SOCIAL MEDIA and COMMUNICATIONS POLICY FOR VOLUNTEER and STAFF

NEW JERSEY COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
SOCIAL MEDIA and COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
FOR NJCA VOLUNTEERS and STAFF

The New Jersey Counseling Association uses social media in its work and recognizes that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. A written policy is therefore required for all staff, volunteers and stakeholders on the acceptable use of social networking at work.

The New Jersey Counseling Association encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to set out what NJCA expects from our volunteers and staff when using social media. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for the NJCA and that social media is never private.

This policy is for volunteers and staff and aims to:
• give clear guidelines on what volunteers and staff can say about the organization;
• comply with relevant legislation and protect volunteers;
• help volunteer officers and committee chairs manage performance effectively;
• help volunteers draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering;
• protect The New Jersey Counseling Association against liability for the actions of volunteers;
• be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with

1. Policy statement

1.1 The New Jersey Counseling Association recognizes that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis etc.¹ This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense. (See 2.1)
1.2 Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation and can jeopardize our compliance with legal obligations. To minimize these risks, to avoid loss of work time and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the Policy?

2.1 This policy covers volunteers, paid staff, consultants, and contractors. Volunteers are defined as NJCA members who volunteer a service or skill on behalf of the NJCA, its Divisions, Interest Groups and Committees to assist the association. These volunteers may serve as officers, committee chairs, committee members, ad hoc committee members, members of the conference committee and any other NJCA member who undertakes volunteer work on behalf of and in the interest of the NJCA.

3. Scope and purpose of the Policy

3.1 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

3.2 It applies to the use of social media both for volunteering and personal purposes, whether while volunteering or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to volunteers or staff members.

3.3 If a volunteer/staff member is found to be in breach of this policy the Executive Committee will address this using the Procedures for Problem Solving in Volunteering.

3.4 Volunteers/staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.

3.5 This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.
4. Personnel responsible for implementing the Policy

4.1 All volunteer supervisors have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all volunteers/staff understand the standards of behavior expected of them and taking action when behavior falls below this.

4.2 All volunteers/staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Executive Committee and the Executive Director.

4.3 Any content which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the President, Past President and Executive Director.

5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide volunteers/staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

5.1 We want you to help protect our business reputation. Volunteers must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:
   a The New Jersey Counseling Association
   b New Jersey Counseling Association staff, our clients, volunteers or members past or present;
   c suppliers and vendors; and d other affiliates and stakeholders.

Volunteers should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

5.2 Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the masses (including the NJCA), colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.
5.3 A publicity consent form must be obtained prior to posting images or text which may be used on social media.

5.4 The New Jersey Counseling Association does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

5.5 There is no obligation for volunteers to link their personal social media to any NJCA social media.

5.6 Volunteers are not permitted to set up social media accounts for work purposes without prior consultation with the NJCA Executive Committee and the NJCA Executive Director.

5.7 If you choose to disclose your affiliation as a volunteer of the NJCA in social media postings you must also state that your views do not represent the views of NJCA. For example, you could state, “the views in this posting do not represent the views of the NJCA”, or “these are my personal views, not the views of any other organizations I am affiliated with”. You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the image you present to those you work with as part of your volunteering role.

5.8 You can only use The NJCA email address if your volunteering role involves using social media on behalf of the organization.

5.9 You are responsible for the security settings of any social media sites you use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.

5.10 Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues, if in doubt speak to the Executive Director or Membership Manager). Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.
5.11 Avoid posting comments about sensitive NJCA related topics, such as our performance.

5.12 If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on NJCA or our stakeholders, you should report it to the Executive Committee and NJCA Executive Director. All volunteers/staff are responsible for protecting our reputation.

5.13 The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish volunteering with The New Jersey Counseling Association.

5.14 Contact details of volunteers are subject to data protection. Staff are not permitted to access or store information on volunteers that would breach data protection.

6. Personal use of social media in the office environment
If using social media while volunteering, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organizations unrelated to the New Jersey Counseling Association work is also prohibited.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

• External Communications
All communication materials (email, mail, social media, website) must be reviewed and approved by (at minimum) the NJCA President and Executive Director. Additional approvals for financial/program/conference obligations must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee (NJCA Officers). The entire NJCA Executive Council ratifies actions taken by the Executive Committee.
• **Internal Communications**

In order to facilitate inclusive and organizationally and fiscally responsible communications within NJCA, all written and emailed communications within NJCA between the Executive Committee, Executive Council members and Executive Director will always include the NJCA President, NJCA Executive Director (NJCA email address) as copied entities.

The NJCA President and the NJCA Executive Director are charged with the overall responsibility for the policy direction, implementation and operations of NJCA, all correspondence (written, email, text) by NJCA Council members relating to NJCA business and communications must be directed and/or copied to the NJCA President and NJCA Executive Director.

These communications policies serve to enhance the fiduciary and operational effectiveness of the NJCA in serving our membership and following our mission.

**Disclaimer**

Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith, without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein. NJCA 501C6

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