

## **Episode 210- Karen Zgoda, Rachel L. West and Patricia Shelly: Promoting Macro Social Work Through Social Media/Twitter Chats**

[00:00:08] Welcome to inSocialWork. the podcast series of the University of Buffalo School of Social Work at [www.inSocialWork.org](http://www.inSocialWork.org). We're glad you could join us today. The purpose of inSocialWork is to engage practitioners and researchers in lifelong learning and to promote research to practice and practice to research. We educate. We connect. We care. We're inSocialWork.

[00:00:37] Hi from Buffalo. We're excited about what's happening in our town. Our former psychiatric center which was built in 1880 and just happens to be designed by famed architect H.H. Richardson with grounds designed by Frank Lloyd Wright will soon open as the hotel Henry an 88 room luxury hotel and conference center. Later this year also on the grounds the Buffalo architectural center will open as a museum showcasing our prized architectural history and resources. Just look it up to see what's going on. I'm Peter Sobota. Macro focused social work the often neglected sibling of clinical social work practice is fighting back and 21st century fashion. In this episode our guest Rachel West Karen Zgoda and Patricia Shelly describe how they're using macro social work Twitter chats to promote support and education for all forms of macro practice activities. Our guests discuss the origins of what they refer to as their micro blogs and what Twitter chats are and why social workers are producing and participating in them. They talk about how their use of social media promotes community among macro practitioners and how they rely and learn by partnering with a community of like minded and interdisciplinary professionals and contributors jazzed about macro social work. Rachel West is a licensed master social worker blogger consultant instructor at Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare and a founder of the macro social work Twitter chats. Karen Zgoda MSW LCSW is an instructor at the School of Social Work at Bridgewater State University. Patricia Shelly MSW is director of community engagement and expansion at the UB School of Social Work. Our guests were interviewed in September of 2016 by our own Dr. Anahita ball Ph.D. MSW and assistant professor here at the UB School of Social Work.

[00:02:46] Thank you everyone for taking the time to join us. And I'm excited to have a chat about America's national park and how you all use Twitter to kind of create new conversations about this specific area of social work research and practice. So before we begin I thought we could define what Twitter chats are for our listener and help us understand what the macro social work Twitter chat group is specifically.

[00:03:11] Rachel?

[00:03:11] The origins of the macro SW Twitter chat, What happened was I've been involved in Twitter chats before with social work helpers so I understood the impact they could have with regards to networking community education and what happened was a few years ago I started doing the social media management for ACOSA. And I had created a Twitter account for them and a Facebook account I need to start building up a following there online. So I wanted to do a chat for them that would take place on a regular basis to kind of help with building up their Twitter following. So I reached out to Deona Hooper who was the founder of Social Work Helper to see if she wanted to get involved because I knew that doing it alone would be rather time consuming because Twitter chats can be kind of deceptively simple a lot of people think and like you just kind of like show up on a certain day of the week and just start chatting about a topic. But there's actually a lot of work that goes into preparing for them in terms of putting together all your information your research getting any guest experts you need putting out any chat announcements so Deona one that actually suggested that we open it up to other people. You know other macro focused social workers and social work organizations. So that's kind of how we started getting involved with like the University of Buffalo and how Karen got involved and the other chat partners. It's much easier

to pull off doing a chat on a weekly or bi weekly basis if you've got multiple people taking responsibility for putting together the chat.

[00:04:50] I think Karen has a really great definition of what a Twitter chat is and perhaps we could start with that and then go to Rachel's origins of the specific macro social chat. Karen?

[00:05:02] So when we talk about Twitter chats what we're really talking about is kind of real time microblogging where there is a choice of topic area. You share a common hashtag in our case #MacroSW and open access to anyone either with a Twitter account or who searches for that hashtag on Twitter.

[00:05:22] This is Pat. And of course Twitter is one of the very popular social media platforms that people use to exchange information in this professional sense with the profession of social work it is a way to network with other professionals. It's during our chats it's a great opportunity for students to get both real life experience with a technology that can serve them as ongoing networking and continuing education and discussion about topics. It's a way to keep abreast of current issues and a Twitter chat is also time limited. For example ours is one hour and most chats I think are that length, one hour in length and we also archive it so we can go back and read the actual tweets as they were made during the chat. So it's got multiple avenues for access.

