



## Key Facts about Social Media

### Using Social Media to tackle Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoking

Social media and social networking tools such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter are increasingly used to tackle health behaviours such as smoking. They are particularly valuable for communicating with youth and young adults. These tools are accessible, low cost and familiar to young people so they have good reach. In 2017 it was estimated that around 70% of the Australian population were active users of Facebook. We also know that social media use is higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than the general Australian population. Even in remote communities use of Facebook is higher than in mainstream Australian society.

Facebook and Twitter are also popular ways for healthcare services to share information with their clients. However the real value of social media is that it is interactive and user-driven, meaning it has the potential to provide real-time peer to peer support and discussion around tobacco use.

Evidence of the effectiveness of using social media in tobacco control is still emerging. Recent studies have shown that focused social media messaging and carefully designed networks can extend the reach and impact of more traditional tobacco control approaches. This includes an increase in quit attempts, as well supporting people who have quit to remain smoke-free. Research with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory that used Facebook for tobacco control health promotion found that:

- Message reach went beyond social media users to individuals without a Facebook profile.
- Practical, credible and relevant posts were more likely to be shared.
- People were impacted by the messaging, with some reporting quitting partly because of the campaign.

### Why use social media?





Research has found online social networks empower individuals and strengthen vulnerable communities. Online conversations often remove the expert-client power relationship. This can work well for those who may be excluded including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The use of images to convey health messages can also be effective for people who prefer visual information. The benefits of using social media for Tackling Indigenous Smoking are:

- Makes health information more available and shareable.
- Shared health information can provide peer, social and emotional support.
- Keeps your organisation engaged with your community.

### Towards developing a Social Media Strategy

NBPU TIS recommends that you make best use of existing social media. If you don't have your own dedicated Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram account now, talk to whoever runs your organisation about how you might increase your social media presence.

#### Key Tips

-  · Facebook first. **Make it engaging.**
-  · Twitter is used by professionals, politicians, activists and journalists. **Make it about advocacy.**
-  · Instagram allows users to use compelling pictures or short videos to share a catchy message. **Make it personal.**
-  · Snapchat is a fun way of connecting with younger social media users. **Make it youthful.**

**Select employees to be administrators or moderators of your organisation's social media accounts.**

**Create social media guidelines** to ensure your message is consistent and credible.

**Make messages "stick".** A "sticky" health message is understandable, memorable, and effective in changing thought or behaviour.

**Content should be simple.** Written text should be free of jargon, acronyms, long sentences and complicated graphics.

**Create posts that appeal to positive emotions.** Include content which:

- Adds value ("How to..." or "Did you know...").
- Produces content which provides something of value to your audience.
- Entertains.
- Encourages online engagement.
- Applies the 70/20/10 rule. 70 per cent of everything you post is original content, 20 per cent is shared content and 10 per cent is promotional.
- Is visually appealing. A study which examined how Facebook is used to promote tobacco smoking cessation to Indigenous people found video works best.

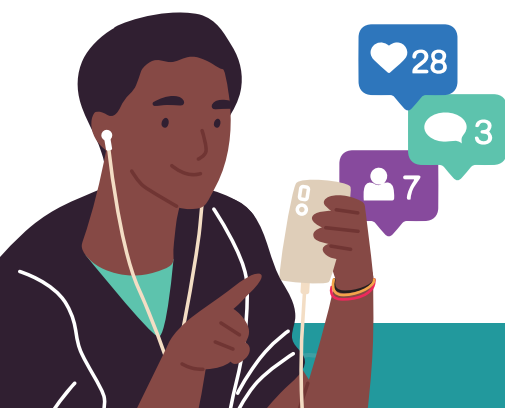
**Create videos.**

Keep the videos short and post directly on Facebook, without links.

**Don't use the same health message crafted for Facebook also on Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat.** They are different platforms which require different ways of communicating.

**Engage with your community.** Ensure you reply to every comment on your page.

**Use Facebook promotional features.** Pay for a few promoted posts and see if they increase engagement.



### Further reading

- Hefler, M., Kerrigan, V., Henryks, J., Freeman, B., & Thomas, D. P. (2019). Social media and health information sharing among Australian Indigenous people. *Health promotion international*, 34(4), 706-715.
- Schmidt, A. M., Ranney, L. M., Pepper, J. K., & Goldstein, A. O. (2016). Source credibility in tobacco control messaging. *Tobacco regulatory science*, 2(1), 31-37.
- Naslund, J. A., Kim, S. J., Aschbrenner, K. A., McCulloch, L. J., Brunette, M. F., Dallery, J., ... & Marsch, L. A. (2017). Systematic review of social media interventions for smoking cessation. *Addictive behaviors*, 73, 81-93.