

Social media in social work practice

The social work profession is underpinned by a value base which is philosophically rooted in social justice, reducing inequalities, empowerment, advocacy and enablement, promoting choice and personal development. The values of social work which rest on respect, dignity and strengthening individuals, families and communities are challenging to adhere to in a political and economic climate which sees social workers publicly blamed and castigated when errors are made, and yet still we try to uphold them and work towards the greater good. As this book illustrates social media technologies have opened up participatory ways of working, and facilitating ways of communicating our work and practice to wider public and global audiences.

Social media provides a virtual environment where knowledge about the social work profession and practice is shared. The virtual environment has come to offer a space for social interaction which potentially extends our relationality, how we relate to and with others. The virtual environments we create on social media offers service users, carers and professionals' spaces for engagement, relationship building, therapeutic or other formal interventions. Amidst this digitally mediated social environment, we are exposed to and interact with pain, distress and trauma, and simultaneously the minutiae and tedium of everyday life, this book discusses how and when we align our professional values in this environment.