
Slide 1



MHN

Finding Balance in Our
Digital Lives

Presentation by:
MHN Training & Development

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Participant Guide

Slide 2

MHN

Learning Objectives

- Discuss what we like about digital technology
- Consider the ways in which our use of digital media may be creating problems in our lives
- Present tips for healthy digital technology use
- Evaluate our digital use habits and changes we may want to make

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

2

Slide 3

MHN

Question

What do you like and/or 'love' about digital technology?

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

3

Slide 4

MHN

Digital Technology – the Pros

- Facilitates social interaction and connection
- Provides access to information and entertainment
- Helps us solve specific problems, streamline things, and makes our lives easier
- Gives people a voice, increases civic participation and facilitates the creation of communities
- Helps to amplify the response to humanitarian crises and to support those afflicted by these crises
- Changes how work gets done by boosting productivity and enhancing flexibility for workers and employers

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

4

Slide 5

MHN

Question

Are there ways in which digital technology may be creating problems in your life?

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

5

Slide 6

MHN

Common Problems with Digital Technology Use

- The sheer amount of time we can spend on our screens
- Habitual and compulsive use

©2021 Managed Health Network, L.L.C. All Rights Reserved. 6

Slide 7

MHN

Time Spent on Social Media

According to Digital Marketing.org:

- In the United States, the average time spent on social media is 2 hours and 3 minutes per day.
- Globally, the average time spent on social media and messaging platforms is 2 hours and 22 minutes per day.

DAILY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
Average h:mm spent engaging with/connected to social networks/services during a typical day

Year	Time Spent (h:mm)
2012	1:30
2013	1:35
2014	1:41
2015	1:49
2016	2:04
2017	2:15
2018	2:32

Age Group	Time Spent (h:mm)
16-24	3:01
25-34	2:37
35-44	2:04
45-54	1:39
55-64	1:13

©2021 Managed Health Network, L.L.C. All Rights Reserved. 7

Slide 8

MHN

Time Spent on Digital Media

According to eMarketer*, adults spent an estimated average of 395 minutes (more than 6 ½ hours) with digital media each day.

* eMarketer is a market research company that provides insights and trends related to digital marketing, media, and commerce.

Digital	6:35
TV*	3:35
Radio**	1:20
0:11 Newspapers*	
0:09 Magazines*	
Total	12:09

Note: ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking on TV while listening to radio is counted as 1 hour for TV and 1 hour for radio; **excludes digital
Source: eMarketer, April 2019

T10153 www.eMarketer.com

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved. 8

Slide 9


MHN

Habitual and Compulsive Use

- Habitual and compulsive behavior can mean that we are less present and engaged in our lives, and with other people
- Social media technologies are built on the idea of engaging the attention of users for as long and as frequently as possible
- Users seek rewards and once rewarded the desire for additional rewards increases
- Different models are used by developers within social media companies to keep users hooked to their mobile apps

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved. 9

Slide 10



Habitual and Compulsive Use *cont.*


Think about an app, or website that you spend a lot of time using such as, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, Etsy, Netflix, Twitter, etc.

- What features does it have that lure you to stay on, or to return to it frequently?
- If you are off your device or phone for some time, do you feel like you are missing out?
- How do you feel when you try to resist checking messages?

©2021 Managed Health Network, L.L.C. All Rights Reserved.

10

Slide 11



Habitual and Compulsive Use *cont.*

Social Media Design Features That Keep Users Hooked

- Likes
- Push notifications
- Fear of missing out (FOMO)
- Gamification
- Scrolling
- Delay of response
- Personalization, scarcity, social proof, reciprocity, etc.

©2021 Managed Health Network, L.L.C. All Rights Reserved.

