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Technical Assistance Guidance

Developing Social Media Campaigns for Domestic Violence Awareness Month

by Rachel Haas

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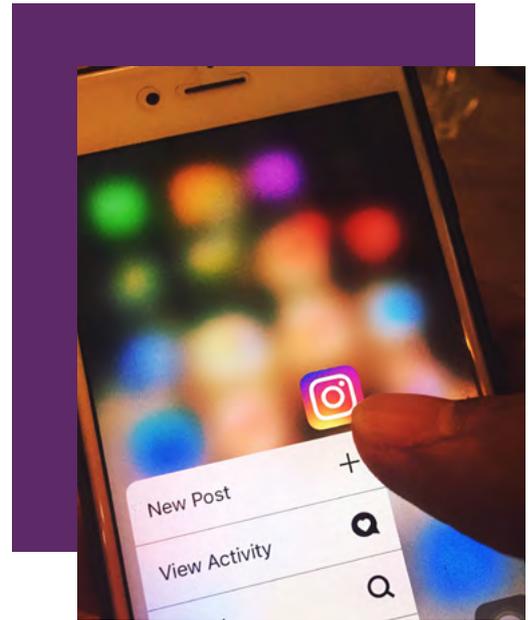


DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
AWARENESS
PROJECT



National Resource Center
on Domestic Violence

Social media is a powerful tool to reach and engage people around your organization’s mission and core values. According to Nielsen ([2017](#)), adults in the United States spend nearly a quarter (22%) of their overall weekly media time using social media — an average of five hours and 30 minutes each week. Plus, unlike traditional media channels like television, radio, print and billboards, social media enables two-way communication in real-time, which presents an opportunity to engage a variety of stakeholders to further your organization’s goals.



While some question the efficacy of social media’s ability to create real-world change, over time we’ve seen social media play a critical role in movement-building – online communities create a space for all voices, enabling visibility to those that have been historically overlooked or misrepresented. Organizations can benefit from social media by using digital channels to reach broad and diverse audiences directly, drive meaningful, two-way conversations, and mobilize people to act, all without relying on mainstream media and traditional communication channels. From [#DudesGreetingDudes](#) calling attention to street harassment to [#FreeBresha](#) bringing national attention to the injustices of criminal justice system experienced by youth of color, online activism can successfully call attention to pressing social issues that might not otherwise make headlines. Social media is a critical component of an effective communications strategy for every grassroots movement and nonprofit organization, especially in today’s ever-connected world.

Whether your goals are unifying your supporters, educating the public, amplifying marginalized voices, starting well-informed conversations, seizing public attention

around these issues, or raising money for existing efforts—social media can be another method to further your organization’s mission.

This Technical Assistance (TA) Guidance is designed to support community-based domestic violence agencies and state coalitions at varying capacity levels in developing impactful social media campaigns for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) and beyond.



Social Media for Social Change Case Examples

#WhyIStayed

Bev Gooden was not a domestic violence activist or advocate when she posted a few tweets that sparked a national conversation. In fact, she had never publicly talked about the abuse she experienced but as a domestic violence survivor, she understood how difficult leaving an abusive relationship is (Gooden, 2014). In September 2014, as public outrage surged around the tragic Ray Rice video footage showing Rice assaulting his then-fiancée, Janay Rice, inside an elevator, the public increasingly focused on Janay Rice’s decision to stay in the relationship. Frustrated and distraught over the public’s misplaced blame and shame for Janay, Gooden took to Twitter to move the conversation away from victim-blaming—she tweeted why she stayed with her abuser: “I stayed because my pastor told me that God hates divorce. It didn’t cross my mind that God might hate abuse, too. #WhyIStayed” (Gooden, 2014).

Shortly after, the hashtag was trending—thousands of survivors and allies used #WhyIStayed to share their stories, effectively seizing the public’s attention and bringing the complex realities of domestic violence to national headlines and into the public consciousness. Bev Gooden’s #WhyIStayed tweets sparked a national conversation with a total of 198,696 original tweets and retweets between September 8, 2014 and December 1, 2014 (Big Mountain Data, 2015). According to an analysis of the #WhyIStayed tweets conducted by Big Mountain Data (2015) in partnership with Salesforce and The Tremendousness Collective, “the fast-paced, viral exchange empowered survivors to come forward en masse from out of the shadows of an abusive past. Survivors found refuge and resolve in the community that grew organically with each subsequent tweet and media mention.”



