

Contributing to the Conversation

Emma G. Dukes

University of West Florida

Human Diversity and Social Justice - 10300 SOW4233

Ms. Michelle Kistler

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Over the past few years, social media has grown exponentially. With this growth, there has been a widespread source of information, though not all of this information is correct. Social media, you can post just about anything and it is designed for you to see the algorithm that you want to see so that you stay on longer. There has been a recent uptick in the past few months especially for a call to action involving human rights across the globe. Our profession calls for us to be advocates, to stand up for the people who are misheard and misrepresented and social media can be a strong platform.

Listening to people is one of the most powerful tools that we can have in this world. No matter where you are, you can find people who can add to the conversation on either side. I feel as though it is important to hear every side to the story because with both accounts you are able to make an informed decision that suits you best. Some conversations are going to be hard, some of it is going to be difficult to hear which can be due to many reasons. Some of these reasons include it being devastating to hear about or some may feel as though the discussion does not concern them. As social workers, we do need to add to the conversation and to utilize a tool like social media would be such a win. Your message could be widespread across the country to help more people, including co-workers that may need the resource of your message.

Staying silent in the charged climate that we are in today is dangerous. There is so much in this world that needs to be brought to the attention of the people. Imagine the changes that can be accomplished if there was widespread news coverage on the problems that the people face. Recently the biggest event that I can think of are the camps that are spreading throughout college campuses in solidarity of the crisis happening with Israel and Palestine. The students are calling for action and it is being spread on several social media platforms and it is continuing to grow.

With all of this new information gathered, people are making changes. With the high presence on social media, it puts pressure onto the people in charge including our policy makers here in the United States. Not all press is good press and we are seeing that with how the college campuses are handling the situations with their students. Some colleges took an extreme move and had the National Guard called in or the police, others have stated that they are meeting the measures that the students are calling for. So, while some campuses are getting positive press, others are getting torn apart by the media as well as the police officers and military. Columbia was one of the first colleges to have a Pro-Palestine encampment that called for the ceasefire of Gaza according to MSN.com author James Bickerton. After many days of police presence, it was when there was a huge movement on social media that led to more encampments across varying campuses in the United States that led to the Dean's of universities to think about making a change (Treisman, 2024).

If we want to see change, we have to be part of the conversation. Change is important for our clients and ourselves and to make any significant moves, we have to take part in the change. Some people feel as if they have no voice or that the only representation they get is from you as their social worker, so utilizing a tool that can reach almost everyone with a phone is a game changer for the field. These hard conversations need to be discussed because if we let it go and brush it off, we exclude communities that need our help. Without our voice, people who need help can be ignored and forgotten about but when we bring attention to it utilizing all of the tools we are able to use, we get the clients the most possible help they can receive.

While I talked mainly about xenophobia that is being called to attention, there are a lot of other problems within not only our nation but around the world that can benefit from social media. Racism was a big topic on social media in the past few years and there have been

multiple calls to action in the aftermath of posting on social media. With an increase of people that are able to see the postings, the more attention that it is able to receive and the higher likelihood that real change is going to be made. Human rights are always going to be a topic that we should advocate for and being silent on the matter, whether that be social media or another platform, is harming your clients. We need to strive to our best ability to get our patient the best outcome and without adding your voice to the conversation, you are a part of the problem.

References

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