

# Healing from Headlines: Raising Awareness About Toxic Media and Mental Health

## Welcome to the Healing From Headlines!

We're a student-led initiative through HOSA that's all about mental health and global awareness. Our mission is simple but powerful: to educate and empower young people to understand the effects of constant exposure to toxic news and give them the tools they need to take care of their mental health. In today's world, it feels like we can't escape news stories about things like climate change, wildfires, the migrant crisis, and school shootings. But constantly hearing about these traumatic events can take a major toll on our mental health, especially for young people who are just beginning to navigate the complexities of the world.

## What is Toxic Media?

**Toxic media** refers to constant exposure to negative, distressing, or overwhelming news stories. These might include stories of natural disasters, human suffering, violence, and fear-inducing topics like artificial intelligence (AI). The problem with toxic news is that it can leave us feeling anxious, helpless, or numb. While it's important to stay informed, too much of this type of news without hope or solutions can make us feel like the world is falling apart—sometimes, it feels like there's nothing we can do to fix it.

## What Are the Key Issues We Focus On?

The **Healing From Headlines** highlights five key global issues that are often featured in the news and can impact mental health:

### 1. Climate Change

- **What's happening?:** Extreme weather events like floods, heatwaves, and rising sea levels are all linked to climate change. The news often reports on these disasters, making us feel like the planet is in crisis.
- **Impact on mental health:** This can lead to eco-anxiety, where young people feel worried or overwhelmed by the state of the planet. We might feel powerless to make a change, leading to stress or sadness.
- **How we help:** We promote climate action and focus on positive changes being made around the world to inspire hope and action. Taking part in environmental efforts or just staying informed about solutions can help reduce anxiety.

### 2. Wildfires

- **What's happening?:** Wildfires are becoming more frequent and intense, especially in places like California, Australia, and the Amazon rainforest. These fires often destroy homes and landscapes, and the news makes it hard to ignore.

- **Impact on mental health:** Constant stories about destruction can create feelings of **fear**, especially for those living in areas prone to wildfires. Even if you're not directly affected, the emotional weight of these events can cause anxiety or secondary trauma.
- **How we help:** We encourage techniques like **mindfulness** and **stress management** to deal with the fear and stress from natural disasters.

### 3. Migrant Crisis

- **What's happening?:** Millions of people are being forced to leave their homes because of war, poverty, and natural disasters. The media often shows heartbreaking images of refugees and displaced people.
- **Impact on mental health:** Seeing these stories can cause feelings of sadness, compassion fatigue, or even guilt. It can also make us feel disconnected from others or unsure about what to do.
- **How we help:** We promote empathy and getting involved in advocacy or volunteer work. It's important to help others and contribute to positive change, which can help young people feel empowered.

### 4. School Shootings

- **What's happening?:** School shootings are a tragic and all-too-common occurrence, and news about these events can cause deep emotional trauma for students.
- **Impact on mental health:** Constant exposure to stories about school shootings can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety, making students worry about their own safety at school.
- **How we help:** By fostering open conversations about safety, mental health support, and resilience, we can help young people process their emotions and feel more secure in their environment.

## How Toxic News Affects Mental Health

When we're exposed to toxic news, it doesn't just make us sad for a few minutes. It can lead to long-term stress, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness. Here's how toxic news can affect mental health:

- **Increased Anxiety & Stress:** Watching or reading about traumatic events can cause us to feel anxious, uncertain, or afraid about the future.
- **Feelings of Helplessness:** When we see problems like climate change or the migrant crisis and feel like we can't make a difference, it can lead to a sense of powerlessness.
- **Compassion Fatigue:** Constantly seeing suffering can lead to emotional exhaustion, and we may start to feel numb or detached from the world around us.
- **Hypervigilance & Fear:** After hearing about school shootings or other tragedies, it can make us feel unsafe or constantly worried about our own safety.

## How to Cope with Toxic News: Mental Health Strategies

We understand how overwhelming it can be to constantly be exposed to these issues. But there are healthy ways to cope and take control of your mental health:

**1. Limit News Consumption**

It's important to stay informed, but constant exposure to bad news can increase stress. Set boundaries for how often and how much news you consume. Try to follow balanced sources that offer both challenges and solutions.

**2. Focus on Positive Action**

Get involved! Whether it's helping out with climate action, volunteering for humanitarian organizations, or advocating for better policies, taking action can help you feel like you're making a difference.

**3. Practice Mindfulness**

Meditation, deep breathing, and yoga can help you stay grounded. These practices reduce stress and help you stay present in the moment, rather than getting lost in fear and anxiety.

**4. Talk About It**

It's important to express how you're feeling. Talk with friends, family, or even a counselor about the emotions that toxic news triggers. The more we talk about it, the less power it has over us.

**5. Engage in Self-Care**

Get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and engage in activities you love. Self-care isn't just about relaxation; it's about maintaining your overall well-being.

## **Get Involved with Us!**

If you're passionate about mental health and global change, join Healing From Headlines. We're here to support each other and work together to create a healthier relationship with the world around us.

- **Follow us on Instagram:** [@healingfromheadlines.hosa](https://www.instagram.com/healingfromheadlines.hosa)
- **Contact us via email:** [healingfromheadlines.hosa@gmail.com](mailto:healingfromheadlines.hosa@gmail.com)

We're excited to hear from you and collaborate to make the world a better, healthier place for everyone!

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