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THE SERENE SCROLLER

A HANDBOOK FOR MINDFUL
SOCIAL MEDIA USE

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INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS USE: A BRIEF COMMENTARY

Social media is not inherently bad or good. It is a tool that can bring us either joy or happiness and like any other tool it all largely depends on the user on how it can impact our lives. Unfortunately, we all have been caught in its grip that instead of us taking control of social media, it takes control of us.

Social media has already been a significant part of life for most of us in 2019 and has about terms such as FOMO and social media addiction. However, the COVID-19 in 2020 has pushed social media use to become an essential part of our daily lives that it brought about additional social media behaviors such as sofalizing, doomscrolling, phubbing, and nomophobia.

Social media use brings with it benefits such as networking with family, friends, and colleagues, entertainment, receiving news updates, and the like. However, it also brought negative experiences such as trolling and cyberbullying. Social media as a tool for learning and information also brings with the dangers of misinformation and disinformation.

At present, there still is no government regulation nor censorship bureau to address the harmful impact of social media. Thus, in the absence of these agencies, the key to social media use is self-regulation and censorship, mindfulness use, and social media use literacy. Parents and schools also play an important role in establishing and maintaining these protective techniques. Developing proper social media use should always start at home. Parenting should always involve teaching and modeling self-regulation and self-censorship as this will be protective tools in combatting the negative impacts of social media. Just as important, is the essential role of schools in educating social media users. Proper use entails literacy like netiquettes and digital footprinting that will help build cyber citizenship among social media users.

There are pros and cons in the use of social media. As users, it is our role to determine its impact to our daily lives.

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In June 2024, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called for a warning label to be placed on social media platforms because of his increasing concern for youth's mental health and about the potential risks social media poses. He emphasized that social media use can contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Dr. Murthy also called for tech companies, policymakers, and parents to take action to mitigate these risks (NY Times, 2024). His recommendation highlights the extent of the harmful effects that unregulated social media use can pose on vulnerable populations.

This handbook was written with the motives of Dr. Vivek Murthy in mind. With its main purpose as a resource for anyone who wants to approach social media platforms like Instagram and Tiktok more intentionally and mindfully.

UNDERSTANDING THE REACH OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There are over 8 billion people in the world. Nearly 5 billion of them use social media. That's 59.9% of the global population. If you look at statistics concerning internet users, the numbers are even more striking: 92.7% of that group are on social media. If you use the internet, in other words, you probably use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok.

Facebook alone has over 2 billion users—a number of people that is hard to fathom. That's almost six times the population of the United States, or more than the entire populations of Europe and South America combined

Or, to use a more relatable conceptual aid, let's put 4.8 billion people in football stadiums:

- A standard NFL football stadium seats around 80,000 people.
- It would take approximately 60,000 football stadiums to accommodate the world's social media users.
- That's an enormous number of stadiums! Given the broad reach of social

media platforms, it is no surprise that social media has had such a profound impact on such a wide range of people.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDFUL SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Proponents of social media often insist that early platforms like Friendster and Myspace were created to foster a sense of connectedness among people. And, in many ways, social media platforms do just that: during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many people felt that social media allowed them to stay connected to their family and friends at a time when they could not be with them physically. Social media has also given a platform to small business owners who want to share and promote their products or services. In general, social media has allowed people to share ideas and information freely, and this is beneficial to many.

However, research shows that social media has also had a profound impact on our attention spans, and has led to an increase in depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. It has even increased the number of suicides by providing a space where access to harmful imagery, ideas, and beauty standards are promoted. On social media platforms, we find highly curated versions of people's lives: users brag and exaggerate and use editing apps to adjust the way they look, and comments sections are full of the hateful remarks of cyberbullies and trolls. For these reasons, social media platforms have become a place that needs to be navigated with extensive care in order to be used safely.

