



Leveraging Social Media to Maximize Reach: Health Equity

A toolkit for every organization—and every budget



Supported by: CDC-RFA-DP18-1808: "Networking2Save"— CDC's National Network Approach to Preventing and Controlling Tobacco-related Cancers in Special Populations

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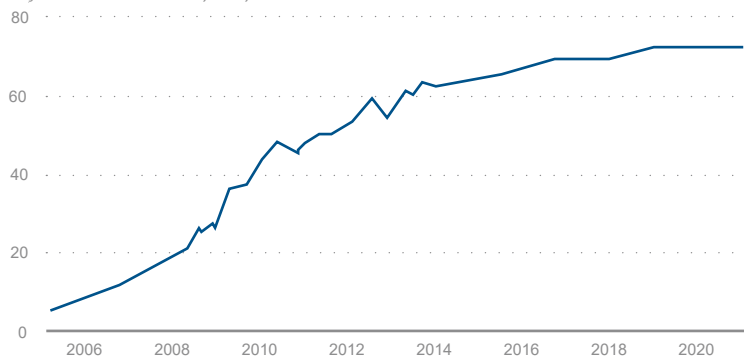
Introduction: Why Use Social Media?

Short answer: Because that's where your audiences are.

Introduced in the mid-2000's, social media has exploded in popularity and now about 7 out of 10 Americans use at least one social media site, such as Facebook or Twitter.¹ In the world of public health, social media is now considered an important way to reach target audiences, either to deliver health promotion messages directly to those we serve or to drive viewers to websites and other resources for more information. Social media is also useful for organizations to reach other organizations with tools and resources to aid them in their work and to share best practices. We're all in this together, and social media makes it easier to collaborate and reach our goals.

Social Media Use Over Time

% of U.S. adults who say they use at least one social media site



When Pew Research Center began tracking social media adoption in 2005, just 5% of American adults used at least one social media platform. By 2011 that share had risen to half of all Americans, and today 72% of the public uses some type of social media.

Source: Pew Research Center

Social Media Platforms



Facebook: Social networking platform featuring user profiles, friends, and likes.



Twitter: Online social networking platform featuring 280-character messages called tweets.



Instagram: Mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking platform.



YouTube: Video-sharing platform allowing users to upload, view, and share videos.



LinkedIn: Social networking platform for professionals.



Pinterest: Web and mobile platform allowing users to upload, save, and sort images and links, known as pins, into categories called boards.



TikTok: Web and mobile platform for posting and viewing short-form (1 minute or less) videos.

But, social media success doesn't just happen. To be effective, social media should be part of an overall communication strategy, with clearly defined audiences, goals, objectives, and metrics. Research shows that nonprofit organizations engaged in health promotion use social media to add to what they are already doing, give more strength to their activities, and to expand their existing communication tactics and tools (such as a website, newsletter, or posters)². A well-defined social media strategy creates a synergy between all of an organization's communication tools, making the results greater than their sum.

¹ Pew Research Center, *Internet and Technology. Social Media Fact Sheet*. April 7, 2021.

² Vedel I, Ramaprasad J, LaPointe L. [Social Media Strategies for Health Promotion by Nonprofit Organizations: Multiple Case Study Design](#). *J Med Internet Res* 2020;22:e15586

Who Is This Toolkit For?

This toolkit is designed to assist state and county government programs, as well as national network member of SelfMade Health Network and other major stakeholders who are committed to eliminating cancer or tobacco-related disparities among populations with low socio-economic status (SES) characteristics. The content presented in this toolkit can be utilized as presented or can be tailored to meet the unique needs of audience groups.

Regardless of your level of skill or experience in social media, this toolkit serves many purposes, including to assist organizations and professionals who are

- new or experienced within the realm of health equity, cancer health equity, and cancer disparities.
- new or experienced within the ever-evolving landscape of low SES characteristics or other vulnerable populations.
- interested in obtaining social media examples
 - to enhance reach or engagement with sectors or stakeholders that directly or indirectly affect the health of populations with low socioeconomic status (SES) characteristics.
 - that can contribute to highlighting the focus on reducing cancer disparities among populations with low SES characteristics.
 - to inform, educate, increase awareness or understanding among major stakeholders who may be new to cancer disparities, health equity, cancer health equity, culturally appropriate strategies impacting with low SES characteristics.
 - that can quickly be used as a “springboard” during some health observances.
 - that highlight significant issues that directly or indirectly affect populations with low SES characteristics to mobilize communities, partners or new stakeholders.



Tip: *It is important to note that SelfMade Health Network (SMHN) is available to provide technical assistance with your organization's planning and implementation efforts. Regardless of whether you have a social media marketing team, this toolkit will help your organization in many ways.*

Quick Facts

Mobile Technology³

About **85% of Americans own a smartphone** – up from just 35% in 2011.



About **three quarters of US adults own a desktop or a laptop computer**, while roughly half own a tablet computer.



Of those who reported **making less than \$30,000 a year, 76% own smartphones**.

Reliance on smartphones for online access is especially common among younger adults, lower-income Americans, and those with a high school education or less.

Social Media⁴

Facebook users are the **most engaged**, with 70% checking their feed daily, and 17% checking weekly.

The **next most engaged users** were on **Instagram** and **Snapchat**: 59% check the sites daily, and 21% check them weekly.

YouTube and Twitter users were next, with 54% of YouTube users checking the site daily and 29% daily, and 46% of Twitter users checking daily and 27% weekly.

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Twitter and TikTok are the major social media platforms at this time, and **YouTube and Facebook** are the **most popular**.

Social media is inexpensive. Most platforms are free to join, but you can increase your visibility by purchasing ads or premium accounts at very reasonable prices.

³ Pew Research Center, [Internet and Technology. Mobile Technology Fact Sheet](#). April 7, 2021.

⁴ Pew Research Center, [Internet and Technology. Social Media Fact Sheet](#). April 7, 2021.

