How to use Social Media for Advocacy

We have created a range of social media templates, which can be found here: https://www.inhsu.org/prisons-advocacy/. These posts advocate for increased testing, treatment and prevention of hepatitis C in prison settings and include graphics with eye-catching and thought-provoking headlines and images alongside supporting captions.

But how can you use social media for advocacy? Whether you're using our content or your own, here's how:

1. **Re-share on multiple social platforms:** when it comes to advocacy, we want to reach as many people as possible.

TOP TIP: re-share content across all of your channels, but adapt as needed to each. For example, Instagram prefers square content whereas you can use rectangles on Facebook and Twitter.

2. **Use hashtags and keywords strategically:** research popular and relevant hashtags within your niche, such as #hepatitis #NoMoreHep #Prisonhealth #Nomorehep #HepatitisC #PublicHealth and include them in your content.

TOP TIP: did you know that Instagram no longer values hashtags as highly? Instead, work keywords into the caption of the image. That way you will increase your likelihood of appearing in search results when people are searching for these topics.

3. **Encourage engagement:** actively engage with your audience by responding to comments, messages, and mentions.

TOP TIP: always respond promptly to both positive and negative feedback and address concerns transparently and constructively.

4. **Be clear about the call to action:** in addition to raising awareness, provide your audience with clear steps they can take to support the cause. This could include sharing advocacy resources, contacting members of parliament, or simply re-sharing the content.

TOP TIP: why not point them in the direction of this Advocacy Toolkit? That way they can continue to raise awareness for the cause.

5. **Monitor and respond**: it's important to post your own content, but equally important is monitoring relevant conversations and responding. Any online discussions about hepatitis C, prison health, or the health of people who use drugs are excellent opportunities to comment or respond and increase awareness of testing, treatment and prevention of hepatitis C in prisons.

TOP TIP: manage multiple social platforms? There are many social media management tools that can be used to monitor mentions, track keywords, and analyse sentiment around your advocacy efforts.

6. **Stay consistent:** develop a content calendar to plan and schedule posts in advance, ensuring a consistent presence on social media.

TOP TIP: increase your posting during key events such as World Hepatitis Day, Liver Awareness Month, etc. This will help you maximise your impact and tap into existing conversations. Add these events to your social calendar and use the event hashtags and handles when posting.

7. **Tag relevant people and organisations:** when sharing content or discussing relevant topics, always tag individuals, organisations, or influencers who might be interested or involved in your advocacy efforts. This increases the likelihood of your content being seen by a wider audience and facilitates collaboration and networking. Hopefully, they'll also re-share the content, increasing the reach even further.

TOP TIP: want more engagement? Be specific about the action you want them to take - ask people to re-share/retweet/repost/comment.

8. **Share the social templates:** encourage supporters and allies in your network to amplify your message by sharing the INHSU Prisons toolkit social media templates or your own.

TOP TIP: anything that can be done to make it easier for people to get involved—the better. What other ideas can your team come up with?

By implementing these strategies, you can maximise the impact of your social media advocacy efforts and mobilise support effectively.

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