[00:06:18] Right, this is Karen, and I want to add that sort of the microblogging aspect and social media from some upcoming publication material that we're actually doing about SSW. It's sort of one aspect of social media that has been shown to have the potential to encourage participation, reflective thinking and collaboration. So basically folks on Twitter actually connect to each other through this series of short messages of these tweets that consist of no more than 140 characters. So on Twitter as one can follow other individuals or organizations get information news entertainment or any variety of topic areas. And while Twitter was initially created in 2006 it's pretty popular. There's roughly 230 million monthly active users currently on Twitter.

[00:07:09] This is Ana, just to clarify then. So using Twitter chats the macro social work Twitter chat has always been focused on macro social work and I'm wondering what it always is frequent as it is now? How did it start in the beginning?

[00:07:25] This is Rachel. We started doing a bi monthly or bi weekly chat. Initially when we started I think were only like five of us. Like I said before, there's actually a lot of prep work that goes into putting together with a Twitter chat. So initially it was hard for us to do every week, and then just this past year we started going to a weekly format since we added in additional partners. And there was a demand there for it. What started happening was that on Twitter we were getting like a lot of responses from top participants who'd be like "Oh can you talk about like this topic this week?" and then we were like "Well we don't have a chat scheduled for this week." It started gaining momentum and then you have people reaching out who were suggesting topics in the calendar was filling up quicker. So at that point it was like OK it makes sense to move to a weekly chat rather than doing it every other week.

[00:08:20] So it seems like there's a lot of interest in macro social work as a topic for Twitter chat. Why do you think there's a need to have it Typically for a macro social work or to promote macro social work?

[00:08:33] It's Rachel again. I'll take that one. I think what it is is that while there's a lot of interest in it on Twitter I think the reason there is so much interest is because it's hard to as a macro social worker find other macro social workers. Macro social work has kind of been in trouble for a while now. For many years now the emphasis has really been leaning towards clinical practice in social

work. So even at school that focus on general practice there's a great deal of imbalance there that scale with much more heavily tipped towards focusing on course work for clinicians instead of focusing on equally on direct practice micro work as well as macro. So I think it does provides a place for macro social workers to get together and network with each other and share resources because that's something that they really couldn't get like even from NASW. So much of the material they have in terms of the type of education courses provided the journal articles the newsletter articles are geared towards direct practice you know micro. So it's just been a really great way for macro social workers to get together and support each other find community.

[00:09:51] This is Pat. Perhaps it would be helpful for our audience to know what macro social work is. And so taking a quote that I mean this is a frequently asked questions that may be found on the chat's website which is MacroSW.com. It's a Wordpress blog that we use. "Macro practice is professionally guided intervention designed to bring about change in organisational community and policy arenas." So instead of having an individual as a client or a family you can think of macro social work clients as communities as countries if we're setting national policy for example on the need for trauma informed care and all mental health facilities that would be an example of macro practice.

[00:10:42] And just to, I know I'm interested, I'm just going a little bit off here but Pat you mentioned the website for the Twitter chat. Is that typically how Twitter chats work or is that something that's different that you all developed also?

[00:10:56] The Web site for the macro social work chat is a blog and that website is MacroSW.com and we list what upcoming chats are going to be about. We have an introduction to each week's chat. That is the form of a short blog post. There are resources listed there with links that you can do some preparatory reading. Often a list of resources and names of our guest experts should we be hosting a guest expert to speak on a topic.

[00:11:28] This is Karen. Just to sort of add to what Pat said while our hashtag #MacroSW is technically available 24/7. The only time we as Chat partners actually staff it are on Thursday night at 9:00 p.m. Eastern time to 10:00 p.m. Eastern time. So you know we have no control over how people use the chat in the interim. However we do have our Website which is available 24/7 in which all of our chat partners contribute to so Pat said you can find chat announcement. So some people really like to have reminders because let's get busy and they want to know what's going on and we currently have I believe over 100 people subscribe to get the chat announcement updates, they can go to those resources. We even have educator resources on our website so that way faculty who are interested in using Twitter chats for classroom assignment get some background information about tips and tricks to do that a little bit more easily and then we have special events like media nights, we have them there as well. That way there's sort of a one stop shop for the chat when we're not actually in that chat room.

