



“Will You Be My Friend?”

Privacy, Pitfalls, Patients, & Facebook

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Facebook

“The Social Network”



- On a fall night in 2003, Harvard undergrad and computer programming genius Mark Zuckerberg sits down at his computer and heatedly begins working on a new idea. In a fury of blogging and programming, what begins in his dorm room soon becomes a global social network and a revolution in communication. A mere six years and 500 million friends later, Mark Zuckerberg is the youngest billionaire in history.
- Speed of light

Learning Objectives:

- 1. Define appropriate boundaries relevant to professional – patient relationships.**
- 2. Describe foundational Professional ethical values applicable to social networking.**
- 3. Identify the interface among professional standards, dual relationships and social media (Facebook).**

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

- Global social networking website, users can:
 - add friends
 - send messages, chat in real time
 - choose your privacy settings
 - update personal profiles
 - join networks organized by city, workplace, school, region, or causes.
- * Started Jan. 2004, now the most used social network worldwide, followed by MySpace

Show Your Pride in Cleveland Clinic: Join Our Facebook Community

- Cleveland Clinic already has 36,600 Facebook “fans” – employees, patients and friends of Cleveland Clinic who actively follow the content we post to our Facebook page. Now we’re asking all Cleveland Clinic employees to show their pride in our organization by becoming a fan and active member of our [Facebook community](#), and joining our other social media sites on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and YouTube (YouTube is blocked on Cleveland Clinic computers).
- Those employees who wish to engage in social media on must do so responsibly and appropriately, and follow Cleveland Clinic’s [Social Media Use Policy](#). If you have questions about any social media initiatives, email socialmedia@ccf.org.

Who should know what you're thinking, doing? Who are your "Friends"?



"Why can't you use Facebook, like everybody else?"

facebook

- When patient's "like" you

I  You

FACEBOOKDORKS.COM

Why can't my patient be my Facebook "friend"?

- - Would it really hurt?
- - I trust this person, we have a "different relationship".
- - We would be "friends" in the real world.
- - I've taken care of this patient for months or years.
- - They already know so much about my life, what's the difference?
- - It's an expression of caring & besides they asked me to be "friends".
- I would hurt their feelings if I said no.
- I'm not crossing a boundary – it's harmless.

Is being a Facebook friend crossing a boundary?

- Why or Why not?

Boundaries & Friendship

- - There is no romantic or sexual relationship
- - No expensive gifts, no financial or business benefits
- - No social get togethers, etc
- - No theft or physical harm
- * Facebook is harmless, I'm just being friendly.

- ** Definition of a friend: (Reciprocity) Relationship is based on EQUAL give and take between two people.

Boston Hospital Bans Facebook

* Appropriate action or Stone Age Response?

- Age old problem – new age venue
- “because healthcare isn’t just a business – it’s a sacred trust with people’s lives, and most personal information.” - *Wagner, M. (2009). Boston Hospital Bans Facebook. www.informationweek.com*
- Somebody’s watching you...

Who Can See What? Friends, Patients, Strangers

- Personal photos - 77.9%
 - Home address – 6.1%
 - Area of residence – 31.7%
 - Email address – 83.3%
 - Phone number – 7.5%
 - Facebook accounts made private 37.5%
- Personal Views
 - Sexual Orientation – 52.4%
 - Relationship Status – 58.6%
 - Political Perspectives – 50.2%

“The Intersection of Online Social Networking with Medical Professionalism”. J Gen Intern Med 23(7):954-7, 2008.

If your Social Worker, Nurse, Dr. or other team member wrote this post, how would you feel?

- “When the whole world doesn’t believe in God, it will be a great place.”
- “I’d rather have a root canal procedure than listen to Sarah Palin give a speech!”
- “I just finished brewing 14 gallons of beer 😊”
- This shift is awful, people are driving me crazy, & I can’t wait to go home.

Danger, danger, pitfalls ahead!!!
But are we over-reacting?



Foundational Professional Values & Connecting with Patients

- **Integrity**
- **Competence**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Non-judgmental Acceptance**
- **Sensitivity to diversity**
- **Objectivity**
- **Professional Effectiveness**
- **Patient-Centered Relationships**
- **Trust**
- **Boundaries**

Warning signs of unhealthy boundaries could be:

- You share personal problems or aspects of your intimate life with patients.
- You keep secrets with patients.
- You become defensive when someone questions your interaction with a patient.
- You have received gifts from a patient.
- You speak to the patient about your own professional needs or inability.
- You speak poorly of co-workers or the hospital to patients.
- You talk to patients/families about things that are out of your scope of practice.
- You give certain patients extra time or attention.
- You give patients personal contact information or money.
- You fail to set limits with a patient.
- You spend off time with patients.
- You feel that you understand the patient's problems better than other members of the healthcare team.

