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University Clinical Media Resource: Best Practices to Create, Maintain, and Maximize Visibility on a Social Media Platform

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University clinical media resource: Best practices to create, maintain, and maximize visibility on
a social media platform

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Abstract

This paper reviews the need for social media platforms as a tool for healthcare facilities to provide resources, market their business, and interact directly with clients. Steps to creating a social media platform will be discussed, in addition to how healthcare facilities should frequently review competing healthcare providers' social media pages to stay competitive with the target population. Special considerations for the audiology and speech-language pathology programs at Illinois State University will be explored, and ethical considerations for engaging in healthcare on a social media platform will also be analyzed in this paper. The Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic at Illinois State University (ETSHC) will benefit from the information and implementation of social media usage provided within this paper because it will allow the clinic to create a professional social media platform. This social media platform will improve patient outreach within the community to increase and diversify the clientele attending that clinic, and allow for the opportunity of interprofessional collaboration between the ETSHC and other speech-language pathology and audiology providers. Undergraduate students and graduate students in the programs of speech-language pathology and audiology will benefit from the ETSHC executing a social media platform to expand the opportunities and experiences provided throughout their education.

University clinic media resource: How to create, maintain, and maximize visibility on a social media platform

Social media is a new, fundamental tool being integrated into modern day health care. Approximately 1 billion people, 1/7th of the human population, use some form of social media at any present moment (George, Rovniak, & Kraschnewski, 2013). That number includes all social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A significant number of people use social media to engage in healthcare communities and as a resource guide. At least 30% of people actively using social media participate in social networks or blogs related to their health care conditions or diseases (Ibarra-Yruegas, Camara-Lemarrooy, Loreda-Diaz, & Kawas-Valle, 2015). As the number of people who use social media for healthcare purposes continues to grow, it is essential that healthcare facilities and practices incorporate social media into patient outreach and marketing strategies.

Impact of online health information access

The availability of health-related information sought online continues to grow, with content being widely accessible through personal devices such as cellphones, tablets, and computers. The likelihood for users to interact with unreliable health information online is prevalent, as any individual with or without subject-matter knowledge is allowed to post and create content. Vulnerable populations such as the elderly or those seeking immediate information regarding a health-related topic, may not be aware that the content they obtained from a website and blog posts is inaccurate. Seventy-two percent of all internet users search general health information and concerns, with 46% of those seeking care from a medical professional due to the information they found online (“One in three American adults,” 2013).

To avoid misinformation, health-care organizations, institutions, and professionals should create and establish a platform of reliable information directly for their users.

Social media to build healthcare communities

Patients can use social media to build community and motivation. Providing a social media platform for clients to interact with others who experience similar conditions or diseases can provide a support system that extends beyond each patient's immediate environment. For rare conditions, or conditions the patient has not encountered before, it can be difficult to locate others who have similar experiences. An online community through social media can be a resource that allows each patient to interact with others sharing similar experiences and ideas. Healthcare providers that support social media and foster online, health-related communities will also benefit by being the "go-to" facility in the area and creating a "like, know, trust" factor (Sprey, 2015). When individuals in a geographic area are consistently viewing information posted by a regional healthcare provider, they are more likely to turn to that facility when services are needed.

Social media impact on outreach

Social media is a cost effective strategy healthcare providers can use to interact with clients through customer service, patient education, and publicity efforts to get the name of the healthcare provider to the appropriate market. Clinics can use social media to market and provide accurate information to prospective clients on electronic devices they are already using, such as phones, laptops, tablets, etc. (George et al., 2013). The majority of platforms for social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) are available on these devices. Through social media platforms such as these, clients can consistently receive reliable resources shared from healthcare facilities. Rather than having clients search for information without professional guidance,

providers can equip clients with articles that are empirically based and contain pertinent information about disorders and diseases. Providing such education can increase patient awareness of symptoms related to diseases or disorders they might have experienced without realizing these symptoms were a cause for concern. This can increase the number of clients that can benefit from the clinic, as well as the awareness of diseases and disorders within the community the clinic serves.

Best practices for general marketing

Marketing is a crucial aspect to consider when designing a social media profile for a speech and hearing clinic. Marketing allows businesses to promote their products/services and to advertise those services in a plausible way (Forsey, 2018). SMART goals must be established in order for the whole team to understand the overall goal of the social media account. SMART goals refer to those that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

Determining the audience(s) of the business is the first step to networking. Once that is decided, the marketing group should look at the generations of the audience to understand how to connect with each generation. It is important to know that generations prioritize different platforms of social media. In order to reach each generation, different platforms of social networking need to be constructed and services/products that the clinic provides should be advertised through multiple platforms.

