

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024 / JANUARY 2025



Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement and action, has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent.

- Bob Keeshan

During October – December 2024 we have been extremely active. We are proud to present some highlights of this period.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM



A collaboration between SAPPIN and UNICEF produced beautiful videos that can be shared. The premise of the videos is the link between parenting and mental health and parenting and violence prevention. We are grateful for the contribution of many organisations but especially The Parent Centre and COAST who are featured in Thembile's story.



[#WorldMentalHealthDay: Importance of support for parents and children](#) [WATCH]



[Thembile's Story](#) [WATCH]

**WELCOME TO SAPPIN'S NEW MEMBERS:
The Character Company, Life Choices and Wordworks**



The Character Company – www.thecharactercompany.co.za/

The Character Company is a long-term MENTorship program for young boys growing up with absent fathers or no positive male role models. Through weekly activities, adventures and camps, a group of Positive Male Role models (MENTors) walk alongside these boys as Social Fathers across South Africa, filling the gap of fatherlessness, instilling values and identity and bestowing masculinity for a generation of young boys growing up to be good men.



At The Character Company, we believe that only through intentional and practical MENTorship can we successfully address the issues that destroy our communities like GBV, corruption, substance abuse and suicide.

Through our Men Around a Fire programme, we also engage men in safe spaces to become vulnerable and surround themselves with men to whom they will be accountable so that they can make commitments to be better versions of themselves.

Wordworks – www.wordworks.org.za/

Wordworks is a South African non-profit organisation focusing on early language and literacy development in the first eight years of children's lives. Since 2005, we have worked in under-resourced communities with those adults best positioned to impact young children's language and literacy development – parents and caregivers, family and community members, home visitors, early childhood development practitioners and Grade R to Grade 3 teachers.



We are working collaboratively to grow an informed, capable, resourced and motivated network of schools, organisations and institutions that promote the importance of, and work effectively for, the improvement of children's early language and literacy, through their

association with our programmes and materials. Wordworks offers training, resources and support for partners who wish to use our early language and literacy programmes in their own networks.

Life Choices – www.lifechoices.co.za/

Life Choices is a Cape Town-based nonprofit that focuses on developing young people, who represent around 40% of South Africa's population and 100% of its future. We work in schools, communities and from our Campus in Lansdowne, investing in young people so they can reach their potential. Since 2005, we've impacted the lives of more than 200,000 people from the Cape Flats. Our vision is to build a world in which every young person feels safe and valued, and in which every young person is free to thrive.



CONGRATULATIONS!



We want to welcome Iyanoluwa to the world. A healthy baby boy was born on 15 October 2024. Congratulations to Esther Chunga and her family on this little miracle of life – Iyanoluwa means Miracle / Wonder of God.

OUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE EPISODE 1: WHY THE NURTURING CARE FRAMEWORK MATTERS FOR EVERY CHILD'S FUTURE



Breadline forms part of the bigger advocacy collaboration with SAPPIN, SANCRG and Families for Children to promote universal parenting support through the life course of the child. [Listen to this podcast](#) with Patricia Martin about the importance of the NCF -



MENTAL HEALTH MONTH – SOS Children's Villages



The month of October is Mental Health Awareness Month with the objective of not only educating the public about mental health but also reducing the stigma and discrimination that people with mental illness are often subjected to.

SOS Mthatha held a mental health awareness soccer tournament in partnership with Tyeks Securities in Mthatha.

The tournament consisted of different participants:

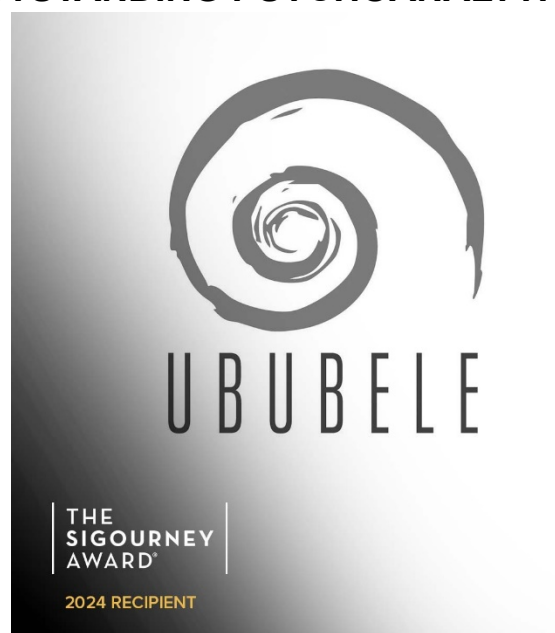
- SOS Children's Village Mthatha
- Siyakhana Youth Outreach and Education Programme: an organisation that provides child care services focusing on the rehabilitation and re-unification of children living and working on the streets. It also provides family support and care to abandoned children (some who are also HIV/AIDS positive while some are HIV/AIDS orphans).
- Thembelihle Junior Primary School
- Sidwadwa Primary School.

During the tournament, there were different speakers in between the matches who were giving speeches about mental health issues and how to overcome them.

Team SOS won and received a trophy and after the games, Tyeks representatives catered for the children.

"These community engagements are important for the development of our children and mental health is one of the issues that affects our well-being. It is necessary for our children to know that they are not alone and they can rely on different stakeholders for assistance. Help is available", says Raphael Mhlungu: Programme Director, Mthatha.

UBUBELE HONOURED WITH AN INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PSYCHOANALYTIC WORK



The Mary Sigourney's Trust recognises and rewards outstanding psychoanalytic work. Internationally, judges evaluated the 2024 submissions from an exceptional pool of global applicants and Ububele was among the top four recipients, being the only organisation that

won this year. The Sigourney Award was established in honour of Mary Sigourney to promote the application of psychoanalytic thought to transform the human experience for the better.

Ububele, a mental health NGO primarily serving the community of Alexandra township has been providing psychoanalytically informed community interventions, including parenting programmes, for the past 24 years. Some refer to the award as a “Nobel Prize” in the field of psychoanalysis and it is significant for Ububele to receive the award ahead of their 25th anniversary.

Executive Director Esther Chunga stated, "This recognition is deeply affirming and validates the critical work we do, highlighting not only its undeniable importance but also the relevance of psychoanalytic practice in marginalized communities."

Read more about the award and other winners here:

www.sigourneyaward.org/mary-sigourney-1

SAPPIN MEETING

3 - 4 October at The Parent Centre



The October 2024 SAPPIN meeting was a vibrant gathering of diverse member organisations collaborating on critical issues in parenting support and violence prevention. Key highlights included the introduction of new member organisations, discussions on improving fatherhood engagement, and updates on various initiatives like "Free to Grow" and Parentline SA. The strategy for 2025 was shared with members and adaptations were made.

Attendees emphasised the importance of reflective supervision for frontline staff and explored strategies for national parenting policies and advocacy. Research updates covered wellness and fatherhood, with plans to expand evidence-based parenting interventions. A focus on collaboration, inclusion and capacity-building underpinned all discussions, with participants committing to strengthening networks and contributing to the collective impact in South Africa's parenting landscape. The meeting fostered a sense of community, innovation and dedication to driving meaningful change.

WHO DO I WANT TO BE IN THIS SITUATION?
Redefining Power through Challenging Gender Roles and Stereotypes
Abigail Osborne - USAPHO



As South Africans, we are acutely aware and reminded of our history, good and bad, at many junctures of our lives. Whether it is a birthday, graduation, or funeral, certain practices are inherent to culture, religion, belief, and race, and these are underpinned by generational practices, knowledge and experience.

Gender particularly, is a construct which is being challenged widely and loudly, yet some communities and cultures still follow the customs and ultimately stereotypes that have been imposed upon us.

The perpetuation of perceived gender norms and stereotypes appears to take on the shape of an ouroboros. In a cyclic loop, we are assigned roles and responsibilities at birth which we are expected to conform to until death and under the threat of being ostracised or ridiculed, dare not step out against the status quo but rather feed into those tropes, eating away at our sanity and truth.