11

Slide 12

MHN

Additional Cons Which Can Impact Our Lives

- Digital overload can lead to being highly distractable
- Excessive use can impact our physical, mental, emotional health
- Increased levels of stress from extreme focus on “bad” news
- Comparison of oneself to others online can contribute to damage to self-esteem
- A poor replacement for ‘live’ relationships

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

12

Slide 13

MHN

Additional Cons Which Can Impact Everyone

- A vehicle to disseminate harmful content and propaganda
- A vehicle for biased information, misinformation, and divisive rhetoric

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

13

Slide 14

MHN

Tips for Healthy Digital Technology Use

- Use digital technology purposefully
- Know where your time is going
- Create a social media use routine
- Set clear usage limits
- Have 'screen free' times
- Be mindful about digital work-life balance
- Be present with people
- Be selective about who you 'follow'
- Avoid using social media before bed
- Take breaks
- Pay attention to how you feel when you are online

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

14

Slide 15

MHN

Healthy Digital Habits

- What is one digital habit you want to change?
- Why is it important that you change this habit?
- What are some ways you can give your new habit a "boost" and make it easier to do?
- If you're trying to break a bad habit, what are some things you can do so that you don't slip back into old ways?

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

15

Slide 16

MHN

Parenting Tips for Older Children & Social Media

- Be a mentor
- Follow safety and privacy guidelines
- Develop, follow, and routinely revisit a Media plan
- Discuss with your child, their 'online lives'
- Monitor television viewing and social media

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

16

Slide 17

MHN

Ways to Help Kids Deal with Disturbing News

Tips for kids under 7

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Be together

Tips for kids 8–12

- Carefully consider your child's maturity and temperament
- Be available for questions and conversation
- Talk about -- and filter -- news coverage


Tips for teens

- Check in
- Let teens express themselves

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

17

Slide 18




Summary

- Digital technology has many pros and cons
- How we use it is up to each of us
- Ensuring that it has a positive presence in our lives means developing healthy habits
- If you could use help to create healthy habits, reach out to the EAP

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

16

Slide 19



Resources

Books

- [Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life](#), by Julie Li
- [Atomic Habits](#), by James Clear
- [Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products](#), by Nir Eyal

Online

- [How to Spot Fake News - FactCheck.org](#)
- [Parents' Ultimate Guide to Parental Controls | Common Sense Media](#)
- [10 steps to protect your kids' online privacy – ParentingDigital](#)
- [MHN.com](#)

©2021 Managed Health Network, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

19

Handout A: Addicted to Social Media?

Over recent years, there has been a proliferation of studies assessing how excessive social media use can impact negatively on health. The good news is that very few people are genuinely addicted to social media. For these individuals, social media use is associated with a number of psychological problems, including anxiety, depression, loneliness, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and addiction.

For many others, social media use is habitual, and it can start to spill over into other areas of their lives and be annoying and problematic. If you want to check whether you may be at risk of developing an addiction to social media, ask yourselves these six simple questions:

1. Do you spend a lot of time thinking about social media or planning to use social media?
2. Do you feel urges to use social media more and more?
3. Do you use social media to forget about personal problems?
4. Do you often try to reduce your use of social media without success?
5. Do you become restless or troubled if you are unable to use social media?
6. Do you use social media so much that it has had a negative impact on your job or studies?

If the answer to all six of these questions is “yes,” then you may have or be developing an addiction to using social media. We say “may” because the only way this can be confirmed is through a diagnosis from a clinical psychologist or a psychiatrist.

If you answered “yes” to a few of these questions, it is more likely that you are a habitual social media user and that what you should do is engage in ‘digital detox’ strategies that simply allow you to reduce the amount of time spent on social media.

This can include simple steps, such as:

- turning off sound notifications and
- only allowing yourself to check your smartphone every 30 minutes or once an hour.

Other simple steps include

- having periods in the day where there is self-imposed non-screen time (such as during meal times) and
- leaving your smartphone in a separate room from where you sleep (just so you don’t get the urge to check social media before bedtime, during the night, and when you wake up).