OVERVIEW OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook explores strategies for navigating the challenges of social media and protecting the mental health of users. We will dive into issues like cyberbullying, body image concerns, and the scary effects of excessive

screen time. Critical thinking, setting boundaries, and practicing digital detox techniques, can help to promote a mindful approach to social media use. This guide concludes with actionable steps and resources for continued support in maintaining a healthy online presence.

SURVIVING THE SOCIAL MEDIA JUNGLE: MEMES, FOMO, AND DIGITAL DRAMA





CYBERBULLYING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

"Go on a diet you fat pig" tap. "You're an elephant" tap. I was twelve years old and had just opened Snapchat to find a series of cruel stories, each one worse than the last. They were from a friend who I'd gotten into a meaningless argument with half an hour earlier. This was retaliation. I tried not to make a big deal of it and simply ignore the messages. After all, they were just a few stories, just a few sentences. In reality, though, the words I was reading had hit on every insecurity of mine. They turned my self-deprecating thoughts into a reality. I was lucky enough to have a support system of people who stood up for me and reassured me, helping me through my first experience of cyberbullying.

Unfortunately, this type of situation is a familiar one for many. Around 59% of teenagers and 40% of adults have experienced cyberbullying at some point in their lives and cyberbullying has proven to be a direct cause of numerous health issues ranging from social anxiety and depression to eating disorders.

SOCIAL COMPARISON AND NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE

As imagery on social media leads users to feel physically unattractive, young people, in particular, are experiencing negative mental and psychological effects. A number of studies have been conducted on the connection between social media and the development of eating disorders and body dysmorphia (Dane & Bhatia, 2023; Wilksch et. al, 2019; Choa et. al, 1970). These are terms that should be defined carefully. First, body dysmorphia is a mental illness characterized by an obsessive focus on a perceived flaw in one's appearance, which can in reality be minor or even nonexistent. Individuals with Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) often engage in excessive cosmetic procedures or exercise, spend time examining themselves in mirrors, and avoid social situations or photos due to their distress. An eating disorder usually includes symptoms of BDD, but by definition is "a range of mental conditions in which there is a persistent disturbance of eating behavior and impairment of physical or mental health." These definitions underscore the serious consequences that social media can have on self-perception, particularly among young people.

Social media use has been shown to play a role in negative body image. One in every 50 people in the US has been diagnosed with body dysmorphia (Phillips & Diaz, 1997). Researchers believe that social comparison on social media platforms has created unrealistic standards, and this can lead to body dysmorphia and dissatisfaction (Jiotsa et al., 2021). Use of editing apps, which allow posters to doctor photographs of themselves, can further exacerbate the perception among posters that they are not attractive or thin enough (Ozimek et al., 2023).

Around 71% of people admit to using FaceTune, a digital editing app, to modify their photos before posting them on Instagram (Georgia Aspinall et al., 2020). Erasing a blemish or slimming yourself down in a photo may seem harmless, but doing so can increase self-insecurity. When individuals modify their photos, they create an idealized version of themselves that cannot be attained naturally. Over time, this seemingly harmless habit can lead to a psychological disconnect between their real and edited selves, or

a "self-discrepancy." In fact, people may start to view their unaltered appearance as insufficient in comparison to the curated version they present online (Admin, 2024). Editing photos also contributes to the setting of unrealistic societal beauty standards. Epidemiological studies have found that eating disorders have increased over the past 50 years as a result of intense Photoshop use.

ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND THE PRESSURE TO BE ALWAYS 'ON'.

Even if you lead the most exciting life on earth, you have probably experienced FOMO (the Fear Of Missing Out). FOMO stems from being anxious about missing out on a fun experience that other people you know are getting to experience. Nobody likes to be left out, and with social media, this feeling has been heightened to new levels. Due to increases in social media use, FOMO no longer simply means being upset about having missed out on an event; now, we all have to actually see what we missed out on, and this fosters previously unimaginable feelings of insecurity and inferiority.

