

Managing your news and social media consumption during COVID19

As the world responds to manage the impact of COVID-19 [Coronavirus] we seek to remain informed and up-to-date with breaking news and important decisions, primarily via digital devices.

Our challenge during this time of uncertainty, rapid change and a life we have not previously known or even considered, is to manage our emotional responses and the information we consume.

Social media is proving to be a source of great community spirit and a positive resource for coping and promoting key concepts around social distancing. It is also a source of significant misinformation, personal opinions (which may exert influence and promote inaccuracies) and anxiety (as we consume too much information and compare ourselves to others).

Here are some tips to manage your news and social media consumption while staying informed and connected.



Select trusted sources of news

With so many news sources available, it's important to seek trusted sources of information that report fact without sensationalising the issues. Sites like ABC News and The Guardian are generally considered trustworthy news sources with ethically backed reporting.

Bookmarking official government sites like the Department of Health will provide you with key information.



Do not share unverified information

Social media is a platform which gives everyone a voice. This can mean that many people both unwittingly and purposely share inaccurate information and ideas.

Be careful to only share information from verified sources and do not add to the spread of misinformation.

This can not only cause harm to others but hurt your personal brand and reputation if you are seen sharing inaccurate information.

Create time to switch off

The accessibility and convenience of smartphones means it's easy to have a quick check of your social media feed. Being constantly distracted and diving into the news and social media puts our brain into flight/fight/freeze as it prepares to deal with the information that comes into our minds. The sheer amount of information we are attempting to consume is also unprecedented and adds to the stress and anxiety.

Set yourself some rules around how often and when you check social media – for example, not first thing in the morning or not right before bed.



Unplugging is not ignorant – its self-care.

Ditch comparison with others

Remember that social media is generally a highlights reel, few people authentically share their daily lives.

During times like these when there is a collective outpouring of emotion and concern, some people will use social media more often to share their strategies and responses.

Be aware of how tempted we can be to compare ourselves with others.

Do a digital declutter

Over the years of being online we've accrued masses of 'friends', followed lots of pages, causes and brands. Now might be a good time to tidy up who you follow, unsubscribe from newsletters you don't read and to cull the extra mental noise from people or pages you can live without hearing from. Don't want to unfollow or defriend? Use the 'mute' button.

Diversify your digital content consumption and align it to your values

After decluttering you might like to find new, positive sources of inspiration and information that is aligned to your goals. You might follow a range of high-quality organisations and discover apps which support mental health and productivity. Research has shown actively aligning the hashtags and accounts you follow on social media positively impacts mental health and motivation.



Be intentional and intelligent with the online sources you choose to plug into.

Apply the 3M's for Digital Wellbeing

The 3M's for Digital Wellbeing are designed to help you have a more constructive and rewarding interaction with your digital world. They are:

- **Mindful:** being fully present and conscious with your scrolling and digital activities
- **Meaningful:** aligning the content you consume and accounts you follow to your values and goals.
- **Moderate:** being able to temper not only your time spent online but also being sensible, measured and kind with your responses to others online.