For the small number of individuals that are genuinely addicted to social media use, treatment is warranted. However, the goal of treatment for this type of addiction (unlike many other addictions) should be controlled use rather than total abstinence, as it is not feasible to stop someone from using devices that have Internet access (i.e., their smartphone).

The most successful type of treatment for online addictions appears to be cognitive behavioral therapy (which is a talk therapy designed to help people change the way they think and behave), although there are relatively few published studies examining its efficacy in relation to internet addictions.

If you are concerned about your social media use, reach out to your EAP for support.

Content adapted from:

- Addicted to Social Media? | Psychology Today

Handout B: What is Doomscrolling? What Experts Need You to Know

This is the tendency to continue to surf or scroll through bad news, even though that news may be perceived as saddening, disheartening, or **depressing**. Doomscrolling serves a real purpose in people's lives, some helpful and some harmful. People have different reasons for doing it and it's important to understand what's motivating your **news habit**. Why do we doomscroll?

- To try to make uncertain events make sense
 - It's easy to feel **helpless and scared** during these uncertain times and some people find that staying informed and trying to understand why something is happening, helps them to feel less frightened, and more in control.
- A sense of connectedness
 - Feeling connected to others who have similar concerns and worries or are in similar situations, so that you're not alone.
- Reassurance that you're okay
 - A way to reassure yourself that things actually aren't as terrible as they seem and that you're doing alright. For instance, news about a devastating typhoon on the other side of the world may make you grateful you live in a land-locked state.
- Feeling prepared
 - For some people, it can be **empowering** that they are on top of the latest disaster before other people. This can also be helpful for knowing what to do to prepare.
 - For instance, perhaps you need to pack a **"go bag"** in case of fire, while others may want to stock up on toilet paper in the face of new quarantines.
- Fear of missing out
 - Constantly reading bad news can be a way to reassure yourself that you're not missing anything important.
- A way to manage anxiety
 - Many people who doomscroll use it as a way to manage their **anxiety** about events they can't control. Unfortunately, this habit can quickly become a compulsion, as the attempt to reduce anxiety creates more of it.
- Boredom
 - Boredom is another reason many of us start doomscrolling. Our phones are the one thing that's with us no matter where we are.
- Hypervigilance
 - People who are in a state of hypervigilance have a heightened sensitivity to potential dangers and are constantly scanning their environment for threats.

- The problem in is that when everything feels dangerous, then you're on constant alert, which is mentally and physically exhausting.
- You're addicted to your phone
 - Every time you pick up your phone, you're rewarded with a hit of **dopamine**, leading many people to pick up their phone 75 to 100 or more times per day.
- It feels like doing something
 - It gives the illusion of action without the responsibility or fear of stepping outside of one's comfort zone and, actually doing something about all these problems.

Health consequences of doomscrolling

Doomscrolling can have a wide range of effects on **mental**, physical, emotional, and social health, particularly when it becomes excessive. Here are some of the health consequences actively seeking bad news can have on you.

An inaccurate worldview

Many people who start doomscrolling experience cognitive distortions such as **catastrophizing**. Doomscrolling can worsen these, causing even more ruminative thinking and more doomscrolling. Eventually, it becomes a vicious feedback loop where your entire worldview becomes even more warped and distorted. This is especially true on the Internet where there is an endless supply of news and opinions that will reinforce your personal biases.

Increased risk of mental illness

Doomscrolling can adversely affect your mood, to the point where you may become depressed, anxious, or begin having panic attacks. It can also lead to a sense of futility or helplessness, which—in the worst-case scenario—could lead to suicidal thoughts or completion.

Sleep problems

Thanks to the blue light, any excessive screen time contributes to poor sleep, but add anxiety-provoking news and you've got the perfect recipe for **insomnia**.

Relationship issues

Doomscrolling is a particularly **addicting type of phone use** and can have serious consequences outside of the content itself. You may find yourself participating less in conversations and interactions with those around you as you become screen-focused rather than people-focused.