Beginning in the early 2010s, when social media use began to become so prevalent among American teens, there was a sharp increase in depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, and other mental health disorders (Harvardgazette, 2023). Cyberbullying and a decrease in in-person interactions, among other factors with social media use at their root, began to have a negative effect on mental health. Indeed, the odds of developing depression and anxiety disorders have increased due to social media use (Twenge et al., 2019).

The rise of social media was simultaneous with the invention of the front-facing camera. With the iPhone 4, which came out in 2017, being the first iPhone to contain a first front-facing camera (Cell, 2024). Selfie culture relies heavily on front-facing cameras and have ultimately contributed to growing body image issues and promoted an exaggerated portrayal of life on social media. Therefore, front-facing cameras in smartphones have

made it significantly easier for people to take and share images of themselves, often edited and filtered, and present an idealized version of themselves and their lives on social media (Ozimek et al., 2023).

It is not natural to feel the need to look perfect and act just right at all times, but social media requires these things for us if we want to “fit in”. The pressure to match our real lives to an influencer’s or celebrity’s ‘highlight reel’, is, for obvious reasons, impossible, and it can only lead to depressive tendencies.

THE IMPACT OF SCREEN TIME ON SLEEP PATTERNS

How many hours a day do you spend on your phone? For the average person, it’s 7 hours a day, almost half of our waking hours. This excessive use is detrimental to our health for a number of reasons. Most importantly, perhaps, it affects our sleep patterns. Many studies have shown that an increase in screen time is a direct cause of poor sleep quality and an overall lack of sleep (Katella, 2024).

Not getting enough sleep or experiencing disruptions to sleep can have an impact on function during the day: inadequate sleep can result in poor concentration, slower reaction times, and inconsistent moods. In children and teens, not getting enough sleep can affect both performance in school and behavior. Long term, chronic sleep deprivation can have a negative impact on both brain and body health, and even play a role in cases of dementia. Kathy Katella, an award winning writer who is known for her work in health and medicine, quoted Dr. Vivek Murthy best, explaining that too much time spent on social media “disrupts activities essential for health, such as sleep and physical activity.”



SCROLLING SMART: DODGING DRAMA AND STAYING ZEN ONLINE

EVALUATING SOURCES AND FACT-CHECKING INFORMATION

When it comes to social media the spread of misinformation is irrefutable (Allcott et al., 2019). This has led to an immense amount of misinformation being spread online, especially through social media.

If you're on social media, you may have had the experience of looking at a selfie on your feed and of thinking: How is this person's skin so smooth? How did they get their teeth so white? Well, 71% of people use Facetune before posting a photo, so the photo you are looking at has most likely been digitally altered (Aspinall et al., 2020; Rio, 2022). With apps like FaceTune, which anyone can now download, digital manipulation of photos is no longer limited to photographers using PhotoShop, but is, rather, available to all social media users. And, anyone who has used FaceTune knows that the difference between before and after photos is striking. (See figs #####.)



The above photos both look real, but one has been digitally enhanced. If you didn't know that one of them had been edited, would you be able to tell? It's easy to imagine social media users could be fooled. As the side-by-side images suggest, it has become increasingly easy to pass off doctored images as real ones on social media platforms. Users should be aware that what they are viewing—and, perhaps, envying—is not always real.

Many social media platforms, like Instagram, have begun implementing AI and editing detectors and flagging photos they suspect have been edited digitally. Clearly, companies like Meta, which owns Instagram, have judged that steps like these are necessary at a time when the use of editing apps has become virtually undetectable. This move aims to reduce the negative impact of unrealistic beauty standards and promote more authentic representations online, responding to growing concerns over mental health and body image issues tied to digital alterations.