[00:12:33] This is Pat. I think this is a good spot to acknowledge our chat partners and as Rachel mentioned we started with basically five individuals, two schools two universities schools of social work at that time. Now we just have the University of Buffalo as a school of social work participating but in addition to Rachel, who is an individual macro social work practitioner and Karen who of course is a professor we have Laurel Hitchcock a professor at the University of Alabama Birmingham. We have Kristin Batista-Frazee who is an author and marketing consultant and a macro social worker independent. We have Jeff Fromknecht who is an attorney as well as a social worker and he works with Side Project Inc which assists nonprofits and sound strategies and legal boundaries that need to be observed. Rachel represents ACOSA, Association for Community Organizations and Social Administration. Relando Thompkins-Jones is a professor also a Ph.D. student and has a very popular blog called Notes from an Aspiring Humanitarian. Sunya Folayan is

a social worker founder and executive director of The Empowerment Project, so an entrepreneur. And in addition she also teaches. Vilissa Thompson is our newest partner and she is the founder of @RampYourVoice a disability rights consultant and advocate as well as a macro social worker. So those are a list of our nine partners in the macro social work chat.

[00:14:15] We also, Pat this is Karen. We have one current media track partner as well. We also work with Linda Grobman at the new Social Worker magazine. So Linda's addition is to sort of cross promoting articles and different chats we all have now that will have an article in upcoming new social worker magazines talking about the chat itself and kind of highlighting some of the topics that seem to be really popular among some of our chat groups. That way we have another way to kind of talk about and sort of disseminate what kind of conversation are people having in this medium and why might we want to be involved.

[00:14:48] It's a much bigger project than I think, Rachel as you said it's deceptively difficult.

[00:14:57] There's always the administration right?

[00:14:58] There's always administration. So out of all the work I'm curious what benefits or outcomes you've seen from the chats that it's really I would think broadly as the macro social work Twitter initiative almost. Not just the specific chat.

[00:15:15] This is Karen. I can talk a little bit about some statistics that we have compiled. So we're currently working on an evaluation study of 2014 2015 Twitter chats since at that time it was all we had had available and what we found in looking at a sort of systematic sample of those chats with that each chat typically averaged about 27 users that range anywhere from 9 to 100 usually if there's a class there's 100. They're very very active chat. So typically we found that each chat had an average of about 245 tweets. And again we that range anywhere from 70 to 969 tweets in an hour. I can tell you that we had a chat in July 2016 to collect feedback on the newly revised NASW technology standards. This is another one of those chat topics that sort of came about by popular opinion. People really wanted to have some way to incorporate input on this topic and be able to send that to NASW which we did. But you know we had over 300 visitors to our blog that week it was viewed over 600 times our chat statistics were pretty crazy. We had over, we used a service a free service called Simpler to help us with those statistics and that particular chat had over 6 million impressions or what they called tweets that were seen by others over sixteen hundred tweets and eighty one participants with an average of about 20 tweets per participant. And then one of our chat partners, Laurel Hitchcock collected all of this feedback and did admit that to NASW for review. So who would have thought that the middle of July when half the population is probably on vacation that that would have even been possible. We're really there was really wonderful and awesome.

[00:17:04] And this is Pat, speaking as a representative of the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. I think for schools it's a great tool to engage students on a specific topic while giving them you know experience with technology and we've got a lot of positive feedback. The students at the end like when we're wrapping up the chat at the hour we'll say okay we've got five minutes left and people will say this is my first chat it's great I'm definitely coming back here again. I learned so much so there's that concrete feedback that says this is good. This is helpful, you share so many resources.

