Be Here Now:
Digital Detox Data Overview

2026

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Context

Retreat Purpose & Agenda

DEVELOPING A MODERN VERSION OF THOREAU'S LIVING DELIBERATELY & THE 19TH CENTURY "CAMP CURE"

ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH NATURAL & TECH FREE ENVIRONMENTS OFF CAMPUS

EXTEND EFFORTS WITH EXISTING UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, SPECIFICALLY OUTDOOR PURSUITS

SUPPORT INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY BUILDING

Digital Detox Agenda

Day 1

- STUDENTS FILL OUT PRE-RETREAT SURVEY
- GROUP HIKES TO TAMOLITCH FALLS (BLUE POOL)
- SET UP CAMP AT COUGAR CREEK CAMP SITE
- COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES & DINNER OVER CAMPFIRE

Day 2

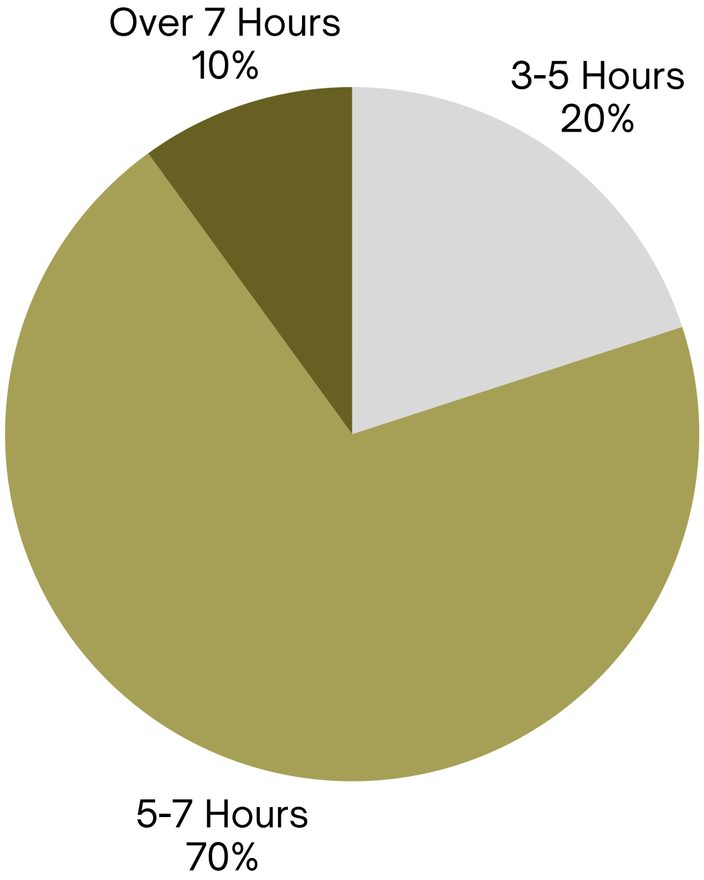
- SILENT HOUR FOR JOURNALING & READING
- PACK UP CAMP & VANS
- TERWILLIGER HOT SPRINGS
- RETURN TO CAMPUS & FILL OUT POST-RETREAT SURVEY

Rules & Expectations

- TECH FREE SPACE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NAVIGATION
- STUDENTS ARE OFFERED A DIGITAL CAMERA TO CAPTURE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Pre-Retreat Questionare & Stats

PARTICIPANTS SPEND ON AVERAGE 5-7 HOURS PER DAY IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN, NOTABLY PHONES AND LAPTOPS/DESKTOPS. NEARLY ALL PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY WORK/SCHOOL AS THE PRIMARY USE FOR TECHNOLOGY. PARTICIPANTS WERE GENERALLY NEUTRAL WHEN ASKED ABOUT FEELING OVERWHELMED IN RELATION TO TECHNOLOGY USEAGE.



Foreseeable Challenges

ABOUT 60% OF PARTICIPANTS CITED THE INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS AS A FORSEEABLE CHALLENGE OF THIS DETOX. RATE OF COMFORTABLITLY RANGED ACROSSED THE BOARD, BUT SKEWED POSITIVLEY. WITH OVER HALF OF PARTICIPANTS HAVING ATTEMPTED INTENTIONAL BREAKS FORM TECH, STUDENTS CITED STRESS RELIF, MENTAL RESETS, AND EXCITEMENT FOR THE OUTDOORS.

