



Communications Toolkit

How to use Twitter



Twitter is one of a number of different social media platforms widely used to share ideas, announce news and make connections with people who share your interests.

This 'How to' gives you some basic ideas about how using Twitter can add value to your public outreach as a psychoanalyst.

You can find lots more guidance on getting the best out of Twitter, for example [Getting started with Twitter](#) and [The Twitter Glossary](#).

Please note:

This guide is designed to help you communicate to the public as an individual practitioner.

Be careful not to suggest or give the impression that you are representing the views of:

- The International Psychoanalytic Association
- Any Psychoanalytical Association, Society or Institute affiliated to the IPA (unless you have their written permission to do so).

Why tweet?

Twitter is particularly well suited for psychoanalysts who wish to communicate in the public arena yet maintain a professional voice.

You will be in good company if you join Twitter—the Pope tweets, as does the President of the United States and well-known intellectuals like Steven Pinker and Richard Dawkins. (check out @pontifex, @BarackObama, @sapinker, @Richard Dawkins)

Positive outcomes of becoming involved with social media include:

- Practice building by being visible as a person with wisdom worth paying attention to.
- Promoting the value of psychoanalysis.
- Intellectual stimulation: sharing your ideas and learning about others.
- Making connections with other professionals and the general public.

It is a good discipline to develop because:

- You must make your point clearly and concisely.
- It enables you to connect in real time with a potentially wide and diverse audience (there are some 300 million Twitter users worldwide).
- It is a easy, free way to promote events, blogs and other content you want to share.
- It is a quick, easy way to show your endorsement of another person's ideas (through liking or retweeting).
- It is easy to fit into your weekly schedule.

Tweeting using psychoanalytic ideas

Most of your tweets will be on general subjects, for example:

- Events in the news
- Mental health news
- Your reaction to someone else's tweet
- New books, films, exhibitions etc
- An experience you had, a response to a lecture/conference etc
- Your response to topical events – Awareness Days, anniversaries.

But can you give a psychoanalytic slant? For example:

- Provide in-depth understanding - we stand for 'what lies beneath'.
- Use an applied psychoanalysis approach.
- Apply a core psychoanalytic concept to the event or issue.

Here's one technique for thinking about how to write a tweet with a psychoanalytic viewpoint:

Think about the event or issue you want to comment on - something that grabs your attention - and then consider which one core psychoanalytic concept might be applicable and interesting, for example:

- Transference
- Counter transference
- Resistance
- Defense
- Conflict
- The Unconscious
- The relationship as an element of cure
- Narrative as an element of cure

Some examples:

Defense/Denial:

The first tweet is from William J Massicotte (@WJManalyst) dated Oct 2. The text reads: "It is not only political question; rather, an issue of the neurotic denial of reality that leads to no gun limits." It includes a retweeted tweet from The White House (@WhiteHouse) dated 12:46. The retweeted tweet text is: "We are the only advanced country in the world that sees these mass shootings every few months" —@POTUS #UCCShooting snpy.tv/1O6RNh6. The second tweet is from Prudence Gourguechon (@pgourguechon) dated Nov 6. The text reads: "Interesting views on policy ignoring trauma ubiquity in public health (&ignoring PH!) Denial/disavowal @ work? @sandrogalea #ISTSS2015".

Transference:

The tweet is from Todd Essig (@ToddEssig) dated Feb 23. The text reads: "Like never forgetting how to ride a bike, we never forget how we were first loved. Old relationship procedures remain onforb.es/1DKqNGf".

Twitter principles

Twitter is about **idea-casting** not **self-casting**. Tweet about ideas, not yourself.

For example:

“Seeing old friends at #IPABoston2015” is not that interesting.

“Neuroscience meets psychoanalysis at #IPABoston2015. See update on #Freud project” is about an idea and is interesting.

The positive culture of social media like Twitter is to share/give away specialized knowledge. You can use it to link to a blog or a website.

Using Twitter – some basic terms

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short messages called tweets. These can include images and links to websites.

Tweet

The message you send is a tweet. It cannot be longer than 140 characters.

Account name/handle

This is how you are identified on Twitter. It always begins with the @ symbol.

For example: Dr. William Massicotte is @wjmanalyst, Dr. Jorge Bruce is @jotabruce

You set up your own account name.

Bio

When you open a Twitter account, you have the opportunity to write a brief biographical statement that identifies you and your purpose.

