Momentum

Build your media literacy

Go Online to Access More Information!

Keep your own counsel

☑ While the online world can be a tempting pastime, ask yourself if maddening posts or stories have meaning in your life—probably not!

☑ If current events make you anxious, sad or negative, try not to transfer these emotions to those around you.

☑ Others may push their advice, ideas or agendas, but don't let them define you. Instead, follow your internal value system and common sense. *Make up your own mind.*

Think before you believe

In these confusing times of so-called "fake news" it can be hard to decide what is truthful and what is knowingly misleading. While all of the troublesome information on social and broadcast media can feel crushing, you can learn to manage it.

Most journalists practice their craft with integrity and respect for the truth. However, some agenda-driven domestic and foreign sources produce "news" only with creating discord and profit in mind. Here are some ways to protect yourself from false messaging.

- Seek information from a wide range of sources. Skip social media sites that deliver information to you based only on your online profile via algorithms or a set of rules. Remember this type of content represents an increasingly narrow range of views and ideas.

- If a news story's intent strikes you as doubtful or one-sided, examine other sources of reporting on the topic.

- If you question whether something in the news is valid, check its truthfulness on sites such as FactCheck.org, MediaBiasFactCheck.com or Snopes.com.

- Don't share without thinking. Compare the validity of stories and voices, and frame your own opinion before sharing online.

"Avoid the crowd, avoid mass audiences, keep your own counsel, which is the counsel of philosophy—of wisdom you can acquire and make your own."
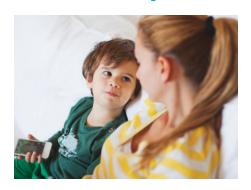– Zygmunt Bauman

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Avoiding what's not helpful

Actively filtering out content that tends to affect you negatively can enhance your well-being.

- Be strategic about internet/social media and TV viewing. The never-ending cycle of bad news can cause you to have a constant sense of unease.

- Unplug for chunks of time instead of following breaking news and the activities of friends nonstop.

- When you feel the chaos and doubt of the world are pushing in, engage in a relaxing activity such as taking a warm bath, walking outdoors or listening to music. Do a pre-bedtime activity that doesn't involve a screen, such as reading a book or meditating.

- Be aware of politically framed content. Does it take you less than two seconds to strongly agree or disagree with an article or headline? If so, it's likely designed to increase discord.

- Strive to not share content that is sharply biased, mean-spirited or exploitative. Take the high road online.

- Consider most news stories do not help you in positive ways.

Build healthy values in children

Stress compassion
It's best to teach children not to view those who seem different as bad, but to learn to understand their struggles. Talk to your children about acts of kindness and injustice they may see or hear about in the news so they can learn fitting responses. Promote values of caring and concern rather than criticism.

Teach respect
Children learn a lot about respect at home based on how parents treat each other. Your child will model your behavior, so remember to act with kindness and patience. Teach children to address the people in their lives with respect—even when they're tired, distracted, or angry.

Model honesty
Today there are many bad examples of dishonesty shown by people in high-up positions. Strive to highlight with your child the value of being truthful and not deceiving others, even when your child may face consequences for telling the truth. Be truthful yourself, and applaud children's courage for being honest.

Additional Sources: Psychology Today, Health.com, EssentialLifeSkills.net, NewKidsCenter.com, Making Caring Common project – Harvard University.

The webinar, "*Media Literacy and "Fake News*,*"* is now available in the Learning Center

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