

John Boccacino:

Hello, and welcome back to the Cuse Conversations Podcast. I'm John Boccacino, senior internal communications specialist at Syracuse University.

Matt Mulvaney:

To the extent to which these devices move us away from in-person interactions, I think produces loneliness, it produces unhappiness, it produces depression, it produces a failure to connect with people. That is, again, in my view, one of the most critical and important human features, is this connection with other people.

Zahra Vahedi:

It is important that we become more mindful about and intentional about how we're using our technology and then ensuring that we have safer times or spaces where we do allow for that communication with others, that we allow for that non-task specific use. But it's becoming difficult, especially in the classroom.

John Boccacino:

We all do it countless times a day. We tap our phones, we fire up our laptops, and we check social media to access our digital devices to see if we have any new notifications. And it's part of a process where our screens have become a vital part of our day-to-day lives. But sometimes having access to technology can cause us to not be present and not be in the moment with our daily interactions. So as members of the Syracuse University community, continue to make the most of summer by taking vacations and road trips. Our phone habits get put under a microscope with more friend and family time exposing the gap between the expectation to disconnect and what most of us actually do with our digital screens. We are pleased to be joined by Matt Mulvaney, an undergraduate program director and associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science in the College of Arts and Sciences, and his colleague, Zahra Vahedi, assistant teaching professor in the Department of Psychology, also in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Together, we're going to have a lively conversation examining the complex roles that our cell phones, laptops, tablets, and other digital screens play in our lives. Matt and Zahra, thanks for making the time to join me here on the podcast.

Matt Mulvaney:

Thank you for having me.

Zahra Vahedi:

Thanks for having me.

John Boccacino:

Zahra, tell us a little bit about yourself, your role at Syracuse, and your research.

Zahra Vahedi:

I've been here for five years now, and I teach a few courses every single year. So I teach the honors psychology course, intro to psychology course, and then I also teach a larger lecture forensic psychology course and the accompanying forensic psychology lab. And so I see a variety of students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, and then I get to work with them in all sorts of different capacities as well, ranging from very small discussion-based courses to the more large lecture type course. And I thoroughly enjoy

what I teach, and I try to be mindful of how I use my phone in the classroom or how I'm interacting with my laptop in the classroom as well. And my research broadly focused on the impact of information and communication technologies, smartphones, laptops, social media, on a variety of wellbeing effects. So depression, body image disturbance, general wellbeing.

I've tried to keep up with recent trends in research. And really, within my five-year goal in the future, I want to look more at the intersection of student use of technology in the classroom and how it impacts academic outcomes. And maybe a little more positively, how we can harness technology to support student learning.

John Boccacino:

And that's a good sequitur to bring in Matt as well to explain his role at Syracuse and his research.

Matt Mulvaney:

My teaching interests are... So I just started teaching a Children in the Media course, and I'm going to be teaching a graduate seminar on it as well, because obviously it has such important implications for children's development. So I come at this as a researcher, but I also come at it as a parent and trying to grapple with how we manage the complexities of technology, both in our own lives, but with our children's lives. And on a policy level, as you noted. One of the things that I think is so hard, and I think that Zahra mentioned it, so importantly, as a teacher as well, how do we manage this really changing set of circumstances in our classroom and the way that people consume information, engage with information, and engage with our classes? So that's been the framework that has led this, and it really pushes me in difficult areas.

Because one of the things is that in general, I sort of believe that young people should have the opportunity to be able to make choices about themselves and should be empowered to be able to make choices. But I also see very vast harms, I think, that are happening with social media and with technology and the impact in my classrooms that I think are so hard. And so that has sort of brought me to this. My research interests are broader. They're in parenting generally, but generally parental determinants of psychosocial outcomes, mental health, and things like that. But looking at things like discipline and general approaches to parental beliefs and how parents conceptualize parenting. And so part of that is, what are their beliefs about cell phones, and what are their beliefs and where do those come from and how do they impact kids?

John Boccacino:

The baseline question I want to begin our conversation with is, in your opinion, from what you've witnessed and what you've seen, how would you assess the current state of our relationships with our cell phones and our digital devices?