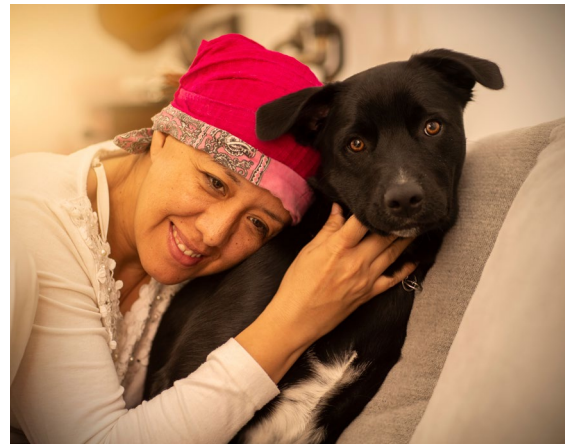
What Are Low Socioeconomic Status (SES) Characteristics?

SES status refers to the social, work status, or education of individuals. Populations with low SES characteristics often have lower levels of education, lower household incomes or lower paying jobs that may not provide health insurance or that have greater exposure to worksite or other environmental risks. Populations with low SES characteristics also include those who are uninsured or underinsured, residents in medically underserved areas, and other vulnerable populations nationwide.

SES is directly related to physical and mental health, for a variety of reasons. People with low SES characteristics often have worse self-reported health, lower life expectancies, and suffer more from chronic conditions. Overall, low SES is related to poor health outcomes due to aspects such as:

- lack of insurance, which limits healthcare options and may cause people to skip appointments, ration medications, and present with advanced disease that could have been more successfully treated if diagnosed earlier.
- living in neighborhoods that may be
 - food deserts, thus limiting access to healthy and fresh food.
 - polluted, thus exposing the residents to unhealthy levels of chemicals, automobile and industrial emissions, and contaminated well water.
 - dangerous, which limits the ability to exercise outdoors and come and go freely.
 - neglected, which increases the chances of lead poisoning from paint and old plumbing.
 - targeted with tobacco and alcohol advertisements, which can increase unhealthy behaviors.
- housing that may be substandard, including lack of running water and appropriate sewage that make it difficult to maintain hygiene, or infested with vermin, which can carry diseases.
- lack of transportation, which can make it difficult to get to and from doctor's appointments or to obtain prescriptions or healthy food.
- low literacy, which can make it difficult to follow medical instructions, understand prevention tools, or to make appointments.
- low incomes, which can lead to prioritizing basic safety and other survival needs over healthfulness, and other outcomes.

Social media can be an important tool to reach individuals with low SES characteristics with health resources and tips. Many people have smart phones, even if they don't have computers, and most – especially younger people – are on social media. Social media can deliver health messages directly to an audience, or it can direct the audience to a website or a phone number for more information.



Creating Your Social Media Strategy

After your organization has decided that social media should be a part of its overall communication strategy, there are a few steps to work through before you hit send on your first post. Overall, your social media programs will be more effective when you identify the people who matter the most to your work, choose the best way to reach them, and integrate social media with the rest of your organization's communications.

STEP 1: Determine Your Target Audience

It's important to focus on who you are trying to reach. Then you can use data to pinpoint the social media platforms that would be most effective. Here are some questions from the Pew Research Center on the Internet and Technology that can help you define your audience.⁵

Is your audience broad based?

Keep in mind that YouTube (used by 81% of respondents) and Facebook (used by 69% of them) are the most popular online platforms among Americans. The next most popular platforms overall were Instagram (40%), Pinterest (31%), LinkedIn (28%), Snapchat (25%), Twitter (23%), and WhatsApp (23%).

What is the age of your audience?

Generational preferences are evolving. For instance, people aged 18-29 are more likely to be on YouTube (95%), Instagram (71%), and Facebook (70%). People aged 65 and over are not heavy social media users, but when they do, they prefer Facebook (50%) and YouTube (49%).

What is your audience's educational level?

People with high school diplomas or less education are less likely to use social media. Of those who do, the most popular platforms are YouTube (70%) and Facebook (64%). College graduates are the most likely users of LinkedIn (51%).

Does gender define your audience? (Gender is binarily defined in this research.)

Men reported using YouTube (82%) and Facebook (61%) the most. Women reported using YouTube (80%) and Facebook (77%) the most, and they are about three times more likely to use Pinterest (46%) than men (16%).



Tip: *If your audience is hard to reach, social media offers the means to involve others in your efforts. For example, Facebook messages promoting Australian truck drivers' health were most successful when managers and coworkers took part, too.⁶*

⁵ Pew Research Center, Internet and Technology. [Social Media Fact Sheet](#). April 7, 2021.

⁶ Sendell M, McCosker L, Crane P, et al. [Using Facebook for health promotion in "hard to reach" truck drivers: Qualitative analysis](#). J Med Internet Res, 2018;20:e286.

Is your audience urban, suburban, or rural?

- Metropolitan or urban audiences are the leading social media users. Suburban and rural audiences report slightly lower social media use.
- Urban audiences report YouTube (84%) and Facebook (70%) as the platforms they use the most.
- Suburban audiences report YouTube (81%) and Facebook (70%) as the platforms they use the most.
- Rural audiences report YouTube (74%) and Facebook (67%) as the platforms they use the most.

Does race define your audience?

People across races and ethnicities reported use of the same social media platforms, at slightly different levels.

- Black (African American) people ranked YouTube (84%), Facebook (74%), and Instagram (49%) as the most popular platforms.
- White (Caucasian) people ranked YouTube (79%) and Facebook (67%) followed by Instagram (35%) as the most popular.

Is your audience comprised of Latino or Hispanic populations?

- Hispanics ranked YouTube (85%), Facebook (72%), Instagram (52%), and WhatsApp (46%) as the most popular platforms.



Tip: TikTok has taken off during the 2020 pandemic, reporting 100 million monthly active US users (and 50 million active daily users), an increase of 800% from 2018.⁷ Marketers are catching on – the number of marketers using TikTok as a marketing tool doubled to 20% from 2019 through 2020. Of those, 67% reported that TikTok is effective.⁸



⁷ CNBC. [TikTok reveals detailed user numbers for the first time](#). Aug 24, 2020.