Much like taking on the form of an ouroboros, our nature similarly seems to follow suit in the destruction and rebirth of these roles,

The fight for equality, though decades old and ongoing, still feels as if in its infancy when we consider certain power dynamics, the definition and distribution thereof and the effects on families and the workplace. Efforts to rectify this and create balance in favour of women lead

this race and justly so in the scope of past and present ill-treatment and confinement into a specific role.

Yet as headway is being made (albeit slowly) within employment spaces, how does this compare to life at home and within families?

Equality speaks of all, not one, and with the epidemic of absentee fathers, do we consider the effects of these stereotypes on men? Also, ultimately the negative effects on our children, especially boys, who grow up without positive, present role models and the ability to break free from this harmful cycle?

Who is a man but the protector and provider? To be masculine is to exude power, to portray that silent and stoic strength, and to be obeyed with one word. And if you cannot command this attention, are you even a man?

When one thinks of derogatory terminology reserved for men, it is intensely linked to sexuality, because the ultimate insult is that to one's manhood. That is where the power lies and if you do not have that power, you must be the equivalent of something less...a woman.

Great-grandfathers have passed this on to grandfathers, grandfathers to fathers, and unless changed, fathers to sons.

To be a father, you need to provide for your family. The provision here reflects financial gain and security. Fathers are thus tasked to work tirelessly wherever and whenever to realize this role. Working away or working long hours becomes the norm, and there is no time or energy left to afford any attention to those who made them fathers.

Fathers protect, they do not nurture; this is reserved for mothers. But if fathers are not overtly showing acts of love and care, nor speaking of their feelings and how to manage these emotions as men, how do our sons and future fathers learn to speak and share and show love?

As we evolve, so do our children and the influences and influencers of today, via social media, become the leaders, teachers and rule makers. Mothers are taking up arms, changing their expected roles where possible and becoming the providers.

Now fathers need to ask themselves... 'Who do I want to be in this situation?' Do we follow suit with what we have learnt, and parent as we have been parented? Do we dare to be different and change what we know to be harmful? Sit idly or be the example? Many are learning that they need to unlearn that which has been ingrained into their psyches over generations. Yet they receive no workshops, therapy, support groups or places to share their experiences and receive guidance and tools.

This is where the narrative needs to change, the meaning of equality understood and the power disseminated.

'Who do I want to be in this situation?' and USAPHO's Positive Fatherhood Coaching Programme helps to honestly and effectively answer that question.

The programme allows fathers to be vulnerable and supportive to one another, to see the value in the roles that they play in shaping future generations and to share the power and wealth of knowledge, in the hopes of cutting off the head of the ouroboros and bringing an end to harmful stereotypes, unrealistic roles, inequality, and the misperception and practice of power.

DR JESSICA RONAASEN SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH AWARD WINNER



Jessica has spearheaded innovative programmes that address critical issues such as nutrition, parent education, and holistic support for young children. Her expertise and dedication have transformed ECD practices, empowering communities and shaping sustainable, nurturing environments for the next generation. Jessica has integrated health, nutrition, early childhood development and community engagement into a comprehensive approach that directly addresses the needs of vulnerable children and families. Through the *Eat Love Play Talk Parent Education Programme*, Jessica has played a key role in advocating for sustainable practices that promote not only nutrition and physical activity but also emotional and cognitive well-being.

Her leadership in this programme has contributed to significant improvements in early childhood education and family support systems, making it an essential element of her professional accomplishments that align with the core values of the *Professional of the Year* award. The recognition acknowledges her impactful work in social work, community development and her commitment to creating lasting change for children and families across South Africa.

This recognition celebrates Jessica's unwavering commitment to social justice, her exceptional professional achievements, and her role as a leader in creating meaningful change in South Africa.

See the other finalists here: <https://sayouthawards.co.za/finalists2024/>

SAPPIN / DBE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 15 – 16 October at Ububele



The recent SAPPIN/DBE meeting brought together diverse stakeholders to discuss and advance the development of a national parenting support strategy aligned through the life course of the child. The discussions emphasized the importance of creating a clear roadmap, fostering collaboration among sectors and ensuring accountability with proper funding. Participants reflected on challenges faced by parents across life stages, identified protective factors, and mapped available services, emphasizing the need for a coordinated, comprehensive system to support families.