Zahra Vahedi:

I'm going to jump off of Matt who mentioned it from a parenting perspective as well, which is something that I've become very, very sensitive to and think about quite deeply given that my four-year-old now wants to constantly watch TV. And then I think about it through the lens of my students who, I don't restrict technology in the classroom, I don't restrict phone use, I don't restrict laptop use. I do emphasize that they can be harmful in the sense of interrupting. And then from a cognitive perspective, we can't multitask efficiently, so you're not able to switch from listening to me lecture and responding to your friend's text message that constantly pops up on your screen, that I can see as well in the classroom. And I really do think that it is important that we become more mindful about and intentional about how we're using our technology and then ensuring that we have safer times or spaces where we do allow for that communication with others, that we allow for that non-task specific use.

But it's becoming difficult, especially in the classroom. I've had small classes where students are sitting right next to me and they're taking out their phone and they're texting while I'm lecturing, only to follow up with a question about what I just said half a minute ago. And then with the rise of AI, which I know is a complete different conversation, my teaching pedagogy has become a bit more stripped down. I'm moving towards notebooks, I'm moving towards small groups discussions and writing on paper, which seems to be a very archaic view to have in the classroom now. But the over-reliance sometimes scares me. And I try to temper that with encouraging students to be mindful and intentional and muting notifications in the classroom on their laptops, especially in reminding them that I can't see what they're doing, but at the end of the day, they're doing a disservice to themselves.

Matt Mulvaney:

Yeah, I think what Zahra's saying is so important. And one of the challenges as a teacher is the way that it has framed the dynamics that happen within classrooms, the way that we interact with our students, the way that they consume information or don't consume information, the extent to which they are active participants in the context of the classroom. I think all of those are hard. And what I would even expand upon, so one of the challenges that I have is that I want to give two positives, both that there are potential benefits of social media, but I think I just am increasingly seeing it as a real harm to ourselves. And one of the things that I think has struck me over the last four or five years is that almost all of my students think so. When I ask my students, I would say five or six years ago, my students would much more emphasize, saying that, "Oh, it allows me to stay connected with my friends," that there are these real benefits.

When I ask my students now, like in my Children in the Media class, in my Child Development class, when I say, "What is the biggest issue facing kids today to a person?" They say social media and the harms that it's doing to them. So I've shifted from saying, "Oh, it's a complex and new technology that has positives and benefits," to that it is a risk factor. And that what we need to do is to fundamentally conceptualize how it is impacting us, particularly affecting young people. And I think that the hard part for it is that as a developmental psychologist, we need longitudinal research and we don't have it, and we won't have it for some time. But what we need to do is to have a sense of... And so we are faced with this challenge of this dramatically changed experience for young people and older people as well without really understanding the effects.

But my belief is that the effects are harmful. And I think that pervasively harmful in terms of the way that is impacting the way that people relate to each other, the people, the way that they make connections, things like this. There was just an article that came out in the Washington Times that they actually asked me about. And now the default for young people staying at home on weekends instead of going out and engaging with social interactions, the number of young people who have romantic relationships has dropped off a cliff during adolescence and young adulthood. These are fundamental transformations, and they're the things that I think make people human. It is that in real life person interactions with other people are what give us richness to our lives.

And when you look at the research, one of the things that... You have to pull from different stems of research. But one of the famous studies in psychology is, there's these beeper studies where they would basically look at people's emotional experiences throughout the course of the day and just randomly beep them. They put a diary and they kind of see it. And one of the key things they found was that people are happiest when they're around other people. And so to the extent to which these devices move us away from in-person interactions, I think produces loneliness, it produces unhappiness, it produces depression, it produces a failure to connect with people. That is, again, in my view, one of the most critical and important human features is this connection with other people. And I think my students, the young people who are in the midst of it now are feeling that and experiencing that and craving social interactions outside of social media, but are seeing social media as having dampened their both ability and maybe even to some extent their interest in engaging in these interactions.

Again, I've tried to balance it. I've tried to look at this... And I live in the real world. My 15-year-old daughter just got Instagram, so it's not like I am saying we should move under a rock. I'm not moving under a rock. I'm not too much like... All of these things I think are true, but it is also that I think that we should approach it as a public health risk and to understand how we can ameliorate that risk and change the way that we approach technology on a fundamental level.

John Boccacino:

How is it that our phones and our screens actually work actively against our sense of being present, being in the moment, in our interactions?

Matt Mulvaney:

One of the things I tell people is that... I started teaching in the early 2000s, and throughout the course of my career, I've taught large lecture courses. So I've always had 50, 100. I've had courses up to 300 in front of me. And when I first started teaching, the challenge with classroom management was getting people to pipe down. I'd be like, "All right, guys, we're talking about the class content now. All right. Eyes forward. All right, stop talking to your neighbor. Come on, bring it back." All of that. Now I never have to do that, not once. The room, when I stop talking or when I come... It's almost eerie now when I walk into large lecture classes and you could hear a pin drop, not one person is talking to the person next to them. So that's been one of the things that's been so striking to me is just this change of a raucous, "I want to connect with the people next to me. I'm constantly talking to the people next to me. I'm talking about what's happening on the weekends."

