the audience. By searching for hashtags and discovering which have been used, organizations can find trends across user demographics. These patterns will reveal smaller user groups that can be tapped for focused content and creating communities.

When choosing which hashtags to use, avoid incorporating too many into a single post. When deciding whether to include one, ensure it is relevant to the post. Appropriate numbers of hashtags vary by social media platform. For example, on Instagram, posts with nine hashtags received the most engagement from users in 2019, while posts with one were the most successful on Twitter.[2, 3]

According to besthashtags.com, the most popular HIV, HCV, and STI hashtags in 2022 were:

#aids	#hivpositive	#mentalillness
#aidsawareness	#hivprevention	#pregnant
#chlamydia	#hivstigma	#prep
#gay	#hivtest	#reducingstigma
#gettested	#hivtesting	#safesex
#gonorrhea	#hsv	#sexualhealth
#hepatitis	#knowyourstatus	#std
#hepatitisstigma	#lgbt	#stds
#herpes	#lgbtq	#stdtesting
#herpesawareness	#liver	#syphilis
#hiv	#liverhealth	#uequalsu
#hivaids	#love	#worldaidsday
#hivawareness	#mentalhealthawareness	#worldhepatitisday

[2] https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-hashtags/#know

[3] https://trackmaven.com/blog/how-to-use-hashtags/

Evaluation

Social media implementation and evaluation are both art and science: the art of thinking creatively about your messaging, graphics, and tone; and a scientific approach to ensure that your work reaches your intended audience.

There are several categories of social media metrics, and they are framed a bit differently depending on how and by whom they are used. See TA4SI's Measure What Matters webinar.

The four main categories of social media metrics are awareness, engagement, sentiment, and action, described as follows.

1. Awareness. Awareness can be thought of as:

- Brand recall: How easily someone remembers your brand.
- Brand recognition: How easily someone can differentiate your brand from others.

Here, "brand" describes what you will promote through social media (e.g., PrEP, HIV testing, and program, organization, and campaign name). Recall and recognition can be difficult concepts to quantify because they seem abstract. For awareness, monitor the number of unique users who have been exposed to a post you created, or the number of times a post you developed appears on a social media user's screen.

Example: An agency wanting to measure awareness should focus on the number of non-repeating visits to a specific post. This will help the agency quantify users who the message has reached for the first time. The agency can also focus on the number of times people mention the agency or services in their posts; this will help the agency understand if users are talking about their services with others and quantify these mentions. When users tag or mention the agency's profile, the agency can measure how much awareness people are generating for its campaign, program, or service.

2. Engagement. Monitor reactions to your posts, the number of shares by different people, and comments received as well as the replies they get. This shows how much people interact with your content, which is an indicator of how much your brand resonates with them.

Example: An agency focusing efforts on measuring engagement might choose to identify the number of likes a post receives or how many times it is shared. Another agency might want to measure engagement by quantifying the number of replies a post receives and/or the average number of reposts in a month for a specific message. Other organizations might be interested in measuring the number of redirections their website receives from a social media post.

3. Sentiment. Sentiment refers to the emotional tone of posts about your brand. Collect qualitative information on mentions, hashtags, and any type of emotional response within all the comments and replies your post receives. When tracking sentiment, assess and quantify the number of positive, negative, and neutral comments, as well as any satisfaction data or recommendations received.

Example: An organization seeing an increase of mentions of its name over a period of time might track the number of positive, negative, and neutral messages, and analyze what people are saying that could benefit or harm its brand.

4. Action. In addition to tracking number of clicks and responses, monitor what happened as a direct result of your social media efforts. Most organizations will focus on call to action efforts that are heeded. In those cases, staff should measure what the result of that post was.

Example: After posting messages on social media, some organizations state "visit our website," "chat with a Navigator to learn more about restarting ART," "talk with your case manager about the new HIV injectable medication," "stop by our office for free condoms," etc. An agency might measure how many people visited its website as a result of the post, but it is most important to track behavioral change related to the program's goal. If a program wants to increase re-engagement into care by promoting injectable ART, it must measure the number of people who had fallen out of care and contact the agency to talk to a case manager about injectable ART as a result of the post, and how many of them re-engage in care.

