

# Engaging People with Disabilities through Social Media

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# Topic Outline

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- 1) Why explore social media use?
- 2) What we already knew
- 3) What we did
- 4) What people with disabilities told us
- 5) Recommendations
- 6) Limitations
- 7) What's next?

# Background

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SAFEPLACE AND DISABILITY RIGHTS TEXAS –  
PROJECT PARTNERS SINCE 2006.

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY AND OUTREACH  
TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND DEAF  
PEOPLE THROUGH BOTH AGENCIES.



A Partner Agency of **SAFE**

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# Why explore social media use

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BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES





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# What we already knew

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(WHAT THE RESEARCH TOLD US)

# Access to Social Media?

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- Fewer people with disabilities have access to the Internet than people without disabilities – 54% vs. 81%.
- At least half of people with disabilities polled reported access to some form of social media.

(Pew Research Center, 2011)

# Facebook and LinkedIn

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How are people with disabilities using Facebook and LinkedIn?

1. Network
2. Services
3. Outreach
4. Education
5. Advocacy



(Baker, et al., 2013)

# Barriers to Using Social Media

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- Lack of Internet access.
- Both device used and social media platforms need to be accessible.
- Lack of available training and experience in how to use the Internet and social media.

*“Despite these access issues, people with disabilities do use social media as a way to interact and gain information.”*

(Sweet & LeBlanc, 2013)

# Abuse and People with Disabilities

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- Crimes against people with disabilities 3 times higher than against people without disabilities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012)
- Sexual assault 7 times more likely for women with disabilities (Martin, et al., 2006)
- 67% of 200 women with physical and/or intellectual disabilities reported lifetime physical abuse; 53% reported lifetime sexual abuse (Powers, et al., 2002)



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# What we did

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AND WHAT WE WANTED TO FIND OUT

# What We Wanted to Know

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1. Should social service agencies engage and do outreach to people with disabilities on issues related to interpersonal violence?
2. How can social service agencies effectively engage people with disabilities through social media platforms to provide information?





# Process

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- ✓ Developed questions and protocols with DRTx .
- ✓ Tx A&M doctoral students **reviewed/gave input.**
- ✓ Conducted 5 interviews and 7 discussion groups.
- ✓ Talked to 51 adults with a range of disabilities.



# Questions

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Participants with disabilities responded to six open-ended questions and five multiple-choice questions.



# Discussion Groups

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- Adapt of Texas (national disability civil rights group)
- The Arc of the Capital Area
- Austin Clubhouse (mental health group)
- Disability Rights Texas PAIMI Council (Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness)
- Easter Seals of Central Texas
- Mary Lee Foundation (residential provider)
- National Federation for the Blind–Austin Chapter
- SafePlace Disability Services Program Advisory Committee
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (transition-aged youth)

# Participants Had the Following Disabilities:

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- Traumatic brain injury
- Blind
- Intellectual and/or developmental disability
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Mental illness/mental health
- Physical disability
- Multiple disabilities

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# What people with disabilities told us...

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ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