And again, as a new teacher, I was like, "Please stop doing that." But more importantly now, I almost wish they did it a little bit more. I almost wish that there was this desire for spontaneous engagement with people around them. And that's what I'm not seeing. And I think that map on to your observations as well. So why does it do it? I think one of the interesting things that I think that underlies this and some of the thoughts that are coming out is, really what is hard about social relationships and romantic relationships for young people in particular are nobody likes getting rejected. Nobody wants to put themselves out there and be like, "Oh, I don't really want to hang out," or, "No," whatever. And so on social media, that never happens. You can connect with people all the time and feel like you're connected on some base level, except for if a friend request gets denied or something like that.

But for the most part, that your experiences on a day-to-day basis aren't... You don't have to put yourself out there and that allows people to not have to put themselves out there. And so I think that that is a... In my own view, and I think that that's what some of the views are coalescing around, is that this fear of rejection that comes, but it's also because we haven't learned those habits. We haven't learned to get rejection. We haven't learned to put ourselves out there and have some people be really enthusiastic to want to interact with us, and some people be less enthusiastic, and managing our expectations and how we modulate our emotional reactions to such types of social interactions. But on a more cynical level, I think that these have been engineered by the smartest people in the country to transfix attention on young people and older people again.

And I think that younger people have a different set of characteristics, and it's most harmful for young people. But the smartest people in the world have tried to figure out these. Engineers in Palo Alto and other places have sat there and they have figured out what can maintain people's staying on and on. And it taps into our very core emotions of social relationships. In the past, gossip was one of the key ways that people connected with each other and keeping tabs on each other. And when you would do so... That's what the base of most conversation was. It was like, what's going on with your friends? What's going on with the people that you know and are around you? And that taps into something, people always want to know. And so if there's this constant feed and a constant flow and a constant set of information about the social relationships, or at least the presented social relationships of people's lives on your screen directly in front of you, it will be transfixing, particularly for young people.

Zahra Vahedi:

I know, Matt, you probably know tons more than me on this topic, given that you're a developmental psychologist, but the idea that during adolescence, that's when we're forming our identities, that's when our self-esteem is in flux, that's where we're trying to figure out where we stand in relation to others. Smartphones and instant access to social media really removes the discomfort associated with that process. One of my students last semester said that it's basically the death of small talk. We don't necessarily have to engage in that discomfort anymore. And that leads to it becoming more addictive. We don't have to sit in the discomfort, the awkwardness anymore. And I resonate with your experiences in that students would much rather have this constant, even if it's just scrolling mindlessly passively, but scrolling rather than having to engage in that awkward "discussion." And I've had these icebreakers where I ask students to get up and I play really cheesy music and they play musical chairs, and they're like, "This is beyond what I would ever think of doing in a classroom."

But I think as a society, it's so important to lean back into that awkwardness, that discomfort, that figuring out who you are, especially during that period of adolescence. And I know, maybe up until last year or so, a lot of students would specify that these are the after effects of COVID and missing out on navigating social relationships during this fundamental time. But now I'm wondering if it's just due to technology and this is just a lasting effect of what we've become so used to. And then I also worry about the next generation. My children's generation who grow up with technology, so they don't even need to figure this out when they're four or five. I've seen kids walking around with iPads rather than playing with other children. So I worry if those effects are going to become even more solidified in the next generation. I push them, but it seems foreign at this stage to ask them to talk to each other.

John Boccacino:

Zahra, that's a great point that you bring up. And I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on what we can do to maybe reestablish a mindful use of our devices, get back to the point where we rely on them for the benefits without having that be our end all, be all for interactions and community.

Zahra Vahedi:

That is a very complex question, and I don't think I figured out the answer in either my classrooms or in my parenting. But Matt, you mentioned earlier that they're aware at this point, and I've seen that awareness as well. My students, when I have this discussion with them at the beginning of every single semester, they're aware of the harms of social media. They're aware of the addictive nature of their smartphones. But I come to them with the research and they're becoming aware of the harms, maybe because it has been a good decade or so that they've experienced the harms, and coming to them with actual practical strategies. So putting your phone on mute, any non-essential or non-important notifications should be muted. Kind of forcing them at times to go back to old school pen and paper, which they at the end of the semester seem to enjoy.

