Social Media for Outreach and Service Engagement among LGBT Homeless Youth

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Goals of today’s talk

• Review some older findings on homeless youth and social media use (from 2009)
• Discuss new data collected 2011-2013 on social media use
• Focus specifically on LGBTQ youth and how they use social media
• Discuss how social media use may contribute to service use
• Discuss ideas for the future of social media as outreach tool
Homeless Youth: Risk and Service Needs

- 36,000+ in Los Angeles each year (Rice et al., 2013)
- 8000+ each night (LAHSA, 2013)
- Many barriers to housing and health services
- Risk behaviors consistently linked to network ties
Adolescents and Social Media

Social media may be crucial to homeless youth because it opens opportunities for them to reach out to influences beyond street life.

- Internet use among housed adolescents is nearly ubiquitous. 96% of youth use the internet. (Livingstone, 2008; Livingstone & Brake, 2010)

- The role of the internet among at-risk adolescents (such as runaway and homeless youth) has however been less forthcoming and needs further investigation (Mitchell et al., 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005).
Social Media and Homeless Youth

• 85% of youth use the internet at least once a week (Rice et al., 2010)
• 57% checked their Facebook account the last time they got online (Rice & Barman-Adhikari, 2013)
• Youth who use the internet to connect to case workers are more likely to report using the internet to look for job and housing (Rice & Barman-Adhikari, 2013)
• LGBT youth are more likely to use the internet to look for HIV testing and sexual health information than heterosexual youth (Barman-Adhikari & Rice, 2011)
LBGT Homelessness

• Homelessness is more common among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth.
  • Data from Corliss et al. 2011 – MA, statewide
  • Data from Rice et al. 2012 – Los Angeles
• About 1 in 3 LGBT youth experience homelessness
• In LA LGBT youth less likely to use shelter services
The YouthNet Study

October 2011 – July 2013

1026 Homeless Youth - 287 are LGBTQ

Recruited and interviewed at drop in centers in Los Angeles

Social Network and Social Networking Technology Study

Funded by National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH093336)
Gender

- Female: 27%
- Male: 72%
- MTF: 1%
- FTM: 0%
Sexual Orientation

- 75% Heterosexual
- 14% Bisexual
- 7% Queer
- 3% Homosexual
- 1% Questioning
Gender - LGBTQ

- Male: 46%
- Female: 50%
- MTF: 2%
- FTM: 2%
Sexual Orientation - LGBTQ

- Homosexual: 56%
- Queer: 11%
- Bisexual: 30%
- Questioning: 3%

USC School of Social Work
University of Southern California
How often do you use social networking websites like MySpace, Facebook or Twitter

- Never: 14.29%
- Less than Once a Week: 17.37%
- Once a Week: 10.81%
- Once Every Couple of Days: 15.83%
- Once a Day: 18.15%
- Several Times a Day: 23.55%
When you use social networking websites like MySpace, Facebook or Twitter, who do you communicate with?

- People from Class: 13.24
- People from a Job: 12.54
- Caseworker: 9.76
- People Met Online: 25.09
- People from the Streets: 39.02
- Partners: 40.77
- People from Home: 40.07

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When you use social networking websites, what do you typically “talk” to your friends about?

- Goals: 14.63%
- Family Issues: 24.04%
- School Work: 22.3%
- Being Homeless: 24.74%
- Sex/Love: 8.36%
- Drugs: 33.45%
- Media: 32.75%
Services Used in the Past Month - LGBTQ Youth

- Help with School: 36.93
- Therapy: 44.95
- Help Finding a Job: 56.79
- Condom: 43.55
- Health: 55.75
- Shelter: 54.36
- Clothes: 78.4
## Adjusted Logistic regression of social media use and service utilization (n=287), Los Angeles, Ca

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Behavior</th>
<th>Shelter OR 95% CI</th>
<th>Health OR 95% CI</th>
<th>Condom OR 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking to someone from home</td>
<td>0.784 (.440, 1.40)</td>
<td>1.14 (.634, 2.05)</td>
<td>0.537 (.289, .997)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to people met on streets</td>
<td>0.744 (.416, 1.33)</td>
<td>0.551 (304, 998)*</td>
<td>0.825 (.452, 1.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to a caseworker</td>
<td>2.57 (1.03, 6.38)*</td>
<td>2.78 (1.07, 7.21)*</td>
<td>0.935 (.381, 2.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about school/work</td>
<td>1.33 (.675, 2.64)</td>
<td>2.7 (1.27, 5.60)**</td>
<td>0.936 (.464, 1.89)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note all models control for age, gender, race. *=p<.05, **=p<.01
**Adjusted Logistic regression of social media use and service utilization (n=287), Los Angeles, Ca**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Behavior</th>
<th>Job Help</th>
<th></th>
<th>Therapy</th>
<th></th>
<th>School Help</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to someone from home</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>(.310, 1.02)</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>(.332, 1.11)</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>(.380, 1.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to people met on streets</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>(.228, .759)**</td>
<td>0.454</td>
<td>(.246, .835)*</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>(.209, .797)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to a caseworker</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>(.719, 4.17)</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>(.959, 5.40)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>(.617, 3.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about school/work</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>(1.35, 6.00)**</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>(.772, 3.04)</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>(.916, 3.87)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: all models control for age, gender, race. *=p<.05, **=p<.01
LGBTQ Youth Are on Social Media

• 86% of LGBTQ homeless youth use social media
• 24% of them use is several times a day
• They are “talking” about lots of important stuff:
  • 25% about being homeless
  • 22% about work or school
  • 24% about family issues
• Talking about school and work is associated with using employment services
It matters who you reach out to

- 39% connected to people met on the streets
- 10% connected to case workers/agency staff

- Connecting to people met on the streets associated with less use of job, therapy, and school services.
- Connecting to case workers was associated with increases in using shelter and health services.
Limitations

• Cross sectional data – no causality

• Generalizability – This is LA data from drop in centers
So what do we do now?

• A minority of LGBTQ youth are using social media to connect to case workers but they are using shelters and health services
• How do we meet them where they are at?
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Supported by National Institute of Mental Health: R01 MH903336  
Thanks to my co-authors: Amanda Yoshioka-Maxwell, Harmony Rhoades, Anamika Barman-Adhikari, Hailey Winetrobe.  

Thanks the homeless  
youth of LA!