Forsey (2018) writes that using the “four Ps” of marketing can explain how marketing interacts with each step of a business. The “four Ps” that Forsey mentions are product, price, place, and promotion. In order for a business to reach its maximum potential, a marketing plan with goals, audience/competitors, and networking ideas must be predetermined. The marketing plan covers the product portion because it focuses on audience, product, platforms, and success.

The price aspect can be looked at from two different angles with one being recruitment of prospective graduate students and the other being potential clients. Place introduces information on how and where to sell the product/service (Forsey). This part of the marketing plan will depend on the different generations targeted and how the potential audience can be reached through social media. The last important stage is promotion, which can be done through social media promotions. This stage can be crucial because it allows prospective students and clients to determine if the program offers the most up-to-date services and technology. For example, displaying advances in new therapy materials and technology that the clinic/program owns can increase clients and graduate student's interest.

Marketing by generation

Because the ETSHC social media account is designed for potential clients and prospective graduate students, there are multiple generations that need to be taken into consideration. The four generations that this social media platform will target are Generation Z, millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers. All four of the generations listed can be targeted as clients and also probable graduate students. It can be assumed that most of the graduate students will be a part of Generation Z and millennials, while potential clients will mainly be a part of the millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers. Children in Generation Z will be clients in the clinic, but their caregivers will likely be the ones targeted through social media. It is important to know that each generation is different when it comes to social norms, upbringing, technology, and social media. All of these aspects need to be considered when planning to use a social media account to market across multiple age groups.

Generation Z is the age group with birth years ranging from 1997-2012, which means these children range from 7 to 22 years old (Dimock, 2019). According to the Statista (2019),

Generation Z has a United States population of 86 million people. This age group is known to be the most racially and ethnically diverse generation (Dimock, 2019). The most fascinating element of Generation Z is that all aspects of technology have been a part of their lives since the very beginning. Unlike the generations before them, children in this age group have never lived without a television, computer, or the internet.

By the time Generation Z children were in their teens they became accustomed to an “always on” technological environment (Dimock, 2019). Connor Blakley, an 18-year-old entrepreneur, stated “Be everywhere. One campaign will not be enough. Young people use multiple social networks and consume thousands of pieces of content everyday” (Odell, 2018, para. 12). Generation Z is a group of people that requires a variety of social media platforms due to the vast array of options found in the networking world. In order to catch the attention of this age group, there will need to be an accumulation of social media profiles. eMarketer (2018) found that children aged 12 through 17 are not likely to use Facebook because they are most interested in Snapchat. If this generation is never interested in Facebook, it will be difficult to market the clinic to them due to the lack of ability to do so through Snapchat. “Teen use of Facebook in the US continues to decline and by 2022 is forecast to lose 2.2 million users age 12-17” (eMarketer, 2018, para. 2). This should spark an interest in broadening the social media platforms used to market the clinic and graduate program. When targeting Generation Z, Instagram is a close second to Snapchat. That social media platform can be used to market the clinic and program because it allows for an actual profile that people can visit, unlike Snapchat. The overall message to consider when trying to reach Generation Z is that they are currently the most diverse and technologically advanced generation. Catching their attention through social

media is advised, but the first social media accounts to exist are not the ones to focus on for them.

Millennials are known as the age group that were born right before Generation Z. The years of birth range from 1981-1996, which places this generation at 23 years old to 38 years old (Dimock, 2019). According to the Statista Portal (2019), millennials comprise nearly 72 million people in the United States. Millennials were known as the most racially and ethnically diverse generation, but this has since changed with Generation Z becoming the most diverse. Knowing that both Generation Z and millennials are very diverse is an important factor when building a social media account. All cultural groups of people should be targeted with the ETSHC social media page. Dimock emphasizes millennials' upbringing because most of them entered the workforce around the height of the economic recession. This is important to understand when reaching out to millennials as both potential graduate students and prospective clients. While Generation Z is known for being very technologically advanced, millennials are also known for being "plugged in." Millennials are known for being the first generation to take part in different social media platforms such as: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and LinkedIn. When it comes to technology, millennials prioritize different platforms of social media more than individuals in Generation Z do. "Facebook is the most used social network among US millennials, with 58.5 million of them expected to use the platform this year" (eMarketer, 2018, para. 11). Using Facebook to market the ETSHC is a great tool because of how many millennials use the platform.