And again, facilitating more in-person interactions. It's difficult though when it's years of a habit that's been ingrained in them. So I am more so worried about this becoming an entrenched habit at a younger age. And that's the cynic in me, because whatever I do in a semester or in a year is not going to undo, I think, what they've been reliant on for the past 15, 16, 18 years at times.

Matt Mulvaney:

One of the parallels, it's maybe not a perfect parallel, but I think, and again, maybe overstating it, but cigarette smoking. When I was a kid, cigarette smoking was exceptionally common. So as we entered into college, I began college in the mid-90s, and that was when cigarette smoking was still, everybody knew it was bad. And so I think the parallels are that everyone knew it was bad in 1996, everyone knows that social media is bad now, but still a lot of kids smoked. A lot of young people, a lot of college students

smoked. So it wasn't until we took a broader lens. It wasn't until we had a broader, saying that, "Nope, we're not going to have smoking on college campuses anymore. We are not going to have them in public places anymore." And in my view, we have reached that point where we need a broader set of group interventions.

But I think there needs to be a reframing of expectations of college classrooms. They're on their phones and they shouldn't be, but it's because there's a norm that they are on their phones. And I think they're missing out. And I think they realize they're missing out on something as well. But it is so hard to do it. People smoked and they knew it was really bad. They're going to keep using cell phones even if they know how bad it is. So it's more of reframing, setting up environments where it's frowned upon. And I think that that is what fundamentally, in my view, changed smoking, that it basically became unacceptable in most circles. It went from being something that was like, oh, personal choice. There's a smoking side of the restaurant, non-smoking side of the restaurant, there's smoking dorm rooms, non-smoking dorm rooms, to a point where it just wasn't really okay in most circles.

There's now got to be a change, I think, on a broader public health level like we're seeing in schools. As John mentioned, one of my pet projects is that, I think banning was so important and I advocated for it in a lot of ways. And people asked me about it in the national media, and I think that it is unfortunately necessary. I think it is unfortunate that we have reached a situation where it is so pervasive, so ingrained, so broader at the group level that individual interventions as parents, individual interventions as teachers, individual interventions as... I try to put my phone away and I can't because my emails are coming in from my student. And so there has to be, I think, a reframing. And I think what Zahra said is, I think we're starting to see that, of moving to pencil and paper and moving to those kinds of frameworks of just rethinking how we set up our spaces.

And one of the places I talk about that I see is in houses of worship. What's interesting is you don't see people on their phones ever, at least the house of worship that I go to and that I've seen and that I visited, that people see that as a time and a space where phones shouldn't be used and aren't used. So there is a part of people that recognize that there are times and spaces when it would be better not to have them. So what we need to do, I think, to have a set of experiences that there's a much broader time. Maybe there's a time and place to use these, but that there needs to be a much broader circle that represents when we're not using these. And that I think would allow everybody to be able to put their phones away.

One of the observations that I see is, you see two people sitting next to each other, and then they're sitting there. Then one pulls out the phone and then the other one's like, "All right, well, I might as well go on my phone too, because I'm not going to be able to talk to the person next to me." But I think so if we reframe those spaces, setting up experiences that students actually want to go to that allow them, and that are specifically phone, would be a really, I think, important and interesting approach.

John Boccacino:

I'm wondering if, Matt, if you want to explain how constant screen exposure changes the way we pay attention, and then can we get that attention span back?

Matt Mulvaney:

Yeah, in my view, absolutely. My own lens on neuroplasticity is that we have a lot of it, that we have a remarkable capability to be able to transform our engagement with the world and our neurocognitive social interactions. And what I see and what I hear from teachers and what I see from kids is that it's happened in schools, that all of a sudden there's a resurgence of personal back and forth interaction, of attention is increased in the classrooms. And these are self-reports. We don't have the data. The data's just coming out for some of the more... School bans are only a couple of years old at most and even the earliest adopters. But what you're hearing at least from the self-reports of teachers and administrators is

that we instantly saw a change, that young people have acclimated, have reformulated their sets of attention.

And I think that people absolutely can change their attention. And Zahra might know more about this, but I think maybe mindfulness is one of the best examples of this, that with concentrated focus on mindfulness types of activities, the research is pretty clear that you can really transform attentional capabilities. And so yeah, I am very optimistic about that. And I think that it would occur in a relatively quick period of time, that if people were put into environments where they weren't attached to their social media or were reframing their social interactions in ways that emphasized in-person interactions rather than social media, that they would very quickly adapt to those types of situations, and that attention would improve quickly, is what I think.

