

# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM OVERVIEW AND TIPS

**When promoting your National Prevention Week events and activities, it is vital to maximize your efforts by regularly engaging with your intended audience.**

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and other digital media platforms, as well as email marketing, can help you reach a larger audience quickly at minimal or no cost. If your group or organization has social media accounts, then it is likely that you are already using them to promote your work.

## **WHEN CONSIDERING WHICH DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS TO USE, THERE ARE THREE KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

- 1. Target Audience.** Who is your target audience(s)? Where are they most represented online and on social media? Where do they get their information?
- 2. Objectives and Purpose.** What is the purpose of your online activities? How will your social media messages and content support your larger social marketing/communications strategy? What is the action that you want your engaged audiences to take?
- 3. Process and Resources.** What resources do you have to devote to your social and digital media strategy? Consider potential writers, graphic designers, social media publishers, and community managers. Who needs to review and approve copy? Do you have someone who can respond quickly to time-sensitive posts on your social media accounts? Take a look at your marketing budget to see if you can invest in social media advertisements. A little bit can go a long way! How will you evaluate your efforts?

## **HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH PLANNING PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**

- Invest the time in developing strong promotional content (e.g., brief messages, graphics, or videos).
- Manage a social media editorial content calendar to maintain active and engaged accounts.
- Respond to and engage with comments accordingly.
- Ask staff members or volunteers who have personal accounts to help promote the activities and events through their personal profiles.

The following is a list of commonly used social media networks and digital outreach channels, their best-use scenarios, and complementary app suggestions based on general trends and insights.

## Facebook



Facebook remains one of the most widely used social media sites among adults in the U.S., with about seven in 10 adults using the platform. Users range in age; however, more than two-thirds of people age 50 and older use the platform.<sup>1</sup> If your organization has a Facebook Business page, you can share organizational information and events with followers.

Facebook is best used for news and announcements, event highlights, photos or albums, online conversations among communities and directly with organizations, online event groups, links to relevant articles or blog posts, and videos.

Create a Facebook event page for your event and send invitations to your network, as well as to your current and potential partners. Once an event page is created, you can update the details on a regular basis and people can share the event with others to spread the word to their own networks. You should also share the event page directly on your organization's Business page.

The Facebook Live feature allows you to broadcast video in real time, so your followers can watch and/ or interact with you. It is great for special events and announcements, behind-the-scenes looks, and personalized video updates.

Another great way to leverage the Facebook Live feature is to hold a live Q&A and have viewers submit questions directly within the live feed. You can then answer questions in real time. Live videos can be archived for additional views after the event. For more information, go to [facebook.com/formedia/solutions/facebook-live](https://www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/facebook-live).

Lastly, the Facebook Stories feature allows you to use a slideshow format to post photos and videos, which will disappear after 24 hours.



### TIP

Use Facebook's own built-in scheduler to schedule posts ahead of time. Use its built-in Insights feature to explore analytics information for your posts.

### NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK TIP

Create a Facebook event page for your event and send invitations to your network, as well as to your current and potential partners. Also, share the link on your event page on other social media platforms and with your partners to share on their social media channels.

## Instagram



The third most-used social media platform in the U.S., used by 37 percent of adult internet users, Instagram skews significantly toward younger adults (ages 18 to 29). Women tend to use Instagram more than men.

Instagram is a visually oriented, highly engaged social media platform where you can upload, caption, and tag images and short videos using hashtags to help promote your organization and your National Prevention Week plans.

Similar to Facebook Stories, Instagram Stories allow you to post photos and videos in a slideshow format that disappears after 24 hours. You can add graphics, text, music, GIFs, geotags, and hashtags to all images and videos to enhance them for your audience. Instagram Stories are meant to be casual. Use the successive video feature to tell full-length stories and show events or ideas as they unfold. This is a great place to tease the planning of your event and show behind-the-scenes shots during the event.

<sup>1</sup>Audience data sourced from the Pew Research Center. You can find more demographic data for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social networks at Pew's website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/> and, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>

If you want your story content to last longer than 24 hours, consider creating a Highlight. Highlights let you spotlight sets of Instagram Stories on your profile page. When users tap a specific Highlight icon, they are able to see each story within that Highlight. A major benefit of Highlights is that they last forever, not just 24 hours. So, if you have important information—like phone numbers for crisis lines—this information will be readily available to your followers at all times. You may even want to have a Highlight dedicated to your National Prevention Week work.

To expand your reach to those who are not your followers, there is Instagram Reels. This means that whether you have a large audience or not, your content can be discovered by a wider community. Instagram Reels lets you produce 90-second videos that can include multiple video clips or photos. You can create your reels one at a time, all at once, or by uploading clips from your phone gallery.



## TIP

When on mobile, you can easily discover popular hashtags to consider putting in your post. Start writing a hashtag with the “#” sign, and a drop-down menu with possible hashtags and their number of occurrences will appear. On Instagram, the rules of hashtags are simple: The more hashtags you use, the more likes you’re going to get. The best practice is to use around 10 hashtags at the end of your post.

### NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK TIP

Be sure to create a “save the date” graphic that you can share in both your Stories and on your profile. Consider creating a Highlight to house all the information that you share in Stories leading up to your event. That way, your followers can access all your event information in one place.

## Twitter



Twitter is used by 22 percent of all U.S. adult internet users. Internet users in urban areas are much more likely to use Twitter than users in suburban or rural areas. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, more men than women use Twitter.