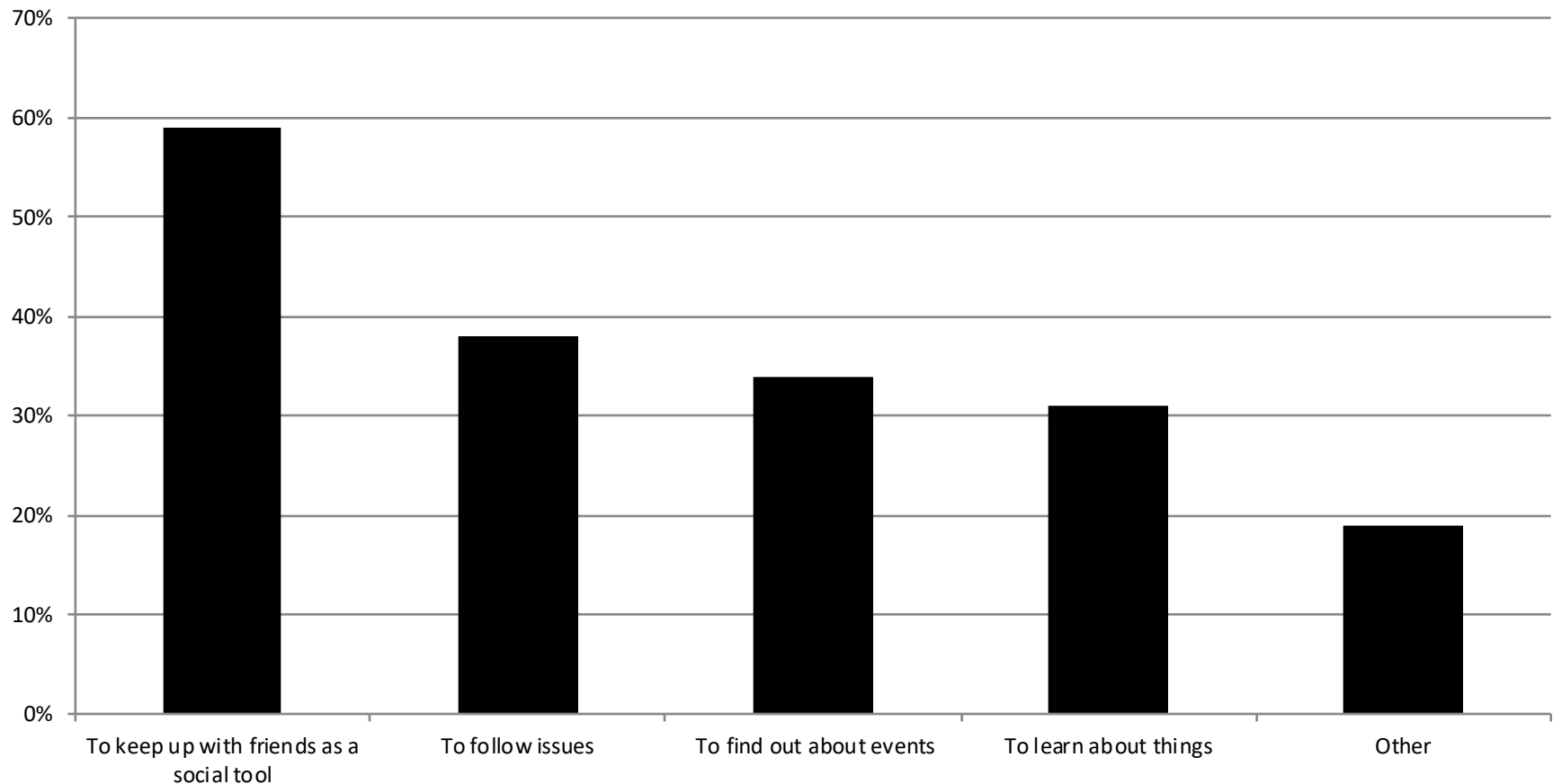
# Do people with disabilities use social media? SAFE |