Keep these considerations in mind when developing messages. When it comes to content, focus on quality, not quantity. You will eventually have to measure message efficacy, so develop those that will get readers to consider their behavior, not just increase the number of social media reactions. Ask yourself these questions:

- Does increasing the number of posts per day get more engagement?
- Do posts about trending topics attract more engagement than content you can reuse?

Lastly, you want to know that your efforts and the final product (your message) is working! Measurement can tell you if you're achieving the goals that you set when you started, and help you refine content and tailor it to your followers. Look at your data and ask:

- In terms of content, what's working? What isn't?
- Are metrics improving over time?
- Am I hitting my goals for engagement?
- Am I raising awareness?
- Am I changing health behaviors?

The answers will let you know what next steps your organization should take to redirect, enhance, or revamp its efforts.
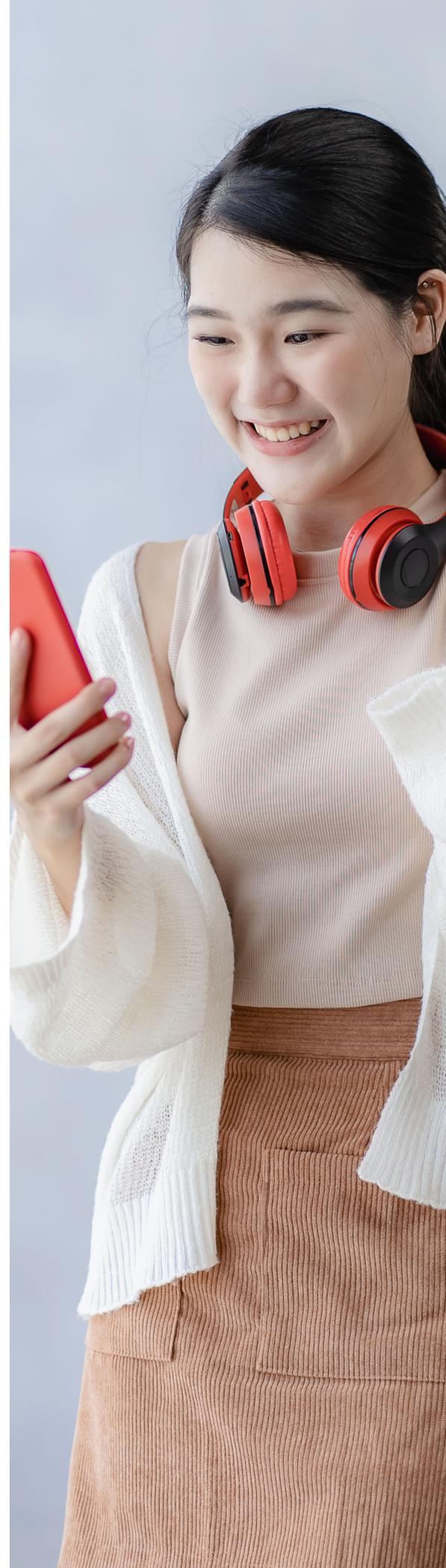
Lasting lessons and practices from COVID

- **Social media takes many resources** (time, money, creativity, etc.). When planning, be sure to pace yourself and allocate time to maximize your team's efforts. Effective use of social media requires a mindful approach and focused investment.

- **Social media users are more active than ever.** Many people used social media to connect with friends, families, and followers during the stay at home orders in 2020 and 2021. This trend continues, and many people are active and open to messages. Now is the time to be more assertive with the promotion of your services.

- **Create consistent and non-judgmental messages.** People have struggled to make medical appointments. Continue to send messages about the importance of knowing one's status, getting tested, and re-engaging in care. COVID-19 renewed stigma associated with acquiring a virus and being sick. At the same time, it increased social responsibility about frequent testing, wearing protective equipment, and other risk reduction measures. Because of this, there is a great need for non-judgmental messages and images that people can identify with.

- **Communicate with other staff.** During the early years of COVID-19, many people reduced interactions with colleagues who contributed to agency programs. Communicate with your front desk staff, clinicians, pharmacists, counselors, case managers, and other staff who can provide insight into what is happening in other areas of your clients' life. This will provide you with more relevant content for your posts.

- **Word of mouth is still as powerful as ever.** Make sure you are delivering high quality messaging - and most importantly, high quality services - and encouraging clients to refer their friends and family to your program. Whether in conversation or via social media, word of mouth is still the most powerful form of advertisement.