[00:17:40] This is Karen. Just to follow up on that too, one of the things that I'm doing this semester as a freefloater is I'm actually teaching a course on professional communication and writing in social media for BSW social work students. And I think it's so important in this day and age that students have that opportunity to get some practice and get some feedback about how we are using some of these tools using our professional voices. So how do we have a conversation on social

media with our own identities possibly representing our own agencies in a way that says yes as an agency we're engaged in this issue we want people to know like here's how to get resources here's how to get involved or here's what we might need for you. But you know it's not all flaming political statements even though it's very popular right before an election. Some of them are very fun and very terrible to read but it's important for students to have that opportunity to handle some of these tools and take advantage of them like we're constantly sharing these resources. So for example this Thursday we are actually working with a couple of organisations including NASW to talk about the current state of what's going on with HIV and AIDS and we're going to have a lot of resources and we're going to have NASW at the table. How often do you get to have a one hour conversation with some of the power players in our field and be again as a student really being like okay so how do I talk to NASW what kinds of things do I say what kinds of things can I share with them or can they share with me to help me do my job better and help me serve clients better.

[00:19:16] This is Pat. Another outcome of these chats, and Rachel I'd like you to speak to this should you wish, is the collaboration of other professional organizations and national organizations. We've even had some international social work chats and I know someone from Britain, Canada, other countries have taken part in this too. But Rachel could you talk about partnerships and the hosts you've been a primary person who's enabled that collaboration.

[00:19:46] Sure. Having said that I was in practice the macro social worker my interest is in using social media as a community organizing community outreach tool. So I think part of what I've gotten out of this collaboration is seeing how it can be used as a way to educate the community in this case macro social workers but also connect with and collaborate with other disciplines and other associations. So over the course of doing these chats you know we've had groups like. Side Projects which Jeff was part of come in, which his law firm specializes in philanthropic work so they specialize in guiding not just nonprofits but also anybody who is interested in setting up like a foundation like that. SCRAW which is an association for community psychologists came in and it was an interesting time because before that like I didn't realize just how much overlap it was between macro social work and community psychology. So I think that was really interesting to connect. It also kind of showed that regard to community psychology. I think you're doing a lot more research and publishing a lot more research than macro social workers tend to do. So to me that kind of me pointed out that you macro social workers need to start getting out there more and publishing research. ACFWA which I believe was an association for clinical social work has been involved in quite a few chats. Also I believe Pat did one with the Institute on Trauma and Trauma Informed Care came in to work with us from a chat. So it's been really interesting of the traffic going on. We've been able to connect with kind interdisciplinary groups and kind of inform each others work.

[00:21:28] And I also think that going back to what Karen was talking about with regards to the staff and some of our chats I think it also kind of shows you how social media can be used as an advocacy tool and an outreach tool. You know you can have like 81 participants on a chat but because they're retweeting and involved in the chat you can end up reaching a few million people who end up seeing from the tweets that have gone out there and going back to the other party about getting the student and using social media. I think there's a real need of how Karen's doing that course this year I'd like to see schools of social work integrate the use of social media into their coursework. It is important and at least speaking at the macro social worker I think is important because social media can be a great tool for doing community organizing work or doing policy work too. So I think it's really important that social work students kind of learn how to use all these different platforms and how to integrate into the work that they're doing in the field.

[00:22:30] This is Pat and I also want to mention one of our collaborators has been the American Association of Social Work and Social Welfare. So I'll use the acronym AASWSW. They have

developed 12 Grand Challenges for social work and we had a number of chats on those grand challenges. And so I'll just list the topics that we've addressed. That is really future looking essentially looking at what's the best policy as well as the best practices that will bring about significant change in within the U.S. of dire social problem. So we have addressed these grand challenges homelessness social isolation smart decarceration. So when people leave prison and jails what is their re-entry as well as looking at the policy that makes the United States the number one and prisoner of human beings in the world. We've also had discussions of the Grand Challenge of healthy development for youth how to harness technology for good and to building financial capability of all. Another national organization to be mentioned is the Council on Social Work Education. We had a chat on the educational policy and accreditation standards which of course CSWE Council on Social Work Education is the accrediting body for all schools of social work within the U.S.. So I think that reflects both on the desire to participate in discussions around macro social work and its potential growth that we might see over the next few years. And Rachel isn't there a campaign to get more people into macro social work?

[00:24:23] Yes there is. What happened was a few years ago ACOSA has sponsored a report that was ran by Jack Rothman, which we just refer to as the Rothman Report which looked at the...

[00:24:34] Famously referred to as the Rothman report.

