



Monitoring Ethics in the Social Media Abyss  
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**Speaker Disclosure**

**FINANCIAL**

- None for this presentation

**NONFINANCIAL**

- Former member of ASHA Board of Ethics
- ASHA Board of Ethics Chair, 2020
- Member of the ASHA Code Review Committee
- Certified member of ASHA
- Currently I have 2 ethics presentations on ASHA Learning Pass:
  - Ethics in Schools (PD102726)
  - Mindfulness in Ethics (PD102211)



**NOTE**

- This presentation is not an official presentation of the ASHA Board of Ethics. The presentation reflects the knowledge and viewpoints of the presenter and not the Ethics Office at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

**Disclaimer**

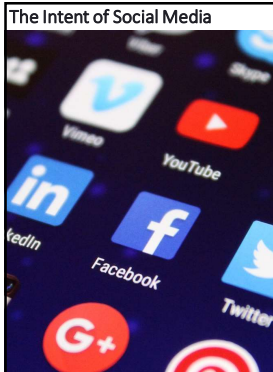
- The presenter is discussing legal issues related to professional practice but is neither an attorney nor is providing legal advice.

**Learning Outcomes**

Participants will:

1. Explain the relationship between ASHA's principles of civility to the ASHA Code of Ethics.
2. Analyze their digital (e)ntity and its' relationship to their clinical practice.
3. Identify and apply 3 good habits to employ when using social media.

**The Intent of Social Media**



- 1 Improve mental health
- 2 Provide outlets for creativity
- 3 Create opportunities for professional networking
- 4 Create educational opportunities and social awareness
- 5 Build business opportunities and marketing avenues


Linda Ashar, J.D.

**Thinking about social media...**

"Social media was supposed to unite us. To forge stronger social connections. Meant to bridge barriers like wealth, class, ethnicity, geography. But what went wrong?"

(Tim Dean, 2022)






- Misinformation
- Doxing
- Toxic online behavior- including cyberbullying and harassment
- Privacy concerns
- Polarization and Extremism
- Censorship and Insufficient Control
- Lack of Pragmatic Filtering
- Exploitation (all types)
- Addiction
- Mental health concerns

- Problems Often Associated with Social Media

## Civility isn't a new idea



*"Every action done in company, ought to be with some sign of respect, to those that are present,"*

George Washington (at age 16)  
-Rule #1, 110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior

<h3>Characteristics of Civility</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual respect</li> <li>• Dignity &amp; dignified behavior</li> <li>• Seeking common ground whenever possible</li> <li>• Disagreeing without being disagreeable</li> <li>• Tolerance for differences</li> </ul>	<h3>Characteristics that Reduce Civility</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrespect</li> <li>• Ridicule, personal attacks, intolerance</li> <li>• Arguing</li> <li>• Harsh, crude, coarse or foul language</li> <li>• Angry words or rage</li> </ul>
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Source: Jack Krupansky ([bit.ly/civility-redux](http://bit.ly/civility-redux))

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

## ASHA Civility Digital Toolkit

The Social Citizens' Guide to Civil Communication

With the advent of social media and the continued popularity of online communication platforms, we have all become publishers. We are all eager to express ourselves and our opinions. And while at ASHA we are all about communication, there is a growing concern that civility and basic respect for one another are on the decline nationwide. Survey research backs this up, and ASHA's own survey of members in 2018 confirms this is an issue among a significant percentage of ASHA members. Click on some of the titles below to find out more, and to learn what ASHA and YOU can do to promote civility in the professions.

Background

Guiding Principles

Civility Scenarios

Tools

Guidelines

References & Resources

## ASHA's 4 Guiding Principles of Civility

- Respect
- Constructive Dialogue
- Discourage Belittling
- Model Professionalism

Principle IV, Code of Ethics (2023):

"Individuals shall uphold the dignity and autonomy of the professions, maintain collaborative and harmonious interprofessional and intraprofessional relationships, accept the professions' self-imposed standards."

## Apply a civility habit

# BEFORE YOU SPEAK

T

IS IT TRUE?

Is this fact or is it really an opinion or feeling? Know & be clear before you speak.

H

IS IT HELPFUL?

Does it help you, them or the situation?

I

IS IT INSPIRING?

Also, does it IMPROVE on the silence?

N

IS IT NECESSARY?

Would this be better left unsaid?

K

IS IT KIND?

What is your motivation for communicating?