Zahra Vahedi:

Matt, I love how you mentioned the importance of environment. Because I do see students, individuals who are individually personally motivated to change themselves, but the environments do not support that. And so having a supportive environment, which in this case would be stripping them of their technology, is so important to facilitate that, especially in our young adults or adolescents. Because it's not even just the habit, the reduced concentration, increased distraction, but the fact that social media, for instance, is engineered to facilitate social comparisons, knowing where you stand in relation to others, seeking peer approval. So in some ways for them, it's even more difficult for them to be able to put it down compared to maybe people all of our ages, because it's also hitting this very, really important part of their identity formation within that developmental stage. And so I see my students, I see parents my age, and they're personally motivated. I see myself and my husband sometimes, we're personally motivated. But unless the environment, it gives you a hard nudge to move in one direction.

And we have that cultural shift, that cultural frowning, which I do think is happening with very young children now. Ironically, I see it on social media where parents now are awakening to the harms of technology for very young children. It's going to be very difficult to harness that individual motivation simply because of how addictive they are, how they fulfill a need in that identity formation and social comparison, and all that good stuff during adolescence. So I agree with you, Matt, in that we do need a shift in cultural norms, in policies, expanding that circle of where technology is just not welcome anymore.

John Boccacino:

I've heard both of you discuss the mental health aspects of digital dependency, being on our screens, being on our cell phones. I'm wondering, Zahra, you have some really interesting research into smartphone usage, its association and link to stress and anxiety. Could you give our audience a little more background into what actually moderates that stress? And does it matter how someone's using their phone, not just how much they're using their device?

Zahra Vahedi:

Absolutely. So this was a meta-analysis which basically summarized or compiled all the existing research at the time. And like I prefaced, this is a little bit outdated, but what we identified then was not necessarily the idea of how much time you spend on your device. There was a small relationship, small to moderate relationship between smartphone use, frequency and stress and anxiety. But what really moderated that relationship was what you're actually doing, what the quality of that use is. So what we very broadly categorized at that time was something called problematic smartphone use. And we still need to work on this in terms of psychometrics, how we actually measure what we're trying to measure, but essentially compulsive use, use where you don't feel like you're in control. And the field as a whole,

and correct me if I'm wrong, Matt, seems to have shifted in the sense of, we need to do better at identifying what types of activities are leading to harm.

And unfortunately, we see more of this in young adults and adolescents. Again, because their minds are so sensitive to peer approval, to receiving rewards from peers, to being accepted in peer groups, fear of missing out. And so that's just so much more harmful to them. And the frequency of time may be conflated with the quality of time in their case. So they're actually just experiencing large amounts of harmful quality where they see all their friends at a party that they're not present at or their friends on vacation or receiving some sort of award. Because again, most of social media is a highlight reel of all the great things that we're doing and achieving in life.

And again, I think the field's moving towards this, that recognizing what types of activities are most harmful, for which developmental period. Even for very young children, they're moving from a how much time to what's the quality of that time spent. Is the parent present with the child? Are they kind of watching alongside the child? So the question has kind of changed. Back in five, six years ago, it was more so how much time do you spend? And so we're moving from just pure frequency to what are you actually doing? And are you in control of that time?

John Boccacino:

What role do you think parents and family members should take on when it comes to handling cell phone and screen usage to make sure that their brain is not being stunted, that their development can be optimized?

Matt Mulvaney:

One key point that I would want to highlight from Zahra that I think is such a great point is the doing things with your kids. So I think that if you're doing screen time with your kids, it's a whole different experience than if they're doing it by themselves. So there's probably a very important way and time and place of, we used to call it co-reading, but I don't know, co-screen time, but of sitting there with your kid and having that be a facilitator of discussions and conversations between parents and children rather than being a replacement for parent and child conversations. My own view, and I think that is backed up, is that the fundamental thing that helps children with this is language, both spoken and written language over the course of their development. And in terms of thinking about how and what parents should do first, the more that they can do stuff with their kids rather than a replacement with their kids, I think is the key part.

So you're still talking to them, you're still engaging with them, and then there might be really unique and important opportunities there. Separately, what I think, I'm actually starting a research project on this this fall, what I think the antidote to a lot of this is, is reading. That I think that what reading and social media and social scrolling are, I think they're two opposite processes. And what I think reading does is that it sort of requires attention. It allows the training of attention and it allows for imagination and it allows for engagement with complexity rather than simplicity. That is the hallmark, I think, of social media or scrolling and those social types of interactions. That reading over the course of childhood allows you a richness into people's lives, that it provides a window into their inner selves, into the inner complexities of human beings.