Key themes included the importance of inclusive policymaking, improved inter-departmental collaboration and a focus on parenting as a central element in child well-being. Participants acknowledged the necessity of engaging parents in programme design, aligning national efforts with international frameworks and addressing gaps in the care economy.

Working groups were formed to focus on areas such as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), advocacy, policy mapping and leadership. The next steps include shaping a strategic

framework, conducting further research and creating a central repository for resources and information. The meeting concluded with participants highlighting the value of connections made, the need for greater government involvement, and a commitment to moving forward collaboratively.

One of the biggest challenges with collaborative meetings like this is, that it is impossible to have all voices in the room. While some individuals were invited, others were not, and this raises important questions about ensuring inclusivity. Moving forward, we must consider: Who are the right people to invite? How can we include the voices of those who play a crucial role in this work, even if they cannot be physically present?

For a network like SAPPIN, this challenge is more manageable because we rely on representatives who bring the collective voice of our members. SAPPIN's strength lies in two key areas:

1. **Amplifying the voices of parents and children** to ensure their needs and perspectives are central to the discussion.
2. **Working collaboratively** to create inclusive, meaningful engagements.

We aim to ensure no one feels excluded. If you are interested in being involved in this process moving forward, please [send me a message](#). This will enable us to share more specific feedback from these engagements and ensure that your perspectives are represented by current representatives in future meetings. We value your contributions and look forward to working together to make these processes more inclusive and impactful.

UPDATE ON PARENTLINE SA



**Being a parent isn't easy.
Parents need all the help they can get.**

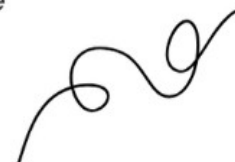
Parentline SA provides simple WhatsApp support and advice on any parenting issues or challenges you may have.



**PARENTLINE SA
087 813 4290**



1. Save this number to your phone
2. Type "hi".
3. Follow the prompts



We are very excited about our progress on [ParentlineSA](#) in the final quarter of 2024. A revamp of the current content has started and most of it should be uploaded by the end of the year. We have rewritten the existing content to ensure that the language is accessible to English second and third-language speakers, has a consistently warm and supportive tone and that the chunks of information are kept short. We have also been looking at ways to offer users more exits on the content flow and to be able to revisit information easily at a later stage. This has involved looking at sub-menus and, in some instances, sub-sub-menus!

Work has already begun on content for the 7 to 12-year age group, and will start being uploaded in January. Content for the next age group, 13 to 18 years, will follow directly thereafter. The following content topics are also been added: Nutrition, Child Sexual development, and Development Concerns.

Further topics identified for 2025 are Child Safety (which will include online safety), and Health. Other developments are around the referral system, and making it more user-friendly. Organisations that have a WhatsApp account will shortly be able to engage with users directly via WhatsApp chat or Facebook Messenger if they request in-person assistance. The ability for organisations offering parenting services to self-register on the chatbot will be tested in the new year. All the details of the organisation will be captured directly through the chatbot and will then be reviewed for suitability before their services are listed live.

Please, remember to start incorporating Parentline SA as a suggested parenting tool in all parents training programmes as well as one-on-one work with parents. We really need it to be used more often.

National VPF South African Medical Research Council



The 20th Violence Prevention Forum Meeting took place at the South African Medical Research Council in Pretoria on the 13th and 14th of November. There were 35 participants representing many different organisations, institutions and government departments. In this meeting, participants shared research, policy and practice knowledge that has emerged in the last three years.

The objectives for this meeting were to:

- Share new knowledge, practice and policy
- Assess how that new knowledge impacts each of our sectors and the VPF's overall goal of
- preventing violence at scale and based on our best knowledge

- Developing a shared understanding of the context in which we are working and how that
- affects and impacts the prevention of violence
- Re-connecting, networking and deepening relationships within and across sectors
- During the two days there was plenty of time for dialogue and interaction, sharing and learning.

The meeting started with a panel discussion on day one, with two parallel sessions where research findings were presented. There was plenty of time for interrogating the findings and making sense of them.

SAPPIN had the privilege to present the preliminary findings of our Wellness Research experientially. See our poster presentation below.