This platform allows for easy updates and information-sharing in 280 characters or less. Posts on Twitter are called “tweets.” Because you can only include a limited number of characters in each tweet, focus on a call and events. Note that photos and videos no longer count toward character limits, which allows you to share more promotional content. Post information and frequent updates about your event, and link to your organization or group’s website to provide followers with more information. Remember to include your promotional hashtag at the end of your tweets about your National Prevention Week event and be sure to include the hashtag **#NationalPreventionWeek23**. Also, do not forget to follow local leaders and community influencers to thoughtfully bring them into the conversation.



## TIP

Keep in mind that links account for 23 characters of the post. However, the best Twitter profiles don’t just share links; they begin conversations, interact with users, and have a personal tone behind the account. Find a relevant hashtag that has gained some traction so you can be part of the larger conversation, as well as gain some new followers.

### NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK TIP

Pin information related to your National Prevention Week event to the top of your profile. This way, it is the first thing that visitors see when they view your profile.



## Snapchat



Snapchat is a mobile-first, on-the-go social media community and boasts strong daily engagement among young adults (ages 18 to 24). Snapchat is the only platform used equally by men and women.

Snapchat is best used for one-way conversations. Though you can snap with other users, for brands and organizations, it's best to keep your communication limited to your one-way story. This is a great way to show behind-the-scenes views of your event or meeting, as well as incorporate storytelling. All of your Snapchat friends will be able to see snaps you post to your "story." Stories have a lifespan of 24 hours, and there are no limits on how many times they can be viewed in that period, but the best time to post is whenever the content you're recording is happening!

Snapchat Memories now allow you to save stories in the cloud or your phone and to share photos and videos taken any time in the past if they have been saved on your phone.

Snapchat allows users to add captions, drawings, and filters to their photos and videos to your snaps. Have fun and play around with the various filters and speeds that Snapchat provides to appeal to different audiences. Unlike other social media, using a designated hashtag for your event in your caption is not as vital.



### TIP

The best Snapchat Stories let us peer into a part of someone's life or an organization's process that isn't normally showcased, all while telling a good story. Using geotags for a live event can help increase visibility.

## YouTube



YouTube is the world's second largest search engine. YouTube can be used in creative ways to share information about your group or organization, your work in the community, or your upcoming National Prevention Week plans. Once you have a YouTube channel, you can create promotional videos, testimonials about your group or organization, or highlights of your event footage (in the preparation stages or post-event). Whether your video is promotional, informative, or educational, it should include information about your upcoming event and encourage others to take action to prevent substance misuse and promote mental health.

You can also create a YouTube Short! Much like Instagram Reels and TikTok, Shorts is the place to give your audience short, snappy, and easily digestible content. These videos are presented in a vertical format and have a maximum length of 60 seconds. YouTube videos can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram via the direct link to the video on YouTube.



### TIP

Include relevant tags and links in your YouTube description as a way to pull in audiences who are interested in learning more. There is no limit to the number of tags you can use! Be sure to add concise descriptions to your videos so viewers will know quickly whether or not the video content is indeed what they are looking for. The descriptions also contribute to discoverability in both YouTube and Google searches. (Remember, Google owns YouTube!)

### NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK TIP

Be sure to include **#NationalPreventionWeek23**, **#MyPreventionStory**, and **#SAMHSA** tags so your videos appear in all searches related to National Prevention Week 2023.



## TikTok



TikTok is one of the most popular and fastest growing social networks in the world, especially among younger people. With more than 1 billion users in 150 countries, TikTok's user base ranges from 13- to 40-year-olds.

The format often includes overlaying music or audio on top of videos and the platform lends itself to less of a curated, more authentic feel, which has contributed to its popularity over the year. Like Instagram, content can be discovered by a wider community, which adds to the appeal. As with any other social media platform, it's best to have a content calendar to make the most of your communications.



### TIP

Have fun with your TikTok content and include dancing, singing, or other audio overlayed onto your posts. Consider engaging youth in your community to help you create and plan out content that they can share through their TikToks, too.

### NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK TIP

Ask young people in your community to take part in the [#MyPreventionStory](#) activity and share it through TikTok. Visit [samhsa.gov/prevention-week](https://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week) to learn more.

## Hashtags

Using hashtags (#) on any social media network can connect posts for your target audience, while also connecting them to an even larger audience having conversations around the same hashtag and topic. Using a hashtag can bring more eyes to your post, and potentially more attendees to your event.

Prior to beginning social media promotion, create a hashtag specific to your National Prevention Week event. Use your event name, a key phrase, or your theme for the year, and consistently include the hashtag at the end of your posts about the event. You can also include the National Prevention Week hashtag ([#NationalPreventionWeek23](#)) to share information about your event, which will bring your event into the national conversation about National Prevention Week.

You can also get involved in the online prevention conversation by sharing your own prevention story, or why prevention is important to you, by including the My Prevention Story hashtag ([#MyPreventionStory](#)) in your social media posts throughout the year.

## Timing Your Posts

For events, begin posting about your National Prevention Week plans on social media platforms as soon as you confirm a date and location; the most effective way to do this is with a "save the date" graphic. As planning progresses, post more details to generate buzz about your event, including creating a Facebook event. In the two months leading up to your event, post about your event on a weekly basis, and in the final week, post daily reminders. Consider asking partner organizations and sponsors to post reminders on their social media profiles, as well during the final week before your event.

