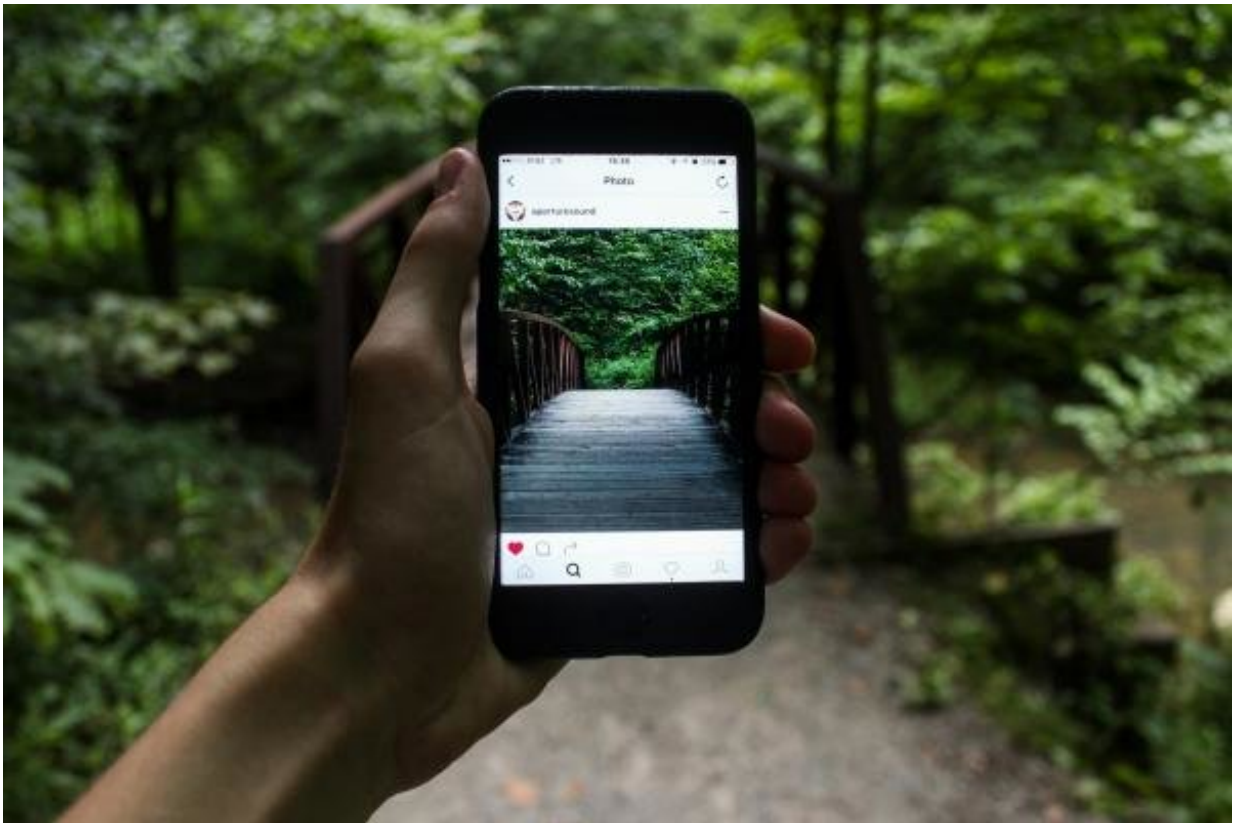# Keeping a healthy perspective on social media

March 22 2018

Credit: University of Colorado at Boulder

Social media can be a place to keep up with friends, make plans or hear about events. At the same time, it can be a bombardment of news and information, which may get stressful. Navigating social media use is all

about keeping things in perspective. So how do we do that?

What are some of the impacts of social media use?

Social [media](#) can be a great way to stay connected with our friends and family, whether it's seeing updates from them or arranging lunch dates. It also facilitates a sense of [social connection](#) and shared experience.

When it is overused, [social media](#) can negatively impact your physical and [mental health](#). When you're preoccupied with social media, you can become less attentive to things such as going to bed on time, engaging in conversations when out with friends or paying attention in class.

With the amount of information that comes through your news feeds, you may see things that evoke a variety of reactions. Social media makes it easy to compare yourself to other people, which can cause anxiety and feelings of loneliness and inadequacy. Hearing from [friends](#) or [family members](#) about their values that may not align with our yown can also contribute to feelings of stress or anxiety.

How can you minimize the negative impacts?

One step you can take is to decrease the amount of time you spend on social media. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

- Move social apps off of your [home screen](#). Having an extra step can reduce the urge to open the app as soon as you get on your phone.
- Schedule specific times to check social media or set a timer to limit yourself to 20–30 minutes.
- Put your phone on silent. When you aren't hearing a tone or vibration every time you get a notification, you're less likely to

get distracted by social media.
- Take a break from social media or limit the number of apps you use. Try sticking to the apps you use the most to communicate with people.

Being a critical consumer of social media is also helpful in reducing its negative impacts. Remember: What you're seeing is usually someone else's highlight reel and isn't indicative of anyone's day-to-day life.

How can you use social media in a more positive way?

There are steps you can take to help you have more positive experiences when using social media.

- Use social media as a way to plan face-to-face meetings. Whether it's in-person or over video, people tend to have more meaningful connections through face-to-face contact.
- Be mindful and intentional of your social media use, such as following people and brands that make you feel good. Look for those that post funny memes or inspirational quotes.

How do you know if social media use has become a problem?

Reflecting on how often or how long you're using social media can be helpful to understand if it's getting in the way of your day-to-day activities. If you find you prefer social media over more direct forms of communication or if you constantly feel the urge to check it, even if there isn't a notification, it might be time to scale back or adjust your use patterns.