RECOGNIZING AND AVOIDING HARMFUL CONTENT

Did you know that eating a carrot every day for 2 weeks will help you lose 10 pounds? No? Because it's not true. Improbable diets like this are often promoted on social media, encouraging people to eat certain foods or take questionable supplements in order to lose weight quickly, when in reality, bodies do not work in that way. Diet and workout cultures can become extremely toxic on social media, which elevates the alluring idea that huge results can be obtained with hardly any effort. The fantasy that "this one weird trick" will make you thin is detrimental to mental health because it creates a false sense that developing unhealthy eating habits will help people attain the "ideal" body. This is not to say that exercising regularly and eating healthy foods is not essential to remaining healthy. Of course, there is nothing wrong with eating carrots, but the omnipresence of ridiculous dieting videos on platforms like TikTok contributes to a culture obsessed with body image.

But, it is possible to avoid body-checking videos and content overly focused on diet culture. It begins with the accounts you interact with on social media. Simply by following influencers on social media that are promoting body positivity, it is easier to avoid content that perpetuates harmful ideals.

HANDLING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AND

AVOIDING “DOOMSCROLLING”

Once again, anonymity online has created a major issue: negative comments and “trolls”. The fact that people can comment on each other’s lives without ever having to show their faces has made many “trolls” feel comfortable leaving negative comments on others’ posts. So when is it a good idea to respond? Bob Pearson from the Bliss Group explains how his company deals with negative comments: “The five W’s are my strategic filter. Who gave the feedback? What is their intent? Why are they upset or angry? When did they submit feedback (and how often)? Where did they share their views (which channels)?”. Although Pearson is talking specifically about negative comments left on his business’s page and not on his personal social media account, these questions are widely applicable. When considering whether or not to interact with negative discussion online it’s essential to ask these questions in order to determine if engaging is worth your time. Ninety-nine point nine percent% of the time, it’s not.

Another problem social media presents is “doomscrolling,” which Merriam-Webster defines as “ spend[ing] excessive time online scrolling through news or other content that makes one feel sad, anxious, angry, etc.” With all the chaos happening in our world today it can be difficult not to get sucked into watching media that causes anxiety and distress. When we find ourselves doomscrolling, however, it is important to consider what we can actually control, and what is out of our hands. It’s OK to step away from distressing stories that concern events beyond our control.



SCROLL CHILL: MASTERING THE ART OF MINDFUL SOCIAL MEDIA

Now that we have identified some of the problems that social media can present, I want to explore some effective ways for minimizing the harmful effects of social media:



LIMITING TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND SCREEN TIME IN GENERAL

The effectiveness of this strategy has been proven time and time again by researchers (Faulhaber, Gentile, Cramer, 2023) because it decreases the risk of doom scrolling, feelings of FOMO, and exposure to harmful content. Limiting time on social media can also help prevent mindless scrolling. Built-in features like time-restrictions and screen-time tracking on social media apps, or third-party apps, can allow users to set daily time restrictions. These features help users monitor their digital habits by providing notifications or locking the app once the set time limit is reached, encouraging healthier social media use.



PREVENTING SOCIAL COMPARISON BY BEING MINDFUL ABOUT WHO TO FOLLOW AND INTERACT WITH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A feed full of instagram models and workout and dieting influencers can be overwhelming at times, and can lead to feelings of inferiority. It's important to be mindful about who we follow. Following friends, family, and content creators who share our hobbies and interests creates a more positive experience when you're scrolling.



CULTIVATING PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT

Before opening a social media app, we should ask ourselves about our intentions. Are we seeking information, connection, or entertainment? Being aware of our purpose can help us use social media more intentionally. It's always better to focus on quality interactions rather than quantity of content. Instead of passively consuming content, we can actively engage with posts that resonate with us, and consider contributing

thoughtfully to discussions. It's possible to avoid mindless scrolling by setting specific goals for social media sessions.



PRACTICING REGULAR DIGITAL DETOX

It is a good idea to designate specific periods, such as weekends or evenings, for a digital detox to intentionally disconnect from social media. This time can be used to engage in offline activities, connect with friends and family in person, or explore hobbies that don't involve screens. This break can help reset one's mental state and reduce the constant stimulation from social media.