Generation X is known as the people born between the years of 1965 and 1980, which makes these individuals 39 years old to 54 years old (Dimock, 2019). According to Statista (2019), Generation X is comprised of approximately 66 million people, which is the lowest

population among the four main generations addressed. Generation X was growing up when the computer revolution was taking off, but social media was not yet discovered. “Generation X uses Facebook most heavily, with 45.1 million users this year” (eMarketer, 2018, para. 8). Generation X is the age group of individuals that will likely just be targeted for getting clinical services, but it is possible for this age group to also be interested in getting their speech-language pathology or audiology degree.

Baby boomers are known as the generation that was born between 1946 and 1954, which places them from 55 years old to 73 years old (Dimock, 2019). According to Statista (2019), baby boomers make up a large part of the United States population with 73 million people in the generation. Baby boomers are known for being one of the most well-educated groups of people, so they are likely to advocate for themselves and their wellness. Because normal, age-related declines in cognitive functioning begin to occur at age 55, baby boomers could potentially be interested in clinical services focused on ensuring maintenance of cognition and language skills. Hearing also tends to decline with age, which could be addressed through audiology services in order to maintain an individual’s quality of life. Marketing to this group of people is very important because most of them would voluntarily sign up for clinical services just to make sure their cognition, language, and hearing are remaining intact. “Baby boomers continue to favor Facebook over other social networking, mainly to stay in touch with friends and family” (eMarketer, 2018, para. 10). Being that Baby boomers prefer Facebook, the ETSHC Facebook page will be a great marketing tool to reach them.

In conclusion, it is likely that millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers will all be able to be reached through a Facebook profile. The only audience that is likely to not be on Facebook is Generation Z, which would be the people that the ETSHC are targeting as

prospective graduate students. In order to avoid missing out on such a large group of people, it may be beneficial to build a profile on Instagram and link it to the Facebook profile. Dimock (2019) writes that Instagram is second to Facebook for both millennials and Generation X, so the services would likely reach these age groups through both Facebook and Instagram.

Marketing strategies for healthcare providers

Healthcare providers can implement social media platforms using several strategies. Popular marketing techniques are the Rule of Thirds and the 80/20 Technique (Tien, 2018). Both techniques can be beneficial in building a social media platform, and the healthcare facility can ensure appropriate materials are included when choosing and planning a technique to use in the social media platform.

The Rule of Thirds suggests healthcare providers split their social media presence between three equal categories: promoting the business and generating leads, using other relevant sources, and engaging followers through direct interaction (Tien, 2018). Tien stated that promoting the business and generating leads can be easily completed through consistent posting by the healthcare provider. Having a constant up-to-date online presence demonstrates the provider's investment in the content being posted, as well as the impact the provider hopes to make on the community following the posts.

The second Rule of Thirds category, providing other relevant sources, can include posting information from other healthcare collaborators on the interdisciplinary team, appropriate resources for the community, articles of awareness, and other materials that support the mission of the posting healthcare provider. This allows clients to find resources and healthcare information that are accurate and appropriate instead of the information they find through a simple internet search engine (e.g. Google) that might not be based on empirically

valid evidence. Patients can receive trustworthy information and articles from the healthcare provider. This can encourage the patient to return to the facility when healthcare needs arise or sources are needed.

The final category in the Rule of Thirds, direct interaction, can be completed in a variety of ways: asking clients to respond to questions, opinions, and polls; requesting patient feedback; and responding to anonymous frequently asked patient questions. Allowing clients to interact directly with the provider through a social media platform is a way to make them feel comfortable and improve provider-client relationships outside of the clinic (Tien, 2018).

The 80/20 Technique includes the same content as the Rule of Thirds, such as promoting the business, providing relevant sources, and engaging followers, but it organizes information within a different ratio. This rule states that 80% of the information posted on the social media site should consist of interesting and relevant content for every 20% of content that is posted about the product or facility being marketed (Tien, 2018). For example, if a clinic posts five times throughout the week, four of those posts should contain information about relevant topics or services while the fifth post should engage clients and include marketing techniques to bring clients into that facility. The 80% combines patient interaction and relevant sources into one category, and decreases the amount of marketing that should be published. This emphasizes the healthcare topics and patient interactions available through the social media site rather than directly marketing the facility.

