



CLIMBING OUT OF DEPRESSION

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating COOD's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with supporters and raise the profile of COOD's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to COOD's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all *staff (defined for the purpose of this document as employees, trustees, volunteers and contractors)*, and applies to content posted on both a COOD device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of COOD, and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Point of contact for social media

Belinda Fuller is responsible for the publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to Belinda. No other staff member can post content on COOD's official channels without agreeing the content with Belinda.

Which social media channels do we use?

COOD uses the following social media channels:

Facebook www.facebook.com/climbingoutofdepression

Instagram @climbingoutofdepression

Instagram contains our slightly younger target audience with a growing following of 826 individuals.

Facebook has seen good interaction from a wide audience with over 1k followers.

Both share the same posts and content to reach a broad audience.

To aid with the replies of messages, administrators will have access to both channels to assist Belinda with message replies and enquires guiding individuals to the correct channels.

Guidelines

Using COOD's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. Belinda Fuller is responsible for setting up and managing COOD's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by Belinda will have access to these accounts.
2. Belinda and any administrators will monitor the channels between them ensuring messages are replied to within 3 days of arrival. If this gets out of hand an automated reply will be set guiding enquiries to the correct email address / website.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect COOD values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all staff should refer to when posting content on COOD's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for COOD, and accurately reflects COOD's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
8. If other staff wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to Belinda about this.
9. Staff shouldn't post content about supporters or service users without their express permission. If staff are sharing information about supporters, service users or third party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from COOD. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a

child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.

10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via COOD's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about COOD's position on a particular issue, please speak to Belinda.

13. It is vital that COOD does not encourage others to risk their personal safety or that of others, to gather materials. For example, a video of a stunt.

14. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

15. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of COOD. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, Belinda can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. COOD is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on COOD's social media channels, staff should seek advice from Belinda before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to a board member.

18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. Examples might include: sensitive information about an individual, triggering content etc. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

Belinda regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of COOD so we can catch any issues or problems early. If there is an issue that could develop or has already developed into a crisis situation, Belinda will do the following: arrange an emergency meeting with the board of trustees to discuss the best plan of action based on the specific scenario. Action will then take place immediately to avoid or diffuse the problem asap.

If any staff outside of Belinda or the board become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on COOD's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to Belinda immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. COOD staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with COOD's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive COOD. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of COOD. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about COOD's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent COOD's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at COOD should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and Belinda. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for COOD should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and Belinda.

3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing COOD's view.

4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with COOD and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the *general public, colleagues, partners and funders*.

5. COOD may work with high profile people, including *celebrities, journalists, politicians and major donors*. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by Belinda. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.

If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to Belinda to share the details.

7. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to COOD, they should talk to Belinda immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.

8. COOD is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing COOD, staff are

expected to hold COOD's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from COOD, and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

9. Never use COOD's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from Belinda.

10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely. You can find more information on your responsibilities when using our computer systems in our *IT Policy*.

11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

12. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support COOD and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to Belinda who will respond as appropriate.

13. Permission will be obtained before the sharing of any photos/images/stories of your service users (particularly if they are children or vulnerable adults). **It is realistic to obtain and keep a written record of this??**

- Consent needs to be specific (for example, just because someone consents to their photo being on your website might not necessarily mean they also consent to it being on social media channels).
- Consent can also be withdrawn by the person who gave it at any time (for example, a young person might be happy to have their story shared when they are 13, but by the time they are 16 they no longer want that information public). Therefore, you might want to have a clear process by which someone can ask that you no longer use their photo/story and ensure you are able to honour such requests by removing it from all your channels/platforms.

14. Staff should avoid following/friending and communicating with under 18s or vulnerable adults via social media. In line with our Safeguarding training and policy, staff and volunteers must "not being alone with a young person" this includes not being "alone" online i.e. direct messaging without others in the conversation.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring COOD into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that COOD is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official COOD social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by Trisha Kemp and Belinda Fuller.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Vacancies may be shared on Facebook and Instagram. There should be no systematic or routine checking of a candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to Belinda immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with COOD's follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. They should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and COOD content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to our *Safeguarding Policy*.

Responsibilities and breach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of COOD is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from Belinda.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through COOD's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, COOD's *Whistleblowing Policy* must be initiated before any further action is taken.