THE STAFF WELL-BEING COST OF THE VIOLENCE-PREVENTION CARE ECONOMY: PERSPECTIVES FROM SAPPIN MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



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BACKGROUND:

Parenting programmes aimed at reducing and preventing violence can be highly emotionally strenuous for the implementing organisations and their staff. In the course of their work, implementers engage in intensive emotional labour and may be susceptible to vicarious trauma, burnout, and moral injury as a result (Bride et al., 2004; Figley, 1995; Maslach et al., 2001). The efficacy and longevity of parenting program delivery throughout South Africa hinge upon the ability to maintain a workforce comprising well-trained, seasoned clinicians, lay practitioners, and community development workers (WHO, 2008).

Given the challenging landscape of South Africa characterised by strained healthcare systems, elevated levels of child abuse, and dysfunctional health and social structures, practitioners face heightened risks of experiencing burnout or vicarious trauma (Harris & Falot, 2001; Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, limited employment prospects and high unemployment rates may compel practitioners to persist in their roles despite severe burnout (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Ethical and quality implementation of violence-prevention interventions must take cognisance of the impact of implementation on staff well-being, and steps must be taken to mitigate this impact (Jameton, 1984; Litz et al., 2009). Internationally, reflective supervision has been advocated as a key strategy for preventing practitioner burnout, particularly for those working in early relational health and parenting programmes (Boyer et al., 2023; Eaves Simpson et al., 2018). However, little is known about whether this protective mechanism translates effectively to other contexts (Frosch et al., 2018; Meuwissen & Watson, 2022; Sadusky & Spinks, 2022). Thus, research is needed to verify if the protective nature of reflective supervision is sufficient for the South African context, where the strain of the work may be greater (Pavlov & Wells, 2023). To do so, a comprehensive understanding of the current staff well-being landscape and burnout prevention interventions is imperative for informed managerial decisions and funding allocations, ultimately enhancing service provision to families in the region.

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

1. Assess the emotional wellbeing of staff members from organisations implementing violence-prevention parenting programmes in South Africa.
2. Map the current interventions undertaken to promote staff wellbeing at both the organisational and individual levels

STUDY METHOD:

This poster reports on the preliminary cross-sectional quantitative results from a larger mixed-methods study into the emotional wellbeing of staff members from organisations implementing violence-prevention parenting programmes across South Africa. Survey data on professional quality of life and care strategies was collected from 209 SAPPIN organisation employees and their collaborators working in eighteen organisations across seven provinces in South Africa.



PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS:



PARTICIPANT SELF-CARE STRATEGIES:

Spirituality and exercise are the primary forms of self-care exercised by staff from SAPPIN member organisations.

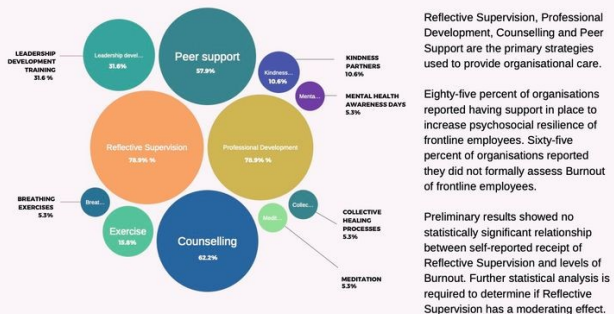


EMOTIONAL WELLBEING RATES:



Average Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress scores of SAPPIN member organisation employees are higher than comparable mean scores of nurses, lay counsellors and other non-profit employees in South Africa (Mason, 2018; Jensen et al., 2022). However, Compassion Satisfaction scores are also higher, indicating a sense of fulfillment from the work.

ORGANISATIONAL CARE STRATEGIES:



Reflective Supervision, Professional Development, Counselling and Peer Support are the primary strategies used to provide organisational care.

Eighty-five percent of organisations reported having support in place to increase psychosocial resilience of frontline employees. Sixty-five percent of organisations reported they did not formally assess Burnout of frontline employees.