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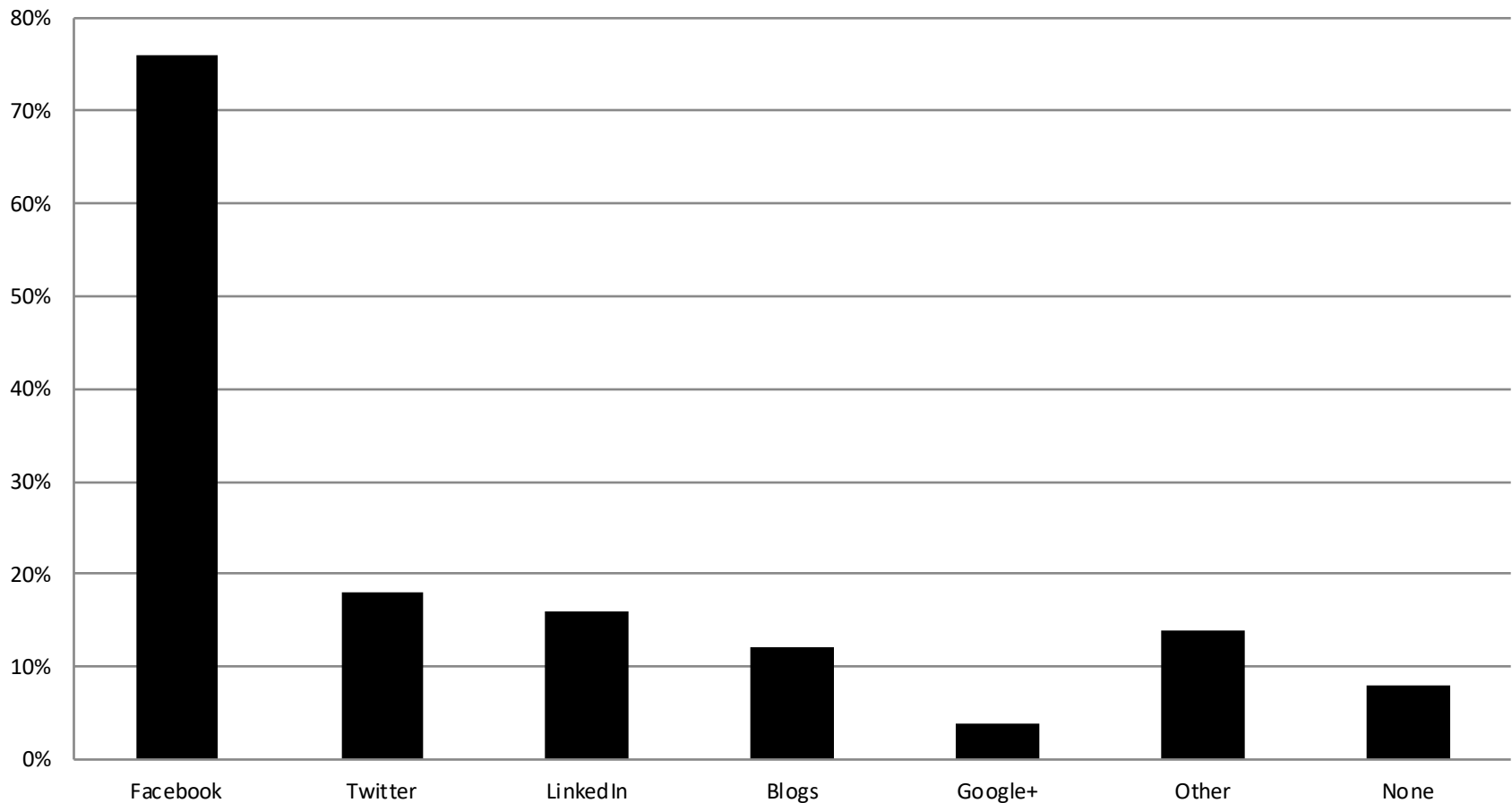
94% of those interviewed said yes.