For example: Dr. Marie Rudden’s Twitter account name is @MGRudden. She describes herself in her bio as “psychoanalyst, writer, researcher. Interested in group interactions and animal behavior, book-inhaler, horse/dog lover”

Twitter timeline

This is a list of all the tweets you receive from other people on Twitter. These are posts by the people you follow (see below). The most recent tweets are first. Depending on how frequently the people you follow post, your timeline can update very rapidly.

Hashtag (#)

A hashtag is a word or phrase used to distinguish the topic, event, concept or person referred to in the tweet.

For example *#Freud #IPA #psychoanalysis #IPABostonCongress*

Use hashtags so you can connect with others who are interested in the same topic.

For example, if you tweet: *Think #Freud is dead? Think again and read this article on #psychoanalysis*

- Anyone who types in #psychoanalysis in the search box will see your tweet in their timeline.
- You will get:
 - Tweets by everyone else in the world using the same #psychoanalysis hashtag.
 - A list of accounts of individuals and organizations interested in psychoanalysis.

Another use of hashtags is to tie together tweets around an **event**. At a congress, you'll often see a hashtag promoted on posters or projected slides, for example #IPABoston2015. This means that everyone who is tweeting about anything they think is interesting at the IPA Congress uses this hashtag and it links together all their posts.

Following

You chose who to follow on Twitter. When you follow someone, his or her tweets show up in your timeline. You get to see what they are thinking and what they are up to.

To make the most of following:

- Aim for a range of feeds depending on your interests.
- Don't just stick to psychoanalysis. See what thinkers in other fields are doing.
- See who your colleagues and people you are following are following - you'll learn about interesting people and groups that you would have never heard of otherwise.
- Avoid extremely frequent tweeters.
- Don't be afraid to 'unfollow'.
- Follow your colleagues.
- Follow @ipaonline.

Followers

Your followers are people who decide they want to see your tweets.

You build a following slowly. Don't worry if you have few followers - they will come. And even if you don't, following others gives you windows into the thinking of people all over the world.

Some tips on following:

- When you get a follower, look at their feed and see if you want to follow them.
- Reciprocate if appropriate.
- Avoid those who are following thousands of people.
- To thank or not to thank? Some people thank every new follower, e.g. they might tweet "@sfreud, thanks for following@. This can be annoying and is not recommended on a routine basis.
- Follow first - don't worry about followers. Look for interesting people to follow.

Links

By including a link to a website in your tweet you can direct readers to more online information such as a page on your Society website, your blog, your Facebook.

In order to keep within the 140 character limit, use an app such as bit.ly, ow.ly or goo.gl to shorten the url.

Images

Add photos to your tweets to make them more impactful and so more likely to be noticed and read. See our guidance about images in the **How to blog** factsheet.

Retweeting



This is the simplest type of tweet. When you see a tweet by someone you are following that you think contains an interesting idea or information you can just click on the retweet icon (see left) and it goes out to all your followers.

Trending/ going viral

Topics which are being discussed more than others at any given time, based on the number of people clicking onto a hashtag, are said to be 'trending'.

When a tweet spreads organically from one person to another, reaching a very large group, this is called 'going viral'. The viral effect is largely ephemeral but can create a campaign or

widescale attention for a period of time, e.g. #saveourdaughters #icebucketchallenge, which is picked up by other media.

A few words of caution on tweeting

- **Whose views are you giving?** If you work for an institution such as a university, hospital or government agency, anything you say can reflect on it. The same goes for your Psychoanalytical Association. Check with your organisation's press office for their social media policy.
- Your tweets carry your professional (and possibly private) **reputation**. Remember, your tweets last forever, can potentially be read by anyone and can be quoted.
- Ensure you do not include any content, which could be seen as **defamatory**.
- If you are writing in a way that might appear to be giving advice about psychological illness, you might want to include a **disclaimer** that this is general information and specific questions should be directed to a registered practitioner.
- Always honor patient and clinical **confidentiality**.
- Consider carefully whether you want to reveal any **personal beliefs** - political, religious etc - you hold.
- Tweeting is **conversational and interactive**. Your followers may tweet back - you can decide whether or not to respond.
- **Trolls** are people who write negative, attacking or otherwise toxic comments. Unfortunately, the anonymity of social media can allow and even encourage irrationality, even viciousness. All experts recommend ignoring comments from trolls. **Do not answer them.**