

(Sample #1 Discussion Board Post)

Social Media Break

Take a social media break this week. I want to preface this by saying that I know many of you are likely benefiting from the virtual connections and community that you have created with social media (like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok etc). If you are comfortable, try to go without the use of these platforms for 1 week. If taking that much time off will be counterproductive for your mental health, try to implement the following tips for giving your mind a rest:

- Try to not get on social media first thing in the morning or for an hour before you go to sleep.
- Look through the content that you are following. Is it positive? Does it make you feel good about yourself? Does it bring you joy? Give yourself permission to unfollow anyone that isn't increasing the joy in your life.
- Check your screen-time report (if available on your phone). How many hours per day do you average on social media apps? Can you make a goal of cutting that time in half this week?
- Make a plan for how you will replace your time that is typically spent on social media. Are there activities you have been missing that you would like to incorporate?

After completing the self-care "assignment" for this week, please post the following:

- If you were able to complete this week's assignment, did you find it easy or challenging? Did you notice a change in your stress or anxiety level with participation in this activity? Describe your experience.
- If you were not able to complete the assignment prompt, did you engage in any other self-care activities this week? Feel free to share.
- Reply to 1 or more classmates with reflection and/or encouragement

Please utilize netiquette to ensure productive and respectful conversation in this discussion board.

(Sample #2 Discussion Board Post)

Mindful morning exercise

This week, try to incorporate a morning mindfulness exercise each day. As soon as you wake up (before you jump out of bed or check your phone) notice and practice the following, without judgement:

- *Check in with your breathing, is your breath short and shallow? Deep and calm? Hard to catch?*
 - *If you notice quick or shallow breathing, take a moment to take in a deep breath for 4 counts, hold your breath for 4 counts, and exhale for 4 counts. Practice this breathing a few times and then allow yourself to breath naturally.*
- *Check in with your body, do you notice any areas of pain or tension? Any areas that feel settled and comfortable?*
 - *If you notice tension or pain, take a moment to stretch out your body and then allow it to relax. You can do this all over the body if you notice full body tension, starting with your jaw by clenching your teeth then allowing your jaw to drop and relax, then moving through the rest of your body tensing and fully relaxing until you get your toes, clenching your toes then stretching them out and finally letting them fully relax.*
- *Check in with your mind, do you have any immediate worries? Are your thoughts racing? Is your mind quiet and calm?*
 - *If you notice worried or racing thoughts, notice what the specific thoughts are. Imagine placing the thought inside of a bubble floating in front of you. See the thought inside of that bubble. Then watch the bubble float up into the air, into the clouds, until you can no longer see the bubble. If another thought comes in, continue this exercise until you notice your mind becomes a bit quieter.*

After completing the self-care "assignment" for this week, please post the following:

- How is your stress level this week? (Could pertain to this class, other classes, your work schedule, personal matters etc.)
- If you were able to complete this week's assignment, did you notice any changes in your stress levels throughout the morning after completing the morning exercise routine. Describe your experience.
- If you were not able to complete the assignment prompt, did you engage in any other self-care activities this week? Feel free to share.

- Reply to 1 or more classmates with reflection and/or encouragement

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(Sample Discussion Board Post: Exam Week)

Connecting with loved ones

Think of someone in your life (family member, friend, roommate, partner, co-worker, classmate) who brings a calming presence. Someone who you feel balanced around and feels safe confiding in. Dedicate a space in your schedule to have some quality time with them. If you are living with this person and can be in each other's physical presence, try to spend time doing something out of your typical routine. Go into nature and see something new together, build a fort in your living room, cook a new meal together. If your person lives outside of your circle, think of some socially distanced activities you could do together. Watch a movie together with a program like Netflix Party, do a virtual art project together over zoom, attend a virtual yoga class together, have a virtual dinner together, anything that helps you all feel connected.

After completing the self-care "assignment" for this week, please post the following:

- If you were able to complete this week's assignment, did you find that making time for these connections improved your overall mood and/or sense of support this week?
- If you were not able to complete the assignment prompt, did you engage in any other self-care activities this week? Feel free to share.
- Reply to 1 or more classmates with reflection and/or encouragement

In preparation for the upcoming exam, make a secondary post with the following:

- What pre-test activities have you engaged in in the past that have been helpful in focusing your mind and becoming present to answer exam questions effectively and efficiently
- Reply to 1 or more classmates with reflection on the test prep techniques they shared

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(Exam prep self-care sample: Language to utilize within the instructions of an online exam; can also be modified for in-class preparation)

Taking exams, especially in a new format compared to what you may be used to, can definitely be stress inducing. When you are ready to begin the exam, take a moment to say to yourself (out loud if possible) that you feel prepared and confident. Practicing self-empowerment right before engaging in something you may be feeling unsure or nervous about will help put you in the frame of mind that you are capable of success.

To further help put you in a relaxed and focused state of mind prior to beginning this exam, follow along with the below mindfulness activity:

Link to a 5-minute guided mindful meditation: <https://youtu.be/7o-oqjiLAOs>