# Why do people with disabilities use social media?

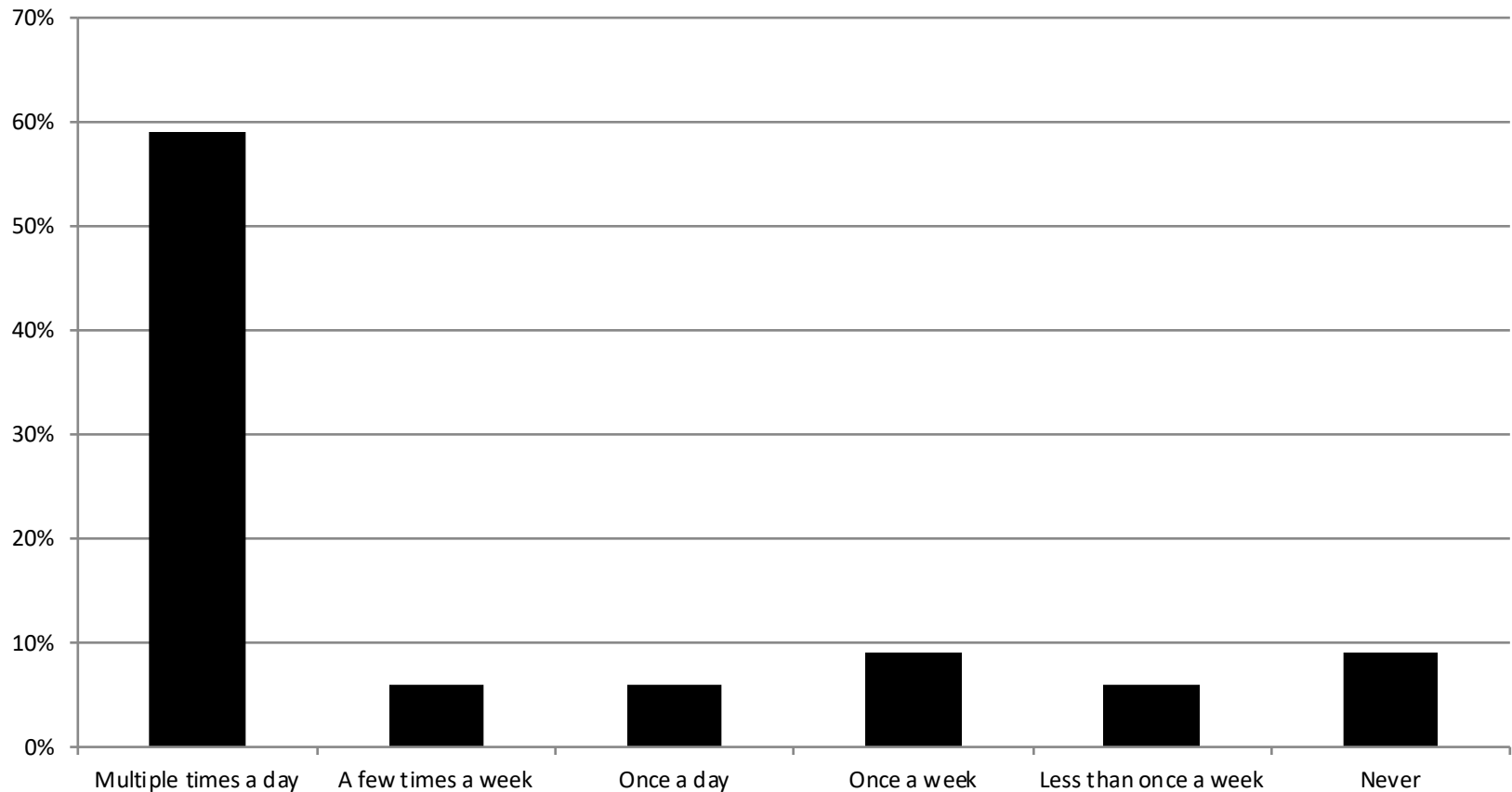


# What social media do people with disabilities follow?