ESTABLISHING TECH-FREE ZONES AND TIMES

Designating certain areas or times in a daily routine as tech-free zones or moments can be particularly effective. For example, keeping bedrooms or dining areas free from devices. Use this time to focus on real-world interactions, such as meals with family or friends, or engage in activities without the distraction of social media. Creating tech-free spaces allows for more genuine connections and breaks from constant digital stimuli.

C. UNDERSTANDING TRIGGERS AND REACTIONS

Understanding triggers and reactions is a crucial step in using social media more mindfully. Triggers can range from certain situations, environments and people to memories, posts or even comments (in terms of social media), all of which provoke emotional responses like stress or anxiety. To be able to recognize these triggers can help immensely and be the first step toward gaining control over strong emotional reactions

Studies show that constantly being exposed to certain triggers, especially as a result of social media algorithms, negative behaviors are reinforced.

For example, cyberbullying or constant streams of content dealing with suicide or self harm online can be major triggers for feelings of insecurity and depression (Katella, 2024).

Once triggers are identified though, it becomes easier to manage the reactions that follow. Some mindful practices that can help subside the negative reactions induced by triggers one can:

01

PAUSE AND REFLECT

By taking a second to consider what it is specifically that is inducing a reaction and practicing mindfulness a gap is created between the trigger and the reaction. This allows one to reflect on the situation before responding emotionally.

02

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

This means reconsidering how we think about a triggering situation to help reduce their emotional impact. For example, if social media posts about others' achievements trigger feelings of insecurity, cognitive restructuring means reminding yourself that these posts do not reflect the full story of someone's life. This can help us not only empathize with others but also empathize with ourselves and cut us some slack! (Palmer, 2023).

03

HEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

Building healthier habits like playing your favorite sport or taking a walk, talking to friends or loved ones, talking to mental health professionals, or practicing relaxation techniques like deep breathing, can prove to be particularly effective in reducing feelings of stress and anxiety.



WRAP-UP: KEEP CALM AND SCROLL ON

COMMITTING TO CONTINUED MINDFUL SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES

With the potential pitfalls of social media, incorporating these strategies into our daily lives we can significantly improve our abilities to navigate social media more mindfully and safely. Using these tools, we can reduce the harmful effects of excessive screen time, such as anxiety, depression, and poor sleep quality, while promoting a healthier balance between online and offline activities(Faulhaber, Gentile, Cramer, 2023).

It is clear that the concerns expressed by the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy in June 2024 about the mental health risks associated with social media use are well-founded. His call for stronger action from tech companies, policymakers, and parents underscores the need to address the harmful effects that unchecked social media use can have, particularly on young people.

This handbook has been created with these concerns in mind, aiming to serve as a resource for anyone looking to engage with platforms like Instagram and TikTok in a more mindful and intentional way. By implementing the strategies discussed here, users can foster healthier habits, protect their mental well-being, and approach social media use with greater awareness and balance.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. HOBSON



QUESTION 1

What are some common mental health challenges you see in students as a result of social media use?

Dr. Hobson

So some mental health challenges that I see that I really loved in your presentation yesterday:

1. Comparisons that lead to body image challenges, which at times can lead into eating disorders.
2. Low self confidence and self esteem that affect mental health
3. Increased levels of stress or anxiety due to feelings of fear of missing out (FOMO) or feeling like their level of competence isn't the same as their peers, or they feel like they're not where they need to be because of the inaccurate perception that's portrayed on social media.
4. Another area is sleep challenges that can, at times, lead to mental health challenges and or exacerbate mental health challenges.

QUESTION 2

When students have been negatively impacted by social media, what initial steps do you recommend they take to start feeling better?

Dr. Hobson

I think it's important to state my role at Sierra Canyon, as well as my profession. So, I'm an occupational therapist by trade, and then I'm the wellness director here at Sierra Canyon. I received my doctorate in helping individuals develop healthy habits and routines by educating them and then helping them implement healthy skills, habits and routines. So with that being said, how I'm going to answer that question is based on my background.