- **Offer live events virtually.** The pandemic presented a unique opportunity for partnerships across programs to enhance teamwork when working with the same intended audience. Several organizations have allocated resources to train staff and/or volunteers on social media. Online events and interactions have been an essential lifeline for clients and community members. These include livestreamed ceremonies, recognitions, workshops, and interviews on Facebook, Instagram, and the organization's website. Programs can offer a live chat feature with a counselor to learn or ask questions about a particular topic.

- **Partner with other agencies**, such as social service agencies, substance use services, and other programs that provide services to and engage with your community of focus. These partnerships can complement the services offered by your organization and vice versa. For bilingual organizations in particular, this includes translating promotional materials to be distributed digitally, especially from your organization's website. Make sure that translation is conducted by a native speaker who understands the context of the identified population.
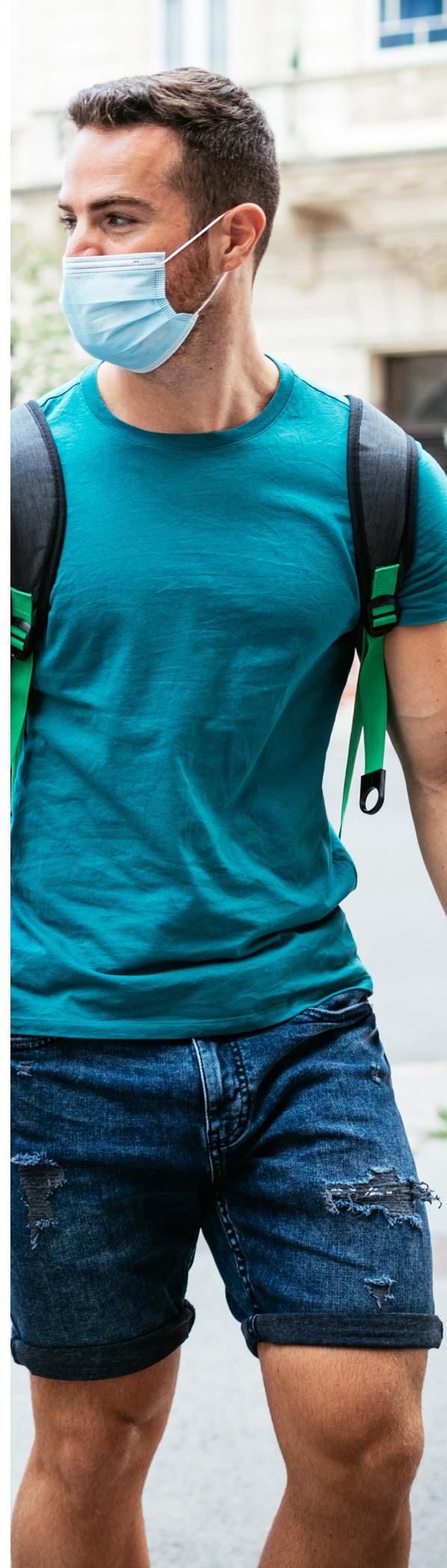
Resources

Tools and national campaigns

Know More Hepatitis Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Know More Hepatitis is a national campaign launched in 2020 to raise awareness about hepatitis C testing for adults aged 18 years and older. Campaign materials include flyers, fact sheets, sample social media messages and graphics for Twitter and Facebook, radio scripts and sample emails, and digital badges.

Talk. Test. Treat. Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Talk. Test. Treat. is a national campaign launched to encourage individuals and healthcare providers to take three simple actions—Talk, Test, and Treat— for STD prevention. Campaign materials include sample social media messages, graphics, and hashtags to be adapted for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

PrEP Aware Week 2022 Social Media Toolkit (New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute)
This toolkit developed by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute contains sample messaging, graphics, and videos to promote participation in the 2022 PrEP Aware Week campaign. The content can be adapted for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Developing a Social Media Strategy to Combat the HIV Epidemic in Indian Country (National Indian Health Board)
This toolkit contains tools and resources to assist organizations that serve American Indian and Alaska Native communities to develop a social media strategy to combat the HIV epidemic in Indian Country. The content can be adapted for a variety of platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and more.

