

W 2.9 | Hashtag Diversity: Dialogue in the Eating Disorders Field Through Social Media Engagement | Meeting Hall V, Second Floor

Andrea LaMarre, MSc | University of Guelph, Guelph, Canada

Ashley Soloman, PsyD | Eating Recovery Center & Insight Behavioral Health Centers, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

June Alexander | Central Queensland University, Laburnum, Australia

Judy Krasna | F.E.A.S.T. (Families Empowered and Supporting Treatment of Eating Disorders) Israel Task Force, Bet Shemesh, Israel

The diversity in the eating disorders field is crystallized in online fora. From blogs to Twitter, we can find innumerable examples of differences in perspective that infuse this dynamic field—a great benefit, but also a major challenge of the online eating disorder field. In this workshop, we address how social media can bridge major gaps between organizations, researchers, health practitioners, caregivers and people with lived experience of an eating disorder. We discuss and demonstrate practical strategies to enable effective and ethical engagement with blogging, social media, and other online forms of communication.

Workshop participants, whether researchers, clinicians, or people with lived experience, will leave the workshop knowing how to understand and engage in lively discussions and debates happening online around the causes, correlates, and treatments for eating disorders. We will ask participants critical questions about how they have experienced social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and blogs and reflect on our own experiences. The presenters, each with high-level engagement in social media, will offer diverse perspectives to contribute to a thorough exploration of this topic. Each has used social media to advance their clinical, research, or advocacy pursuits. We begin the workshop by demonstrating the uses of social media and blogs, including as research tool, data gathering source, communication method, peer support platform, information provision mechanism, and research knowledge translation device. To promote discussion, we invite participants to engage with us in a dialogue about the potential barriers, drawbacks, and advantages to online engagement as bridging device. We conclude with interactive examples of techniques that allow respectful and effective sharing information dissemination, and audience engagement in online fora to encourage greater communication, transparency, and productive diversity in the eating disorder field.

Learning Objectives:

- 1 Identify strategies for respectful and productive online dialogue in the eating disorders field.
- 1 Appraise methods of diffusing and resolving conflict that may arise through disagreements in online debates about eating disorders.
- 1 Compare approaches to using social media and blogging to spread awareness about, and build engagement with, diverse stakeholders across the eating disorders continuum.