#BlackLivesMatter

#BlackLivesMatter (BLM) might have started as a hashtag, but since it was first used as a call to action after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was killed in 2013, it has grown into a massive grassroots movement for fighting anti-Black racism that helped spur a national conversation around the ubiquitous police violence endured by innocent Black Americans. Black Lives Matter used social media to reach the masses, bypassing mainstream media to tell their own narratives and effectively complicate the narrative of a “post-racial” America. Social media, especially the widespread use of videos, was critical in shedding light on racial injustice after the tragic killings of [Eric Garner](#), [Michael Brown](#), [Freddie Gray](#), [Sandra Bland](#), [Philando Castile](#), [Charleena Lyles](#) and more.

According to American University Center for Media & Social Impact study on #BlackLivesMatter and social media usage, “Like many important but invisible issues, police brutality was for many years the exclusive concern of the communities most affected by it. The rise of BLM changed that” (Freelon, Mcllwain & Clark, 2016). BLM offers many learnings on how activists can leverage social media to raise public awareness, amplify the voices of marginalized voices, organize, and galvanize broad support for social and racial justice (Freelon, Mcllwain & Clark, 2016).

This TA Guidance will help you develop a social media campaign for DVAM through seven key steps:

1. Identifying Potential Partners
2. Determining Campaign Goals
3. Defining Intended Audience
4. Developing Key Messaging
5. Setting Communications Strategy (including Channel Mix and Content Mix)
6. Implementing Action Plan
7. Monitoring & Evaluating Campaign Impact



1. Identifying Potential Partners

There is an unfortunate tendency to begin planning in silos and then look to form partnerships after the campaign has already been planned. However, inviting individuals and groups as partners as early as possible in the campaign development process shows potential partners that you respect and recognize their expertise and want them to take a leadership role in framing and guiding the campaign design. Especially when working with culturally-specific organizations, reaching out at the very beginning of campaign conceptualization is a more authentic, mutually-beneficial collaborative approach, rather than a symbolic effort to have representation or appear inclusive. This later practice is called tokenism or Trickle-Down Community Engagement and even when unintentional, can be highly damaging to marginalized communities and can hurt your relationships with culturally-specific agencies led by marginalized communities ([Le, 2015](#)).

When built respectfully, collaborative partnerships can help amplify your campaign's reach and bring more meaningful community engagement and action, thereby

advancing your organization's goals. If community partners are crucial to your campaign's success, consider whether your organization can provide dedicated funding for the community-specific organizations with whom you are hoping to partner.



2. Determining Campaign Goals

Determine the campaign’s goals early on in your process, as they will inform everything else – the intended audience(s), messages, and communications strategy. If your organization has identified overall priorities for the year, compare your social media campaign goals with these priorities to ensure that they are mutually aligned. If your organization has not engaged in strategic planning, consider whether your social media campaign goals align with your organization’s mission.

The goals for your social media campaign should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

Tip -> Whether you’re a volunteer or an Executive Director, consider your staffing resources and needs when determining SMART goals. It may be better to start small – remember, you can always go back to add another goal.

	Organization’s Overall Mission	Organization’s Objectives, Priorities or Theme for DVAM	Social Media Campaign Goals
Example Local Program	Help survivors and their children in greater Detroit heal from abuse	Engage youth and youth allies (parents, teachers, coaches, etc.) in outreach and education	Increase email subscribers by 25%
Example State Coalition	End intimate partner violence and all forms of violence against women	Change the conversation about domestic and sexual violence to focus on prevention and intersectionality	Increase social media engagement by 25%
Example Culturally-specific Agency	Drive social change to address the disproportionate rates of violence impacting Native communities	Inspire attention and action to address domestic, sexual, institutional, cultural and societal violence against Native women and children	Raise \$2,500 from general public (non-Native sources) to help fund social change clubs for youth
Your Organization			

3. Defining Intended Audience

The audience for your DVAM campaign should be based on the campaign’s goals. While it may be easier to communicate with communities stated in your organization’s mission, it is important to focus on specific groups that help achieve your stated goals. Ask yourself: Who is in a position to have the most impact towards the stated goals?

