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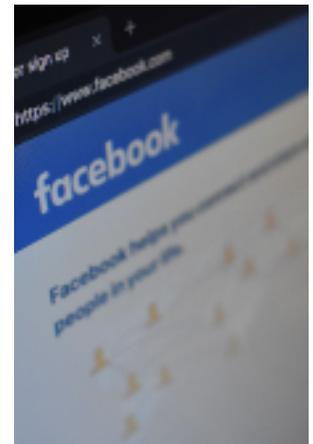
Threat Assessment and Disaster Behavioral Health Services

BY STEVEN SANCHEZ, MS, LSC

COVID-19 | *Social Media*

Social Media Safeguards to Use During a Pandemic

As the Governor of Oregon continues to announce new restrictions on every aspect of our lives, it's only natural to become frustrated and sometimes angry. It's very human to let that anger lead to blaming and other emotions that become self-defeating. Regardless of our feelings, all of us have the choice and ability to pick positive attitudes, including enthusiasm, determination, tolerance, kindness, gratitude, and contentment. Attitudes are choices we make that are not based on the emotions we might be feeling, and in picking positive ones, our internal and external worlds can change. Attitude, after all, is everything!



This is not the first pandemic we have experienced, the last being the H1N1 pandemic of 2009/2010. However, it is the first "social media pandemic." I recently read an article in *USA Today*, by Jessica Guynn, in which she provides the following recommendations for social media "self-care." These recommendations can actually apply to social media regardless of the situation.

- Practice better information hygiene. Pick carefully where you're going to visit and what you're going to look at.
- Arm yourself with credible facts, not rumors or hypothesis.
- Take 60 seconds to research anything before sharing it.
- Don't spread misinformation about prevention or cures.
- Beware of posts that traffic in fear.
- Keep partisan politics and blame out of it. It doesn't matter how it got here, we're all in it together and need to get out together.
- Don't fill the vacuum of the unknown with unreliable information.

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I would add the recommendation that you consider taking a *break* from social media and news altogether. I'm on my third day of not watching the news and very seldom go to *Facebook*, and it's amazing how it's affected my positive outlook. By now we're all aware of the situation, have been given guidelines to follow, and just need to concentrate on applying them.

A few final suggestions:

- Open the blinds/drapes in your home and let the light in.
- Find options to screen media entertainment, especially for your children.
- Step out into nature and the sunlight while maintaining your 6 ft.—social spacing. Fresh air by itself can do wonders for the body and mind.
- Constantly work at balancing the needs of your body/mind/spirit.

I love this quote from John F Kennedy:

"The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger, the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger--but recognize the opportunity."

I encourage you to join me in looking for opportunities.

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