Poor work performance

The more time you spend doomscrolling, the more your attention, performance, and functionality will suffer in other areas of your life, like work.

Weight gain

“Doomscrolling is often accompanied by **stress eating** or binge eating,” Yeager says. “Some individuals scroll and eat concurrently, and subsequently, experience shame and guilt. They often then resort to binge scrolling and eating even more to alleviate these negative feelings.” In addition, if you’re doomscrolling you’re probably not doing it on a treadmill. Sitting for long periods of time has been linked with many health problems. Doomscrolling could lead to weight gain, and over time, increase the risk of cardiac and endocrinological disorders.

Neck, back, and eye strain

“Many people assume poor posture while scrolling, and this could cause muscle pain and discomfort,” Yeager says. “Additionally, doomscrolling could lead to **dry eye syndrome** and ocular fatigue.”

Doing things you regret

Because doomscrolling relies on cycling news headlines, oftentimes the news you are reading isn’t complete or accurate. In some cases, it may be an outright lie or manipulation. Believing dangerous conspiracies or false beliefs can lead to serious consequences both on a personal and societal level. People have done some upsetting, crazy, illegal, and life-threatening things based purely on misinformation they came across while doomscrolling.

How to know when you’ve crossed the line

Whether or not your doomscrolling has become a problem can be hard to see in yourself. At first, the consequences are minimal, and they may worsen slowly across time. Many will feel their actions are normal as they see others around them doing exactly the same thing. It is not until they break the habit that they realize just how much of their life it’s taking up. What qualifies as a “problem” is going to be very individual, but there are some red flags to look for. They include:

- Checking the headlines and social media feeds more than a few times per day. Some doomscrollers feel compelled to check every 15 minutes.
- Seeing the same information over and over again and becoming frustrated with the lack of new information
- Checking social media so often that it disturbs your sleep, including waking up at night to make sure you don’t miss anything
- Waking up for whatever reason and then checking your phones delaying going back to sleep due to heightened anxiety
- The stats on your phone use show that you’re on it constantly and/or are picking it up dozens of times per day
- Turning down activities you love in order to spend more time doomscrolling
- Checking your phone in inappropriate or dangerous situations, like while you’re driving
- Being unable to function normally in your daily life, including going to work, taking care of your health, grocery shopping, and spending time with loved ones
- An overwhelming feeling of hopelessness and futility
- Concerns expressed by loved ones

How to quit (or at least moderate) your doomscrolling

Once you've recognized that doomscrolling is impacting your life in negative ways, you can start taking action. Here's how to get started:

Set up your digital health apps

The best way to moderate or stop this behavior? Use the same technology that is enabling your doomscrolling to lock you out of phone access. Most phones come with "digital health" apps or functions that allow you to set time limits for phone usage or for individual apps.

It can even be set to lock you out of your phone if you pass the limit or during certain times of the day, like during sleeping hours. Your phone can also prompt you to do other things, like take more steps or drink water instead of scrolling through Twitter.

Give yourself a hard limit

Cutting it off cold turkey can be too difficult for some people, so a good compromise is to set a time limit for yourself each day, Gardere says. For example, limit your doomscrolling to no more than one hour total and use a timer to keep yourself honest.

And don't forget to include screen time on devices other than your phone; it still counts as doomscrolling if you're watching it on TV or your laptop.

Make a list of alternate activities

A lot of doomscrolling happens during periods of boredom so short-circuit this impulse by having a list of more productive things you can do with small chunks of time, Yeager says. "Try taking a short walk, sit outside in the sun, have a healthy snack, meditate, take a stretch break, or visit with a friend."

Charge your phone in a separate room

It's hard to constantly check your phone if you have to get up to do it. Keep your phone in a separate room, particularly at night, to reduce the temptation to mindlessly check it. Turning off notifications from news apps can also be very helpful in this regard as you'll be less likely to check your phone without constant notifications.

Check in with a therapist

For some people, the pull to doomscroll may be too hard to overcome on their own. A mental health professional can be key both in overcoming the addiction and in dealing with the depression and anxiety.

