A Primer on Twitter for Eating Disorder Professionals from The Academy for Eating Disorders

What is Twitter?

Wikipedia defines Twitter as “an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called ‘tweets.’” These messages can contain text, pictures, and videos. You can search for specific topics or words by using the # sign. For example, you can search #EatingDisorder to find all published tweets containing that phrase. On average, 500 million tweets are sent per day.

Why join Twitter?

Many of you might be hesitating to add another task to your to-do list, but here are some reasons for joining:

- Twitter is one of the fastest ways to access the most up-to-date information on just about every topic.
- It’s a great tool to establish connections and relationships with colleagues, friends, and people you hope to get to know.
- By reading, sending, and retweeting information on a specific topic (e.g., eating disorders), you can use the platform to establish yourself as an expert.
- Social media is an effective tool for creating awareness, promoting prevention, and sharing your message broadly.
- It’s fun!

How do I join?

1. Create Your Account

The following screenshot will help you get started with creating your Twitter account:
2. Start Following Others

We suggest you use the AED Twitter page to connect with other eating disorder organizations and clinicians. Go to https://twitter.com/aedweb, click on the “Follow” button on the right side of the screen. Then click on the button that says “Following” to get a list of people you might want to follow yourself.

3. Start Sending Tweets

The easiest way to do this is to read others’ tweets and simply hit the “Retweet” button. To create your own tweet, click on the “Tweet” button in the upper right hand corner and start writing! Include fellow tweeters (with the @ sign followed by their Twitter handles) and hashtags (#) to make your tweet searchable. Remember to keep your messages to 140 characters!

How do I manage my privacy on Twitter?

Keep in mind that your tweets are public and accessible by everyone (not just those who follow you), unless you specify otherwise. If you’d like to protect the privacy of your tweets, follow the steps below:

How to protect your tweets:

From the web:
1. Go to your Security and privacy settings.
2. Scroll down to the Tweet privacy section and check the box next to Protect my Tweets.
3. Click the blue Save button at the bottom of the page. You will be prompted to enter your password to confirm the change.

Tweet privacy
   - Protect my Tweets
     If selected, only those you approve will receive your Tweets. Your future Tweets will not be available publicly. Tweets posted previously may still be publicly visible in some places. Learn more.

From an iOS device:
1. From the Me tab, tap on the gear icon and select Settings.
2. Select the account you’d like to edit.
3. Under Protect my Tweets, tap the switch to On.

From an Android device:
1. Tap the overflow icon and select Settings.
2. Select the account you’d like to edit.
3. Under Other, check the box for Tweet privacy.