Tip -> Avoid the common pitfall of trying to reach everyone. While your organization overall might have a broad range of audiences over time, when developing a specific campaign, it is crucial to narrow your audience and identify subgroups or subset audiences to whom you can tailor your messages and more effectively engage. You may want to begin with identifying your primary audience and then secondary audiences.

When specifying your intended audiences, consider age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, geography (rural and urban), class, religion, sexual orientation, immigrant status, physical or mental abilities, and other aspects of identity and culture. You may also want to consider behavioral or cultural characteristics like media or technology usage.

	Organization’s Overall Mission	Organization’s Objectives, Priorities or Theme for DVAM	Campaign Goals	Intended audience
Example Organization A	Help survivors and their children in greater Detroit heal from abuse	Engage youth and youth allies in outreach and education	Increase email subscribers by 10%	Parents, teachers, and coaches, and trusted adults in the lives of youth in Detroit
Example Organization B	End intimate partner violence and all forms of gender-based violence	Change the conversation about domestic and sexual violence to focus on prevention and intersectionality	Drive people to share and discover stories about women of color’s gendered experience of police brutality	For story sharing: Women and girls of color including youth, queer, trans and disabled black women For engagement: Cisgender men and white women

Example Organization C	Drive social change to address the disproportionate rates of violence impacting Native communities	Inspire attention and action to address domestic, sexual, institutional, cultural and societal violence against Native women and children	Raise \$5,000 from general public (non-Native sources) to help fund youth-led social change clubs	Primary Audience: Parents with kids in cities near reservations Secondary Audience: Local business leaders
Your Organization				

4. Developing Key Messaging

Now that you have determined the audience for your campaign, with input from your partners, you can begin developing messages. First, learn as much as possible about your audience – what are their needs, beliefs, motivators, challenges? Understanding your audience’s motivating factors will help you create compelling messages that lead to meaningful engagement and action.

Tip -> Make sure that both your language and visuals are inclusive. Are the voices and lived experiences of historically marginalized populations in the communities you serve represented? One of the most common pitfalls is to default to white-centric, heteronormative representations and messages that already dominate our culture. Unintentional or not, this practice can run the risk of perpetuating the social norms and structural inequalities that you are trying to dismantle – and can cause further damage to communities that have been marginalized, neglected and rendered invisible by mainstream media for too long.

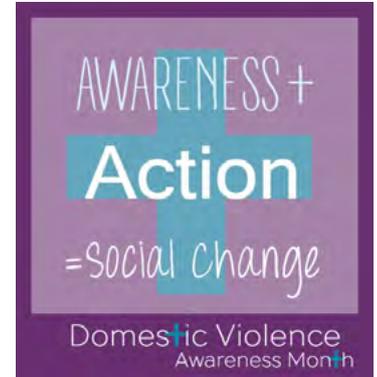
Ways to ensure your campaign is informed by the needs of your intended audience:

- Conduct a needs assessment survey and/or focus groups to better understand your intended audience’s needs and ensure that your campaign messaging is informed by the group you are trying to serve.

Tip -> If you don’t have the time or resources to conduct a full needs assessment, use insights pages. Rebecca De Leon, Casa de Esperanza’s Communications and Marketing Coordinator says, “Using any social media platform’s insights page will give you a better look at who exactly is engaging with you there.” To learn more, Casa de Esperanza hosted a [webinar](#) with information and tips on utilizing social media platforms’ insights pages to advance your nonprofits work ([Casa de Esperanza, 2017](#)).

- Engage your intended audience in the development of your campaign by actively involving them in planning, designing, implementation, and monitoring.
- Partner with culturally-specific organizations serving the intended audience you identified and listed in Step A.

Some organizations may develop core messaging based around a theme that they wish to carry through all activities and communications, like NRC DV’s “Awareness + Action = Social Change” framework and other campaigns that are more than consciousness raising. If this is the case with your organization, remember to ensure that the thematic messaging is incorporated into the campaign’s key messages.