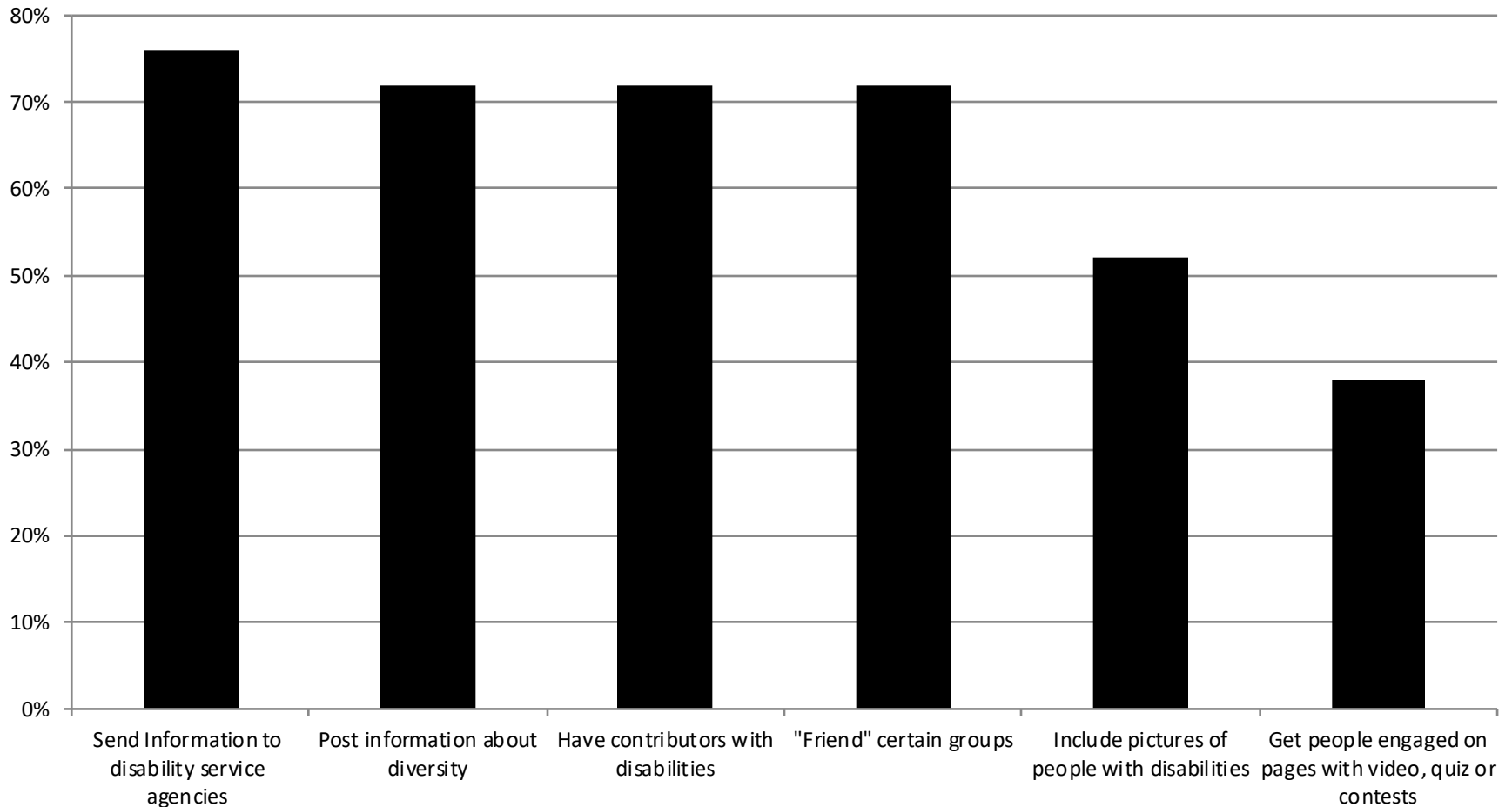




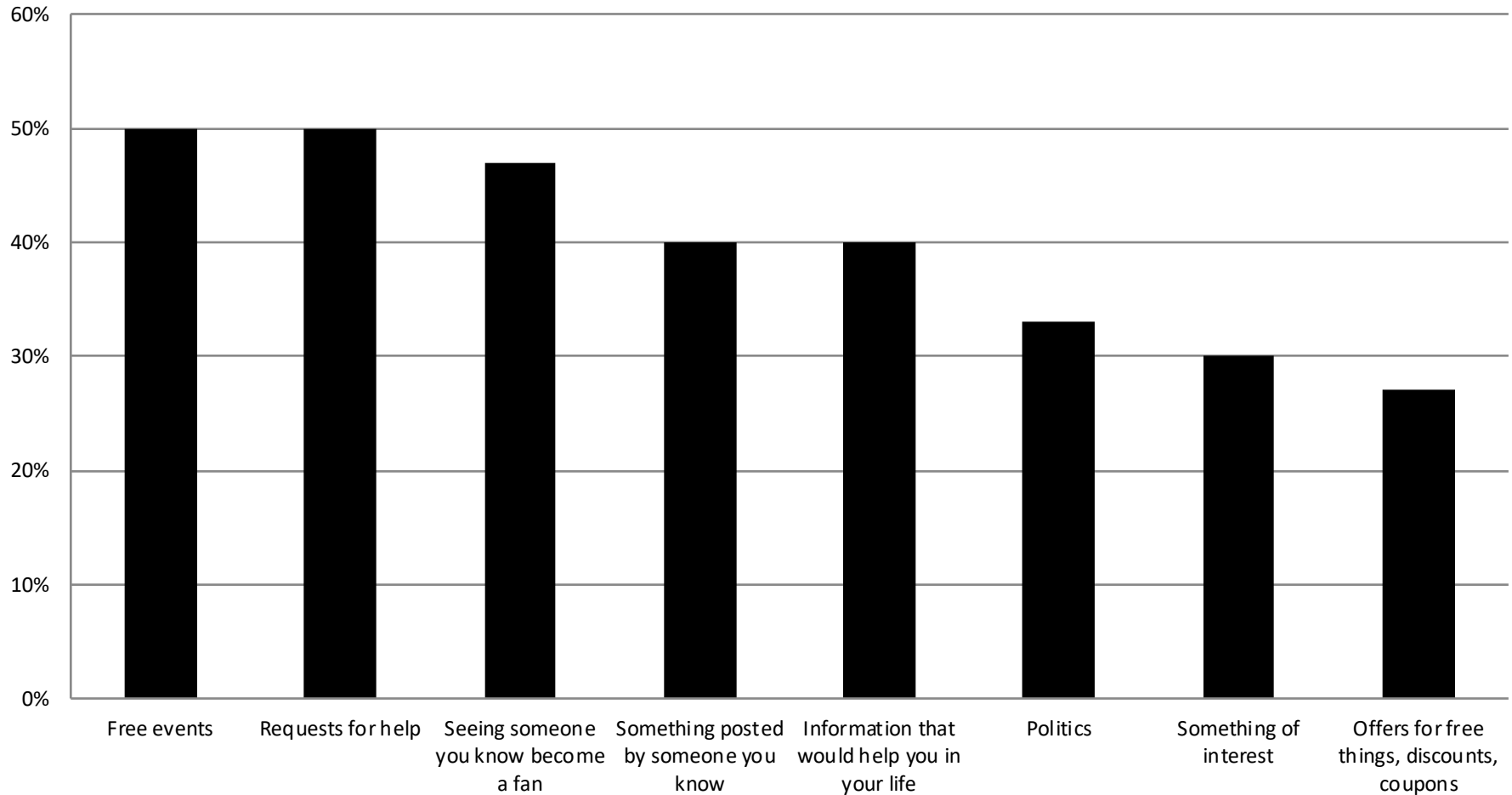
# How often do people with disabilities use social media?



