

Managing Triggers on Social Media in Early Recovery

Life Skills Library

Recovery from addiction is a challenging journey, and social media can sometimes pose a significant obstacle. In early recovery, it's essential to recognize and manage triggers that may arise while browsing your social feed. This guide will provide you with helpful tips on navigating social media during your recovery, so you can lead a healthier life with limited social media exposure.

The Impact of Social Media on Recovery

Social media platforms are designed to keep people engaged for extended periods, making it easy to get lost in a world of endless scrolling. However, this virtual world may contain content that glorifies substance use, exposes you to people who contribute to your addiction, or otherwise triggers cravings or negative emotions.

In early recovery, it's crucial to be aware of these potential triggers and take steps to minimize their impact on your progress.

Recognizing and Managing Triggers

One of the most important things to do in early recovery is to spot triggers quickly and manage them so you don't relapse. When you're on social media, this is especially important since it's so easy to log on and scroll through various accounts.

-  **Identify triggering content** – Common examples include images or posts that glamorize drug or alcohol use, parties, or people using substances. Be mindful of the emotions and cravings these posts may evoke.
-  **Unfollow or mute accounts** – If certain accounts consistently share triggering content, consider unfollowing or muting them to limit your exposure. Remember, your recovery comes first.
-  **Remove friends contributing to your addiction** – Evaluate your friend list and consider removing or unfriending people who may negatively



influence your recovery. Surround yourself with positive influences and support instead.

-  **Set boundaries** – Limit the time spent on social media each day and avoid browsing when you're feeling vulnerable or emotional.
-  **Seek support** – Join online recovery groups and connect with others who understand your journey. Share your experiences and learn from others' insights.

Of course, staying on social media for a long time can be hard on your mental health

Taking Breaks from Social Media

When you realize you're spending too much time on social media, consider taking a short or extended break.

-  **Use in-built settings** – Many social media platforms have settings that allow you to limit your daily usage, like screen time limits or downtime schedules. Utilize these features to create a healthier balance.
-  **App blockers** – Consider using app blockers to prevent access to social media during specific times of the day or when you need a break.
-  **Digital detox** – Periodically take a complete break from social media for a day or even a week. This can help you reevaluate your relationship with these platforms and refocus on your recovery.

Staying away from social media for some time can be beneficial to your mental health and recovery.

Benefits of Limited Social Media

Limiting your social media use during recovery can help you:



-  Avoid triggering content that may jeopardize your progress
-  Focus on self-care and personal growth
-  Strengthen relationships with supportive friends and family
-  Improve mental health by reducing exposure to potentially harmful content

When you limit your social media use, you can focus on healthy hobbies that enrich your lifestyle.

Alternatives to Social Media

Learn a new skill or get outside when you take a break from social media. You can try:

-  **Hobbies** – Engage in hobbies that bring you joy and relaxation, such as reading, gardening, or cooking.
-  **Staying active** – Exercise is known to release endorphins and improve mental health. Choose activities you enjoy, like walking, swimming, or yoga.
-  **Creative outlets** – Express yourself through creative pursuits like painting, writing, or photography.
-  **Mindfulness practices** – Incorporate mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or journaling, to help you stay present and focused on your recovery.

Managing triggers on social media is an essential aspect of early recovery. By recognizing and limiting exposure to triggering content, seeking support, and finding alternatives to social media, you'll be better equipped to maintain your sobriety and lead a healthier life. Remember, recovery is a journey, and it's essential to prioritize your well-being every step of the way.



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