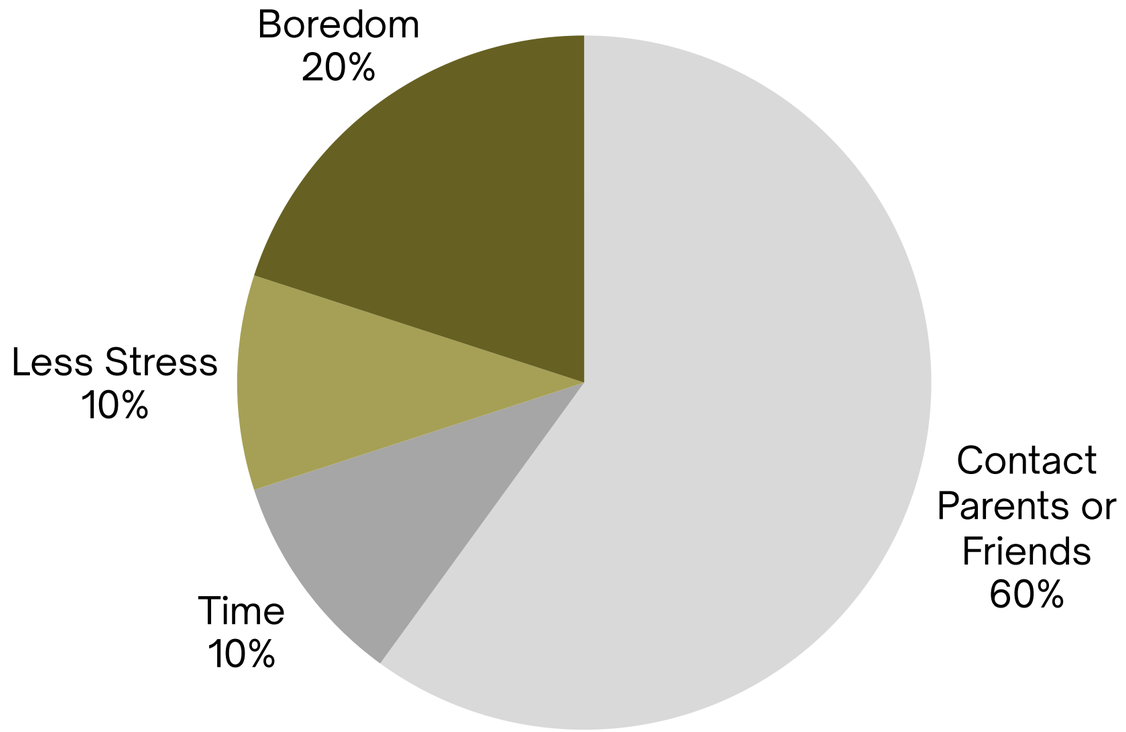
“I am nervous that I may feel anxious without having access to my family/friends.”

“Not checking the time.”

“I will miss texting my mom and BFFs, but this is a very minor challenge.”

Meaningful Moments of the Retreat

HALF OF PARTICIPANTS DID BRING THEIR PHONES BUT DID NOT USE THEM. THE GROUP REPORTED A LEVEL 8 COMFORTABILITY AVERAGE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10.



What Did Students Notice?



Motivated

“I FEEL MORE MOTIVATED TO SPEND TIME OUTDOORS AND BE INTENTIONAL WITH HOW I SPEND MY TIME OFFLINE”



Self Reflection

“I NOTICED THAT I NEEDED TO TAKE TIME TO MYSELF TO PROCESS AND JUST BE ALONE, EVEN WITHOUT MY PHONE.”



Gratitude

“IMMENSE GRATITUDE TO BE OUTDOORS, CALM, MINIMAL STRESS OF THINGS BACK AT UP. ACKNOWLEDGING HOW I DONT NEED MY PHONE.”