⁸ Wyzowl. [The state of video marketing](#), 2021

STEP 2: Decide What You Want (and Don't Want) from Social Media

Next, think about what you want your audience to know. When you are clear on what you want to tell your audience, you will get the most benefit from social media—and so will they.

Here are some examples from the SelfMade Health Network social media feed.

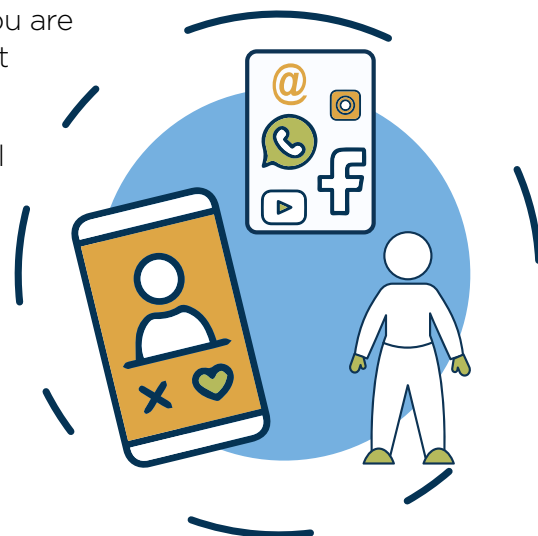
Are you creating awareness or making an observation?

This post, for example, highlights American Heart Month and the problem of secondhand smoke.



Are you offering a solution (or solutions)?

This tweet, for example, connects followers to Pap tests for cervical health.



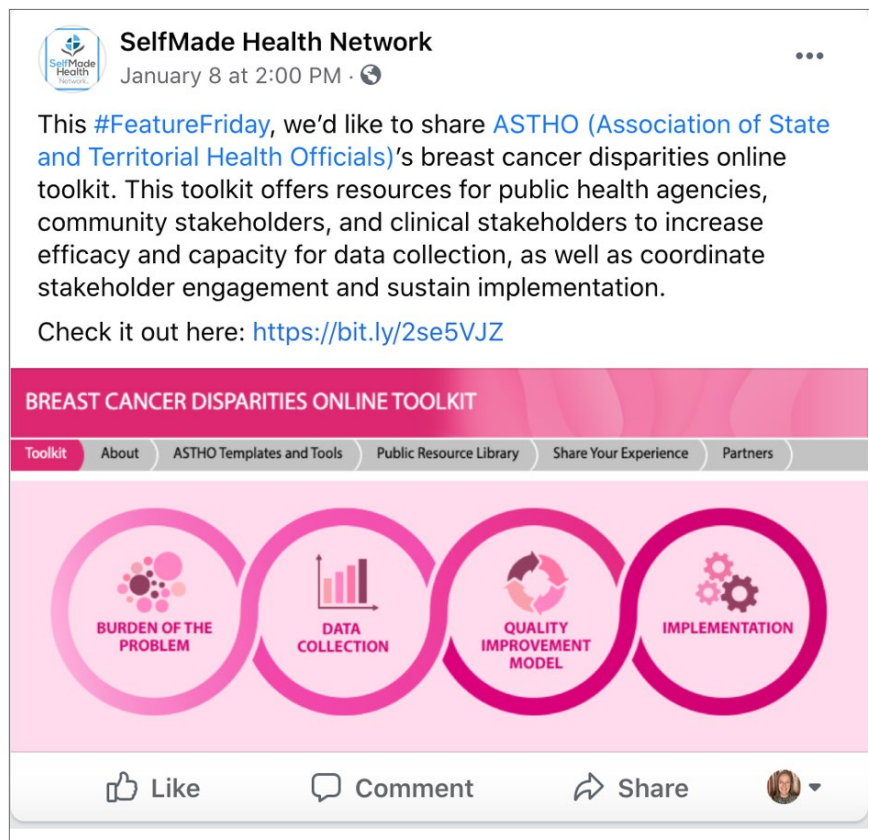
Are you educating?

For example, this tweet shares timely research of interest to SMHN members.





Do you have a call to action?


Always make it clear, like the directive “check it out” in this Facebook post.



Will your message be time-sensitive (such as an event or deadline)?

For example, this LinkedIn post followed up on natural disasters Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Harvey.

**SelfMade Health Network**
35 followers
3yr • 

[+ Follow](#) 



We can close the gaps.

Low-resourced populations are more likely to smoke after a natural or manmade disaster.

Including smoking cessation resources after a disaster may help change that.

www.SelfMadeHealth.org

 1

Will you be sharing information about your organization?

For example, this Tweet emphasizes the origins of SelfMade Health Network's name.

 **Pinned Tweet**

**SelfMade Health** @SelfMadeHealth · Apr 7 

#DYK Our name is rooted in history? "SelfMade" by Frederick Douglass is grounded in principles of equity, national resilience, & community engagement. Learn more about our nat'l network's goals + resources serving metropolitan & rural counties: selfmadehealth.org



SelfMade Health
Network..

Educate • Empower • Mobilize

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Are you announcing an event?

A well-designed social media post provides all the information needed for the viewer to attend or participate in an event.



It's also important to identify potential pitfalls to your social media engagement.

Here are some challenges and complications associated with social media that should be addressed by an organization:⁹

- Managing misinformation from online users.
- Ensuring compliance with user privacy protections.
- Potentially reducing health information access for people who are not on social media.
- Shutting out those who are not online, such as the elderly, the physically and cognitively disabled, those without access to technology, and those with low text, technical, and eHealth literacy.



Tip: *You don't have to have all the answers before you get started, but you do want to be thoughtful about the why and how of your approach. Social media is an ongoing conversation.*

⁹ Stellefson M, Paige SR, Chaney BH, et al. Evolving role of social media in health promotion: Updated responsibilities for health education specialists. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 2020;17:1153.