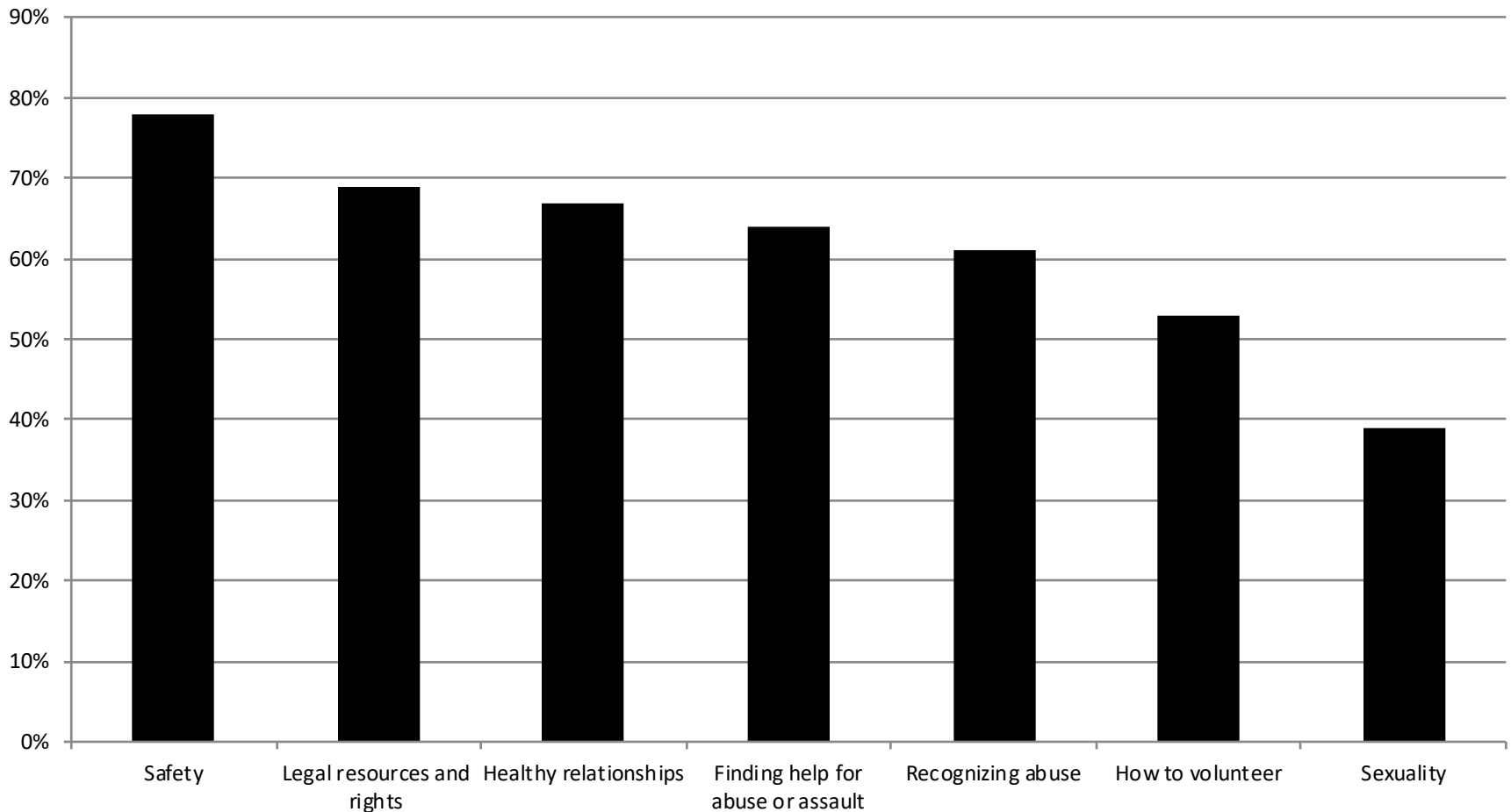
# How can we attract people with disabilities to our social media sites?