[00:24:37] Right. Right. The state of macro social work and social work education. The key finding there was that faculty and administration were either opposed or showed no real interest in macro course as a program, that the schools were not hiring macro focused faculty or they at least weren't hiring at the same rate. They were hiring faculty focused on critical work. The school's curriculum were primarily clinical. Again even when there was school that is supposed to be generalist practice that there still wasn't a balance there that those scales was still tipping heavily toward focusing on clinical work. So out of that you have the special commission to advance macro social work practice was formed and they started working not that long ago on the campaign which they're calling 20 by 2020. So the aim there is to increase the enrollment in macro concentration or method by 20 percent in all social work schools nationwide by the year 2020. And also to advocate for more macro content. Basically what we want to do is have a balance there. It's not that we're saying that clinical doesn't matter as much as macro and it's like that, what we're saying that needs to be an equal balance there. That you know this should be pretty much as evenly you know focused on micro as there is on macro, which it currently isn't. So that's what they've really been working on over the past few years. So they've been doing things like advocating with the CSWE, which is responsible for a creating the BSW and MSW program, been meeting with the NASW and other social worker associations as well as I think some social licensing boards to kind of try you just get that balance in the profession.

[00:26:30] And then just to add one other thing to like we also do, you know, in social work we always care and we always talk about self care and things like that. So in last March of 2016 we actually had a collaborative chat for social work month and we worked together with a variety of different partners including Live Social Work. Rhonda Ragsdale who runs the #Saturdayschool chat on Saturday. We worked with Jonathan Singer of the Social Work Podcast and Shauna Grieger who we're talking about #SPSM which is a suicide prevention social media chat. Again we partnered with ASWSW and NASW and we were talking about social work hears and why Social Work Month is important and what you wish more people appreciated about social workers and things like that. So I always feel it's important to take a step back and even just participating in this podcast is just having me realize that wow we are really busy. No wonder we're so tired sometimes we do a lot of great work and we work really hard to try to make this really great experience for people. You know this is no one's full time gig. We're all you know working full time doing our thing having our livesand, You know we've still been coming together every week on Twitter and

it's been really awesome and amazing to work with these folks and learn from them and meet new people.

[00:27:52] And it sounds, this is Ana, it sounds like a lot of the work you've done is very nicely aligned with the initiatives that are happening in multiple arenas around macro social work and technology. So I'm wondering now if you could talk a little bit about any research projects that have resulted from the Macro Social Work Chats or even within teaching also.

[00:28:13] This is Karen. SO as I previously mentioned we're sort of working on this ongoing evaluation of the chat and as available we try to promote just what is happening. So that we you know interviews like this are really helpful just to even have us kind of coalesce around what are we doing what what is going on with these chats why are we doing all of this work. What is the end point. So we're sort of working on that evaluation. It is tough you know good research takes a long time and if it's not your full time, Yeah it takes even longer. We have submitted for publication in an upcoming book chapter some information about the chat a little bit more detailed information, and you know we would really like in the future I think to think about what is our role within the grander context of Macro social work. Are we able to impact that conversation. Are we really able to possibly reduce isolation and increase connection among people practicing and learning about macro social work. Can we see the power of having these regular conversations have some kind of influence and impact and I think ultimately that would be one of the directions I think we would all like to see and then have the numbers to be able to talk a little bit more about that.

[00:29:30] And it seems like maybe I don't know if it's exactly what you're talking about but something that I would be kind of interested in is knowing how many people are involved in the chats that are not social workers that are involved in macro work or community organizing or anything along those lines to see an impact on practice that might be outside of Social Work that is, you know, clearly very related. It didn't sound like you said you had a way to look at that yet.

[00:29:57] So when you participate in a Twitter chat one of the unique things is that the only time you know people are there is when they talk. We have no way to know how many people are sort of actively listening to what's going on every week. We can sort of see sometimes in terms of impressions how many people sort of read tweets but we don't know if it was something they saw on accident or if it was something purposeful. There's no way for us to be able to collect that. I can tell you that I definitely have some friends on Twitter who have actually come into our chat room who I know I had a colleague from the school in teaching who was in the math department and he came into our chat to talk about our topic. We had a topic last week on the impact of toxic masculinity and he was able to come in and talk and he had two twin boys and he was talking about you know his concerns about what it means to have them grow up within this culture and it was really fascinating. So I'm sure, I don't know if Rachel or Pat want to add anything to that but it definitely does. I wish we had a better way to try to capture that.

