

Beware, Don't Overshare - Proper Use of Social Media for Nurses

Sheryl Repischak RN, BSN, MS
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Sheryl.Repischak@lvhn.org

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlyworks.lvhn.org/patient-care-services-nursing>



Part of the [Nursing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Published In/Presented At

Repischak, S. (October 29, 2013). *Beware, Don't Overshare - Proper Use of Social Media for Nurses*.
Presented at: LVHN Research Day, Allentown, PA.

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by LVHN Scholarly Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in LVHN Scholarly Works by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact LibraryServices@lvhn.org.

Beware, Don't Overshare - Proper Use of Social Media for Nurses

Sheryl Repischak, MS, RN

Dept of Nursing, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, PA

Abstract

Social Media can strengthen professional relationships and provide valuable information to health care consumers; however, patient privacy and confidentiality is a concern, even when social media use is appropriate. With the ever growing popularity of social networking on popular sites such as Facebook®, Twitter®, Google®, My Space®, Blogs, You Tube®, and LinkedIn®, hospitals need a Social Media Policy. Nurses need guidance to use these media forms appropriately. In most cases, inappropriate disclosure is unintentional, but may have devastating outcomes.

Case Study

Kim, a junior in a baccalaureate nursing program, witnessed a vaginal birth during a clinical experience. The delivery was difficult; with the baby receiving low Apgar scores and transferred to neonatal intensive care. Feeling anxious and unable to sleep, Kim posted her feelings on Facebook:

"I got to see my first vaginal delivery at Doctors Hospital today. The mom is a high school teacher. She pushed for 2 hours! When baby began having decelerations of his heart rate, the room became very tense. She finally delivered a baby boy. He was huge, 10lbs, 8 oz. He was really blue at first, which scared me. But oxygen helped. They had to take him for observation and I got to go to the high risk nursery."

The following day, Kim's professor hears several students discuss her post. Although the posting was innocent and not intended to disclose private information, Kim was suspended.

Misperceptions of Social Media

Communication is accessible to the intended recipient.

Confidentiality is not breached when disclosing room number, condition, or diagnosis.

Postings are **Private** and can be deleted.

How to Avoid Disclosure of Confidential Patient Information

"Social Media Tools" based on best practice

- Do not share confidential information; maintain patient privacy. (Photography and video are included)
- Write in first person to clarify you are speaking for yourself, not the hospital. Add a disclaimer stating these are personal views and not your employers.
- Avoid 'friending' patients on social media websites.
- If you communicate with the public internet about your hospital, you must disclose your connection and your role.
- On a social media site where your affiliation is known, personal recommendations or endorsements should not be given.

Social Media Policy Key Elements

- 1 Maintain patient confidentiality
- 2 Take responsibility and use good judgment
- 3 Prohibit personal health information or images from being posted
- 4 Never provide medical advice on social media
- 5 Require all employees to read the institution's Social Media policy annually



Disciplinary Action Process Policy Enforcement

- The Board of Nursing disciplinary action varies among jurisdictions. Grounds for action may include: unprofessional conduct, unethical conduct, moral turpitude, or privacy breach. The nurse may be reprimanded, pay a monetary fine, or receive a temporary or permanent loss of licensure.
- Improper use may violate state and federal laws to protect patient privacy resulting in civil and criminal penalties including fines and jail time.
- A nurse may face personal liability and be sued for defamation, invasion of privacy, or harassment.
- If a nurse's conduct violates employer policy, the nurse may face employment consequences.

© 2013 Lehigh Valley Health Network

A PASSION FOR BETTER MEDICINE.™



610-402-CARE LVHN.org