



Ontario Nurses' Association

How to Navigate Social Media Effectively:

A Best Practices Primer From Your Union



Background

Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Instagram make casual conversations very easy.

Social media is an online forum for building relationships and engaging with others. It's a place to exchange ideas and information, to find out late-breaking news and updates, to watch how-to videos and so much more. It's an easy way to be in-the-know about the topics that interest you.

As a health-care professional, you are evaluated at a higher standard regarding your "communications." You should feel free to follow and participate in conversations on social media while ensuring you are meeting your professional standard expectations.

Although these are online tools, you have the same responsibilities online as you do anywhere else. Here are a few ways to make sure you're meeting them. ▷





The Yays

- **Use social media to research and discover** current trends, ideas and best practices on a host of topics including labour, health care and politics.
- **Follow topics and organizations that interest you.** Virtually all companies and organizations maintain social media profiles, and ONA is no different. Be sure to follow us @ontarionurses on Twitter & Facebook, and @ontario.nurses on Instagram to keep up with news, events, advocacy and much more.
- **Make sure you use appropriate privacy settings** on your social media accounts. Privacy settings are located in your profile settings on each social media platform. Make sure to check yours often as they can change regularly.
- **Be respectful and tactful with your posts.** Remember, you are representing yourself and your profession. Anything you post or share could be seen by your employer, a co-worker or patients and their families—even when posted to a private account!
- If you post on social media, please **make sure you use your own personal device.** Using your workplace's computer or employer-sponsored mobile device is a no-no, and you could be disciplined.



The Nays

- **Social media is instant. Remember anything you post could be seen by anyone.** Deleting a post will not ensure it is permanently gone from the world wide web. Use caution when posting information on social media.
- It's not wise to post information that is **inflammatory, insensitive, off-topic or that contains foul language.** You can post comments of an opposing viewpoint, but do so in a constructive and respectful manner. If you see inflammatory comments in an online discussion, do not respond. This will only continue the rhetoric.
- Do not post any information – including photos – **about your patients, clients, residents, their families, coworkers or your workplaces.** This breaches your professional boundaries and privacy laws. ONA members have been disciplined for their inappropriate social media use so please take heed.
- Likewise, **do not provide medical advice through social media.** It is not appropriate and it breaches your professional standards.
- Protect yourself online. **“Phishing”** is an online social media scam where people try to convince you to give them key pieces of information – for instance credit card numbers or login information to your social media accounts. The “phishing” information usually includes a link for you to click on which will take you to what looks like a login page. But by filling in your login info, your account will be the next one spreading the phishing message. It will spam your friends with messages about get-rich-quick schemes and more!

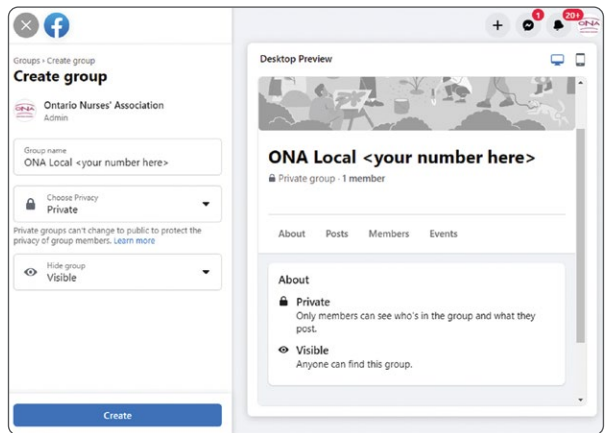


Facebook: How to Create and Manage a Facebook Group Page

Several ONA Locals have created their own Facebook group pages to help communicate with their Local members. This is an excellent way for members to be in-the-know and engaged with ONA happenings.

How to Create a Facebook Group Page

When viewing Facebook on a desktop browser, click the blue F logo in the top-left corner to return to Facebook's home screen, then click "Groups" under "Suggested". Next click the blue "+ Create new group" button.



On the Create Group screen, fill out the fields. One suggestion to name the group is, "ONA Local <your number here>". Do not put a zero in front of your Local number.

There are three different types of groups on Facebook.

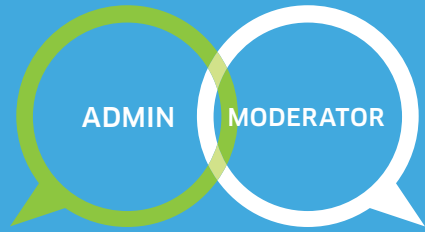
Each has its own privacy settings.

- 1. Public:** Anyone can join or be added or invited by a member of the group. This is the most open and accessible type of group.
- 2. Private – Visible:** This group will appear in Facebook searches. Anyone can ask to join the group or be added by a member. The majority of ONA Local Facebook groups are “Private – Visible”.
- 3. Private – Hidden:** This group will not appear on Facebook searches. Anyone can join the group, but they need to be added by a member.

Once you've set up your ONA group, you can now begin to build your follower base. You can use the blue “+ Invite” button to start adding members to the group from your friends list. You can also send invitations by email using this button. Alternatively, you can copy the URL for your Facebook group and send that to colleagues to make it easier for them to join the group.