Adapted from:

- [What Is Doomscrolling? What Experts Need You to Know | The Healthy](#)

Handout C: A Critical Eye for Digital Media

Choose Your News Carefully

It is tough to distinguish good information from bad information, and fact from opinion. Even the people we trust may be unknowingly spreading false information, so we can be caught off guard.

- Be deliberate about where you get your information.
- Instead of relying solely on the information showing up in your social media feeds, choose a set of publications that you trust, like a newspaper, a magazine or a broadcast news program, and turn to those regularly.
- Mainstream media is far from perfect, but it's subjected to a standards process that is usually not seen in user-generated content, including memes.
- And pause before sharing... ask yourself, "Am I sure enough about this that I should share it?" If we all did this, we could dramatically reduce the amount of misinformation.

Be a Fact Checker

Not sure if the article you are reading is legitimate?

Step 1 is to open a browser tab (keyboard shortcut: Ctrl+T (or Command+T on a Mac).

That creates a new browser tab in Chrome and Firefox. The reason: It enables you to ask questions and hopefully get some answers with a quick web search.

Step 2 is to ask yourself these questions:

Who is behind the information?

What is the evidence?

What do other sources say?

- You could do a web search on the author of the content when possible. You could do another search to see what other publications are saying about the same topic. If the claim isn't being repeated elsewhere, it may be false.
- You could also open another browser tab to look at the evidence. With a meme, for example, you could do a reverse image search on the photo that was used in the meme. On Google.com, click Images and upload the photo or paste the web address of the photo into the search bar. That will show where else the image has shown up on the web to verify whether the one you have seen has been manipulated.

With videos, it's trickier. A browser plug-in called InVID can be installed on Firefox and Chrome. When watching a video, you can click on the tool, click on the Keyframes button and paste in a video link (a YouTube clip, for example) and click Submit. From there, the tool will pull up important frames of the video, and you can reverse image search on those frames to see if they are legitimate or fake.

Content adapted from: How to Deal With a Crisis of Misinformation - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Handout D: Tips for Finding Balance in Our Digital Lives

Use digital media (including social media) purposefully.

Be thoughtful about *why* you are using an app or a site. Are you bored and just killing some time? Fine. How much time do you want to spend? Wanting to connect with friends or family or get caught up on them? Wanting to read the news to be informed? Great, set some intention around how much news, or how much time spent, will satisfy you. Needing a distraction? Fine. Again, set your intention for how you want to do that. And use a timer. This will help to ensure that you are being purposeful about your use, and that you have some limits.

Know where your time is going.

If you want to cut back, on screen time, working out how much time you actually spend online can be the first step. There are some apps, such as [Moment](#), [RescueTime](#) and [BreakFree](#), which can be helpful in tracking where your time goes.

Screen time/app usage information is available on your smart phone/device. For instance, on an iPhone, go to open ‘settings’, swipe down and tap ‘battery’, tap the clock icon to the right of the Last 24 hours and Last 7 days, and can see Battery use by App, total screen time, and where you spent your time.

Start your days intentionally.

As easy as it is to pick up your phone and start scrolling from your bed, it may not be the healthiest way to begin your day, as you cannot control what you’re going to see. Try starting with meditation, prayer, stretching, or positive affirmations instead. These alternatives are likely to support a healthier internal monologue.

Create a social media use routine.

Create a social media routine in terms of what you engage with, when. For instance, perhaps you get caught up on the news in the morning before you start work and engage with your social networking apps in the evening.

Set clear usage limits.

Set timers and alarms for a set amount of screen time and stick to them.

Use features on apps such as [Moment](#), [RescueTime](#) and [BreakFree](#) to block distractions when you need to focus, or set *daily* limits on sites and apps. Facebook for instance, includes a feature where you can set a daily limit.

Yes, there is some irony here in that we’re talking about using technology to curb technology (smile).