Preliminary results showed no statistically significant relationship between self-reported receipt of Reflective Supervision and levels of Burnout. Further statistical analysis is required to determine if Reflective Supervision has a moderating effect.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE:

Employees from SAPPIN member organisations find their work highly fulfilling but are significantly impacted by their work, with elevated levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. This occurs despite widespread access to therapeutic services, peer support, ongoing professional development and reflective supervision. Further analysis is underway to determine the quality of reflective supervision received, as well as to evaluate other avenues for network-wide support. What is clear is that more measures need to be put in place to protect the wellness of staff working in the violence-prevention landscape. On the basis of these results, SAPPIN plan to continue emancipatory participatory research to establish support needs.

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FSP CoP

8 – 10 October at The Parent Centre



The two-day CoP meeting focused on strengthening collaboration among members, reflecting on challenges, and planning for future initiatives. Key discussions included the need for unified communication and clear roles between government departments and the CoP, with members emphasizing improved alignment and ethical obligations in the ongoing pilot.

The group explored Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices, sharing diverse tools currently in use, including pre-and post-tests, attendance tracking and qualitative evaluations. Members identified gaps such as the need for qualitative research and understanding the reasons for participant dropouts. Plans were made to refine M&E tools and processes collaboratively.

Self-care and reflective supervision emerged as essential supports for members, with plans to expand these offerings. Training on Personal Development and Leadership (PDL) will take place in February 2025 to further equip members to address trauma-informed care in their programmes. The Sinovuyo Teens Programme was highlighted, with positive feedback from members implementing it across various organisations.

Looking ahead, the CoP will hold bi-annual and online meetings to share insights, enhance collaboration and advocate for sector-wide support, including staff compensation and sustainable NGO funding. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with participants expressing appreciation for the supportive and collaborative space provided by the CoP.

WESTERN CAPE VPF

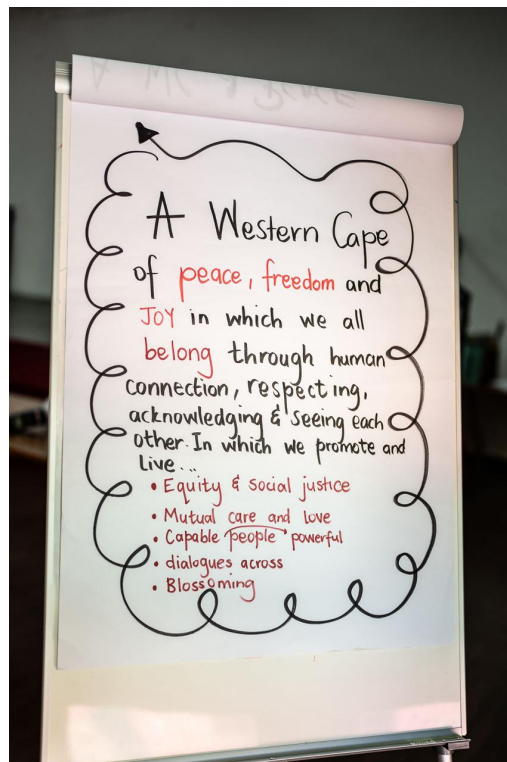
5 - 6 November at Community House



The theme for this meeting was: “Re-imagining a safe and prosperous Western Cape.” The meeting responded to the question “What does a healed, equal and violence-free Western Cape look like?”

There was a mapping out of how our individual and collective violence prevention work contributes towards achieving this violence-free future as well as possible partnerships. Participants connected and shared the latest knowledge and research. SAPPIN shared the preliminary quantitative findings of our Wellness research.

Through different exercises,
the following vision emerged:



FESTIVE SEASON



This year has been incredibly busy and impactful, with meaningful progress made across various sectors. As we reflect, we do so with immense gratitude and appreciation for the dedication of our members, the support of friends in our broader network and the collaboration with government partners. It is truly a privilege to work alongside such committed individuals and organisations.

As the year draws to a close, I hope you find time to rest, recharge and embrace moments of peace. Let us remain mindful of those whose lives are affected by illness, violence and conflict, and let this awareness inspire us to continue striving for change. Together, we can look forward to a new year filled with renewed energy and shared purpose.

- Wilmi

Please don't forget to support SAPPIN on social media