Organizing the components of a social media content calendar

Once a marketing strategy has been chosen, it is important that a healthcare facility implements a plan to coordinate what, when, and where the information will be posted. One of the easiest ways to coordinate and plan social media content is to create a social media content

calendar. A calendar is beneficial because it highlights important dates and facilitates members' ability to collaborate on what they are posting and to select content for each category to follow the ratio of information that has been chosen (Tien, 2018). Tien shares 10 steps to take when creating a social media content calendar that allow healthcare facilities to remain consistent with updating their media and promoting engagement with social media followers. These steps, delineated below, will be completed in the design and implementation of the social media platforms for the Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic (ETSHC) at Illinois State University.

Creating a social media content calendar begins with a social media audit (Tien, 2018). This audit should include a review of what social media platforms are already in use, which have proven to be beneficial for the targeted population, and individual responsibility for each platform. A content audit should also be conducted to determine content types that have been successful in the past, discover recent content that could be used when the new platform is utilized, and identify what resources other healthcare professionals in the area are posting on their social media pages. The demographics of the site should also be analyzed, that is, who is the target audience? What are their needs and preferences? How can the site be constructed to accommodate all populations that will use this social media platform? Each of these audits will prepare the healthcare facility to create and maintain a successful social media profile by creating a foundation for the social media platform.

As previously discussed, determining a content ratio is essential to having a successful social media platform. The facility must determine what ratio, either the 80/20 or the Rule of Thirds, works best for them and plan content accordingly. Content should be labeled to ensure that all categories, including direct interaction, relevant resources, and marketing the business,

are properly filled. The facility should also determine how frequently posts will appear on each social media platform. This frequency can easily be planned throughout the social media content calendar, and posts should be planned in advance to keep the ratio consistent, as well as to ensure all planned posts are published as scheduled (Tien, 2018).

A content repository is useful as a storage place for the content that the healthcare facility anticipates using on the social media platforms (Tien, 2018). A content repository allows the social media planner to store content in a place separate from the social media content calendar until the content is used for future postings. This repository can be organized in a computer folder or a spreadsheet and should include information required to locate the files later when needed for publishing. A spreadsheet can easily be broken down into categories with the essential information about each source, such as the title, network, date published, and even summaries of the information the reader pulled from the source as a reminder of the content inside of it. This information can then be simplified and placed into the social media content calendar publishing.

The final steps for preparing for a social media content calendar include planning and scheduling when the posts will go public. The social media content calendar should be completed, and a plan for each team member involved in posting to the site should be made so that each participant's publishing role is clear. Each person must ensure they have the appropriate access to each social media site for posting each month, and team members should schedule when their content will be posted on the site before the scheduled posting date. Content planning deadlines should be determined each month among team members to promote successful posting each month.

The ETSHC at Illinois State University will implement the 80/20 Ratio for the implementation and management of the clinic's social media site. This plan allows for flexibility and combinations for patient interaction through the social media site and relevant information that the managers of the site will publish. A content calendar will be utilized to monitor the type of data being published to the social media platform each week, and this will allow the site to be managed and reviewed in an effective way for patient outreach to be successful.

Considerations for social media profile

In order to make an effective social media profile for the ETSHC that will reach the appropriate audiences (caregivers, physicians, clients, and prospective students), many appropriate elements will be required. In order to effectively implement elements on a social media profile, both social media platforms and elements to run the social media site effectively must be chosen. Businesses have the option of choosing one social media site and focusing on the quality of information and audience targeted on that specific site, or they may choose multiple social media sites to portray information and target different types of audiences. Due to user popularity, Facebook has been chosen as the social media site for the ETSHC (Social Media Glossary, 2018). The popularity is due to the broad age of users and simplicity of running this social media site when setting up profiles and group pages.

Utilization of social media aspects

To take advantage of the opportunities Facebook offers for businesses to market appropriately, the following terminology should be understood and implemented in a business Facebook page: Manager, hashtag, Facebook page, Facebook group, Facebook profile picture, Facebook cover photo, Facebook tag, Facebook event, and Facebook album (Social Media Glossary, 2018). For the ETSHC, a manager of a Facebook profile page is the individual(s)

employed by Illinois State University, or directed by University employees, to monitor and administer information on a social media account that is directed towards the clinic (Social Media Glossary, 2018). A manager can be a Communication and Science Disorders (CSD) employee, or students overseen by the employee, who are assigned to run the ETSHC Facebook profile page and the responsible individuals to post information to the site to spread clinical and educational related information to its targeted audience.