Have ‘screen free’ times.

During meals, an hour before bed, or when you wake up perhaps? Use an old-fashioned alarm clock to wake up in the morning.

As parents, it can be helpful for our kids to see that we can decompress with occasional and regular screen-free times.

Keep your phone out of sight, out of mind.

Silence your phone and leave it in a separate room or space for periods of time. Charge it in a separate room.

Disable push notifications, schedule them, or simply turn the volume setting to silent on electronic devices to reduce the urge to check them compulsively.

Remember that push notifications are intended to get users to engage. Be selective about which ones (if any), you permit.

Use other people’s posts as inspiration rather than comparison.

If you see people broadcast their successes and post magazine-perfect moments, remember that these moments are not representative of their whole life, and the person posting them is probably struggling with their own particular challenges in life. Look at these posts as inspiration for you to work toward your own goals, rather than directly comparing your daily life to theirs.

Think before posting.

Think about what you are sending out to the world. Before you hit send on a post, consider whether it is spreading positivity. You can help make your feed an encouraging place to be by avoiding trolls or online arguments and fostering a community of support and positivity among your friends or followers – at least on your page.

Focus on your real-life friends and family.

Social media can be a great way to keep up with what your long-distance friends and family are up to. However, social media likes, and comments don’t always provide the same interpersonal connection as being together physically, having a conversation over the phone, video chat or even text messages. Focus on those real-time conversations and use social media as a secondary tool to nurture your real-life relationships.

Be present with people.

Resist the urge to check your phone every ten seconds when you are with your friends or family. Sure, answering an urgent text or taking a selfie or two to document the moment is perfectly

normal but ignoring the person next to you in favor of your smartphone can be downright rude. Put your phone away and give them the attention they deserve.

Be selective about who you follow.

Follow people and pages that bring you joy. Unfollow, block or mute content that bothers you, make you feel bad about yourself or leads you to feel anxious. Instead choose to follow things and people that make you happy and/or keeping you informed and engaged in things that align with your values.

Be mindful about digital work-life balance.

Clarify expectations for frequency of checking and responding to email, chats, texts, etc.

If helpful, reach an agreement with your manager, about the frequency with which you check and respond to email, chats, texts, etc., based on what makes sense for your role and responsibilities. This can alleviate the pressure of thinking you need to check and respond to them constantly. As appropriate, communicate that plan with your team/customers. Decide on the preferred types of communication, if and when something is urgent.

Reach agreement on how to communicate that you've stepped away.

Have an agreement with your manager about how to indicate that you are on a break, or at lunch. Decide if it is expected that the breaks/lunch happen at certain times, or if it is necessary to indicate via an IM message or some other channel, the time of your return, i.e., when you will be available. This way, others will be aware when you are unavailable, when you *will be* available, and you can feel unencumbered, able to enjoy the time away. Blocking your calendar online for lunch can also help protect your time as yours.

Avoid using social media before bed.

The blue light from our phones and other devices can negatively impact how well we sleep but getting good night's rest is important for regulating your mood. Be sure to log off of social media and shut down your screens about an hour before bedtime.

When you are out and about, live in the moment.

When you are doing something fun, don't worry about having the perfect picture to share on social media. Instead, take full advantage of the moment by putting away your phone and being fully present.

Take a break!

If you notice that using social media has made you feel anxious or depressed, it's a good idea to take a break. Unplugging helps you recharge your batteries and helps you refocus on what's most important in your life.

By telling everyone you know that you will not be online for a few hours, a full weekend day or what have you, they will be less likely to contact you and you will be less likely to check for messages. For email, use your “I’m away from email until ...” can also relieve some pressure to check.

Reduce your content.

One way to spend less time online is to reduce the number of friends on social networking sites, stop following blogs, delete unused apps, and unsubscribe from online groups that have few benefits. Also, delete game apps that can be time-consuming.

Enjoy the silence.

