



The social media maven

Even in the early 1990s, San Francisco-based psychologist **Keely Kolmes, PsyD**, was tinkering with social media when it was merely AOL chat rooms and Usenet. When she launched her clinical practice in 2008, Kolmes assumed she would have to ditch her social media passion to maintain her professional identity. But a friend convinced her that she could do both.

“He told me, ‘You’re not most people — you’re mindful of the things you say,’ and that drove me into creating my professional Twitter account,” she says.

Kolmes already had a blog on social media ethics and began sharing her posts and other mental health news via Twitter. Then she developed and released a social media policy to guide her private practice that she disseminated on Twitter. It quickly earned the attention of mental health professionals worldwide who were seeking guidance on the topic. Within just a couple of years, Kolmes became a sought-after expert and speaker on social media ethics and her Twitter following grew to 86,500 at @drkkolmes. She published an op ed in *The New York Times* about the challenges of consumer review sites for psychotherapists and is a frequent news source for the media.

Dr. Keely Kolmes grew her Twitter following to 86,500 as an expert on social media ethics.

She admits that her online presence can have drawbacks, such as having to tamp down her sense of humor. “I have an online persona, and it’s still me ... but sarcasm and complaints about customer service, for example, don’t always wear well on a psychologist’s professional persona.”

She cautions psychologists who want to be as active on social media to be humble: “Don’t be afraid to be wrong or to say you’re sorry,” she says. In a world where one offensive tweet can become national news, learn when to rein in your emotions. “If something someone says makes you angry, take a break,” she says.