

The Power of Twitter

Social media has become integral to communication and daily life for most people. There are numerous social media platforms and, to the uninitiated, the plethora of options can seem overwhelming. Originally designed to be a mini-blog of sorts, Twitter asks people to communicate what they are doing to the world in 140 characters or less. Quickly, Twitter users discovered the platform's power for purposes beyond mini-blogging – specifically in promoting businesses and, most strikingly, advocating for a cause.

While opinions vary on the exact degree to which it played a part, there is consensus that Twitter played a significant role in the Arab Spring uprising of 2011. Twitter literally has the power to change the world.

Twitter's power comes from a function central to its existence: the “retweet.”

One person in a remote area of the world can tweet one message to his/her followers - no matter how few – and if even one follower decides to “retweet” that message... this message has the potential of being seen by millions around the globe. The retweet is gold.

How can Twitter benefit the profession of dance/movement therapy?

Less than a year old, the ADTA Twitter campaign has already shown significant results. @ADTAorg is the “handle” for the American Dance Therapy Association and currently has over 420 followers, the majority of whom are not even actually dance/movement therapists! @ADTAorg's followers are allied professionals, creative arts therapists, dancers, students, people interested in the mindbody connection or in the healing inherent to creativity. The ADTA's tweets have been retweeted by organizations and people that have thousands of followers; an @ADTAorg tweet has even been retweeted by a Huffington Post account to over 30,000 followers!

On a regular basis, @ADTAorg tweets facts about dance/movement therapy and shares links to all of the following: specific pages on www.adta.org, article abstracts in the AJDT and other journals, dance/movement therapists in the press, etc. If these tweets simply landed in the inboxes of a few hundred people, one could argue that the campaign might not be worth the effort. But these tweets do not end up seen by only these people. Each one of

@ADTAorg's followers might potentially "retweet" that message to their respective followers and those followers might potentially retweet the message to *their* followers and so on. The potential reach is exponential.

Retweets are happening and people are clicking on the links.

Software currently being used by @ADTAorg to monitor the reach of its tweets reveal that individual messages have reached thousands of people as a result of only 1-3 people retweeting the original message!

These tweets are making a difference: educating people about the field of dance/movement therapy, increasing "brand awareness" and counteracting media that refers to dance experiences or dance classes as "dance therapy."

Imagine the awareness we could build in the world if only a *few* more people followed and retweeted ADTA info?

Now imagine the reach if *we all* did.

If you have a Twitter account, please follow @ADTAorg and retweet as you are moved to do so. Share your own tweets about dance/movement therapy and watch your own messages get retweeted! Know that when you are doing so, you are making a difference that benefits our entire profession.

If you are not on Twitter, I encourage you to consider creating an account and getting involved. Please see the *How To Twitter Guide* created by PR Committee member Alice Garfias, for step by step instructions. It literally only takes a few seconds to retweet a message. The little bit of time it takes to set up an account and gather followers is well worth the pay off (and can prove beneficial to you as an individual professional, in addition to benefiting the collective.)

Together we can make a difference. Together, we can bring dance/movement therapy into the spotlight it has so rightly deserved for so long.