STEP 3: Take a Strategic Approach

To get the most out of social media, it needs to be considered as part of an organization's communication planning. Generally, social media works well for breaking news or making an announcement and driving readers to more information on your website. Here are three common approaches to creating your social media presence.¹⁰

1. Replicate: Your organization's social media feed uses your traditional communication content and format, but delivers it on social media. This is the least time-consuming strategy, but also the least value returned.

Example: You publicize your event on your website, and share the link on Facebook and Twitter. More people know about your event, but they don't really know anything else about your organization.

2. Transform: Your organization uses your traditional communication content, but you transform it to take advantage of the social media platforms. This is more time consuming than replication, with more potential return on investment.

Example: You make a short video about your organization that includes the link to your website, and post the video to YouTube and share it on Facebook. Your video gets much greater response than a link, and more people learn about your organization.

3. Innovate: Your organization modifies your message or action on social media with a specific goal of developing a vibrant online community. Innovation takes full advantage of the power of storytelling on social media, and requires proactive thoughtfulness.

Example: Someone who has benefited from your work tells that story in their own short video. They share it on social media. You share it on your channels with hashtags. Others watch and share it, too. This user-generated content fuels your stakeholders to attract new people to your online community to interact and spread your message. They tell their stories, too.



A Clearly Defined Social Media Strategy

Is: Is Not:

- A complement to your existing communication efforts.
- A reflection of an organization that is self-aware.
- Created purposefully around a clear plan of action.
- A process of informed decisions that lead to strategic, rational actions.
- Implemented by a responsible owner, such as your CEO, executive director, or communications director.



- Separate from your existing communication efforts.
- Being on social media because other people and organizations are.
- Reacting mindlessly to what others are doing on social media.
- Adjusting content primarily on a trial and error basis.
- A responsibility juggled among many in your organization.



¹⁰ Vedel I, Ramaprasad J, LaPointe L. [Social Media Strategies for Health Promotion by Nonprofit Organizations: Multiple Case Study Design](#). *J Med Internet Res* 2020;22:e15586

STEP 4: Create and Organize Social Media Posts

The Editorial Calendar

Social media needs a schedule or calendar to fit into an organization's communication strategy. It is likely your organization has a calendar of events that it promotes or manages, meetings and conferences that will occur over the year, reports that will be published, and key dates for communicating with the target audiences, such as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Look at what is already happening in your organization and create a separate calendar for social media that augments the regular communication calendar.

An editorial calendar is one of your most important tools. By planning out your social media posts, you will keep in touch with your audience and stay consistent in your tone. Over time, you will create audience anticipation for new content. The editorial calendar:

- Keeps track of your social media content.
- Provides structure and deadlines.
- Sets out how often you will be posting and at what times.
- Organizes the content and graphics.
- Allows you to look back at what you posted in previous months so you can repurpose or reuse some of your graphics or content.

Companies like Hootsuite, Sprout, Tweetdeck, and others are cloud-based paid services that help organize and schedule your social media messages. Of course, you can simply create a table with the date, the content, and the images. Even the most structured editorial calendar should not prevent you from posting when relevant news breaks or your organization needs to comment more spontaneously, like the post to the right.

Tip: *It is considered good social media manners to pause your daily posts to comment on a national disaster or a global event. Even if you don't make a direct comment on the situation, it can seem insensitive or out of touch if your organization has a routine post when a notable person has died or there has been a tragic accident or event.*



Creating Your Content

There are general guidelines for creating your content, based on the parameters of the specific social media platforms. For example, Twitter has a maximum of 280 characters. And then there are “lessons learned” guidelines for what works best to engage audiences, for example, write in friendly, conversational ways. CDC’s [Principles of Effective Social Media Communications](#) offers the following tips:

- Follow plain language best practices: Avoid jargon. Keep it short. Use the active voice.
- Make your call to action concise.
- Highlight the positive aspects of your health message.
- Tell the audience what’s in it for them.
- Make your message action-oriented.
- Make your message easy to understand and share.
- Use contractions, avoid acronyms. Avoid ALL CAPS.
- Use abbreviations only when necessary and easily understood.
- Keep your tone casual, conversational, friendly, professional.
- Use @ to tag your partners or hashtags (#) for subjects.



Tip: *Don't reinvent the wheel. Repurpose your web content (see Appendix C) and take advantage of resources offered by other organizations. One example is the CDC's [Tips from Former Smokers social media resources](#). Many others can be found in this ToolKit's Resources section.*

Text: Keep it short. Twitter posts are maximum 280 characters, and that’s a good limit for any Facebook message too—especially if you only have text.

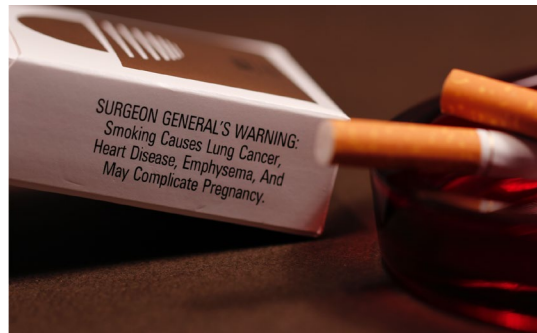
Links: Any web content, related news stories, online videos, and more can help you get your message out, even if someone else created this content. Make sure you give credit when you share on social media.

Shorten URLs: If your link is long, use a free URL shortener such as tinyURL.com or bitly.com to shorten it. A short link will give you more room to write your message.

Images: Research into social media best practices has found that relevant photos increase the effectiveness of social media messages that nudge people toward safe and healthy behaviors.¹¹ Parents were better able to recall safety messages when the images in the posts aligned with the messages in the text. In general, social media posts with photos are more memorable and shared than those without images.



Tip: [CDC Public Health Image Library](#) is a free resource of high-resolution photographs such as this one.



Video: Short videos are even more effective than graphics or photos. A 2021 survey¹² points out that people are twice as likely to share video content with their friends than any other type of content, including social media posts, blog posts/articles, and product pages. Consider making an informational video explaining your cause and most important message/s. Make sure to ask your followers to share the clip!

