Becoming a Savvy News Consumer

Living in a world of 24/7 news and social media may make it more difficult to determine the actual facts about an event. Fast-moving crisis situations are particularly prone to generating misinformation, such as rumors, inaccuracies, and theories or speculation.

When you first learn about a news event, keep these points in mind:

- ▶ **Consider the source.** Is the information coming from a reputable news outlet or verifiable source? If you are watching an interview or speech, has the person provided supporting facts to back their assertions?

- ▶ **Acknowledge your biases.** Your personal political and social preferences strongly influence how you react to a news story. Before responding with outrage, learn as many facts as you can.

- ▶ **Check the date.** If you are reading an older news story or post, search for follow-up stories to learn whether the situation has been resolved.

- ▶ **Read past the headline.** Often, headlines are written to attract attention or focus on the worst-case scenario. Read the story in full to learn the actual facts.

- ▶ **Confirm using multiple sources.** It's a good idea to visit at least two or three different outlets to verify facts and compare details.

- ▶ **Do your research.** Complex world events are difficult to understand from soundbites and social media posts. Take the time learn about the subject in more detail.

- ▶ **Watch for parodies.** Parody news and social media accounts are sometimes mistaken for legitimate sources.

- ▶ **Set limits.** Too much time on news or social media sites can be stressful. If you are feeling overwhelmed, step away and engage in a relaxing activity for a while.

A constant diet of bad news may leave you feeling stressed or anxious. LifeMatters can help you cope with your feelings and set healthy boundaries. Call 24/7/365.