

UNIT 8

Practice Pausing



The information we absorb from the media impacts our thoughts, feelings, and even our bodies. This week's tools are focused on helping you navigate the infodemic that is present in these COVID-19 times.

“An infodemic is an excessive amount of information about a problem, making it difficult to identify a solution,” as Dr. Brubaker explained.



Practice with at least one of the following tools to pause and evaluate the media you are consuming, connect in meaningful ways, and take breaks.



TOOL 1

Break Your Filter Bubble

Identify and expand the type of information you are consuming in critical ways.



Social media news feeds use algorithms to filter posts that are aligned with what you think and like. This means that you are absorbing information that conforms to, or reinforces, pre-existing viewpoints, rather than challenging or expanding your point of view. As the faculty lectures emphasized in this unit, this is called a “filter bubble.”

Practice identifying the “filter bubble.”

Get curious about:

- What kind of news and information are you encountering repeatedly?
- What is the source of the information you are encountering?
- Has the information you see regularly been curated for you?
- What information do you see in your media with which you don't agree?
- In what ways might your “filter bubble” reinforce pre-existing viewpoints?

Take action to break your bubble:

- Seek out diverse perspectives about what is happening in the world today.
- Follow people with views that differ from yours.
- Follow topics other than those you're most interested in.
- Check out at least one new and unfamiliar media source.
- Look for facts and evidence, and be cautious with your clicks.



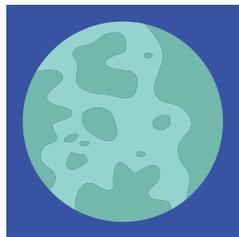
TOOL 2

Build a Community of Support and Listen in Digital Spaces

Digital spaces can help connect people.

Practice with any of the suggestions from Dr. Rajabi's lecture:

Find a friend, online or offline, with whom you have something unique in common. Develop a routine, digital way to connect with them that is safe. Maintain boundaries to your connection, while being flexible and open to others.



Digital spaces also invite opportunities to listen in creative and strategic ways.

Practice with any of the suggestions from Dr. Sprain's lecture:

- ✓ Enclave listening is between like-minded citizens to build solidarity
- ✓ Alliance listening is across different groups to form new alliances
- ✓ Adversarial listening is between people on opposing sides of a debate
- ✓ Transformative listening is listening to other community members with the intention of changing one's own views



TOOL 3

Break Up With Breaking News

Strengthen your skill of taking a break from digital media and information.



Check out this list of simple strategies for breaking up with breaking news.

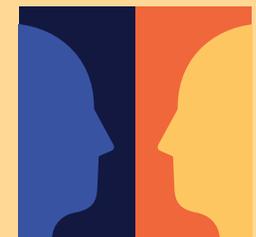


✓ Take a digital sabbatical.

Plan a time to step back from the news and social media platforms once a day, or maybe even one day each week. Fully disengage with the news and focus on other activities or relationships that matter to you. If you listen to the news at particular times during the day, consider switching to music or experimenting with a few moments of silence.

✓ Have a media boundary buddy.

Take action by choosing only one or two specific times a day that you will proactively check the news and turn off any other news notifications on your phone. Find a media boundary buddy to help you stick to your commitment and avoid over-consumption.



✓ Step away.

If you notice you're feeling worse when engaging with social media or the news, step away from your device. Set it down, even for a few moments. Get outside. Experience the fresh air, sunlight, and natural world.

Take a walk. Do one of the ACE activities (Accomplishment, Connecting, or Enjoyment) that nourishes you. Read a book, watch a favorite movie, create art, water your plants, make yourself tea, etc.



✓ Be uplifting. Share and encourage positive news.

Set aside time for yourself to connect with the people in your life who lift you up and do the same for them.

✓ Focus on what is actionable.

As Dr. Brubaker recommended, reduce passive consumption of information. Focus on media sources and information that support you in taking meaningful action.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ?

Which of the practice pausing tools did you use? How did it go?
- ?

When you reflect on the types of news or social media you consume, what do you notice? Did you decide to make any changes to your consumption of news or social media?
- ?

When you chose to connect or listen in new ways online, how did it go? What did you learn?
- ?

What changes did you notice in your mind when you took a break from any news or social media platforms? How did it feel?