

So, what can be done?

Moderation is key, according to Scott Kennelly, assistant director for Butte County Behavioral Health. The more screen time, the more people—particularly young people—can be influenced by what they see, and that can “significantly impact someone and create more depression and anxiety.”

He added: “The biggest impact is on kids’ self-esteem and mental health, if they believe too much of what they see on the internet or social media and they take feedback from others—particularly negative feedback—to heart.”

Chervinko encourages people to explore what it is they like about social media use, and what isn’t really working for them—“increasing mindfulness and awareness and intentionality” around its use. Sometimes creating a schedule that dictates when to log on, and for how long, can help.

Taking a break is sometimes the best option, Minden said.

He likes to advocate for small

changes that are meaningful and achievable. If social media is interfering with face-to-face contact with friends, for example, Minden encourages people to increase their own accountability: form a study group, meet up with a friend once a week for lunch, make a commitment and stick to it. Instead of scrolling through Instagram or Facebook, plan to devote some of that time to exercising, painting or creating music.

Hunt, who creates music and poetry under the name Himp C, said the “addictive nature” of social media is the hardest part for him.

“I look up and I’m like, *Man, I just burned an hour I could be jammin’*,” he said. He tries to be mindful of that, and not get sucked into things he doesn’t enjoy.

“It’s always important to think about, *What would I like to be doing instead?*” Minden added, “and figure out a way to make that happen.” □

WEEKLY DOSE



Vitamin See's

Got a cough? Grab some chocolate! We’re only a few weeks into 2019, but this might be the best health care news of the year: A research group at the University of Hull in Yorkshire, England, has shown that chocolate can help alleviate a nagging cough. The small survey of 163 people found that patients on the chocolate-based medication reported a “significant improvement” in their symptoms within two days, compared to those on the regular cough syrup. Meanwhile, a similar study at Imperial College in London discovered that theobromine, an alkaloid in cocoa, is better at suppressing cough than codeine. Chocolate is “stickier and more viscous than standard cough medicines, so it forms a coating which protects nerve endings in the throat which trigger the urge to cough,” one of the researchers explained. The authors recommend sucking on a piece of chocolate to help alleviate cough symptoms. Pass the cacao!

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