

## VAST SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES, PROPOSED

*Context: Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture is an 'anti-oppressive' organization. This means extreme tact and sensitivity is mandatory in all interactions with clients, to ensure no demands are placed upon them as this may both break a barrier of trust critical to work with refugees and torture survivors, and to ensure there is no suggestion of a need for personal disclosure as any expectation in return for VAST resources and services.*

### Twitter

- There is an organizational account, @VASTVancouver
- The objective of initiating Twitter presence and interactions is to build relationships in order to raise the profile of VAST, with a primary strategic fundraising goal
- All VAST-initiated social media posts and tweets must be pre-approved. This means that content – a list of outgoing Tweets – must be requested in writing to the Executive Director, approved, and then scheduled for release via Hootsuite.
- In initiating the Twitter presence (and beginning to build social media relationships), \_\_\_\_ (*both fundraising and communications to cover both angles?*) will research and compile lists of beneficial organizations or people to 'follow', to be submitted to VAST staff to take action on initiating the 'follows', via the VAST Twitter account
- As distinct from the 'outgoing content' tweets, responsive public tweets (those responding to tweeted questions from the public) can be responded to immediately, directing them to the appropriate email address pertaining to their question.
- There should also be a list of pre-approved <140-character responses developed, for potential FAQ (eg. 'What does VAST do?' 'How many torture survivors are there in Vancouver?' 'I would like to volunteer with VAST' 'What are your volunteer needs right now?' 'What donations, besides cash, does VAST currently need?')
- Any incoming requests from potential donors should be directed to \_\_\_\_\_ (Christine? Kim?)
- Any incoming enquiries from potential clients should be directed to email \_\_\_\_\_, and these conversations on Twitter should be curtailed and quickly directed offline
- Any 'Mentions' of @VAST can be responded to, unless the 'Mentions' are 'overheard' client discussions about meeting at @VAST's office or as users of VAST services, in which case these should not be engaged with or RT'd ('retweeted'). This is for confidentiality reasons.

### Flickr/YouTube

- Because of the extreme sensitivity of VAST's clients with the immigration system, and sensitivity around any public association with torture issues, any

photos or video of any VAST events (or activities in the VAST offices) may not be shared on any public platform.

#### Facebook

- At present, there is no VAST presence on Facebook.
- Can Christine confirm with Tod Maffin: Can one set up a Facebook page to send out posts, and to receive private comments, but not to permit a 'wall' / public posts or comments?

#### Blog / E-Newsletter

- There is no VAST blog/e-newsletter currently
- If sufficient regular content is brainstormed, such a blog/publication may be created, as part of the developing communications plan
  - *[What about profiling some of the counsellors?]*

#### **Use of personal social media accounts of staff, counsellors, board members, and volunteers:**

- Social media includes personal blogs and other websites, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, or others. These guidelines apply whether volunteers or staff are posting to their own sites or commenting on other sites.
- Follow all applicable VAST policies. For example, you must not share confidential information about VAST and you must maintain client privacy.
- References can be made to associations with VAST, upcoming/attending VAST events and being at VAST by those Board/Committee members without direct client interactions, to assist with raising VAST organizational profile
- If you identify your affiliation to VAST, your social media activities should be consistent with VAST's high standards of professional conduct
- If you write on social media, write in the first person. Where your connection to VAST is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of VAST. In those circumstances, you should include this disclaimer: "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of any organization." Consider adding this language in an "About me" section of your blog or social media profile.
- Be professional, use good judgment and be accurate and honest in your communications; errors, omissions or unprofessional language or behavior reflect poorly on VAST, and could result in consequences for VAST. Be respectful and professional to fellow staff/volunteers, other organizations, and government/other stakeholders.
- Personal political activity should not reference VAST or the volunteer's/staff member's role with VAST

- No breaches of confidence – if client stories are shared or overheard, socially or at VAST office, these are not permitted to be retold on social media in any form without explicit permission of the VAST Executive Director.
- VAST strongly discourages “friending” of clients on social media websites. Staff, counsellors, Board members and volunteers generally should not initiate or accept client friend requests
- VAST staff, counsellors, volunteers and Board members should not ‘follow’ the Twitter feeds of VAST clients.
- VAST Staff and counsellors (and any volunteers with direct client interactions) should not use their personal Twitter/Facebook accounts to ‘follow’ or ‘like’ official VAST accounts. [This is to avoid situations where clients can then access information about staff personal accounts and begin to ‘follow’ them and have awareness of their personal lives, and similarly to avoid staff having awareness of client’s account names and access to information about their personal lives].
- Unless approved by VAST, your social media name, handle and URL should not include VAST’s name or logo.

*Once the ‘social media guidelines’ have received the feedback of all Committee & Board members and it has had revisions made and had final approval, then it should advance to become the VAST Social Media Policy.*