How Can Social Networking/Facebook Cause Harm to the Helping Relationship?

Patients

- Skews Boundaries
- Unintentional harm
- Negative transference, erosion of trust
- Favoritism/Neglect
- Power differential from patient centered...

Professionals

- ... to equality or professional-centered
- Loss of Professionalism
- Vulnerability
- Judgmental views or causes
- HIPPA violation?

In other words...

- It's a slippery slope...
- Taking away your power to share what & when...
- Otherwise, Facebook can open up "**ALL PARTS**" of your life and takes away your ability to "**FILTER**" what is appropriate and what is not for patients to know
- But what about the patient's privacy ...

Patient's profiles & updates

- Did they invite you or are you their “friend”?
- What if you're “creeping” & find something concerning?
- What do you do with that information?

Protecting your “Professional Self”

- “Impression Management”
- Everyone has their own perceptions (of you) based on what you post.
- Perceptions of your personal vs. professional life
- However, if the two presentations differ dramatically, we may run into trouble as professionals, especially in the “helping professions”.

--Kimberly Strom-Gottfried, Ph.D. *Ethics and Social Networking* presentation, March 29,2010.

Conflict of Interest: It's a Multi-disciplinary issue...

- Physicians:
 - “physicians must exercise substantial care in non-professional relationships with patient & families to promote the highest possible degree of trust in the doctor-patient-family relationship”.
- Nursing Code of Ethics
 - “Nightingale Pledge” - ... “I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, will hold in confidence matters committed to my keeping in the practice of my calling & devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care”
- Social Work: Code of Ethics

State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board ~ Professional Standards

- Chapter 4757-5 Rules for Standards of ethical and professional conduct
- **4757-5-03 Standards of ethical practice and professional conduct: multiple relationships.**
- (A) Counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists shall **avoid multiple relationships** and conflicts of interest with any client/consumer-of-services, ex-clients, family members of clients or ex-clients, or other persons encountered in professional or non-professional setting which are not in the best interest of the client and **might impair professional judgment** or which increases the **risk of client/consumer-of-services exploitation.**

Use of Self-disclosure & Filters

Appropriate

- yes, I'm married

- I have 2 children

- Acknowledging a bad day

- I had a fun weekend

Not Appropriate

- I'm attracted to someone else, do you think I should stay?

- my dtr stole from us and has a drug problem. I'm still helping her but my husband refuses to

- discussing your financial problems

- I got completely drunk and passed out. I don't remember half of the evening or where I woke up

What do you do when patient's want to be your "friend" ?

What to do when patient's want to be your "friend"

1. Address it immediately. Ignoring the issue gives "silent permission" that it is ok, even if you do not respond to their friend request, etc.
2. Explain that you must keep professional and personal relationships separate for reasons of ethicality and objectivity. (Could say it's CC policy)
3. Review your on-line profile and make adjustments for privacy as necessary. Pay special attention to whom you are viewable ("friends of friends" category may not be a good idea).
4. Should you be a friend of your employer (CCF)?

Cleveland Clinic Social Media Policies:

~ What to know

- Before joining CC's social media sites – including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube – please remember:
 - You are responsible for the information and comments you post on these sites: this information is publicly accessible.
 - When posting comments related to Cleveland Clinic, please show respect to the organization and never disclose your role here.
 - Never post confidential & proprietary information, including information about our patients, on these sites.
 - While CC encourages employee participation in social media, those employees who abuse privileges & violate policies may be subject to corrective action.

Specific Guidelines

- 1. Avoid entering into dual relationships by not immediately accepting an invitation to become an online friend with a patient.
 - *All multiple relationships and/or conflicts of interest shall be noted in the client record with reasoning as to why it is in the best interest of the client and/or not harmful*
- 2. Respect patients' privacy by carefully managing any information garnered about them on social networking sites.
 - *Such information should not be entered into the patient's medical record without the patient's knowledge.*

Specific Guidelines:

- 3. Exercise restraint when disclosing personal information on social networking sites.
 - Cautiously choose the content to be displayed and with which to associate oneself.
- 4. Read and understand the site's privacy settings in order to maintain control over who can access one's online profile.
 - Use conservative privacy settings, coupled with a sober use of language and professional decorum.
- Be careful - You could get reprimanded or fired.
- Don't forget your future life!

Take home message/thoughts

- Protect your professional & personal self
- Facebook friendships can approach, tempt, and cross professional boundaries
- Think about your future (do you have a tattoo?)

Your thoughts...

- Do you use social networking? Why or why not?
- Have you had a patient send you a “friend” request? How did you address it?
- Do you think you (as a professional) should look up your patients on social media networks? And if so, what do you do with the information? What would be your rationale for doing this? How would you handle non-compliance?

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