Next, you can begin developing specific messaging. What kinds of messages will grab your audience’s attention and motivate them to take action? List the messages and call to actions below:

Audience	Key Messages	Call to action
Example: Parents	Your voice matters. Talk to your teens.	Take the pledge to start the conversation: [URL]
	If they don’t hear from you, what will they hear?	Get 5 quick tips to start the conversation: [URL]
	Talking with teens can be challenging. Having meaningful, ongoing conversations about healthy relationships is key to promoting your son or daughter’s health and safety.	It’s important to talk – and listen – to your teen. Learn how you can talk with your kids about healthy relationships from a parent who did: [URL] Share and tag two other parents!

5. Setting Communications Strategy

Channel Mix

In addition to understanding your audience's needs, beliefs, actions, motivators and challenges, it is also helpful to identify key insights about your intended audience's engagement with and consumption of social media. [Pew Internet](#), [Nielsen](#) and [Cone Communications](#) can provide helpful insight on how your intended audience is using social media. Understanding where and how your audience is using social media, in the context of the goals of your campaign, will influence the direction of your messages and your communications strategy. Just because your audience is on a certain social network does not necessarily mean they are actively engaging on that platform.

Using the insights you discovered about your campaign's intended audience will help you determine the best channels to communicate with your intended audience.



Content Mix

When planning the content for your campaign, it's important to create compelling posts for your intended audience, on the specific channels you selected from the array that are available.

DVAM Campaign Example:

The National Resource Center Against Domestic Violence leveraged social media to support the promotion of DVAM 2016 activities and events. Using the overarching hashtag #DVAM2016, NRCDV's social media strategy centered around two campaigns: #WhyICare and #ThisIsDV. The NRCDV used Twitter as the primary channel for the #WhyICare campaign and Facebook as the primary channel for the #ThisIsDV campaign, aimed at illuminating the multifaceted nature of domestic violence. In order to amplify these campaigns, NRCDV equipped national, regional partners and coalitions with a #DVAM2016 Social Media Guide that included a full listing of the NRCDV events, ways to get involved and sample social media messages.

Tip -> Create platform-specific content. Failure to do so will likely lead to poor results. For example, if your channel mix is heavily focused on Instagram, your content mix should be informed by Instagram's strengths. Instagram is a place for visual storytelling through high quality, beautiful photos and short video clips, so appropriate content could be high-resolution portraits, short video clips that loop back and forth (utilizing the [Boomerang application from Instagram](#)) or a first-person time-lapse video (using the [Hyperlapse application from Instagram](#)).

In addition to images and videos, other types of content you can use in your campaign include listicles, infographics, GIFs, memes, blogs, Podcasts, Spotify playlists, Storify stories, and much more. Below are some (but not all) additional examples of content to consider in your planning process. You may want to focus on one or two types of content for each campaign – including too many types of content may lead to a disjointed and less effective campaign. **See the Tools and Resources Supplement for a list of helpful Content Creation Tools and Design Resources.**

Twitter

- [Twitter Polls](#): A Twitter Poll lets your supporters weigh in on something. You can also create a weekly Twitter Poll as a “question of the week.”
- [Periscope](#): Twitter’s live video streaming platform is a great platform to build more personal relationships with supporters.
- [Twitter Cards](#): Twitter offers a variety of Twitter Cards that allow organizations to communicate beyond 140 characters. For example, organizations can use Twitter’s free Lead Generation Card to capture e-mail address and grow your e-mail list. (In order to set up Twitter Cards, you must access Twitter Ads. While the Lead Generation Card is free, you may have to add a credit card to your account in order to access the tools in Twitter Ads. Then you can post the Cards for free or spend money to promote the cards.
- **Twitter Ads**: While Twitter Ads cost money, you do not necessarily need to invest a lot to create customized content that reaches your intended audience. Many nonprofits are using social media advertising so that their messages rise above the noise. Twitter Ads enables organizations to create campaigns [based on geography, age, interests, ethnicity, device, behavior, tailored audiences and more. Tailored audiences](#), for example, can help you reach specific groups of people, which is particularly useful if you’re looking to engage a group of people that attended an event of yours or reengage inactive donors or subscribers on your email list.