[00:31:01] It's Rachel. You know kind of her thing is kind of hard for us to know that they don't actually talk or the chat or reach out to us through the website afterwards, you don't really know who's actually watching. I can tell you we tweet stuff and not all of my follows on Twitter are social workers. You know there's a lot of people who are interested in policy who are other elected officials, people who do social justice work who aren't social workers that follow me, so Presumably they see those Tweets when I put them out there but I don't think we have any way of really gathering that kind of data at this point.

[00:31:39] And it seems like maybe it seems like, not even seems, it is that Twitter doesn't either. I recognize that too. I mean, it might if you're CNN, but that's not us. That's not our budget right now.

[00:31:53] This is Pat. I'd like to follow up Karen mentioned of the chat last week on toxic masculinity. And again I'll remind people that you can go to our blog MacroSW.com and read archives. The chat archives and look at the introduction to that. So toxic masculinity was the chat for September 15th 2016 and that was based on a documentary. Once a month, We have a media night as part of our macro social work chats and that's another way to bring in, I don't know if I call it popular media but certainly movies, you know media night movie night. We show documentaries. the documentary for toxic masculinity was called The Mask You Wear. Other topics that we've had for our media night is Gunned Down, dealing with gun violence gun safety and mass shootings, Concerned Student 1950, which is a documentary looking at the recent activism around racism on campus. We had a documentary dealing with AIDS in the U.S. South and that is called Wilhemina's War. And the most popular one and this has been repeated once a semester by Laurel Hitchcock and she used to partner with a professor named Jimmy Asylvia. Thank you, Jimmy, on the documentary called Inequality for All on how the wealth gap and that divide between the 1 percent richest people in the United States economy and the other 99, how that really is structurally created. So those are examples of our media night. I also cannot fail to mention at this point that the University of Buffalo has some lovely resource online for social work and technology. And if you go to the University of Buffalo School Social Work Website and you will find other community resources a resource center that has technology and social work tools as well as a lovely infographic dealing with the social workers guide to social media using it professionally and ethically.

[00:34:05] That one's fantastic I have it in my office. So I guess my last question then, after all of these, even these newly developed activities have come out of the Twitter chat, what have you learned from the Twitter chat? What are some takeaways for you that you share with listeners?

[00:34:26] It's Rachel speaking. One is they, you actually don't see much of a budget do something like this. I think we've done a lot, like Karen has mentioned like this isn't like our job or a paying job to do this. So all of the chat partners are pretty much volunteering their time outside of what they do for a living and their personal lives to put these together.

[00:34:51] We have a budget of 20 dollars for our Website every year. Everything else is Google Plus and email. Wordpress.

[00:35:01] Yes, it's simpler which is good.

[00:35:02] This is Pat. A benefit that I've seen is the potential to grow truly global networks from something as simple as this one hour a week Twitter chat. For me personally, every week I feel that I learn, I have my awareness raised and also I'm continually exposed to students that participate in our chat. And one of the benefits is it continually inspires me to think about the next generation of social workers and their commitment and their interest and the potential for significant change they think represents.

[00:35:42] This is Karen. I'd also like to echo the sentiment. I often feel Thursday night I'm exhausted, other people are exhausted and whenever I go into the chat room I just feel instantly reengaged and energized and I'm having fun with colleagues and by the end of the chat people are posting like Yes! and Social Work memes, just sort of having fun with images and humor and like it's amazing to me how it always that it's just like brightens my day and just to have that connection. So I think as Rachel sort of empathized. It's always good to know that there's other macro social worker out there and she's often said that it speaks to social media's effectiveness as an organizing and educational tool. It's one thing to see that it's another thing to experience that for an hour. I sort of feel like students, practitioners, educators and others in social work are just hungry for this conversation and this connection around social work practice. So we help provide the space, time, and experts for those conversations, connections, networks and learning to grow. In my feeling I



sort of feel like ideally you can move from conversation to action and get people working on that and get people connected with job opportunities and different things like that. But even just to sort of have that connection and just be like you know sort of reducing social isolation around you know the only macro social worker in my agency or you know I'm in a very clinical social work program. But where do I talk to who can I talk to you about these systemic issues that are happening with social policy that clinical social work that has to deal with. I think those connections and opening up those avenues for dialogue are so important.