Too many people fail to appreciate being in the moment and allowing themselves to resist the urge to log onto their laptops, mobiles and tablets. It is at these times that some people might interpret as boredom that we can contemplate and be mindful. This could be made more formal by introducing meditation into a daily routine. There are also many places that run whole weekends and short breaks where technology is forbidden and much of the time can be spent in quiet contemplation.

Fill the void.

To undergo digital detox for any length of time, replace the activity with something that is as equally rewarding (physically, psychologically, or spiritually). Catch up on a novel for instance! In shorter spaces of time, doodle, write ‘to do’ lists, call a friend to say ‘hi’, or simply do nothing (and be mindful, aware of the present moment). Try to productive (or unproductive) for periods of time, without having to resort to technology. You can start with small windows!

Pay attention to how you feel when you are online.

Instead of going on auto-pilot as you scroll through your feeds, practice being mindful of what you are taking in and how it is affecting you. Do you feel energized? Inspired? Connected? Sad? Angry? Disconnected? Anxious?

If news is bearing down, leading you to feel hopeless or as if you are powerless, ask yourself: "How can I respond to this in a meaningful way?" If you want to get involved, find wise and safe activities to help the causes you are most passionate about.

Put your mental health first.

Check in with yourself and if you are feeling down, maybe go outside for a walk or get a cup of coffee with a friend rather than spending time online.

If getting notifications throughout the day makes you feel stressed or anxious then it would be a good idea to delete the social media apps from your phone or disable push notifications, so you only see alerts when you sign in manually.

Being on social media can help enhance your life, but it can also easily become an additional stressor, and potentially exacerbate symptoms of anxiety or depression. Using some of these tips can help you create healthy social media habits that create balance in your life, protect your mental health, and make your social media use a positive force rather than a negative one. If you feel that social media is impacting your mood more than it should, and taking a break isn't helping you find relief, then consider reaching out to the EAP.

Adapted from:

- [How to Have a Healthy Relationship with Social Media - MindWise](#)
- [7 Healthy Habits for Social Media | Cone Health \(an EAP\)](#)
- [Nine tips for healthy social media use | MIT News | Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)
- [Five Healthy Social Media Habits You Can Start Today \(forbes.com\)](#)
- [Top Tips for a Digital Detox | Psychology Today](#)
- [Prince Harry calls for social media reform after Capitol riot \(fastcompany.com\)](#)
- [Five Healthy Social Media Habits You Can Start Today \(forbes.com\)](#)
- [Five Healthy Social Media Habits You Can Start Today \(forbes.com\)](#)

Handout E: Creating Healthy Digital Habits

What are some of your current digital habits?

Keep in mind: Habits can be positive, negative, or both. Brainstorm and list as many of your habits as you can.

Examples:

- *Look at my phone, as the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning.*
- *Jump on my phone when I take breaks*
- *I'm on my phone while I'm eating my meals.*
- *Multi-task on my phone or computer, while I attend meetings.*
- *Constantly picking up phone*
- *Scroll through Instagram every hour or so.*
- *Can't leave house without phone.*
- *Getting directions on your phone when you don't really need it.*
- *On my phone while I take walks.*
- *Look at every notification I get (text, email, Instagram, Facebook, etc.)*

What is one digital habit you want to change? Write it down. Why is it important that you change this habit?

Examples:

I want to turn off automatic pushes/alerts on my phone and apps.

Why? Because they get me looking at my phone more than I want or need to.

I want to take a short break after watching an episode of my favorite Netflix and do something else.

Why? Because I spend too much time watching and I'd really like to do some reading.

Challenge yourself.

Make a plan for how you would like to change your habit. Consider when you will do something different and what you can do instead. (When we're trying to change a habit, it's not enough just to say what we won't do. We also have to come up with something to do instead!)

Boost your challenge. What are some ways you can give your new habit a "boost" and make it easier to do?

If you are trying to break a bad habit, what are some things you can do so that you don't slip back into old ways?