



Black Lives Matter: How Can We Manage Our Social Media Intake?

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The Black Lives Matter movement is undeniably at the forefront of every social media platform and has already made big changes in our society. This article aims to help Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), as we navigate our lives.

With media feeds filled with content, do you find yourself mindlessly scrolling and filled with emotions and thoughts of your community at risk? When you're checking in with others, are you checking in with yourself to see if you're okay too?

Although social media has its pros, it also has its cons. On the brightside, social media keeps us informed and connected. On the flipside, social media can feed us fake/incomplete information and disconnects us from valuable in-person interaction. Learning without context is more dangerous than ignorance. Context gives what we learn meaning. It allows us to understand the content presented to us on a deeper, more empathetic level. Social media often lacks context as its goal is to present information in a succinct and rapid fashion. Do the work as a learned individual and seek out the context to enhance your understanding.

Social media can also be problematic in excess. Taking in too much traumatic media may start to take a toll on your mind and body. Our bodies continue to hold onto our stress when our minds forget. Those of us who are BIPOC may find it harder to face the words and beliefs of others on social media since the proliferation of media and protests regarding racial injustice prompted by the unfortunate murder of George Floyd and many others. Racism is real. So, what can we do to help our clouded brains in our colorful bodies?

Here are some tips to handle the psychological demands as a BIPOC:

1. **Sleep:** One of the most important factors in a healthy mind is sleep. If you are tossing and turning because your mind will not stop thinking, this could be a warning sign. You can look into sleep hygiene to see what fits your daily wind-down to bed (i.e. maybe turning your phone off an hour or two before you hit the bed). If your sleep schedule has been off for a longer period of time, check-in with your primary care doctor to see what next steps you can take to help you.

2. **Limit media intake:** As hard as it is to pull away from our devices, it is healthy to do so. There are plenty of emotions, frustrations, stressors, anger, and anxiety surrounding social media right now. Constantly defending yourself as a BIPOC can be psychologically taxing as you view some of the erroneous content presented via social media. Try to take a step back and limit yourself to a set time for social media daily. You can try setting a timer on your phone once you start. For iPhone users, you can lock yourself out of your apps after a set time under screen time in your settings. It might be hard at first, finding yourself automatically and unconsciously picking up your phone and clicking on your favorite social app, but it is worth the time to unwind and rest your mind!

3. **Engage in mindfulness or meditation:** Mindfulness is about acceptance of any bad or good thoughts you are having presently and gently letting them go for the moment to focus on your breath and what is going on around you. These relaxation techniques are about accepting yourself. You can try these by sitting in a comfortable position and focusing on your breath. Next, you attend to the present moment, noticing and acknowledging the thoughts and feelings you are having. Then, like a leaf floating on a river, you can imagine those thoughts and feelings slowly drifting away from you until you can't see them anymore. What is left is your breath and the sensations or sounds around you. Try googling guided meditation or mindfulness to de-stress from a hard day to help you get started! There are also free and low-cost apps for your phone that can help you engage in mindful meditation.

4. **Reach out to family and friends:** Social support is a big part of how humans function properly and is also important for a healthy mindset. Try reaching out to close family members or friends during this time to be surrounded and/or engage in discussion with people whom you trust. Knowing others are supporting you during this hard time is relieving as a BIPOC. Talk to your people and ask them for help if you need it.

5. **Make space to grieve:** There are many people to grieve for as well as your own experiences and feelings. Living through this time as a BIPOC is difficult--it is more than normal to be feeling emotional or fatigued. It's ok to let yourself be sad. It's ok to let yourself cry. However, it is also important to know that people grieve in different ways. Try and figure out what grieving looks like for you. You can try doing this alone in a private space or with others.

If you feel you would benefit from talking with a professional and would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please try our [Psychologist Locator](#).

Additionally, a resource list of specific mental health services for the African American community is maintained by the Borris Lawrence Henson Foundation:

<https://borislhensonfoundation.org/resource-guide/>