Toolkit: Twitter Basics

Using Social Media to Develop a Public Voice

Introduction

Twitter is one of a number of different social media platforms widely used to share ideas, announce news, and make connections with people who share your interests. Positive outcomes of becoming involved with social media include:

- Practice building
- Intellectual stimulation
- Promoting the value of psychoanalysis
- Importation of new ideas
- Making connections

Twitter is particularly well suited for psychoanalysts who wish to communicate in the public arena yet maintain a professional "face". It is easy to learn and use. You will be in good company if you join twitter—the Pope tweets, as does the President of the United States and public intellectuals like Oliver Sachs and Seven Pinkert. (more examples from other regions are welcome! Please send to resourcelibrary@ipa.world.

Twitter Advantages

- Training in brevity, clarity, sharpness of language and thought
- Connections to new ideas
- Connections to other thinkers
- Fits in to small spaces in your schedule
- Easy and fun
- Respond to breaking news and events

Twitter – Basic Terms and Concepts

- **Twitter**—a social media website found at http://twitter.com
- **Tweet**—a post on Twitter—limited to 140 characters (characters!, not words)
- **Account name/handle**—how you are identified on twitter. It always begins with the @ symbol.
- Example: Dr. William Massicotte is @wjmanalyst
- Example: Dr. Jorge Bruce is @jotabruce
- **Bio**—when you open a Twitter account, you have the opportunity to write a brief biographical statement that identifies you and your purpose.

  o Example: Dr. Prudence Gourguechon's account name is @ pgourguechon and she described herself in her biography like this:

"Psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, writer. Interested in applying psychoanalytic thinking to culture and social issues".

- **Twitter timeline** – this is a list of all the tweets you receive from other people on Twitter. These are posts by the people you "follow" (see below). The most recent tweets are first. Depending on how frequently the people you follow post, your timeline can fill very rapidly.
- **#Hashtag**-A hashtag is a word or phrase (without spaces preceded by the symbol "#" known as a hashtag or pound sign. Learning to use hashtags is important as it allows you to connect to others who are interested in the same concept or event.

Use hashtags in your tweets: Example: "Think #Freud is dead? Think again and read this article on #psychoanalysis". This is how it works. Any of the 300 million Twitter users interested in psychoanalysis (including you) can put #psychoanalysis in the search box here

And this is what you get:

- Photographs related to psychoanalysis
- Tweets by everyone else in the world using the same #psychoanalysis hashtag
- A list of accounts of individuals and organizations interested in psychoanalysis

Try it. It is amazing.

Another use of hashtags is to tie together tweets around an event. At a congress, you'll often see a hashtag promoted on posters or projected slides, for example #IPABoston2015. This means that everyone who is tweeting about anything they think is interesting at the IPA Congress uses this hashtag and it links together all their posts.

- **Following**—You chose who to follow on Twitter. When you follow someone, his or her Tweets show up in your timeline. You get to see what they are thinking and what they are up to.   To make the most of "following"

- Aim for a range of feeds depending on your interests.
- Don't just stick to psychoanalysis. See what thinkers in other fields are doing.
- See who your colleagues and people you are following are following—you'll learn about interesting people and groups to follow that you would have never heard of
- Avoid extremely frequent tweeters
- Don't be afraid to "unfollow"
- Follow your colleagues
- Check out who decides to follow you and follow them back, but only if you are interested in them.

- **Followers**—Your Followers are people who decide they want to see your tweets. You build a following slowly. Don't worry if you have few followers—they will come. And even if you don't, following others gives you windows into the thinking of people all over the world.
  - When you get a follower, look at their feed and see if you want to follow them
  - Reciprocate if appropriate
  - Avoid those who are following thousands of people
  - To thank or not to thank—some people thank every new follower, e.g. they might tweet "@sfreud, thanks for following@. This can be annoying and is not recommended on a routine basis.

Twitter Principles-

- Idea-casting not self-casting—aim towards tweeting about ideas, not yourself. "Seeing old friends at #IPABoston2015" is not that interesting. "Neuroscience meets psychoanalysis at #IPABoston2015. See update on #Freud project" is about an idea and is interesting.
- Follow first—don't worry about followers. Look for interesting people to follow.
- Learn twitter jargon and tricks (up to a point)
- Stick with it
- Give away knowledge

Etiquette, Privacy and Ethical Issues

- Don't tweet anything you don't want your mother, children, and patients to read
- Assume your patients are reading ALL your social media entries
- Don't follow your patients
- Make a decision about politics
- Limit yourself to no more than 20% self promotion
- Give away knowledge

- Remember, your tweets last forever
- Opt for discretion not privacy

How to Tweet

- 140 characters is the limit for each Tweet

- Retweeting—This is the simplest and easiest type of tweet. When you see a tweet by someone you are following that you think contains an interesting idea or bit of information you can just click on the retweet icon and it goes out to all your followers.
- Use Links
    - A link is a bit of live copy the reader can click on to jump somewhere else on the web

- Where do you want your readers to go?
    - A page on your society website?
    - A blog post or article your wrote?
- Learn to substitute short links for long URL's. These apps help you do it.
    - [ly](#)
    - gl
    - ly

- Use Hashtags

- Use Images – Add images to your tweets-they strengthen the impact and make your tweets more likely to be noticed and read. Images are also a way to get more information into the tweet—you can add an image of some text, for example, dodging the 140 character limitation.

BUT be careful about images you use. Don't use copyrighted images without permission and attribution. Take your own pictures on trips and around your home and city, and save them for future tweets. Here are two sources for photographs that are in the "public domain" and therefore can be used freely (usually still with attribution-see details on the site).

Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org

Creative Commons https://org

Tweeting using Psychoanalytic Ideas

Most of your tweets will be on general subjects—opinions about books, films, reactions to cultural events. But try to devote some of your tweets to demonstrating the explanatory power of psychoanalysis. Here's one approach to consider.

I. Focus on the content for your tweet. Possibilities include:

- Your reaction to someone else's tweet
- A current event
- A cultural event—book, movie, festival
- An experience—lecture or speech
- Calendar event—holiday, graduation
- Public conflict or issue
- Promoting psychoanalysis

II. Think: Can you say something uniquely psychoanalytic?

III. Consider and choose an approach

- Give a psychoanalytic slant
- Provide in-depth understanding—we stand for "what lies beneath"
- Promote general depth of understanding
- Use an "applied psychoanalysis" approach

IV. Try choosing one core psychoanalytic concept and applying it to the event or issue

1. Transference
2. Countertransference
3. Resistance
4. Defense
5. Conflict
6. The Unconscious
7. Development
8. The relationship as an element of cure
9. Narrative as an element of cure

Resources

Twitter itself has many easy to follow resources that will help you get started and increase your ability to use Twitter. Go to the Twitter Help Center https://support.twitter.com/ and browse the articles. Once you've signed up for twitter, you can find a link to the help center on your profile page at the very bottom on the right.

One article is absolutely essential to read: "Getting Started with Twitter"

Click on it at the help center page or paste this link into your browser:

https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585

Also highly recommended when you are getting started is this article: "The Twitter Glossary". You can find it at the help center, or go to this url: https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337

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