DIGITAL COPING STRATEGIES

for Diabetes Distress

Presented by: Eliot B LeBow, LCSW, CDCES
Diabetes-Focused Psychotherapy | Virtual Sessions Nationwide

Living with diabetes in a hyper-connected age means constantly filtering numbers, alerts, and opinions. While tools like CGMs and social media can help, they can also cause "digital burnout". Use these digital hygiene practices and coping strategies to protect your mental well-being and set healthy boundaries with your technology.

1. Alarm Hygiene: Managing Tech Stress

Constant beeping can keep your brain in a state of high alert. Take control of your device notifications to reduce alert fatigue.

- **The "Buffer" Strategy:** Audit your high/low alerts to see if they give you time to act or just nag you. Setting high-glucose alerts slightly higher can prevent nagging for fluctuations that you are already handling.
- **Urgent vs. Informational Sounds:** Customizing sounds so that a life-threatening low sounds different from a non-urgent high helps prevent the "alarm fatigue" that causes patients to ignore all alerts entirely. Additionally, change your alert sounds occasionally to prevent your brain from associating a specific sound with panic or failure.
- **The "Sun-Down" Rule:** Try silencing non-critical alerts during high-stress times, like an important work meeting or a family dinner, to reclaim mental real estate. Establish "Sacred Spaces" where the phone or receiver stays in another room for at least one hour a day.

2. Social Media Boundaries: Escaping the "Comparison Trap"

Social media often shows "Unicorn Days" (perfect flat lines) that do not reflect the reality of managing diabetes.

- **The "Unfollow" Audit:** If an account makes you feel guilty, ashamed, or "less than" because your numbers don't look like theirs, that account is a distress trigger. Practice digital hygiene by muting or unfollowing that account.

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- **Time-Box Your Scrolling:** Set a 15-minute cap for reading diabetes-specific forums or Facebook groups. Spending hours reading about others' complications or struggles can spike your own distress.
- **Seek "Helpers" over "Judgers":** Social media algorithms often push extreme content, ranging from perfect management to complication horror stories. Seek out communities that embrace the real life of diabetes—including the highs and lows—rather than those that focus solely on perfection.

3. Digital Minimalism & Real-World Connection

Practicing digital minimalism is an excellent way to decouple your identity from your data and medical routine.

- **Technology Vacations:** Take scheduled breaks from social media apps and online gaming, and turn off notifications other than your necessary diabetes apps.
- **Prioritize Analog Time:** Spend at least one hour a day entirely screen-free. Focus your attention on a hobby that has nothing to do with diabetes.
- **Find Non-Diabetes Spaces:** Join a club, sport, or group where you are a person first, and a person with diabetes second.
- **Seek Professional Support:** If you find that your technology use is becoming compulsive or problematic, consider looking into support groups specifically designed for technology overuse.

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Desktop:
https://www.diabetictalks.com/digital-wellness-forms.html

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