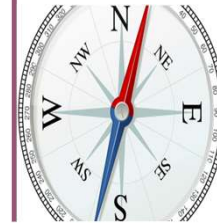


Source: [www.thecoachingtoolcompany.com](http://www.thecoachingtoolcompany.com)

## A gentle reminder from ASHA's Issues in Ethics Statement: Ethical Use of Social Media

"ASHA supports social media use for robust conversations but inflammatory comments, poor judgements, personal attacks, and lapses of **civility** may lead to ethical violations under the Code of Ethics."

## Why have a Code of Ethics?



1. Provides a guiding philosophy
2. Promotes a well-established code of conduct
3. States a set of rules from an organization
4. Creates set standards of professional conduct
5. Clarifies and guides the mission of an organization
6. Serves as a reference tool for members and those served by the members

## ASHA Code of Ethics (2023)

### Principle I: Welfare of Persons Served

Honor your responsibility and uphold the welfare of those served

20 rules

### Principle II: Professional Competence and Performance

Achieve and maintain professional competence and performance

8 rules

### Principle III: Responsibility to the Public

Honor responsibility to the public and provide accurate information

7 rules

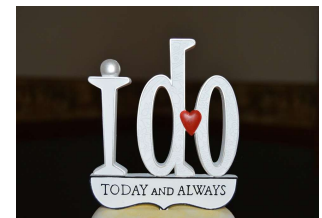
### Principle IV: Dignity and Responsibility to the Profession

Maintain integrity, collaborative relationships and accept professional standards

21 rules

## Remember.....

Every time (annually) when you renew with ASHA, **you affirm** that you have read and will adhere to the Code of Ethics. So.... the responsibility and ownership of the Code is upon you. You cannot say, "I didn't know" –or- "I didn't read it."



## ASHA Board of Ethics



### Who comprises the Board?

- 13 ASHA members plus 2 public members
- SLPs and AUDs from a variety of employment settings
- Serve a 4-year term, 3 years adjudicating and one year on Ethics Education Subcommittee
- Supported by the staff of the ASHA Standards and Ethics division plus the Board of Directors' Chief Staff Officer

### Function

- Amend the Code of Ethics
- Develop ethics education materials
- Evaluate alleged violations
- Determine sanction(s) of any
- Review on-going cases
- Determine reinstatement
- Protect the public
- Promote adherence to the Code

## ASHA Board of Ethics holds jurisdiction over...



Members of ASHA-certified and noncertified ; ASHA certificate holders

Nonmembers holding CCC

Applicants for membership and/or certification

Former members/certificate holders and those relinquishing membership/certification IF the event occurred while in membership/certification

Individuals certified under ASHA Assistants Program (C-AA or C-SLPAs)

**\*\* No jurisdiction over students and Clinical Fellows (CFs)\*\***

## How do cases come to the Board of Ethics?



- All must be in writing
- No anonymous complaints
- Sources of complaints include: clients/consumers; colleagues; public records; courts and court records; licensure boards; media sources; etc.
- The Board of Ethics has ZERO subpoena power and ZERO investigatory power (but licensure boards may)
- The Board of Ethics does not look for cases, they come to us.

## Sanctions



Written Warning - private

Reprimand - private

Censure - public

Suspension - loss of CCCs

\*Revocation - loss of CCCs & membership

\*Withholding - loss of CCCs and or membership → only for non-members

Remember: There is also *Dismissal*, usually due to lack of sufficient evidence or corrective practice

## Regarding findings by the ASHA Board of Ethics

No Double Jeopardy!

ASHA Board of Ethics ≠ State Licensure Board

Just because one Board acts does not mean that the other Board will do the same. The two Boards are independent of one another in their roles, analysis and decisions.



## Just one more reminder regarding potential violations

There are other ethical codes which require your attention once you are in practice.

- Regulatory Boards
  - Office of the Professions; Licensing Board; Teacher Certification Board; SC Board of Examiners; SCLLR
- Employment Sites
  - Code of Conduct; Employee Handbook
- Professional Organizations
  - ASHA; SCSHA;

KNOW THE RULES!



“The crux of social media ethical dilemmas is that social media was designed for **social communications**, which for most adults traditionally has been considered a private and protected space. However, the inherent nature of social media makes those communications available to a wider public. Once the information becomes public, then the way it is used is no longer under the control of the presenter.”

Cain and Fink, 2010, p. 5

## (e)ntity

(e)ntity is your electronic identity and is composed of the digital traces left behind by your participation in the digital world.

Your leave digital footprints every time you reply, post pictures, “like”, email, create an avatar, blog, tweet, game, upload a picture, and request a movie on Netflix.

Many people make an assumption that they can be anonymous in the digital world; in fact, anonymity is rare. Usually someone or something is tracking your (e)ntity profile and what activity it is conducting.