A hashtag, a popular word or group of words preceded by the pound sign, is used on social media to help organize content in specific categories (Social Media Glossary, 2018). For example, if the ETSHC wants to categorize information that is posted onto Facebook about Conversation Café, the hashtag “#ConversationCafe” can be used to place all of the information posted about the service in one specific area. When this hashtag is used on posts, anything attached to it will be gathered together in one place to be accessed easily on Facebook.

A Facebook page is the main feature Facebook offers to institutions to produce and market different information toward targeted audiences (Social Media Glossary, 2018). Information is marketed through the use of photos, videos, and posts. These are seen when people “like” the Facebook page, meaning they choose to follow the page to receive information on their Facebook feed throughout the day. The ETSHC can use a Facebook profile page to highlight information about different activities, groups, individuals, research, clinical opportunities, and important dates regarding the clinic that will benefit the clinic’s targeted audience in an efficient manner. This profile page also provides a means for audience members to ask questions and make comments.

A Facebook group is an additional feature that Facebook users can create built around a certain business, activity, or place (Social Media Glossary, 2018). Group pages can be public,

open, or private. If the group is private, an invitation to the group is needed in order to join. The ETSHC can use a Facebook group when planning certain events such as clinic programs for a specific population of clients or events the clinic is involved in such as Illinois State University's Homecoming or Illinois State University's Family Weekend.

A Facebook profile picture is a photo that is used as the main photo next to the Facebook page's name (Social Media Glossary, 2018). This photo is chosen by the manager of the page and reflects directly on the Facebook page's name or intentions. A Profile picture can be a photo of the business, photos of employers, or photos of events going on within the business. The ETSHC could use photos such as the front of the speech clinic building, pictures of the educational staff, or Illinois State University's logo as the profile picture of their Facebook social media profile page.

A Facebook cover photo is the other photo on the Facebook profile page. The cover photo is behind the profile picture and also depicts an identity for the Facebook page (Social Media Glossary, 2018). This picture is larger than the profile photo, serving more as a background for the Facebook page. A Facebook cover photo for the ETSHC should be different than the Facebook profile picture. This photo is used as another enhancer to market the Facebook profile page. The Facebook profile picture and cover photo are both extremely important when marketing and displaying a positive experience for the business through Facebook.

A Facebook tag is a feature used when a manager on Facebook is including another individual or group due to their direct relevancy or involvement in a specific post, photo, or status, by referencing their name through a Facebook link (Social Media Glossary, 2018). This can ensure target individuals directly see items posted on a Facebook profile page. For example, if a business wants an individual to see an article that provides information about a previously

asked question, they can tag that person in the post about the article. This is done by linking the person's name to the post so it will pop up in the person's notification list when he/she accesses Facebook. The ETSHC can direct certain posts to target individuals, other businesses that the clinic collaborates with, or different organizations that are involved in speech-language pathology and audiology, such as the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA).

A Facebook event is something created by the Facebook profile page manager and is used to invite people to a specific event happening through that business (Social Media Glossary, 2018). With a Facebook event, you can see how many users have accepted or denied your invitation, any questions they have, and post information about the event that can be relayed to the target audience directly. Businesses can use Facebook events for things such as current promotions, activities, volunteer events, and demonstrations. The ETSHC can use Facebook events for things like free hearing and voice screenings, educational seminars about the clinic, and open houses for prospective students and their families. Facebook events can also support outreach and restricted target audiences by having the ability to invite certain people to the event that is being hosted. For example, if a Facebook event is made for an open house, the manager can invite students that follow the ETSHC Facebook profile page specifically.

Facebook albums are a collection of photos under a certain title that are published on Facebook by the manager of the profile page (Social Media Glossary, 2018). These can be photos from certain events that were held by the business, volunteer work, advertising photos, or photos of the employees. The ETSHC can use a Facebook album to organize photographs from an open house for prospective students, a volunteer event with employees and students, welcome weekend and family weekend for students and faculty, and photos of the clinical spaces.

Examining university clinic social media profiles

An examination of University Speech and Hearing clinics Facebook profile pages indicates most of them have incorporated each aspect of the above Facebook definitions into their social media pages. For example, the profile page, “The University of Nevada-Reno, Speech-Pathology and Audiology Clinic” has many elements to their Facebook page. A photo of their clinic is the profile picture to help their target audience familiarize themselves with what it looks like, their cover photo is the inside of the clinic so the target audience can see the inside of the facility. The address, phone number, and website are available on the Facebook page for users to contact the clinic easily. Managers of the Facebook media profile have posted pictures of things like new equipment, graduate students participating in class and activities, and holiday activities going on throughout the clinic. Individuals have tagged the university clinic in photos of their children or loved ones getting services in the clinic and posts about being at the clinic for various reasons. There are hashtags being used such as #UNR to promote the university clinic being on the University of Nevada at Reno’s campus grounds. Overall, this Facebook profile media page is filled with information and photos to help the target audience better understand the atmosphere, location, and services available at this university clinic.