I think that with reading... When I look at what reading has done for me, and when I look at the research on how reading changes people's viewpoints on their engagement with other people, with people with diverse views, with things like that, that it seems an exceptionally powerful tool, because it gives you this window into the inner lives of people who are complex and have different views. And so reading is the antidote. That's what I think. That's my tagline. If you want me to give a tagline that, working with kids, that reading is the most important thing you can do with them and have them do themselves, is to develop a framework and the representation of the world that has been mediated through reading.

John Boccacino:

I'm wondering if you both would like to comment, starting with Zahra, on digital detoxes. From your experiences, do they work or is it just a temporary fix to what could be a larger issue, larger problem?

Zahra Vahedi:

So I haven't personally delved into that research, but from what I can infer, and I may be completely wrong, is that they rarely work, particularly if that habit hasn't been formed. And I've seen studies where participants are asked to detox for two weeks, for instance, from their phone, and then they get their phone back or they gain access to their phone back and they just go back to their previous habits. And to me, it goes back to the fact that our environment continues to facilitate or continues to support technology use in all spaces. And so unless we have the individual person who is motivated enough along with a environment and a specific developmental period, again, such as adolescence may make this even more difficult to overcome, it might be quite challenging. That said, I do think baby steps towards a digital detox, so starting with muting notifications, starting with becoming more mindful of how you use your technology, starting with the messaging surrounding how you use your technology is the direction that I do think we're moving towards.

And it also depends maybe on when you start. I do think people have a lot of success when they go through detoxes, again, with very young children and just eradicating it from the house as a whole. No iPads, no cell phones, movie night once a week, that's how we're going to do this. Can you do that with a 15, 16, 18-year-old? Not necessarily. So I think it's a complex issue, and I do think we need that individual determination coupled with societal cultural shifts in what we consider acceptable technology use.

Matt Mulvaney:

This is a very simplistic argument, but I would say dumb phones. That's what I think the argument is, that I think that the more that we can push kids out using dumb phones rather than... And this is not my view, Jonathan Hade, who's the famous person who does this, that's his argument. I believe it. And I can say my own experience though, that's either for or against that. So that's what I did. I moved to a dumb phone for a couple of years and it was better. My life was better. I read more. I wasn't checking my phone all the time, but I came back. So I don't know, in terms of the detox and what you're able to do. But when people ask me, what is the number one thing that we could perhaps do with young people? My daughter would still complain. She was like, "I don't want to be the one in the group chat that doesn't have the same technology to do it or whatever."

And that was part of her reasoning for why she got Instagram was because they're communicating all through Instagram, so I don't want to be left out. And then that's a powerful argument for parents and it's hard to counter that. But I do think that not having your social media in your hand at all times will help a long way. And it still allows you to be connected, still allows you to do some functions. Or strip down phones, removing many apps. If you could just take off some of your social media ones, I think that would go a long way. But again, how long it takes before people download it, I don't know. So I think that Zahra's cautions are very warranted, but thinking creatively about some of these detox options. And I think one of the suggestions some people have asked me is, I think that for people who are so inclined, journaling a little, how does it make you feel? Highlighting that and bringing it to the fore of how people feel is maybe one sort of intervention that I sometimes suggest.

John Boccacino:

This has been a fascinating, eye-opening conversation. I want to thank both of our guests here on the Cuse Conversations Podcast. Zahra Vahedi is an assistant teaching professor in the Department of Psychology. And Zahra, thank you for sharing your insights with us today.

Zahra Vahedi:

Thank you for having me, John. This was wonderful. And speaking to Matt, this was incredible. I have many takeaways for my own personal life and parenting as well.

John Boccacino:

Matt Mulvaney joining us here, associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science. And Matt, I thank you so much for your insights as well.

Matt Mulvaney:

Yeah, thank you. And again, thank you, Zahra, for helping me think about this in a lot better way. This one of the benefits of these types of conversations is to hear the richness of these different perspectives. And so I appreciate the time to be able to be here. And like I always say with my students, I've learned much more from this setting than I think I've put forth. So I really appreciate the opportunity to be part of this.

John Boccacino:

Thanks for checking out the latest installment of the Cuse Conversations podcast. My name is John Boccacino signing off for the Cuse Conversations Podcast.