Graphics: These are ideal when the message is more visual in nature and requires more than data or charts to communicate successfully to the target audience. Your organization's logo can work on social media. Graphics are great for data that relates to your message. Statistics, charts, and graphs can show the need or your solution. For example, the National Behavioral Health Network offers a free tobacco-related infographic with interactive features.



Tip: You don't have to have anything fancy to get started on social media. Use what you have at hand, even if you only have text or links. You can always do more later.

¹¹ Elizabeth G. Klein, Kristin Roberts, Jennifer Manganello, Rebecca Mcadams, Lara Mckenzie. [When Social Media Images and Messages Don't Match: Attention to Text versus Imagery to Effectively Convey Safety Information on Social Media](#). *Journal of Health Communication*, 2020.

¹² Wyzowl. [The State of Video Marketing](#), 2021

STEP 5: Growing Your Audience

Following best practices for consistently interacting on social media will help you reach more people and interact with them more meaningfully. Social media platforms provide routine metrics to measure your engagement and interactions. By monitoring these data and adjusting based on what they report, you can post content that best serves your strategy and goals.

Interacting with Intention

Hashtags (which begin with #, such as [#Cancer Prevention](#)) are used to make sure your messages are getting in front of people who expressed interest in those topics. Search for hashtags on your selected social media platforms and select 4-6 hashtags that are used to highlight similar issues.¹³ If you're on Instagram, you can follow hashtags.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the strategy of using keywords with hashtags (#) and tags (@) to make sure your content is found when someone is searching for what you offer. SEO will boost your visibility when someone uses Google, for example, to search social media and websites. If you are buried on page 5 of the search results, the user may never see you. But, if your SEO is strategically created, you will appear near the top of the search results. One easy SEO tactic is to keep your username and handle consistent across all of your social channels.

Make it as easy as possible for your followers to share your content. A free social media plugin for your website will help. A plugin is software that will add a specific feature to your website; a social media plugin allows visitors to your website to easily share your content on social media. Find a free and fast plugin by reading reviews.

Invite followers to be your influencers. A great example of this is the American Cancer Society, which offered volunteers a clear way to use their social media skills to fight cancer.¹⁴

Interact, interact, interact. With your strategy and goals in mind, plan a Facebook Live session, run a Twitter poll, or host an Instagram Q&A. Your engagement rates go up when people are interacting with you on social media.

Show up consistently to your social media channels. Respond in a timely manner to questions and issues raised by your posts. CDC's [Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit](#) points out that monitoring trends and discussions can be a valuable way to better understand current interests, knowledge levels, and potential misunderstandings or myths about your health topic.



¹³ Resource Media. [Social media toolkit: Creating one for your organization.](#)

¹⁴ American Cancer Society. [Helping save lives can be as easy as pressing "send."](#)

Coordinate with partners and coalitions. CDC's [social media best practices for tobacco control](#) encourage doing this to extend the reach of messages and increase visibility of health issues. For instance, tobacco control programs can:

- Create an information-sharing network with partners to share new scientific evidence and opportunities to promote campaign messages.
- Provide sample social media posts and shareable content for use on partners' social media channels.
- Tag partners in social media posts and share partners' content.
- Develop messages that emphasize the connections between tobacco use and other health issues.
- Train partners on news coverage strategies, such as writing letters to the editor.
- Give partners sample news releases and other templates.
- Invite partners to be spokespeople and give them talking points.
- Promote your work at partners' events.

Measuring and Adjusting

Data from social media platforms can show who you are reaching, what devices they use, and how much they are interacting with your organization. Each social media channel offers basic information on using their analytics. This is the [Facebook introduction to marketing analytics](#) and here is [Twitter's overview on using data](#). Basic metrics include your likes, shares, retweets, comments, and follows on social media.

By tracking your metrics in the analytics page of each social media platform on a consistent basis, you can use that information to adjust your strategy.

3 Best Practices to Adjust Your Social Media Strategy

1. If some images get more engagement, increase your usage of those and skip the others.
2. If no one clicks on your call to action link, check that the link is working and copied correctly to your post.
3. If your key influencers and decision makers aren't paying attention to your feed, include their handles in your posts and engage with their posts to draw more attention to your content.

Source: Resource Media, <https://www.resource-media.org/social-media-toolkit-creating-one-for-your-organization/>

Analyze Your Followers

Periodically, it is important to examine who is following you on various social media platforms. Doing so gives you information on whether you are reaching your desired audiences and can let you know if your numbers are artificially inflated due to bots or dummy accounts.

Auditing your followers can be as simple as creating categories that are important to your organization, such as non-profit organizations, individuals, or health departments, and manually counting the followers that fall into those categories. There are paid services that will do this for you, such as [Followerwork](#) for Twitter and [Follow Analyzer](#) for Instagram.

Knowing who is following you is a key lesson in quality versus quantity. It is more important that you are reaching the audiences that are important to you instead of reporting large numbers of impressions that may be due to bots.

Buying Ads

Unless noted, every resource in this toolkit is free or is offered in a basic version that is free. However, if you're not getting the traction you want on social media, advertising can be a strategic investment. Each platform offers paid advertising to promote your messages. There are social media marketing companies that can help plan and execute your communications with your budget in mind, but it is also something you can do yourself. Even spending \$100 can help you make progress in your social media goals.¹⁵

If you have performed a baseline audience analysis prior to beginning ad buys, you will be able to see if you have added more followers that are important to you.

It maybe helpful to work with partners, grantees and other stakeholders to initially identify who or what audiences you are attempting to influence, educate, or reach. And if you are new to this process, you can contact SelfMade Health Network.

