

CHOICES

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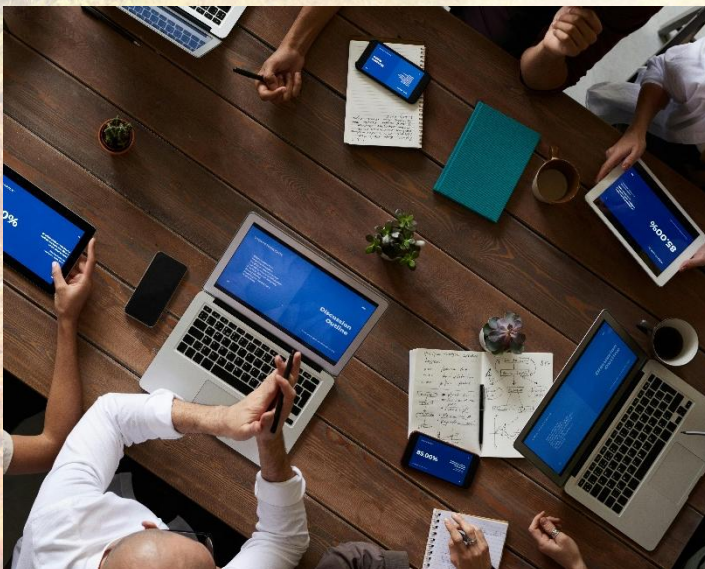
Unplugged: Finding Peace in a Digital World

Digital Dilemma

Technology has become woven into nearly every part of our lives—from our work, to how we connect with loved ones, to the way we learn and find information. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has added new tools that can support creativity, efficiency, and even wellbeing.

But with constant notifications, endless scrolling, and the pull of algorithms designed to keep us online, many people find it hard to **switch off**. Overuse of technology can fuel anxiety, reduce sleep quality, and even weaken our ability to stay present with ourselves and others.

The good news? By setting intentional boundaries, we can reclaim space to breathe, reflect, and live more fully in the moment.



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Technology, AI & Mental Health

Technology and AI can be both helpful *and* harmful for mental wellbeing.

- **The Benefits:** AI tools can reduce barriers to care by providing resources like guided meditations, therapy apps, or quick access to mental health information. For some, it's a first step toward professional support.
- **The Challenges:** Social media algorithms may amplify comparison, misinformation, or polarizing content. The constant stream of data can overstimulate the brain and make it harder to focus or rest.

The key lies in **intentional use**. Technology is a tool—it can support wellbeing if we use it mindfully, rather than letting it shape our moods and habits unconsciously.



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What is Confirmation Bias?

One of the subtle ways technology and AI affect our thinking is through **confirmation bias**—our tendency to seek, notice, and remember information that confirms what we already believe.

Social media platforms and search engines, powered by algorithms, often show us more of what we've clicked on before. While this feels comfortable, it can trap us in "echo chambers," limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.

Tip: To counter confirmation bias, intentionally read from a variety of sources, ask open-ended questions, and stay curious—even when you encounter ideas that challenge your own.



"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you."

— Anne Lamott

5 Tips for Putting Down Technology & Being Present

1. **Create Tech-Free Zones:** Keep phones out of bedrooms, mealtimes, or walks in nature. Physical boundaries help mental boundaries.



2. **Use "Time Blocks":** Set specific times to check email or social media, instead of letting it run your whole day.



3. **Replace, Don't Just Remove:** Instead of scrolling, swap in activities that nourish you—reading, journaling, cooking, or spending time outdoors.

Tip: Make a checklist of activities you need to get done before you can get back to scrolling!

For example:

- Unload the dishwasher
- Fold the laundry
- Make the bed
- Cook dinner

4. **Practice Mindful Pauses:** The next time you reach for your phone, pause. Ask yourself: *Am I using this with intention, or out of habit?*



5. **Reconnect Face-to-Face:** Prioritize in-person conversations whenever possible. Eye contact and body language add depth to connection.



Small, consistent changes can restore a sense of balance and presence.

"Almost everything we need to be happy is already right here in this moment—if only we remember to look up."

— **Unknown**

At Vancouver Island Counselling, we know that technology is here to stay—but balance is possible. If you'd like support building healthy digital habits, cultivating presence, or navigating the challenges of modern life, we're here to help.

Let's disconnect to reconnect—with ourselves, with others, and with what matters most.

Warmly,
The Vancouver Island Counselling Team



Contact us!

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