



# the MIND reader

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## TECHNOLOGY & YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

### Textiquette: How 2 TXT & TXT Well

BY: Sheri Fluellen

#### DOs

- always double check your content and recipient to ensure that it is all accurate
- Use the signature function on your texts, especially when you communicate with a lot of people that aren't "buddies" and may not have your number already programmed

- give people with whom you are physically present your full attention. Let them know if you will be temporarily texting for an important reason.



- send your loved ones random unprovoked texts that remind them you are thinking about them. using a scheduling text app can help make this easier. (DON'Ts on page 4)

What do you do when you live in the middle of nowhere, don't have any good mental health counselors in your area, want specialized services (such as Christian counseling), or your therapist moves away? Did you know that technology can be your saving grace? Telemental health (TMH) involves delivery of mental health services by a licensed professional that are not provided in-person. Research has found that the use of internet video conferencing can reduce or eliminate the barriers that people face to getting the care they are looking for. Word to the wise, if you are checking out a therapist or agency for TMH, make sure they are savvy with the technology. For example, if they recommend using Skype, run the other way. This is an indication they may not be current on the confidentiality criteria of different technologies. **Mind Spa currently offers TMH services to residents of WY and CO. Mind Spa will soon be expanding into MT as well. Give us a call to find out if your needs would be a good fit for TMH.**

"I was a little apprehensive about not being face to face with the doctor. but the conversation was just as good as if we were in person."

BY: Sheri Fluellen

#### IN NEXT ISSUE:

Physical Health & your emotional well-being

#### RESEARCH NEWS: violent video games

Playing violent video games may have negative effects that accumulate over time and lead to increasing aggressive behavior, suggests a study from Ohio State University. Researchers assigned 70 university students to play either a violent or nonviolent video game for 20 minutes on 3 consecutive days. Students who played the violent video game showed increases in aggressive behavior and expected to be the recipient of hostility/aggression from others each day they played, whereas those who played nonviolent games showed no changes in aggression/hostile expectations. (J of Exp Social Psych, March 2013)

Some studies show up to 10% of people online are addicted.

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Statistic: The average American spends 8.5 hours per day in front of a screen.

# What is it about facebook?

BY: Sheri Fluellen

Facebook (fb) is a lot of things to millions of people. A way of self-promoting, finding long lost friends, entertaining oneself, and staying connected. While fb can increase your feeling of connectedness to the real social world, it paradoxically can increase feelings of being disconnected and alone. It seems that those of us who

feel chronically lonely don't get any lasting relief from fb. Fb may be great for maintaining connections with off-line relationships. However, using it as the main source for human interaction and to get rid of your nagging feelings of loneliness is unproductive. It is like an addiction that doesn't solve the thing that you're trying to

cope with. So what is the solution? It is an old-fashioned solution. Get out there and engage with people face-to-face. As much as technology can be used to support our real-life relationships, it falls short of replacing them. It will be worth your time to find what social outlets there are in little Cheyenne Wyoming, or where ever you happen to reside. And if social anxiety plagues you, seek out the help to overcome!



**FACT:**

A child born today will have spent one year's worth of 24-hr. days watching screen media by age 7.

Based on article from Monitor on Psychology, March 2013

## Social Media and Your Family

By  
Linda  
Malm

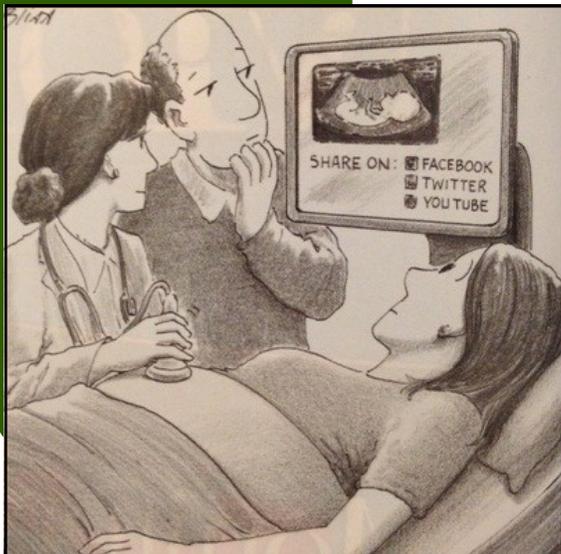
For many parents, social media tops the list of social evils out to get our kids. However, it is not just the young who have fallen prey, as parents can be just as consumed by that last minute e-mail, box score or Facebook update. Technology has changed the way families spend time, relate and grow together, but it is



deeper with each other to discuss topics, spend a night away, or engage in a full family vacation.

Challenge #2 is to not move so quickly through life that we miss out on living. All of us crave real, face-to-face, honest relationships. We need to know that we are cherished and chosen by those closest to us. We need the courage to take control of our schedules to make time for people we love, and who love us.

Families can and should design and implement times to unplug from technology to sustain authentic long-term relationships and put technology in the place where it belongs; as a tool that enhances our lives without damaging our families. (Adapted from C. & D. Clark, Christian Counseling Today, Vol. 19 no.3).