So when I was working at USC, I had one student come to me and say, "I'm gonna stop using social media completely". And I feel like some people may take that and say, "okay, great, let's do that". But what I did in that situation, and what I sometimes do now, being at Sierra Canyon, I will say, "Okay, let's make a pros and a cons list. What are some of the pros of social media, and what are some of the cons of social media? And if you were to completely stop social media, how could you get some of those pros in other areas? Or is it about moderation with social media, so you still get some of your pros and you decrease some of your cons". So a pros and cons list.

Also thinking about balance and going back to moderation. So whether that's using screen time trackers or an accountability partner, it's important to recognize that sometimes it's about balance and using skills and strategies to figure out how to make that balance.

The third thing that I'd like to say about this is, tracking. So not just going on screen time and looking to see how often you're on social media- actually every single time, just for a week, or if you feel like you can't do it for a week, just a few days- track on a piece of paper, or on your notes app, when you are on that social media app and how long you're on it. What I find is that when you're actively tracking, opposed to screen time tracking, you become more aware. And just through awareness, you start to become very self sufficient at limiting, and gain that skill of living a more balanced life.

QUESTION 3

How can students rebuild their self esteem if it's been damaged by social media content or interactions on social media?

Dr. Hobson

This is a great question. So, never underestimating the impact of a visual cue. And what I mean by that is a visual cue such as writing affirmations that trigger a healthy emotion within you. We want to trigger our healthy emotions, because emotions are very closely connected to our memory in our brain. So if that's the case, then we start to then remember these feelings, or are more inclined to do them. So what that looks like, practically, is if you have an expo marker and you have a mirror that you feel comfortable

writing affirmations on, that you can see every single day when you get up or every single time when you go to bed, seeing a visual affirmation written down somewhere right when you wake up and right before you go to sleep can be helpful on enhancing your self esteem.

Another strategy is journaling. So, journaling right before you go to sleep, or journaling right when you wake up, to stimulate your brain and fire the neurons to think affirmations, opposed to thinking negative thoughts that decrease your self esteem. This is because sometimes our brain is wired to think negatively at times or lower our self esteem. So, you want to start training your brain, just like you would train in any sport, train your brain to automatically think affirmations, healthy-self-esteem-boosting thoughts.

Another thing that I wanted to say for boosting self esteem is meditation. The reason why I want to say this is because meditation isn't about controlling your thoughts. It's more about taking a moment to pause and to observe your thoughts. If we train our brains to observe our thoughts, then we're able to recognize when we have thoughts that are negatively impacting self esteem and instead implement affirmations. But we need to take that moment to pause people to become aware of these thoughts. Sometimes people think that these negative thoughts are, "the normal way of thinking", and "the only way of thinking", because they've thought like that for so long. But when we take a moment to pause through meditation, or through a different technique like meditation, then we have more awareness to actually implement different thought patterns.

QUESTION 4

What advice do you give to students who are struggling with body image issues due to social media comparisons or just in general?

Dr. Hobson

Yeah, I think that goes back to the first question as well. With body image, at times, it has to do with your thought patterns and the way that you're thinking, and also your habits and your routines. So it may be about modifying your

morning routine. So reflecting, “What does your morning routine look like? Does it look like you’re just going through the day and that these thoughts are happening and you’re not even noticing them? Are they a part of your normal daily routine?”

If so, let’s see how we can embed a coping skill to truly show self care and self love for yourself in the morning, to set the tone for the day, and to rewire the neurons that are going in your mind to not just fire and wire in a way where they’re thinking low-self-esteem thoughts that are on autopilot, but you’re disrupting them and replacing them with a mindful thought that is actually uplifting your self esteem and then your body image as well.