Who should administer and moderate a Local Facebook group page?

There are two main roles in a Facebook group:



An admin (the highest role) is a person who can manage all information within the group including creating admins and moderators, manage group settings (such as naming the group, adjusting group privacy settings, etc.), approve group members and approve and delete posts and comments.

A moderator can approve or deny membership requests, approve or delete posts and comments and remove or block people from the group.

With a group Facebook page, it's best to have at least two admins who have complete access to the page. Ideally, the Facebook group admins should be members of the Bargaining Unit. ONA staff should not be a group Facebook page administrator.

ONA staff can help with the set up, but it is ultimately up to the Local Facebook group admins to determine page membership and content.

What to post

It's best to know who your Facebook audience is – in this case ONA members. Your goal is to communicate what's happening at your Bargaining Unit, at ONA Local and ONA provincially and in the greater labour and health-care community.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- Your Local and Bargaining Unit union meetings, events and updates from employers. It is very easy to create a Facebook event for your members. Simply click on the “Events” tab in the top navigation of your Facebook group and follow the steps. Or email digital@ona.org for assistance.
- Any information from ONA Provincial Office including news, events, education opportunities, campaign updates, calls to action, and more.

Information from other labour organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

How to enhance your Facebook page

- **Post a cover photo.** This is an excellent opportunity to make your Local stand out and show your members what you're all about. The cover photo sits directly at the top of your Facebook Group page.
- **Post a profile picture.** Again, it adds recognition for your audience and becomes familiar with your members. This is the picture that shows up in news-feeds and searches so it should be clear and crisp.
- **Post your Facebook group link on your Local website,** tell ONA Provincial Office that your Local has a Facebook page, and produce a flyer to post on your ONA bulletin board to spread the word and to get more members to follow your group page.
- **Given that your page is representing ONA,** you need to adhere to ONA's branding and logo usage. Please contact ONA at digital@ona.org for further information.

**Need a cover photo?
Ask ONA!
Email: digital@ona.org**

**Need a profile
picture? Ask ONA!
Email: digital@ona.org**



ONA has an App!

Download it today!

We have created the ONA App which provides you with direct access to need-to-know information.

Filled with news, events, collective agreements and more, the App is a new mobile digital way to keep you apprised of ONA happenings and actions.

Download it on to your mobile device today through the Apple Store or Google Play.

Questions about the App? Email ONA at AppFeedback@ona.org

The Benefits of Twitter

Twitter is a fast way to communicate to a group of people simultaneously.

A tweet – which is a 280-character message including spaces – provides quick facts and information about topics. It's easy to set up a Twitter account: go to www.twitter.com, enter your email address and your user name (use the same naming convention as your Facebook page, for example ONALocalXX) and you can begin. Be sure to follow @ontarionurses and retweet our tweets.

Twitter tips:

- **Follow organizations and individuals that may be of interest.** For instance you may want to follow labour organizations, local media outlets, health-care workplaces and others. Always start slowly – it's easy to be overwhelmed with information overload on Twitter.
- **If you want to mention a person or organization in your tweet use the @ symbol and the name.** This way, they are advised that they are mentioned in the tweet. For example: "Check out @ontarionurses new campaign!" @ontarionurses will be aware that it was mentioned in a tweet. If you mention someone at the beginning of your tweet, put a period (.) at the beginning. For example, ".@ontarionurses just launched a new campaign. Check it out here!"
- **Use a hashtag (#) in your tweets.** Hashtags are used to categorize things on Twitter. It is considered best practice to use no more than three hashtags in a single tweet. Some hashtags that ONA uses often include:



#onpoli (Ontario politics)
#onlab (Ontario labour)

Trusted Sources

In the era of “fake news,” it is best to follow sources that have like-values to your own.

The Ontario Nurses' Association relies on organizations that use facts to determine a stance on an issue. ONA regularly follows these organizations:

- **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions** (@CFNU) – a national voice for 200,000 nurses and nursing students, the CFNU advocates for a stronger health-care system and better workplace for all nurses.
- **Global Nurses United** (@GlobalNursesU) – more than 200,000 health-care professionals representing 14 nations across the world, GNU fights against austerity, privatization and cuts in health-care services.
- **Ontario Health Coalition** (@OntarioHealthC) – a strong network of community organizations from across Ontario, the OHC engages stakeholders to help protect and improve Ontario's public health care system.
- **Canadian Labour Congress** (@canadianlabour) – the national voice for Canadian labour representing more than 3.3 million workers.
- **Ontario Federation of Labour** (@OFLabour) – the OFL represents more than 50 unions and more than one million workers who stand up for workers' rights and is a powerful voice in Ontario's labour movement.

The Bottom Line

The more you know about social media and how it works, the better off and more empowered you will be to use it. Make sure you also know your employer's rules about social media and follow them.

And, while there has been disciplinary action against ONA members' use of social media in the past, our hope is that additional resources and information will help curb these complaints.

Be Professional! Get Loud!

ONA is here to help you with your social media questions and concerns. Please contact the Communications and Government Relations Team at digital@ona.org or speak with your Labour Relations Officer.