Harry Bliss/The New Yorker Collection/  
www.cartoonbank.com

not the fault of social media. We have not taken the time or had enough awareness to adapt. The answer is to create value-driven priorities that set boundaries and enhance family relationships.

There are two responses we

can make to the new digital dynamic. Challenge#1 is to negotiate seasons of deliberate disengagement. These can be during brief, regular and sustained times. Brief times are when we simply decide to talk, spend quiet time reading, or do homework without responding to our phones, the internet or TV. Regular times are when we agree to be together without technology such as 30 minutes before dinner until 30 minutes after the last person has eaten. Sustained times are when we go

# CBT, there's an APP for that By Doug Blocksm



Engaging Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

can be a cumbersome enterprise. Often the most effective path to combating negative thoughts and impulsive reactions can be to continuously document your daily feelings, thoughts and actions. A legitimate obstacle to such a diligent record is the prospect of carrying around a frayed notebook, spilling coffee on it one day, and watching your child rip a page out with his teeth the next.

One solution to this dilemma comes through your smart phone. A quick search for the term 'CBT' brings about dozens of different applications that want your money and attention. In this article, I will focus on a few apps that might be worth your time, attention and dollars.

One free application that allows for the charting of mood, coping skills, and sleep is called [Optimism](#). The application can be

used on a number of different platforms: as software for either PC or Mac computers, in a web browser, as well as an app on any [iOs device](#). (They say an Android version is forthcoming) The user inputs scaled (1 to 10) data about their day and the app displays the information in clear charts for noticing trends from day to day or week to week. The platform can even sync from phone to web browser to software to keep you completely up to date.

Another option that prompts users to think about changing their behavior as "experiments" in the laboratory of life is called [Behavioral Experiments - CBT](#). (\$3, iTunes) Framing new behaviors as a test trial, folks using the app can observe the effects of their new choices like a scientist in a lab, and even bring their findings back to their counselor for consultation. A cousin to CBT is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), a therapy with very specific coping skills and methods to be used throughout a day filled

with highs and lows. A very helpful partner in employing these skills can be found in the [DBT Diary Card and Skills Coach App](#). (\$5, iTunes) Also employing a daily log format, this app also has succinct instructions for each specific DBT skill that can be used as a reminder and coach when hitting a hard part of your day. It also has an option to automate the sharing of your daily diaries with your therapist – as well as a password to keep out snooping eyes. Regardless of what application you choose, harnessing the technology already in your pocket is a great way to assist your journey to improved mood and functioning. While they are not a substitute for the real care of treatment, they can be incredible supplements to assist in executing CBT skills. Instead of carrying around one more notebook to be lost or smudged, these apps can be convenient, helpful and even fun ways to observe the ins and outs of your daily routines!

## There's an APP for that TOO!

The PTSD Coach app was developed by the VA's National Center for PTSD ([www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov)). It can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma. Together with professional medical treatment, PTSD Coach provides you dependable resources you can trust. If you have, or think you might have

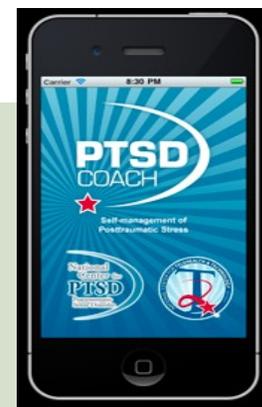
PTSD, this app is for you. Family and friends can also learn from this app. Features include:

- Reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work.



Google play

- Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms.
- Convenient, easy-to-use skills to help you handle stress symptoms.
- Direct links to support and help.





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## Texting Cont'd

### DON'Ts

- try to have a deep, productive, emotional conversation via texting. Too much non-verbal content is lost that misunderstanding happen frequently.
- bad mouth anyone in an email as you never know who might end up reading it.
- don't sext as you never know who might end up reading it (or accidentally get it).
- don't text and drive. not only might you get a \$125 ticket in Cheyenne but it increases your odds of getting into an accident by 23 times.
- make important, life changing decisions with someone through texting. call them or wait to talk in person.
- start or end a relationship through texting. Be real with them.

## Boundaries in Technology

By: Sheri Fluellen

*It's a slippery slope my friend.*



You are texting your coworker, emailing a past school-mate, or

facebooking a former boyfriend.

Be very very careful what you say and how you say it when you are communicating via technology .

There is a phenomenon that I imagine is still being studied in the halls of the ivory tower related to the dis-inhibitions of communication through technology. What one would never dare to say in person (heck, it may not even cross one's

mind normally) seems to spring forth and come alive when your fingers are typing at the speed of sound. I have seen too many times when an innocent texting conversation turns into a steamy chat that might even include a pic or two. I implore you, keep your morals close by, keep your boundaries even closer. Boundaries to consider are: don't communicate late at night, don't communicate when you are tired, drunk, or otherwise intellectually compromised, communicate when around others (e.g. wife), and don't use technology as primary communication. If you have fallen prey, talk to someone you trust for help.