Keep Up with Trends

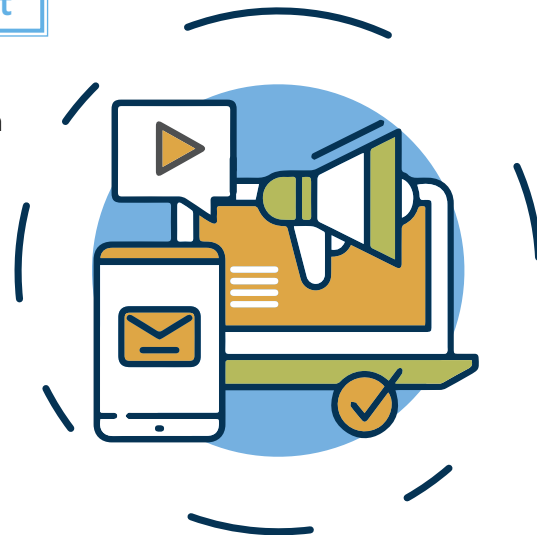
Because social media is changing all the time, you may want to bookmark a related news site, like [Social Media Week's News](#) to keep up with the latest trends. Staying informed about social media allows you to make decisions that will keep your information in front of the people you want to receive it.

¹⁵ Buffer.com. [Imagine you have \\$100 to spend on social media.](#)

STEP 6: Keep Inspiration in Your Social Media Toolkit

Communications of any kind can be daunting to keep up over time. If your social media efforts ever feel stale, seek inspiration from sources like the Shorty Awards' [most memorable social media for public health](#). Here's [an example](#):

In a rural Maryland county situated in the Appalachian Mountains, social media was used to improve community health and helped create a tool now available to anyone with computer access. With help from a foundation grant, the county gathered user-generated testimonials and shared them through Facebook, Twitter, and other channels. They used online games to encourage their community to become invested in the process and receive recognition for helping improve health in their county. Instead of the 50 partners expected to take part through traditional communication methods, social media attracted almost 2,000, including more youth and economically disadvantaged stakeholders. Citizens continue to be active in online groups focused on cancer screenings, reducing and preventing tobacco use, and other health issues. The Universal Community Planning Tool Project has been replicated in the District of Columbia, Ohio, Oregon, and Montana.



This is only one success story. Many community health organizations have successfully leveraged social media to multiply their reach and effectiveness.

This toolkit equips you to use social media to help educate, empower, and mobilize your community. The most important step you can take is the first one. Research the platform that makes sense for your organization, open an account, and keep going!

Appendix A: Resources

Audience Growth

- [American Cancer Society Recruitment of Social Media Ambassadors](#)
- [Social Media for Non-Profits: How to Make an Impact with Little Budget](#)
- [WebFX: How much does social media advertising cost in 2021?](#)

Audience Surveys

- [SurveyMonkey](#)
- [Qualtrics](#)

Content Creation

- [Animoto](#) (video maker)
- [Canva](#) (graphics)
- CDC Resources:
 - [Guide to Writing for Social Media](#)
 - [Media Campaign Resource Center](#) (for co-branding)
 - [Public Health Image Library](#)
 - [Social Media Graphics and Images](#)
 - [Tips from Former Smokers Social Media Resources](#)
- [Hootsuite](#) reference for image sizing
- [George Washington Cancer Control TAP website](#) (for resources, including evidence-informed communication strategies, pre-written Tweets and Facebook posts, as well as other social media and cancer awareness-related tools and resources)

Content Planning

- Google Docs: [Editorial Calendar Template](#)
- Constant Contact: [What to Post on Social Media](#)
- Coschedule Blog: [Social Media Content Calendar](#)

Research, Data and Trends

- The Pew Research Center, Internet and Technology: [Social Media Fact Sheet](#)
- [Social Media Week](#) (news and trends)

Social Media Best Practices

- [CDC Social Media Tools](#)

Strategy Planning

- [Smartsheet](#) (free social media planning for Excel)
- [Constant Contact](#)

Appendix B: Determine Your Organization's Most Effective Platform

Twitter: Online social networking platform featuring 280-character messages called tweets. [Find a tobacco control tweet here](#) and [learn how to post on Twitter here](#). Here, [CDC offers best practices for Twitter posts](#).¹⁷

Instagram: Mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking platform. [Find a tobacco control post here](#) and [learn how to use Instagram here](#).

YouTube: Video-sharing platform allowing users to upload, view, and share videos. [Find a tobacco control YouTube video here](#) and [learn how to post on YouTube here](#). A Google account is required.

LinkedIn: Social networking platform for professionals. [Find a tobacco control post from LinkedIn here](#) and [learn how to use LinkedIn here](#).

Pinterest: Web and mobile platform allowing users to upload, save, and sort images and links, known as pins, into categories called boards. [Find a tobacco control pin here](#) and [find out all about Pinterest here](#).²¹

TikTok is a relatively new Web and mobile platform allowing users to upload a variety of short-form (1 minute or less) videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education. [Learn how to post on Tiktok here](#). See an [anti-vaping post by TikTok influencer Demi Bagby here](#).

Appendix C: Turning Web Content into Social Media Posts

Type of Web Content	Ideas for Creating Tweets, Posts, or Texts Based on Web Content
Features	Features that appear on your homepage are a great place to find topics and content that can be repurposed for Facebook, Twitter, and text messages. The CDC Features web page also offers this content.
News Articles	Repurpose news article content for social media by using elements of the article as material for tweets, posts, and texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lead (beginning) of the article• Quotable quotes• Photos and other graphics
Fact Sheets	Use your own fact sheets or CDC's for content that can be repurposed for social media messaging: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announce a new fact sheet.• Communicate about an already-published fact sheet that's relevant because of the season or an event.
FAQs	Use a question as a tweet, post, or text.
Health Notices and Advisories	The information in notices and advisories is urgent, timely, and rapidly changing, thus ideal for social media.
Research Reports	Review published research reports for social media-worthy content: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An interesting "Did you know?" fact.• A research finding that comes with strong recommendations.
Event or Conference Content	Collect event-related information for social media uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feature individual speakers or topics before the conference.• Collect and tweet interesting quotes from presenters during the event.• Share photos or presentations after the event.
Guidelines	Use social media to increase awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let people know about guidelines.• Feature an individual guideline, one that has recently changed or one that is an old standard.• Compare guidelines for different groups of people.