[Act Against AIDS Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
Act Against AIDS was a 5-year national communication campaign launched in 2009 to combat complacency about HIV and AIDS in the United States. Comprising multiple targeted sub-campaigns, it is focused on raising HIV and AIDS awareness among all Americans and reducing the risk of HIV infection among the hardest-hit populations. Act Against AIDS campaign materials are available for downloading and ordering for use in any setting including health departments, community clinics, and private health care practices. Materials include fact sheets, brochures, and posters as well as on-line resources such as website banners, badges, and buttons.

[Doing It Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of outreach materials includes a series of short videos focused on the importance of HIV testing as part of the Doing It campaign.

[HIV Treatment Works Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of outreach materials includes posters, brochures, and short videos focused on the importance of HIV treatment and staying in care as part of the HIV Treatment Works campaign.

[Prescribe HIV Prevention Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of outreach materials includes brochures and posters to support clinicians as they initiate conversations with their patients about HIV prevention, as part of the Prescribe HIV Prevention campaign.

[Start Talking. Stop HIV Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of outreach materials includes posters and brochures focused on PrEP and PEP for HIV prevention, as part of the Start Talking. Stop HIV campaign.

[Stop HIV Stigma Campaign (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of outreach materials includes short videos, pledge cards, and posters focused on ending the stigma around HIV as part of the Stop HIV Stigma campaign.

[Let's Stop HIV Together Social Media Toolkits (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)](#)
This collection of social media toolkits includes content to promote HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and anti-stigma messaging. Materials include videos, imagery, sample messaging, recommended hashtags, and more to be adapted for Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

Appendix

PROJECT LISTEN

If you're new to social media, listening to the conversation first – before you start talking – will help familiarize you with how your peers and clients are using social media. What are they saying? What are they sharing? This listening activity will help you to learn more about the people you want to connect with.

STEP 1: DETERMINE WHO YOU WILL LISTEN TO.

Who is your target audience?
(e.g., Black men at risk of HIV, peer organizations)

What is the demographic of this audience?
(e.g., age, gender, geographic location)

Which individuals or peer organizations would you like to follow online?
(e.g., an agency that also serves your target audience)

STEP 2: DETERMINE WHAT YOU WILL LISTEN FOR.

What key words are related to your organization, work, or mission?
(e.g. HIV, testing, USCA)

What do you want to learn about your audience?
(e.g., what kind of information they are seeking)

STEP 3: START LISTENING!

1. For your first listening activity, try using Twitter, Facebook, or both. If you don't already have an account, create one now. You can also conduct this activity using other tools (e.g., Tumblr or Pinterest) to better understand how your target audience is using these tools.

2. Search for the organizations and people that you identified in Step 1 and begin to "follow" or "like" them.

3. Look at whom these people/groups follow or like, and begin to follow other users that seem similar to you or aligned with your interests.

4. Make an appointment with yourself for the next three weeks to look at your Twitter or Facebook feed once a day for seven minutes.

STEP 4: REFLECT

Take notes of what you see and hear to learn more about your target audience and how others are communicating using social media. Use the questions below to help guide you.

1. What types of content or information are people/organizations sharing?

2. What types of information are people/organizations seeking?

3. What types of content are people/organizations retweeting or liking

4. What do you like/dislike about the way other people have written their tweets or posts?

5. What did you learn?

6. What can you use for your agency? Or for your own personal use?

Social Media Strategy Worksheet

P.O.S.T. FRAMEWORK

Project:

Goal:

PEOPLE

Who are you trying to reach? How are they using social media? Start a social media strategy by understanding your audience and their use of social media.

OBJECTIVES

What are you trying to accomplish with social media? Decide on your objectives before you choose which tools to use.

Bernoff J. The POST method: a systematic approach to social strategy. In: Groundswell: How People with Social Technologies Are Changing Everything. December 11, 2007. http://blogs.forrester.com/groundswell/2007/12/the-post-method.html.

STRATEGY

How does social media support your objectives? What will success look like? How will you get your project to embrace a social media strategy? Create a plan for meeting your objectives that considers your organizational culture and resources.

TECHNOLOGY/TOOL(S)

What tools best support your objectives and your audience's needs? How many hours do you need to allocate to using this tool? Select tools after considering your audience, objectives and strategy.

Bernoff J. The POST method: a systematic approach to social strategy. In: Groundswell: How People with Social Technologies Are Changing Everything. December 11, 2007. http://blogs.forrester.com/groundswell/2007/12/the-post-method.html.