



## COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

# Social Media

Imagine: A major publication has just published a long-form investigative report about oral health care called “The Cost of a Smile.” It delves deep into the state of oral health care in the United States, putting a national spotlight on the challenges that many Americans face. These challenges include lack of access to providers, the high cost of care, and the absence of prevention programs. The article is a good opportunity to tap into a national conversation and reframe oral health. Social media is a good place for this kind of engagement, as framing works in spaces of all sizes—even in 280 characters.

 Sample Tweet:

***[@Major publication] knocks on the locked doors that bar millions from accessing good #oralhealth <https://bit.ly.url/>***

The first tweet invokes the ***Keys to Oral Health*** metaphor to highlight the systemic barriers to oral health. The metaphor brings barriers to the forefront of thinking by helping people understand that oral health is not just about willpower—or caring for your teeth. No matter how hard you push on a locked door, you can’t get through without a key.

 Sample Tweet:

***Lots of people can’t unlock the doors to good #oralhealth. [Initiative X] is the key they need. <https://bit.ly.url/>***

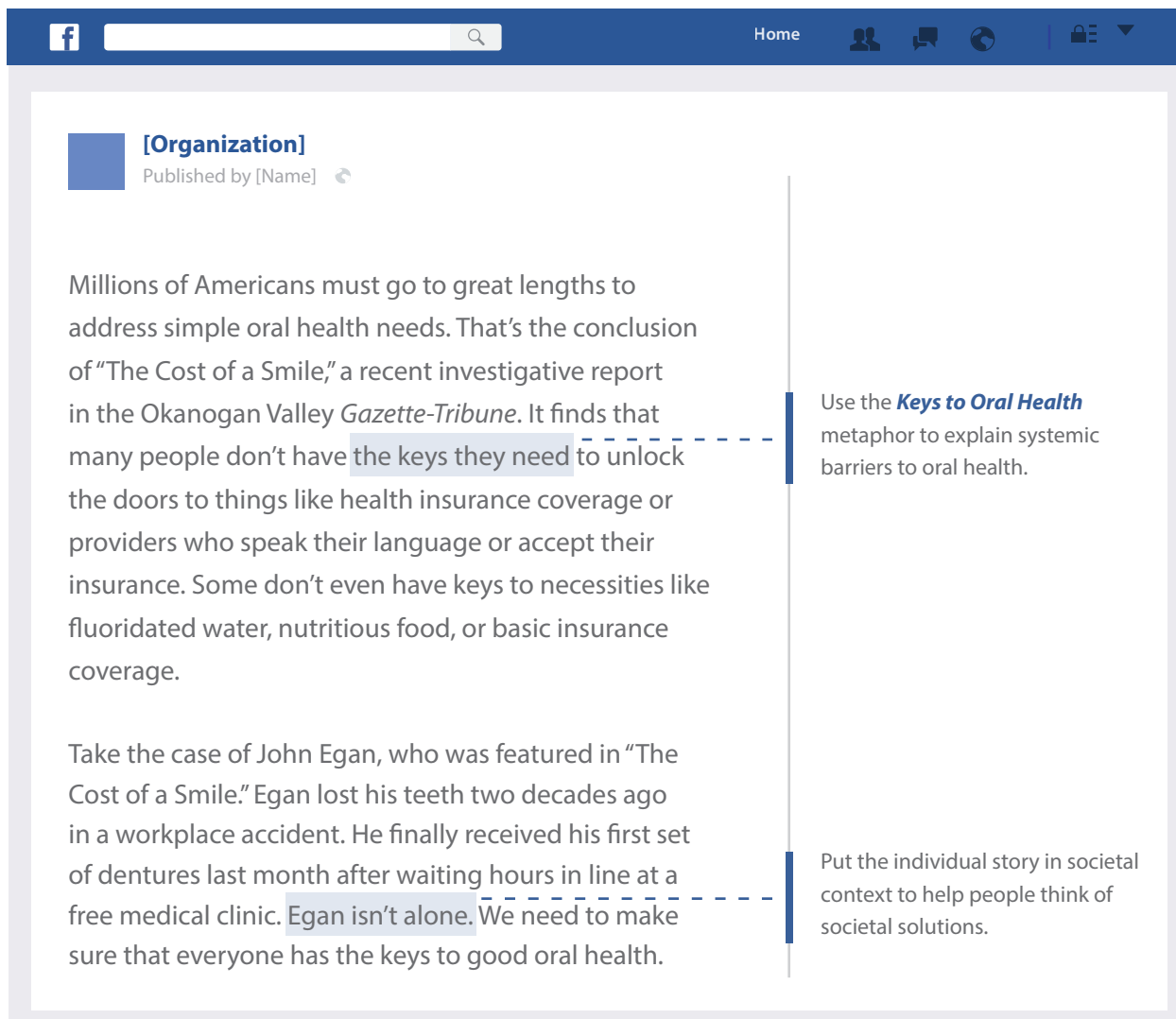
Because locked doors (barriers) need keys (access), the metaphor helps people understand both the societal challenges and solutions to oral health. Referring to a program or initiative as a key gives advocates the opportunity to talk about it as a solution.

 Sample Tweet:

***#Oralhealth affects overall health. New @gztr report shows how mouth health affects body health—and vice versa: <https://bit.ly.url/>***

The public thinks that oral health is simply about shiny teeth. Quoting the title of the piece (“The Cost of a Smile”) in a tweet will reinforce these problematic ideas. Advocates should point to the story but frame the tweet in a more productive way. This tweet makes the connection between oral health and overall health and avoids invoking the story’s title.

Blog posts are great opportunities to reframe oral health. Here’s the beginning of a sample post about the same article above.



**[Organization]**  
Published by [Name]

Millions of Americans must go to great lengths to address simple oral health needs. That’s the conclusion of “The Cost of a Smile,” a recent investigative report in the Okanogan Valley *Gazette-Tribune*. It finds that many people don’t have **the keys they need** to unlock the doors to things like health insurance coverage or providers who speak their language or accept their insurance. Some don’t even have keys to necessities like fluoridated water, nutritious food, or basic insurance coverage.

Take the case of John Egan, who was featured in “The Cost of a Smile.” Egan lost his teeth two decades ago in a workplace accident. He finally received his first set of dentures last month after waiting hours in line at a free medical clinic. **Egan isn’t alone.** We need to make sure that everyone has the keys to good oral health.

Use the **Keys to Oral Health** metaphor to explain systemic barriers to oral health.

Put the individual story in societal context to help people think of societal solutions.

The image shows a simulated Facebook interface. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with a Facebook 'f' logo, a search bar, and icons for Home, a group of people, a speech bubble, a globe, and a lock. Below this is a white post area. The post contains two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph is highlighted in light blue and reads: "Healthier mouths mean healthier people. And healthier people mean stronger communities." A dashed blue line connects this text to a callout box on the right that says: "This statement connects oral health to overall health." The second paragraph is also highlighted in light blue and reads: "To reach this goal, Oral Health Advocacy Associates is working to give more people the keys they need for good oral health. We're working to make prevention services more available to more people, such as screenings at schools and community centers. If we create opportunities for people to receive preventive care at facilities outside of dentist offices, we will catch dental problems before they start. We'll give them the keys they need to health—and our entire society will be stronger as a result." A dashed blue line connects this text to a second callout box on the right that says: "Don't leave prevention undefined. Help the public see the benefit of prevention by giving examples of what it looks like."