# What would make you “like” or become a fan or post a comment on Facebook or Twitter?



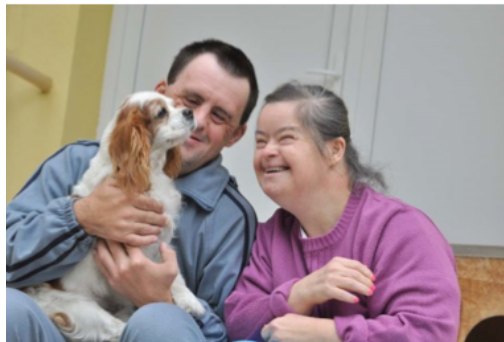
# What topics would you be interested in following through social media?



## However...

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- “I don’t like it so much, I like face to face.”
- “I’m not really a big fan of technology. I’m an old-fashioned guy, I use cell phones.”
- “I don’t know how to access everything or find time to respond to everything.”
- “It gets too confusing and time consuming.”



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# Recommendations

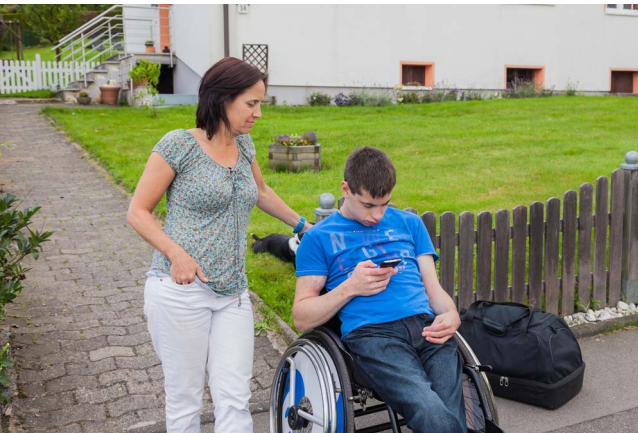
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BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

# Overview

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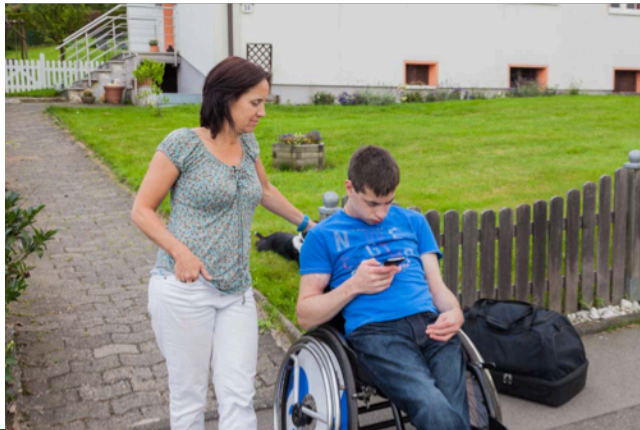
1. Accessibility
2. Content/format
3. Outreach



# Overview

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1. Accessibility
2. Content/format
3. Outreach





# 1. Accessibility

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- “A lot of people [with disabilities] are poor and do not have resources for computers and tablets.”
- “Some people are slow with certain disabilities ...explain it slower so they get it and process it.”
- “Have more text ...that gets that message across in a fairly simple way.”

# Accessibility Needs

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People with disabilities need both:

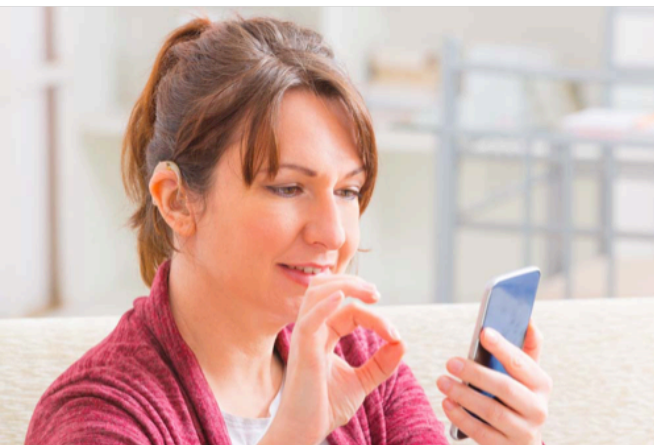
- accessible devices
- accessible social media platforms



# Accessibility Recommendations

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**Ask** people with disabilities about the accessibility of your social media platforms and websites.