[00:37:25] Yes, so I think maybe one last component would be lessons learned for people who may want to start Twitter chats or start some other social media ways to engage macro social workers that might be helpful to.

[00:37:38] That sort of, this is Karen. I think that brings us to the root of what it means to really practice macro social work. And an all powerful sort of community organizing effort that always starts with people on the ground doing work and getting others involved in that. It tells there's sort of an issue to kind of coalesce around. So if it is an election, if it's a candidate. If it is a particular issue that has special meaning here or you want to have that impact on getting people involved getting them together figuring out how to communicate and then what to do it's not I feel personally that education is one piece of that, but it's not the whole picture. We can educate someone on how to drive a car from now until next week, but if you don't actually sit behind the wheel, pump the gas and start going in that car you're never going to get anywhere. So there's that education piece and then there's the action piece, which I think is so important. If you want it you'll make it happen.

[00:38:39] This is Pat, and people can begin by just dropping in on a chat. You don't even need a Twitter account. So at nine o'clock Thursday night you get on your computer you can google #MacroSW, that will bring up that hashtag, and you can click on that link and you'll be able to follow the tweets as that goes along. I think also that there are many good guides if you go to the Website MacroSW.com Website. You will find our Twitter chat frequently asked questions, FAQs and they have some great resources and we're very fortunate to have our partner Laurel Hitchcock a professor but also someone who has been writing about researching and has a forthcoming book that will be coauthored with Melanie Sage and UB's Dean of social work Nancy Smyth about the use of technology in social work.

[00:39:37] That's great it sounds like a lot of places for people to get resources starting with the chats that are going even further.

[00:39:43] Just to follow up with that. I mean all we started with was a hashtag and look where we are now. Anybody with Twitter or access can start any hashtag provide like. Look what's happened with like Black Lives Matter how that's gaining traction look what even happened with No Doppel. What happened with all these other hashtags. So if there's an issue that's important to start that hashtag, get people involved, start that conversation.

[00:40:07] It's Rachel. Just to say that we do the Twitter chats weekly now but there are chats that are more like loose and how they run. So it's kind of like you have a official hashtag for that conversation but it's not like it take place on a particular day and time is just whenever you know, whoever wants to discuss that topic related to that hashtag uses that hashtag. Even the hashtag social work. Yeah. You can just use the hashtags just to have a conversation it doesn't have to be that you're going to set aside an hour or a week to talk about a topic related to a particular area of social work or a particular area of whatever it is that you do.

[00:40:48] I think it's also a great way for students to sort of build their own professional branding. One of our chat partners, Kristen, is an expert at personal branding and you know if you want to

become known as someone who is really engaged in social policy, if you start using #SocialPolicy all the time it's going to build that online reputation so that when employers go to search for your mind because that's what they do now it gives them some sense about what you're doing with your social media presence. And I think that's also very important.

[00:41:15] That's great advice also. And I think I do I really appreciate the time that you are giving to Share your experience and also to help others learn more about not just the Twitter chats but really the whole project. I don't know if you're calling it a project at this point but I think you might want to consider that. An initiative or a project or, it's more than a chat and I think it sounds also to me like you truly are doing macro social work at the same time when you talk about this community that you built, it's a community and it's a community that's doing things and that is kind of at the core of Macro social work. So I think it's pretty innovative and exciting, so thank you very much for sharing.

[00:41:54] Thank you, Ana, for interviewing.

[00:41:57] You've been listening to Rachel West, Karen Zgoda and Patricia Shelly discuss promoting macro social work through social media on inSocialWork.

[00:42:16] Hi I'm Nancy Smyth Professor and Dean of the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast. We look forward to your continued support of the series. For more information about who we are as a school our history our online and on the ground degree and continuing education programs we invite you to visit our website at [www.socialwork.buffalo.edu](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu). And while you're there check out our technology and social work Resource Center. You'll find it under the Community Resources menu.