



## October is Health Literacy Month!

### *How do you know if something you read on the internet is true or good information?*

There is so much information on the internet that knowing what you can believe and trust can be hard. It is very easy for anyone to create and publish a website that seems real, and people can post anything they want to on social media. There is no one person or entity that checks the accuracy of the information that people put on websites. Anyone can say anything whether it is true or not. *So, how do you know what to believe?*

First, look at **WHO** made the website or wrote the article. Look for websites ending in:

- ◆ “.gov” These sites are from the US government (e.g., cdc.gov).
- ◆ “.edu” These sites are from educational institutions (e.g., UGA.edu).
- ◆ “.org” These sites are professional or non-profit organizations (e.g., heart.org for the American Heart Association).

These types of sites are usually reliable and good sources of information. News articles can also be useful, but you want to make sure that the source of news is a reputable source. Recently websites have appeared that look like legitimate news agencies, but aren't. Make sure that the source is from something you have heard of before. Most newspapers and TV news agencies usually have a process for making sure they are giving you good information. Something that is truly news-worthy will usually appear on multiple news sites as well. If something seems outrageous and is only appearing on one site, but not others, it is most likely not true.

Social media can be a confusing way to get your information. Just because something looks like a news article or comes with nice looking graphics, does not mean it is true or good information. Always check to see who created the post (is it someone or something you have heard of before?) or what the source of the information is. Remember that anyone can post anything they want. It is always good to make sure something is true before you click the “share” or “like” button!

Finally, another thing to keep in mind is: **Are they trying to sell you something?** Websites may be sponsored by companies that are selling products to provide objective information. Even legitimate websites may have ads from less reliable sources. You may see things labeled as “Ad” or “Sponsored Content”, but many times they are not labeled. When companies are trying to sell you something, it is usually a good idea to ask questions and verify the information that is being provided.

*The internet is a great way to get information, but keep these tips in mind to ensure that you are getting accurate information. Your health is important!*

~H. Zuercher

### In this issue:

- ⇒ **October is Health Literacy Month**
- ⇒ **Mental Health matters!**
- ⇒ **CFR's COVID-19 Response**

### Quotable....

Every great dream begins with a dreamer.  
Always remember, you have within you  
the strength, patience, and passion to  
reach for the stars to change the world.

**Harriet Tubman**

## Mental Health Matters

Taking care of our mental health and emotional wellness is just as important as taking care of our physical health. In fact, mental health is closely related to physical health. Research suggests that while African Americans may report feeling symptoms of emotional distress often, we are less likely to seek help for these issues. The topics of emotional wellness and mental health in African Americans have been discussed more widely in the past six months as the Black community has been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus and the resulting economic crisis. Additionally, the highly publicized murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd (as well as others that have also come to light) have likely resulted in a many different emotions – grief, anger, hopelessness, frustration, depression, despair, and stress. The impact of all of these events will continue as we enter the final quarter of 2020, with even more stress that will come with school and childcare issues during the pandemic and the upcoming election.

In the midst of so many challenges and uncertainties, it is very important that we focus on taking care of our mental health and emotional well-being. The big question is **“HOW?”**

*Please keep reading for tips and strategies.*

### ***Mental Health Matters continued***

How do we care for ourselves when the world seems chaotic? An important step is recognizing what is within our control and the things that we cannot control. Focus on the things you can control—actions you can take. Consider the following action steps and strategies to help with your emotions and stress:

- ◆ **Acknowledge your emotions:** Identify the emotions you are feeling and recognize that it is okay for you to feel whatever those emotions are, whether it is rage, sadness or numbness.
- ◆ **Be still:** Take a break from the news and social media; breathe; pray, journal, meditate, listen to your body and take time to process everything you are experiencing.
- ◆ **Engage in community:** Connect with others who can empathize with you; share and process your feelings in a safe space (e.g., support group, friends, family, faith community).
- ◆ **Move your body:** Do something to exert physical energy (exercise, dance, do yard or housework).
- ◆ **Practice self-care:** Eat well, drink water, get good rest and do something that brings you joy.
- ◆ **Ask for help:** Tell your loved ones what they can do to help.
- ◆ **Seek professional help:** Know when it is too much to handle on your own. Despite what we may have been taught growing up, there is nothing wrong with talking to a therapist or counselor. Taking care of yourself is a sign of strength, never a weakness. Consider seeking professional help if you experience the following:
  - ◆ Feelings of hopelessness or despair that do not go away
  - ◆ Isolating from family and friends (e.g., cancel plans, don't respond to calls and texts)
  - ◆ Drastic changes in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or too little)
  - ◆ Have thoughts of harming yourself or others

Our lives matter and our mental health matters too! Visit the For Families page on the CFR website for good resources for emotional wellness and mental health: [www.cfr.uga](http://www.cfr.uga).

~T. Anderson

## **CFR's COVID-19 Response**

CFR's researchers and staff were preparing for a busy spring when the pandemic began to affect the US. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the health of our many participants, we temporarily stopped all in-person research activities in March.

Several projects resumed data collection with phone and internet-based surveys this summer. We appreciate the willingness of long-term and new participants to continue to share their life experiences with us during this difficult time in new ways.

Our staff have worked hard to develop safety protocols that will allow for very low contact research visits as we resume in-person visits in the coming months. We will be in touch with updates about when the projects will resume. In the meantime, current participants may contact CFR at (888)542-3068 to provide updated information or talk to project staff.

Stay safe! We look forward to being in touch soon!