# Accessibility Recommendations (continued)

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- Balance text and graphics for readers who are blind or have visual impairments.
- Provide text descriptions of pictures/graphs.
- Keep content brief, to the point, and easy to access.
- Format content with clear headings and a topic sentence or summary statement.

# Accessibility Recommendations

(continued)

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- Use a variety of social media sites.
- Add an open-ended survey link to agency websites for suggested changes from users.



# Long-term Accessibility Recommendation

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Because 46% of people with disabilities do not have access to the Internet,\* partner with other agencies to provide computer and social media training to people with disabilities.

\*(Pew Research Center, 2011)





# Content/Format Recommendations

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- “No pictures of people getting checks!”
- “Tell people what they need to know to get services.”
- “You have 5 seconds to reach someone.”
- “Be like an English teacher; give the topic sentence.”

# Content/Format: Increasing Safety

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- Address Internet privacy, safety and confidentiality.
  - Provide an anonymous online discussion area
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# Content/Format: Relevant, Interesting & Brief

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- Again, keep website and social media posts relevant, brief and easy to access.
- Avoid advertisements, public relations or fundraising photos and topics.

# Content/Format: Include People with Disabilities

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“Engage us, not the people who support us, our family, caregivers, etc.”

- Seek people with disabilities as regular contributors.
- Develop ways for people with disabilities to post, learn and share with each other and the community.

# Content/Format: Keep it Fresh and Active

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- Update content at least weekly.
- Include art, pictures, poetry, music, inspirational quotes.
- Post relevant questions to keep discussions active.
- Engage users through contests/promotions.

# Content/Format: Engage and Educate

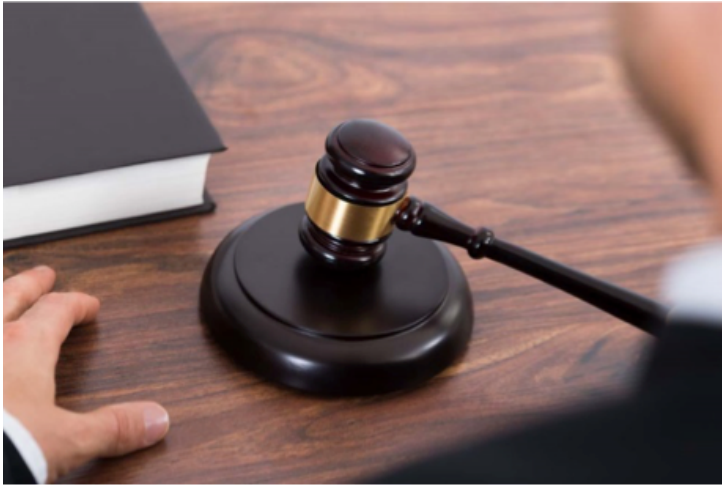
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Topics people most interested in:\*

- ways to increase safety
- legal resources and rights
- healthy and respectful relationships
- where to find help for abuse and assault

◦ \*from closed, multiple-choice question



# 3. Outreach Recommendations

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- “I’m really hesitant to vote for something because I don’t want them to spam me.”
- “I tend to follow things that I feel will have an impact on me or someone I’m close to for whatever reason.”
- “If I’m needing your services, I’m not going to ‘like’ you.”

# Outreach: Trainings

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Use social media to promote and provide education and training on disability-specific aspects of abuse and healthy relationships, safer sexuality, advocacy and legal rights.



# Outreach: Collaboration


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- Collaborate with disability and crisis service organizations for web content and stories.
- Use agency newsletters to promote other agencies.
- Provide links to resources, including local transportation options and other websites for people with disabilities.



**COLLABORATION:**

Two or more people working together towards shared goals



# Outreach: Talk to Us

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- Explore ways to reach people who have experienced trauma and/or have mental health needs.
- Provide a confidential avenue for people to learn about services.
- Be clear what will happen when you ask someone to like or become a fan of your agency.





# Outreach: Ask Us

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- Ask people with disabilities to suggest social media campaigns.
- Suggested outreach campaigns:
  - agency appeals for help
  - free events
  - information that could be helpful and/or was posted by trusted source.



# Limitations

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- Social media examples
- Transcripts
- Recruitment
- Rapid changes in social media

# What's Next?

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- Develop guidelines for safety with social media.
- Engage women with disabilities to submit blogs, articles, video, art.
- Disseminate material on project and community websites and social media.

# Questions?

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