

# Life, Health and You



## Media and Anxiety

Many people find it hard to resist news of traumatic events, such as disasters, conflicts, and terrorist attacks. As awful as it is to watch and read about, many still cannot turn away. Why is this kind of news so hard to resist? Some say it is because people are trying to inform themselves to be prepared in case of future disaster or attacks. Others say that people are watching and reading news in an effort to understand and process the event. Still others say the media is trying to draw you in with exciting images almost like those from an action movie. Research tells us there is a link between watching news of traumatic events, such as attacks, and stress symptoms. It could be that watching television of the event makes people worse. It could also be that people who have more severe stress reactions are the ones who choose to watch more television about the event.

Although there may be negative effects, clearly the media plays a vital role after a disaster. The media provides needed information and alerts. Media outlets can direct the public to services for victims and

their families. They are a resource for the community. They can also be a source of hope. In some ways, being involved with the media might give survivors a sense of power. This could help offset their feeling helpless after the trauma.

You may want to limit the amount and type of news you are viewing if you:

- Feel anxious or stressed after watching a news program
- Cannot turn off the television
- Cannot take part in relaxing or fun activities
- Have trouble sleeping

Some useful tips include:

- Do not watch the news just before bed.
- Read newspapers or magazines rather than watching television.
- Inform yourself by talking to other people about the attack.

Source: US Dept. of Veterans Affairs

### Healthy Social Media Habits

**Use Your Time Wisely:** Logging into social media and actively engaging and connecting with others online can help build your social supports—both online and offline. But spending many hours passively scrolling through upsetting content can send you spiraling into negative thoughts and feelings.

**Connect Carefully:** You can find countless different people and communities online. But the digital world can also expose you to harmful health behaviors such as excessive substance use that is sometimes misleadingly shown as what everyone's doing or wants to do.

**Seek Out Help:** Social media can be a tool to improve your mental health. You can search for health information, hear about others' experiences, or find treatment options. But there is often misinformation that can be spread as well. Be aware.

## National Health Observances

Healthy Aging Month celebrates positive lifestyles and how to maintain health  
<https://www.hhs.gov/aging/healthy-aging/index.html>

National Recovery Month celebrates treatment and recovery practices and the recovery community  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month>

National Suicide Prevention Week is Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> <https://afsp.org/national-suicide-prevention-week/>

## Mental Health Minute



### Guided Imagery (Visualization)

Guided imagery is a technique that uses the power of your mind and imagination to relax the body.

Here are some steps you can take to practice this strategy:

Imagine a relaxing place and focus on the details of that place. Describe everything captured by each of your senses in this place. No detail is too small to describe. What exactly do you see? Think of everything. Do the same with smell, hearing, and taste. Imagine a clear and complete picture of your entire experience in this relaxing place. Before, you will begin to feel your mind and body relaxing.

When you feel you are deep inside your relaxing place, take some time to simply feel the peace throughout your entire body. You can increase effectiveness by using deep-breathing and 4-7-8 breathing while using this technique.

### LIVE MONTHLY WEBINAR:

Cultural Myths in Media: Fact or Fiction  
Date: 9/13/2023 | Time: 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM EST  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3012668887306121306>