Source: [CDC's Guide to Writing for Social Media](#)



Appendix D: Sample Social Media Posts (For use on Twitter or Facebook)

Health equity, cancer health equity, cancer disparities

Education, age, income, race & healthcare coverage are factors associated with lower utilization of colorectal, breast & cervical #cancer screening and routine medical care in low-income populations. Learn more #SDoH Determinants of Health Fact Sheets at: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Learn how your state, county or community can identify ways to improve #cancer #healthequity with @CDCgov
10 Essential Public Health Service Framework centered in equity to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. #EndCancerSilence <http://bit.ly/3qg3xv5>

Involvement of primary care physicians in medically underserved and health professional shortage areas throughout the entire #cancercare continuum and as part of @CDC_Cancer Cancer Survivorship Care Plans is critical. #EndCancerSilence #HealthEquity <http://bit.ly/2MZMy1G>

Poverty includes episodic poverty & chronic poverty in low-income populations.
Poverty = low socioeconomic status factor affecting cancer outcomes along continuum of care: screening, early detection, treatment and survivorship
Learn more #SDoH Fact Sheets: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Low-income communities are more susceptible to negative effects before and after a natural disaster. Reasons: health status, SES, literacy, low perceived risk, distrust and reliance on in-formal sources. #EndCancerSilence
Learn more #COVID19 Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

#Cancersurvivorship needs & issues of cancer survivors are exacerbated by factors including low socioeconomic status (SES) characteristics & costs correlated with diagnosis, follow-up care & subsequent treatment. #HealthEquity Fact Sheets: <https://selfmadehealth.org>
#AccessTo-Care

Social vulnerability: Pre-emergency social & economic factors in communities create a lack of capacity in preparing, responding & recovering from #COVID19 pandemic. Social vulnerability & cancer health outcomes are interlinked.
Fact Sheet – Men's Health: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Negative or adverse unintended consequences of the digital divide significantly affect vulnerable populations with low-socioeconomic characteristics: low income, rural or geographically isolated, disabled and elderly. #HealthEquity
Learn more, Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Access to information & care are essential. People 65 and older may be disadvantaged by first-come first-served #COVID19 vaccine appointment signups that occur online vs. by telephone, many do not have internet access at home & less fluent with technology <https://www.kff.org/Ocd5f92/>

Vulnerable populations including low-income populations in Medically Underserved Areas (both metropolitan and rural communities) with physician shortages may result in fragmented coordination of #care with #cancer specialists. #HealthEquity
Learn more <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Low socioeconomic status characteristics and other vulnerable populations

Increased cancer survival for underserved populations (including low-income populations) only represents significant progress when accompanied by a corresponding reduction in cancer incidence, mortality or both. #HealthEquity #EndCancerSilence
Learn more <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Fear of cancer diagnosis; perceived cost of care; lack of transportation, childcare, or flexible work hours; and lack of physician referrals are common barriers to cancer screenings among low-income populations. #HealthEquity #EndCancerSilence
Learn more <https://selfmadehealth.org>

A critical need exists to understand social determinants of disease burden with behavioral, environmental, community factors that influence utilization of breast cancer services across continuum. #HealthEquity Multi-Regional Engagement Plan-Breast Cancer
<https://selfmadehealth.org>

The needs of #cancer survivors, such as follow-up care to manage chronic & late effects of cancer and comorbidities remain relevant even during the #COVID19 pandemic and natural disasters in low-income & uninsured populations #HealthEquity
Learn more <https://selfmadehealth.org>

@theNASEM One way to address cancer #healthequity in low-income communities: Strengthen multisector partnerships that match evidence-based interventions to resources & determine the best fit between what is recommended & feasibility #EndCancerSilence
<http://bit.ly/3j11Q7f>

Equity, resilience & sustainability are relevant to post-disaster efforts to build healthier communities. Health = physical, behavioral, social, environmental health & wellbeing is part of community resilience #HealthEquity #COVID19
Learn more - Fact Sheet <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Enhancing reach or engagement with sectors or stakeholders that directly or indirectly impact the health of populations with low socioeconomic status characteristics.

The coexistence of cancer with other chronic conditions has substantial implications for treatment decisions & outcomes, as well as corresponding financial challenges due to cancer and the additional chronic diseases. #HealthEquity

Learn more – Fact Sheets: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

How do you value communities or community partners to improve cancer #healthequity
Mobilize assets to drive policy change affecting the #uninsured
Invest in community-clinical linkages in medically underserved areas
Build equitable access. Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/3qg3xv5>

Partner with organizations that possess a #patientnavigation model or adopt a community health worker #CHW model to reach among low-income populations (including rural populations) #HealthEquity
Learn more, Multi-Regional Engagement Plan-Breast Cancer at <https://selfmadehealth.org>

#CommunityEngagement: Consider Housing sector partners to improve cancer #healthequity among underserved community residents (cancer survivors) – rural and metropolitan communities. #EndCancerSilence Learn more, Multi-Regional Engagement Plan-Breast Cancer <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Cancer #healthequity
Fit effective cancer survivorship interventions or practical strategies within delivery sites that can be easily adopted in partnership with low-income communities in which the intervention is planned. #EndCancerSilence #AccessToCare
<http://bit.ly/3jl1Q7f>

Incorporating #publichealth with health equity as part of strategic planning & implementation phases across multiple sectors is important to address cancer #healthequity #Medicaid #HealthInAllPolicies #Underserved #SDoH
Learn more – #COVID19 Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

What are some core elements or characteristics that our state, county, worksite or coalition should consider in the form of partnerships & resources now that cancer #healthequity among low-income populations or communities has been selected as a priority?
#EndCancerSilence #SDoH

Informing, educating, and increasing awareness or understanding among major stakeholders who may be new to cancer disparities, health equity, cancer health equity, or culturally appropriate strategies impacting with low socioeconomic status characteristics

Geographical access challenges, socioeconomic factors, #AccessToCare & high out-of-pocket cost burden are associated with low utilization of routine medical services even among cancer survivors #HealthEquity #FinancialToxicity

Learn more-Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Addressing social, economic & cultural issues or challenges including cancer myths, stigmas & appreciating community assets are critical to sustain & successfully expand cancer screening programs impacting vulnerable populations. #HealthEquity #RuralHealth
<http://bit.ly/3j11Q7f>

Consider costs in @CDC_Cancer Care Plan development from cancer diagnosis to survivorship that may cause hardship for low-income families with limited financial resources & unable to afford expenses

#HealthEquity #EndCancerSilence

Learn more-Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Low socio-economic status is a marker for mammography underutilization; low-income women are more likely to be uninsured & lack routine healthcare services.