### 3 Types of Digital Users

Digital Natives	Digital Settlers	Digital Immigrants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grew up in the digital world</li> <li>Fully skilled in technology</li> <li>Not versed in "pen &amp; paper" life</li> <li>Social interactions, friendships, civic activities, work and key work components are mediated by digital technology</li> <li>Often do not discriminate between their online and offline lives</li> <li>Constantly connected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not native to the digital world, rather they have learned skills/techniques</li> <li>Online and digitally sophisticated but still rely on "pen-paper" and traditional forms of interaction</li> <li>Rely on digital natives for support, guidance and teachable moments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can use digital types but are less savvy and familiar</li> <li>Prefer pen and paper to electronics</li> <li>Usually learn FB and email for pleasure but "life tasks" are not digital</li> <li>Grew up in the world of print and paper</li> </ul>

Palfrey & Gasser, 2011

### Be mindful of these Social Media sites

\*Think about the "who" factor: Who has accessibility to What?

- 1 Social Networks: Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Threads, email
- 2 Media Sharing: Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Pinterest, email
- 3 Discussion Forums, including: Blogs, Reddit, Quora, Discord, email
- 4 Content Curated\* : Closed FB sites, Flipboard, Google Docs, Google Classroom, Dojo
- 5 Consumer Review Sites: Yelp, Google reviews, Independent Bloggers

"When you put personal information about yourself online, you don't always get to choose your audience and can't always prevent inappropriate disclosure by accident-by a second or third party."

Matthew Robb, 2011

Before you post, blog, respond to, "like", etc., ask yourself these questions:

1. Who is viewing the post?
2. What is the purpose of the post?
3. What does the post reveal ?
4. What are the benefits, costs, ramifications of the post?
5. What will others think about the post? About me ?
6. What are the "tentacles" of the post with regard to my friends/family, job, career, clients ?
7. Apply the "T.H.I.N.K." assessment.
8. Does the post violate or impinge upon any codes of conduct, codes of ethics or professional practice parameters?

### phronesis

This term was developed by Aristotle to mean "**practical judgement**". By applying phronesis to the concept of ethics, we are acquiring and cultivating better decision-making skills about behaviors and choices.

What practical judgements need to be made when considering the ethics of social media and the professions?



### 10 Good Habits when using Social Media

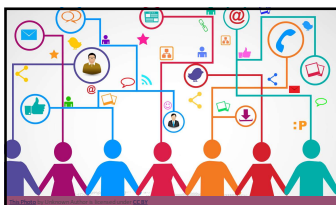
1. Don't get personal.
2. Don't post pictures, videos or any digital information without informed consent (see informed consent).
3. Don't ask for a diagnosis based on your post.
4. Don't be case specific or give scenarios.
5. Don't be antagonistic, pick fights, post rumors or respond to abusive comments. Refrain from unprofessional discourse (including foul language).

## 10 Good Habits when using Social Media

6. Model professionalism; maintain professional dignity and boundaries.
7. Maintain confidentiality, including testimonials.
8. Remember HIPPA, FERPA, Codes of Conduct, Codes of Ethics, etc. still apply.
9. Some memes, jokes and humor may be offensive to others.
10. Don't post copyrighted or trademarked items. Check all hyperlinks before posting.

"Most ethical decisions are in the moment and very private. This fact leads to an inescapable conclusion : No matter how many laws we pass or codes of ethical conduct we develop, everything comes down to a private decision."

Wheeler & Bertram, 2015, p.47



Remember...

### ASHA Code of Ethics (2023)

There are no stated Principles or Rules within the 2023 Code of Ethics that specifically mention social media. Rather, potential violations are based upon the "who" and the "what" surrounding the application of social media.

The following cases are fictional

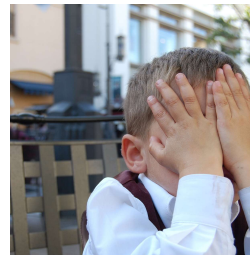
Keep in mind, ASHA does not search out cases; rather, they are brought in writing to ASHA.

While some missteps may be noted, they may not rise to the level of the Board of Ethics.

If adjudicated by ASHA, cases stand on the information provided by all parties- referral and response.

Apply prudence when evaluating the cases. Don't forget the embarrassment, tears and personal blame which often accompanies a case. It can be painful to watch a colleague have this distress.

Remember, "building ethical practice into what you do is safer than ignoring it." --Wayne Foster



"Technology advances occur faster than the resulting creation of statutes, case law, or the most recent version of the code of ethics. As a result, many legal and ethical implications remain largely unknown."

Wheeler & Bertram, 2015, p.149

Thank you!

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