The Facebook profile page, “The University of Cincinnati Speech and Hearing Clinic” has a welcoming page. The profile and cover photo are arranged in a unique way; the profile picture is on the left hand side of the page and the cover photo is on the right hand side of the page. The profile picture is a student in an audiology booth performing a hearing test and the cover photo is a professor teaching a student how to use equipment. These photos promote educational experiences for prospective graduate students. These photos also promote the different types of services available to clients in this university clinic. Their clinic website and

phone number are posted for prospective clients to contact them easier. The clinic also markets different Facebook events through their clinic page such as group therapy sessions for childhood apraxia of speech and children with social and emotional conditions. The clinic posts pictures of different therapy sessions and clients and clinicians engaging in activities. This university clinic page offers a wide variety of ways to get their target audience involved and avidly promotes different events going on in the clinic.

The Facebook profile page, “Nova Southeastern University Speech-Language Pathology Clinic” has their logo as the profile picture and a picture of the Gulf of Mexico as their cover photo, to better describe their geographical placement being in the State of Florida. This could be a positive way to attract prospective graduate students by marketing their proximity to the beach and warm temperatures. The profile also offers the clinic’s address and phone number for the target audience to be able to contact them. The clinic page has a variety of photos of graduate students engaging in activities on and off campus such as class, clinic, the beach, and other social gatherings. The clinic page also promotes different National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) group activities such as bake sales to raise money for their program. Event information is provided for different group activities the clinic offers for children and adults with autism. Information is also provided about non-profit organizations the clinic collaborates with to help with promotion and fundraising. This university clinic page is designed to be effective at recruiting prospective graduate students.

Social media specifically for audiology

With the plethora of information found online, individuals seeking services to address their health-related concerns may face challenges in identifying which healthcare professionals provide accurate and effective diagnosis and treatment. The American Academy of Audiology

(AAA) is the leading professional organization for audiologists. The AAA provides information about proper, quality hearing services, advocates for hearing loss prevention and proper audiological care, and increases awareness of hearing health and services through educating the public (Academy Information, 2019). AAA aims to raise the public's awareness of the differences between an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser, as such professions are commonly perceived to be synonymous.

Audiologists are doctoral-educated and certified allied health professionals who assess, diagnose, and treat hearing and balance disorders. Hearing aid dispensers require a license to perform hearing testing to determine whether hearing supports are necessary, but do not provide the proper adjustments and quality of care a certified licensed audiologist would. For individuals seeking hearing aids in their local area, an initial online search would likely display hearing aid dispensary sites rather than a clinic, university clinic, or hospital. For settings like private clinics, universities, and hospitals, creating a social media presence will create a controlled platform in order to minimize misinformation to the public, be moderated with accuracy, and be an accessible tool for individuals seeking available assessments, treatments, and services to address their hearing concerns and needs.

Considerations of audiology marketing tools

The AAA provides marketing guides and strategies for audiology businesses and service providers in how to be successful when maintaining a social media presence. For this paper's purpose, a university clinic providing audiology services will create their first social media platform, a Facebook business page, in order to reach out to the local community, professionals, students, and potential clients. By creating a Facebook platform, the university clinic will have a social media presence online for those who seek health-related content and services. The AAA

designed a public relations guide titled, *Public Relations Tool Kit*, that provides step-by-step guidelines for audiology service providers to follow in order to gain visibility in their communities (Public Relations Tool Kit, 2017). Suggestion for maximizing visibility through social media is to cater to multiple audiences, including potential clients, prospective audiology students, audiologists, other professionals, and developing a better understanding of audiology services, programs, and activities (Public Awareness, 2019).