Facebook

- **Facebook Live**: Stream your DVAM events live using [Facebook Live](#).
- **Facebook Q&A**: Hosting a Facebook Q&A with a public figure¹ or use Facebook Live to host a live chat to answer questions from your supporters. You have probably seen Q&A’s hosted by celebrities, musicians or politicians, but that should not deter you – you do not need an influencer to host an inspiring, informative Q&A. For example, you could host a live chat with an expert in

¹ Public figures, media companies or brands with a verified Page can host a Q&A in partnership with a nonprofit. While the public figure must host the Q&A, the public figure can tag and mention the nonprofit and the nonprofit can work with the public figure in advance to draft language and compile resources to promote during the live Q&A. Additionally, public figures can invite the nonprofit to join as a page admin to help moderate comments. For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/get-started/qa>

your field if your goal is to inform. If your goal is to drive action (like making a donation), you could give people a behind-the-scenes look at the impact your organization is making by hosting a Q&A with an advocate who participates in or benefits from the project you are fundraising for.²

- **Events:** Now you can sell tickets³ or encourage registration directly on Facebook without requiring people to leave the Facebook app or site.
- **Fundraisers:** US-Based 501(c)(3) organizations can fundraise using [Facebook's peer-to-peer fundraising tool](#), which enables your supporters to raise money from their network for your nonprofit directly on Facebook. Also, nonprofits can [add a donate button](#) directly on their Facebook page.

Instagram

- **Instagram Stories:** Following the growing popularity of Snapchat's disappearing photos, Instagram added [Stories](#) as a new feature, enabling users to upload multiple photos and videos in real-time, disappearing in 24 hours. Stories are a great way to give your followers a behind-the-scenes look at your organization's work. Remember to save these posts for future reference, or to re-post as a permanent post on Instagram later.
- **Instagram Takeovers:** Organizations can host an Instagram "takeover" where staff or influencers manage the organization's Instagram account for a day. Another way to host a takeover is reach out to influencers, businesses, and/or local media outlets (especially those that share your organization's intended audience) and invite them to donate their social media account for a day so your organization can takeover their Instagram account to showcase the important work you do in the community year-round. Remember, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a great incentive for external partners like influencers, businesses, and local media to get visibility for their commitment to social justice and empowering local communities.

YouTube

- **Donation Cards:** Raise money on YouTube by adding [donation cards](#) to videos. Maximize reach by sharing the video on other social media platforms like Google+ and Facebook. Not only can your organization raise money using the donation card, anyone can use donation cards to fundraise for your organization with 100% of the funds going to your organization—Google covers the fees!

² Kenya Fairley, former program director at the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, presented guidance on preparing survivors for public speaking (including considerations for unique populations) and advice for victim advocates seeking to maximize survivors' physical and emotional safety and ensure the overall success of the speaking engagement: <https://vimeo.com/37992827>

³ If you're an event organizer that uses Official Events through Ticketmaster or Eventbrite, you can sell tickets directly on Facebook through the Facebook Official Events API. To learn more, contact your ticketing partner. Eventbrite ticket sellers can visit https://www.eventbrite.com/blog/boost-sales-by-selling-tickets-on-facebook-ds0d/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=sm&utm_campaign=banner_blog&utm_content=fbpilot

- **YouTube Live Event:** Now you can broadcast any in-person events in real-time with the entire world using [YouTube Live](#) – or create a special event experience for specific people by making the YouTube Live Event private. YouTube Live allows you to upload a custom thumbnail, add alerts and slates to the video footage, create highlights during the live event, utilize multiple cameras, utilize chat functionality to post updates and answer questions from viewers, and so much more.
- **Hangouts On Air with YouTube Live:** Don't have a lot of time to plan for a YouTube Live Event? You can utilize [Hangout On Air](#) through YouTube Live to stream right from your browser, whether on a laptop, mobile phone or tablet.