Another thing too is recognizing the impact of different healthcare professionals, whether it’s teaching them and their families about the impact of a therapist that can really get into the root of these thoughts and how they came to occur, manifested and are still reoccurring. The impact of a registered dietitian as well. The impact of seeing their pediatrician and building that close connection with them. And then going back to my role here, thinking about the different habits and routines that may be impacting their body image. So whether that’s their exercise routines, their eating routines, their dressing routines, their hair care routines. Because with different body image issues and potential eating disorders/weight loss, hair may be involved as well, as hair loss. So, there’s just so many different routines that may be impacted and looking at those and cultivating healthier ways that are more aligned with their long term goals for body image.

“Clothes” is actually a huge one now that I mention it, because all the things that I’m saying are true. I remember there are times where, because we’re in a school, we sometimes have to have different uniforms, for example in sports. And for different reasons, people may not feel comfortable. So whether that’s working with the coaches to make sure that students feel comfortable in their uniforms, or working with the parents as well to make sure the student feels supported. It’s very nuanced at times. That’s why habits and routines are really, really important to look at.

QUESTION 5

How can students recover from, or work to recover from, the anxiety or stress caused by constantly checking social media?

Dr. Hobson

Yeah, it's a great question. And for everyone, it's going to be different, right. Depending on the severity, depending on so many different factors.

There's so many different ways but this is one thing I want to highlight. Within my profession, I'm taught that if you are to take away an unhealthy habit, you replace it with a healthy habit. And I think that's often forgotten, and let's just say, the addiction world, where people are like, "Oh, I'm gonna stop smoking", or "I'm going to stop, (and this is in severe cases) stop drinking". But in response it's like, okay, well, that was a routine, that was a habit, that was time spent doing something so how are you going to now replace that time with something that's healthy. Instead of just saying, "Don't do that".

So, in this case, with anxiety and stress, that takes up time too. So now, it's important to think about what you are going to replace that anxiety and that stress with? Instead of just thinking about certain things that cause stress or cause anxiety, or doing things that cause that stress anxiety, what can you replace it with? So I have a list of different coping skills, and I ask students from this very extensive long list to highlight the ones that they feel that they could do or that they've tried that have been beneficial for them to replace the act of stressing, or the act of having anxiety, or anything that they've felt inclined to do that was unhealthy, and then they'll start to reap benefits from doing the healthy coping skill, opposed to engaging in the unhealthy coping skill.

So some people don't recognize that stress and anxiety are, at times, different activities that people engage in, but it's a similar principle on replacing it with something that's healthy. It's actually a principle that was in a book called, *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg. And that's what it talks about in that book.

B. RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING AND SUPPORT

Here are 10 resources for further information on mindful social media use:

1. The American Psychological Association (APA)

Offers insights on the impact of social media on mental health, and provides tips for developing healthier online habits.

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/02/social-media-body-image>

2. Common Sense Media

A comprehensive resource that reviews the effects of media and technology on children, teens, and families, and offers practical advice for managing screen time and social media use.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

3. The Center for Humane Technology

Focuses on realigning technology with humanity's best interests and offers strategies for reducing screen time and promoting mindful tech use.

<https://www.humanetech.com>

4. Time Well Spent

An initiative that promotes a healthier digital environment and provides tools for conscious technology use.

<https://www.timewellspent.io>

5. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Provides resources related to social media's impact on mental health and strategies for managing online interactions.

<https://www.nami.org>

6. The Jed Foundation

Focuses on emotional health for teens and young adults, with resources

on social media's impact and how to develop healthy online habits.
<https://www.jedfoundation.org>

7. Calm App

A mindfulness app that includes resources for reducing anxiety and stress related to social media use.
<https://www.calm.com>

8. Iowa State University

Research on Social Media and Mental Health – Offers studies and findings on the benefits of limiting social media and screen time.
<https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2023/06/14/socialmedia>

9. Headspace

A mindfulness and meditation app that includes tools for managing anxiety and practicing mindful social media use.
<https://www.headspace.com>

10. StopBullying.gov

Provides information and resources on cyberbullying, including how social media plays a role and what steps can be taken to reduce its impact.
<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying>

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