There are a variety of forms of outreach to utilize when creating content for audiology services regarding posting content mechanics. The *Public Relations Tool Kit* suggests initially beginning with format mechanics for posts. These include: creating an attention-grabbing first sentence, concise text content, direct links for additional information, tagging relevant organizations if necessary, statistics, and images (Public Relations Tool Kit, 2017). After the mechanics are established, types of posts to include on the social media platform will depend on the setting in which the audiology services are provided through. For a university clinic, content is to be curated for multiple audiences, such as the local and surrounding communities, prospective doctoral students, and audiologists. Curated posts for a university clinic to maximize its visibility include: discussing audiology services the university provides, current outreach programs doctoral students and audiologists contribute to the community, the clinic's audiologists and their specialties, and educational content on hearing loss prevention, disorders, and health.

A university clinic may be interested in creating educational posts regarding hearing disorders, such as tinnitus. The post, utilizing the AAA's suggested format mechanics, will begin and include an attention grabbing sentence, important information of the disorder, a link for further information, statistics, and an image if appropriate. For example, attention getting

statements could be: “Do you hear ringing, or buzzing throughout your day? Tinnitus, the perception of sounds in the ears, is a hearing condition for which supports are available.” An image related to tinnitus should be included. The post is designed to target those who have symptoms related to tinnitus and would like to seek further information. It also contributes an educational purpose for those who are unaware of the hearing disorder. If the university clinic has an audiologist who specializes in support for the tinnitus population, in the post it may include their information.

Advocacy on a social media platform allows for educational resources and insights to be available to a wider audience by sharing, liking, and commenting on a single post. Depending on the privacy settings, these actions will be displayed on others timelines. The AAA provides multiple forms of media, including informational videos, diagrams, gifs, brochures, podcasts, and presentations for all ages. These formats are available supports designed for educational content purposes regarding hearing loss and prevention. Dates such as, May being Better Hearing month and October being National Audiology Awareness month, premade templates, posters and promotional tools, educational resources for youth, diagrams, and additional informative resources regarding multiple topics within the audiology field are readily available to share on a social platform (National Audiology Awareness Month, 2018; May is Better Hearing Month, 2019).

Sharing these professionally created tools on a social media platform will allow users to remain up-to-date with proper hearing protection, identify early signs of hearing loss, be aware of what supports are available to aid their hearing difficulties, and remain informed and connected through a reliable organization such as AAA. Users seeking health-related information through online platforms have risks facing unreliable and inaccurate information. With

professional organizations such as AAA, reliable and accurate resources are readily available for social media platforms to utilize best practices to educate communities across multiple formats of content to fit every user's demographic.

ASHA's suggestions for professional social media use

University clinics are unique because they serve to provide high quality services to clients while providing clinical experience to its students (Worthington & McCabe, 2013). As they are still fully operating clinics, marketing and community outreach are two aspects that need to be considered. As previously mentioned, educating clients about hearing, speech, language, and cognitive disorders can be accomplished through social media. The ETSHC is working to provide the community more education on these disorders and ways to gain information about the services they offer. Social media is an effective way to connect with the community and the clients the clinic serves. Both audiologists and speech-language pathologists are allied health professionals who are governed by ASHA. ASHA outlines many notable aspects that should be included when creating social media pages for speech and hearing clinics.

Strategies to engage the target audience

Social media is used to engage an audience and inform them of a specific message. In the *ASHA Leader* article, "Grow Your Practice Through Social Media," Roehl (2015) wrote that a clinic's social media page should "drive traffic". She said that there are two types of traffic that a page should receive, which include cold and warm traffic. Roehl defined cold traffic as new people visiting the page with no prior knowledge of the clinic. Warm traffic was defined as people who have already viewed the clinic's professional website and are looking for more information through the social media page.

Roehl (2015) stated that there are four broad points that should be addressed while creating a social media page. First, the ideal client or audience must be identified. Identifying the age, gender, and demographic of the clients that are seen at the clinic can steer the outreach in the right direction. Once the audience is known, the following prompt should be used to move forward with the page: “We help [audience] do [benefits] [better] than [a competitor or common knowledge]” (n.p). Pinpointing the specific services you are providing to the clinic’s audience and why it is unique to the clinic can shape the way the social media posts are made.

After identifying the clinic’s target audience, research regarding marketing strategies and competing clinics should be done. Roehl (2015) explained that researching competing clinics’ social media page can be a way to learn about marketing techniques and find what their audience likes. It should be noted that when exploring a competing clinic’s page, their posts and work should not be copied but rather taken into consideration moving forward. Finding a theme amongst a competitor’s most popular posts can be telling as to what clients respond well to. With the information gained through researching other clinics and identifying the audience, social media posts can be created. Roehl stated that every post should catch the audience’s attention within seconds. It should not take more than a few seconds for the audience to become engaged and interested in the message being published. Social media posts for a business, such as the university clinic, should be short, simple, and serve as a crucial need for the audience. Short, simple, and effective posts should avoid using jargon and unnecessary information.