Snapchat

- **Geofilter:** Create a [Geofilter](#) for Snapchat and pay for the filter to run in a specific location. All of this can be done from a computer – from designing the filter with Snapchat's in-browser editor to tracking performance.
- **Story:** [Stories](#) are another great way to give your supporters behind-the-scenes access to your organization's work. Remember, it is easier for people to connect with other people - so don't underestimate the power of authenticity. Try introducing your supporters to the everyday people behind your organization, including those that have been positively impacted by your work or those that actually keep your organization running like staff, volunteers, or donors. Too often, organizations focus their efforts on engaging influencers and celebrities – relationships that require a significant investment in time and resources – instead of leveraging the stronger and more significant relationships they have already developed in their day-to-day work.



6. Implementing Action Plan

Now it's time to bring this social media campaign plan to life and move from the ideation phase to planning for implementation.

An action plan can be organized in a variety of ways but key considerations should include:

- **Actions:** What needs to happen to bring your campaign to life? Actions may include convening partners, developing a shared content calendar using Google Docs, creating a social media calendar, finalizing content materials, conducting blogger and media outreach, and more. It might be helpful to break up actions into various phases like planning, preparation, execution, and monitoring and evaluation phases.

Tip -> Remember to ask your community partners and staff to share posts/tweets rather than simply liking them. While liking a post or tweet is appreciated, shares are much more effective at extending the reach of a campaign. Also, keep in mind that cross promoting partners' work can actually lead to increased engagement for your nonprofit ([Bosanko, 2009](#)).

- **Timing:** When do these actions need to happen in order to launch your campaign in time? You might want to organize by quarter, month, week or day depending on how far in advance you are planning.
- **Staffing:** Who is responsible for which action? Discuss this with your partners, team, supervisor and/or organization. If you don't have a standard meeting, schedule dedicated time to discuss your campaign to ensure organizational approval and buy-in.
- **Resource needs:** What do you need to accomplish these actions in this timeline? If you don't have a staff person or volunteer who can take on each action, that need should be reflected here. If bringing on new staff, contractors or volunteers is not realistic within the budget and timeframe you have, you can scale back various elements of your campaign so they are more realistic and your campaign's action plan is manageable for your organization.

Using the table on the next page, copy your goals, audiences, messages, and calls-to-actions from above and then list the channels and content you will create for each. The posting cadence for each channel will affect your content needs.

7. Monitoring & Evaluating Campaign Impact

Monitoring and measuring the outcomes of campaign activities is essential to evaluating the effectiveness of your campaign in achieving the goals you originally outlined. This is also an important practice that can help you improve future social media campaigns and implement real-time adjustments to improve your current campaign's performance until the very last day. There are many tools to help you monitor and measure your campaign listed under "Monitoring Resources" in the Tools & Resources Supplement to this paper.

List the metrics of success you will be looking for. Likes, shares, mentions and comments are great metrics to measure engagement, whereas clicks, downloads, new e-mail sign-ups, new followers, traffic from social media and donations help measure conversion.

Tip -> Consider sharing your successes with your supporters and partners. Sharing metrics with supporters is a great way to make them feel included and appreciated and ultimately strengthen your relationship!

YOUR ORGANIZATION	Goal(s)	Intended	Messages	Calls-To-Action	Channels	Content

Conclusion

By putting social media tools to good use, domestic violence organizations can advance their mission, unify supporters, engage in critical dialogue, elevate public awareness, and move people to action. Thoughtful planning around the seven key steps outlined in this Technical Assistance Guidance – 1) identifying potential partners, 2) determining campaign goals, 3) defining intended audience, 4) developing key messaging, 5) setting communications strategy, 6) implementing action plan, and 7) evaluating impact – will set you on the path to developing impactful social media campaigns for Domestic Violence Awareness Month and beyond. For practical tools and resources to help you on your way, see the Tools and Resources Supplement to this document.

Rachel Haas is the Associate Director of NO MORE, a unifying campaign to end domestic violence and sexual assault. She is passionate about social justice and believes in the power of media to transform social norms and drive social change.

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The NRC DV welcomes your input. If you have any comments or additional information to provide, please contact our Programs & Prevention Team at nrcdvTA@nrcdv.org.

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