Today you can research any disease on line, join any number of chat groups/support groups formed around a specific ailment, but there is very little pastoral care on line. More and more people will be using the digital medium to reach out to their rabbis. How can we be better trained and prepared?

I. Digital Communication is a fact of life: Texting, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs. How do we use them for pastoral care and help educate others to use them properly?
   a. Asked to do funerals on Facebook, counseled friends who reached out to me as a rabbi on diff issues.
   b. [Link](http://www.newlifepastoralcounseling.com/New_Life_Services.html)
   c. Friend Skypes with therapist
   d. Ipad at Wedding [Link](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/blog/rabbis-without-borders/2011/11/18/257/)

II. What are technologies we can use? Basic info:
   a. Phone call
   b. Phone texting
   c. Facebook [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) (status updates, messages, chat)
   d. Twitter [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)
   e. Blogs or websites [http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sarahsjourney](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sarahsjourney)
   f. Skype [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

III. What are the benefits of social media to pastoral care?
   a. Ability to quickly gather community to gather to help individuals or larger community.
   b. Easy access to information for all. Gives a life line to those who are home or hospital bound.
   c. As an example of a pastor offering pastoral support to an entire community on twitter see: [http://pastorkeithanderson.net/index.php/pk-social-media/item/praying-the-manhunt](http://pastorkeithanderson.net/index.php/pk-social-media/item/praying-the-manhunt)
      • When is this kind of tweeting appropriate?
      • How can it be used to best effect?
      • How can social media be used to build community on line during times of crisis?
      • How can the rabbi lead the group?
   d. Caring Bridges [http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sarahsjourney](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sarahsjourney)
   e. Facebook Groups – rally people around someone who is ill. [www.theberrychildren.org](http://www.theberrychildren.org)
IV. What questions arise when doing pastoral care using these technologies?
   a. When is it appropriate to counsel online? Through email, Facebook or other?
   b. When should conversations be moved off line? Is there a trigger point to look for?
   c. What privacy issues should rabbis be aware of? (Everything on line is recorded somewhere.)
   d. What issues do you have to be aware of when counseling online? Written words do not come with a tone of voice, a smile, a hand to hold. How does this affect the pastoral relationship? What are pitfalls? How can they be avoided?
   e. What are the uses of video conferencing?

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