#EndCancerSilence #HealthEquity

Learn more, Multi-Regional Engagement Plan #BreastCancer: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

#DYK Community-Clinical partnerships that increase access to & affordability of costs: cancer screening & follow-up medical services (abnormal test results) in low-income women is vital #HealthEquity

Learn more, Multi-Regional Engagement Plan-#BreastCancer: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

An unintended consequence of jobs without paid sick leave or have limited health insurance coverage is that workers continue to work even if they are ill, including men high risk for cancers #HealthEquity #SDoH #COVID19

Learn more, Fact Sheet-Men's Health: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Highlighting significant issues that impact directly or indirectly populations with low SES characteristics to mobilize communities, partners or new stakeholders.

Postponing preventive services: #colorectalcancer screenings can result in late-stage diagnoses & treatment, and widen socioeconomic & geographic mortality disparities.

#Uninsured #Medicaid #EndCancerSilence #HealthEquity

Cancer Survivorship Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

The #Coronavirus pandemic reinforces the need for surveillance, prompt diagnosis & robust research and to develop effective countermeasures with #equity-oriented solutions to #COVID-19 & minimize impact on low-income populations. #HealthEquity

Fact Sheet: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Socioeconomic disparities reflect inequitable access to employment, income, education, housing & healthcare barriers: cancer prevention, early detection & treatment along the cancer continuum. #HealthDisparities

Multi-Regional Engagement Plan #BreastCancer <https://selfmadehealth.org/>

#HealthEquity includes connecting low-income populations with unstable employment, under-insured, #uninsured or delay seeking preventive & follow-up care to @CDC_Cancer National Breast and Cervical #Cancer Early Detection Program <http://bit.ly/3qkO790>

#EndCancerSilence #Medicaid

Consequences of lung cancer stigma include avoidance or delay in seeking treatment, lack of illness disclosure, and reduced use of healthcare resources.

#HealthEquity #LungCancer #PatientCenteredCare #MensHealth

To learn more – Fact Sheet: Lung Cancer at: <https://selfmadehealth.org>

Additional Tools and Resources

American Cancer Society (ACS) Guidance on Cancer Screening During COVID-19

Provides guidance on how public health agencies, healthcare professionals, and cancer screening advocates nationwide can promote and deliver cancer screening appropriately, safely, and equitably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Screening Guidance on Cancers topics include: Breast Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Lung Cancer, and Cervical Cancer

<https://www.acs4ccc.org/acs-guidance-on-cancer-screening-during-covid-19/>

National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) provides low-income, uninsured, and underserved women access to timely breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services in states nationwide, territories and Native American (tribal) communities.

<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/>

Cancer Survivorship E-Learning Series for Primary Care Providers (George Washington University Cancer Center) <https://cme.smhs.gwu.edu/gw-cancer-center-/group/gw-cancer-center>

COVID Data Tracker and COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States

Features information including the total COVID-19 doses administered and reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by state and territory. Also included is a COVID-19 Pandemic Vulnerability Index (PVI), an interactive mapping application visualizing risk profiles of vulnerability to COVID-19 epidemics for the 3,142 counties in the United States.

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

Additional Tools and Resources (continued)

Emerging Issues in Commercial Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Social Media Toolkit

As part of a collaboration between George Washington Cancer Center and a consortium of 8 national networks funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to advance the prevention of commercial tobacco use and cancer in populations experiencing tobacco- and cancer-related health disparities. The toolkit contains information on planning, implementing and evaluating social media activities around various commercial tobacco-related health observances. Messages from this toolkit can be used or tailored for addressing national observances and commemorative months acknowledging vulnerable populations. <https://smhs.gwu.edu/cancercontroldap/resources/emerging-issues-commercial-tobacco-use-social-media-toolkit-2020>

National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Organizations that offer Cancer Support Services

Directory that consists of organizations throughout the nation that provide free or low-cost cancer support services. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/managing-care/services/support>

10 Essential Public Health Services (2020 Version)

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. This revised version is centered around achieving equity, Essential Public Health Services (EPHS) actively promote policies, systems, and overall community conditions that contribute to optimal health for all and seek to remove traditional or historical systemic and structural barriers that have resulted in health inequities or disparities. <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/publichealthservices/essentialhealthservices.html>

Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF)-Community Guide

The Community Guide is a collection of evidence-based recommendations and findings from the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) intended to improve the health of populations and communities nationwide. It includes more than 230 intervention approaches across 21 topic areas. The CPSTF makes evidence-based recommendations about the effectiveness and economics of public health programs, services, and other interventions used applied in a broad range of real-world settings, environments and sectors. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/>

CDC COVID-19 Response Health Equity Strategy: Accelerating Progress Towards Reducing COVID-19 Disparities and Achieving Health Equity

Outlines guiding principles along with recommendations, activities and proposed outcomes to address health equity. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/cdc-strategy.html>

Healthy People 2030 National Objectives

Healthy People 2030 national objectives (data-driven) are established to improve health and wellbeing across the lifespan over the next 10 years. A broad array of topics are included such as: health conditions, health behaviors and social determinants of health in a variety of systems and settings. Explore or identify action steps to advance or improve cancer health equity using the Healthy People 2030 Objectives. States, communities, and multi-sector organizations throughout the country use Healthy People objectives to set their respective priorities. <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

Supported by: CDC-RFA-DP18-1808: “Networking2Save”– CDC’s National Network Approach to Preventing and Controlling Tobacco-related Cancers in Special Populations

To contact SMHN for additional assistance, please submit information to the SMHN mailbox: info@selfmadehealth.org

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