The last piece of advice provided by Roehl (2015) was that a “call-to-action” is needed on every social media post. A call-to-action should be the part of the post that tells the audience what to do with the information given to them. The call-to-action serves as an end goal of the post and can include signing up for a screening or an appointment. It is crucial to include the

information needed for the audience to obtain the end goal, such as phone numbers, names, or links.

The *ASHA Leader* article “Tech Your Message Out” by Sean Sweeny (2015) provided information on social media post details that can be especially helpful to the audience. Social media is a way for clients to stay informed, be more engaged, and stay better connected with the clinic. Posts should include events, scheduling, weather cancellations, and relevant research (Sweeny). This information is important to clients and their families and allows them to stay up to date with the clinic. Sweeny included a helpful app called “Remind” in his article. “Remind” is a text messaging service that messages clients with reminders about events or appointments once they have signed up. Sweeny stated that using these apps with social media can help keep clients connected.

Along with creating a detailed message for the audience, the message should be concise, repeatable, and memorable. Cehrs (2015) stated that posts should be catching enough to be memorable by the audience. The way to ensure this is to post the takeaway message repeatedly. For example, if the clinic’s goal is to schedule screenings the posts should include a constant message about screenings. Cehrs stated that this is a way to drive the main goal or “call-to-action” home and clearly send the message out.

Educating on a social media platform

Social media posts can also follow themes outside of the business aspect of clinics. ASHA provided multiple tools to use on social media to boost awareness and engagement from the clientele. “PR Tools You Can Use” by Francine Pierson (2018) was included in the *ASHA Leader* as a resource for clinics to create knowledgeable posts about communication sciences and disorders (CSD) related topics. One of the topics that Pierson included was World Hearing

Day on March 3rd. A post about World Hearing Day could include information on audiology, education about hearing protection, and hearing loss. Better Hearing and Speech Month is in May and can be written about on social media to create awareness of CSD and other related professions. ASHA has different campaigns to promote awareness of various CSD issues. A social media post can be created for the “Identifying the Signs” Campaign. This campaign raises awareness about early identification and can be used to educate clients and their families about signs of a speech or hearing delay or disorder. Another campaign created by ASHA is the “Value of the CCCs” which serves to emphasize the importance of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) achieving their certifications. Posting about this campaign on social media can reach toward the SLP audience to raise awareness of certifications and how to achieve them. This campaign can also educate clients and families on the certifications that SLPs and audiologists have and their importance to the clinic (Pierson).

Ethical considerations

Social media can present ethical considerations if not used correctly in the workplace. Some ethical violations can include posting personal identifiable information (PPI) about clients online or distorting services the clinic provides to the public (ASHA, 2016). Posting details about a client may expose the client’s identity to the public. Exposing a client can be either through posting seemingly harmless, but identifiable, comments about the client or posting the client’s treatment documents. A breach of confidentiality is not limited to just clients, this can occur with research subjects, too (ASHA, 2016). Social media posts can misrepresent services through promoting practices or treatments that are not supported by research. Ways to avoid breaches in confidentiality include avoiding posts attacking others and using good judgement while on social

media. Defamation is another ethical violation that is seen on social media. According to ASHA, defamation is “verbal [or] written statements that are factually false” (ASHA, 2019, n.p.).

Avoiding ethical violations is important when using social media in the workplace. ASHA outlines steps and tips to consider before posting on social media. Some tips include consulting the ASHA Code of Ethics, finding guidance through an appropriate Issues in Ethics Statement, and considering whether a complaint could be filed based on your posts. If there are concerns with a social media post, make corrections or delete the post in question (ASHA, 2019). Being aware and familiar with the ASHA Code of Ethics, state licensure, and codes of conduct can help avoid violations (ASHA, 2016). The most effective way to avoid defamation or violations on social media is to be aware and refrain from any posts that may cause harm to others.

Conclusion

Overall, social media profile presence will serve as a beneficial tool to encourage more clients to seek services in the clinic and to increase graduate students’ interest in the program. The social media account will provide insight into the newest technology and materials in the clinic while also highlighting the immense support that the professors, faculty, and students give to one another. The platforms will also focus on the many clinical experiences that are offered at the ETSHC and how to get involved whether it be from a student or client perspective.

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