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MINIMIZING DISTRACTIONS WHILE WE'RE SHELTERED IN PLACE

Distractions. They happen all the time in my household. With all three of my teenagers underfoot constantly, a husband who works from home and my own commitments, it's easy to get sidetracked, distracted, and overwhelmed.

In 2005, [research carried out by Dr. Glenn Wilson](#) at London's Institute of Psychiatry found that interruptions and distractions in the workplace have a profound effect on productivity. Emails, phone calls, worries, and noise all play into that. Surprisingly, so does a cluttered workspace, or a cluttered break space.

I recently learned firsthand how true this was. I had two bookshelves in my office that were continually piled up with miscellaneous stuff. Nothing pressing, just old files, magazines, and papers that needed to be filed. I couldn't understand why I never wanted to be in my office. Then one day I decided to tackle those bookshelves to make them look presentable during Zoom calls. It was a necessity to do so, and now, I am no longer distracted by the haphazard piles of stuff! It also feels good to have a nice visual to look at while I am in there working.

In August 2018, [research from the UK's telecoms regulator Ofcom](#) reported that people check their smartphones on average every 12 minutes during their waking hours, with 71% saying they never turn their phone off, and 40% saying they check them within five minutes of waking. This habit negatively impacts human bonding, inhibits face-to-face socialization, and reduces the amount of meaningful conversation we engage in.

Before we made a 'no cell phones out at the table' rule in my house, we ate in silence, and rushed through meals. Now however, no cell phones are visible, conversation is lively, and as a family we have more of a connection with one another.

What can we do to help minimize household distractions? I found this fantastic article about 12 common distractions and how to manage them that you might also find useful: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/330196>.



Some of the tips include turning off email notifications on your phone or computer, investing in a noise-canceling app or headphones, refraining from multi-tasking so much, and not trying to work on an empty stomach.

With virtually all of us confined to our homes 24/7 for work, school and leisure time, this advice can go a long way to providing peace of mind and a more harmonious home environment.

This article was written by Erin Dowsley, who serves on the Health & Community Concerns Commission.

PREVENTING DISTRACTED DRIVING AMONG TEENAGERS

There's a common myth out there many of us fall prey to – that we can multitask, and that it makes us more productive. The truth is, attempting to multitask actually makes us more distracted. Just because you have two hands doesn't mean you can write two separate letters simultaneously, even if you're ambidextrous. Or have you ever tried to watch a movie and read a book at the same time? Our brain can't complete multiple tasks at once, but rather drains itself trying to switch back and forth between tasks.



A drained and distracted brain is especially dangerous as it pertains to the task of driving. Using Bluetooth – or any technology that allows you to communicate hands-free while driving – is actually just as dangerous as handheld talking. This is because even when you remove the manual distraction, the cognitive distraction remains. Research confirms cognitive distractions actually take the longest to recover from.

Reckless and distracted driving is the leading cause of death for teens, and phone use is only part of the equation. Lethal distractions include texting and talking on the phone, but also messing around with friends, experiencing intense emotions, daydreaming, applying make-up, adjusting the GPS or radio, shuffling the playlist, eating or drinking, or anything that diverts attention from the task of driving.

Impact Teen Drivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to stemming the tide of this preventable epidemic. Through evidence-based educational programming, ITD empowers people to devote their visual, manual, cognitive, and auditory focus to driving.

To learn how to set up a parent workshop, teen presentation, or utilize any of ITD's free evidence-based Interactive Educational Modules, please start by visiting www.ImpactTeenDrivers.org/California. Resources are available in both English and Spanish.

NEW SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE FROM THE CDE

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond announced this month that the California Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with the San Diego County Office of Education, is launching a **free online suicide prevention training program** available to middle and high school staff and students throughout the state.



According to a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 24. For every youth who dies by suicide, an estimated 100 to 200 young people make suicide attempts.

“The COVID-19 pandemic not only disrupted the academic lives of our students and families, but it may have contributed to emotional and mental health challenges that some of our students struggle with,” said Thurmond. “It is important that students know that they have someone to turn to within their school community when they are feeling overwhelmed. Providing this specialized training to school staff and peers can not only be utilized to support students in crisis during the critical time we are in now, but any time a student is feeling despondent, stressful, and alone.”

The online training is called **LivingWorks Start**, an evidence-based program that is aligned with CDE's Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy to address the needs of high-risk populations. The program will be rolled out in two phases, with school site staff trained first and students trained during the second phase, which will take place in September.

Having trained school personnel in place will allow students to receive the proper support when they go through the program and will help them be better equipped to support students who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide. Some of the training topics include how to recognize when someone is having suicidal thoughts, intervention strategies, and connections to support services.

For questions or more information, visit the San Diego County Office of Education's Student Support Services [web page](#), or email Program Specialist Heather Nemour at heather.nemour@sdcoe.net.

TAKE ACTION!

What's New in the Resource Library? WATER!



This month's featured resources are from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Project WET, the CA Dept. of Water Services and Aquarium of the Pacific.

[BROWSE NOW](#)

Reflections Items Available in PTA Online Store



Celebrate the winners of the 2019-2020 Reflections Art Program with a badge or ribbon, or get a poster or yard sign for the 2020-2021 program.

[SHOP NOW](#)

Student Leadership Academy Deadline Extended



The deadline for students to apply to join Ed100's online summer leadership academy has been extended to July 10!

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