Greater Awareness

“I FELT MORE AWARE OF HOW MUCH I USE MY PHONE ON A DAILY BASIS AND NOW I WANT TO TRY USING SOCIAL MEDIA LESS THAN BEFORE.”

Post-Retreat

Immediate Effects & Impacts of The Retreat

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ON THEIR RESPONSES FROM THE PRE-RETREAT SURVEY, THE MAJORITY REPORT THEIR INITIAL EXPECTATIONS TO HAVE BEEN MET OR SURPASSED.

> “Yes, I believe that my initial expectations were met.”

> “Yes, I feel great about the retreat it was much needed.”

> “I have never gone camping before this retreat and I always imagined that camping would be completely immersing myself in nature. This retreat did meet my expectations as there was no technology and I felt like I was really able to connect to nature.”

Most Meaningful Moments...

“I loved getting to know my peers better. If I had my phone, I think I would've spent the car ride on it or listening to music.”

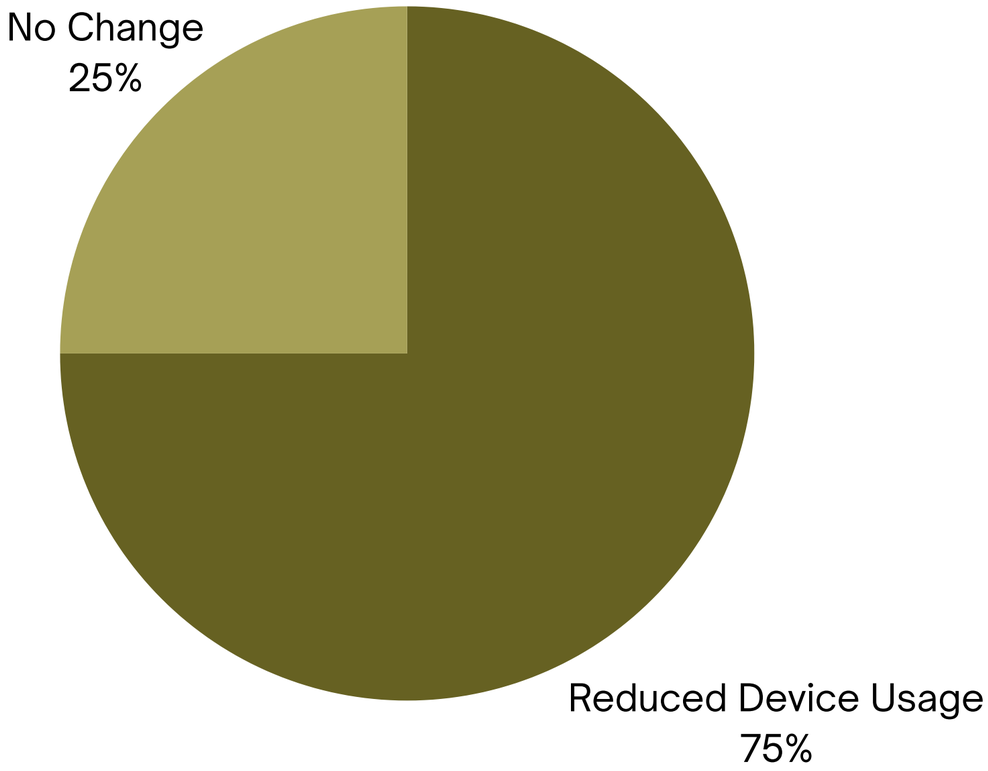
“Sitting in the hot springs just sitting there doing nothing other than being in the moment.”

“Waking up in morning to the sound of birds and then going out of the tent felt really special for me.”

Conclusion

Plans Moving Forward

OVERALL, STUDENT PARTICIPANTS RATED THIS EXPERIENCE POSITIVELY. ALL PARTICIPANTS WOULD RECOMMEND THE EXPERIENCE TO A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND. THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS FORESEE THEIR TECH USAGE HABITS TO CHANGE AS A RESULT OF THE DIGITAL DETOX.



Notes for Improvement

① LONGER DEXTOX PERIOD, SUCH AS AN EARLIER DEPARTURE TIME OR ADDED DAY/NIGHT.

② HOST DIGITAL DETOX RETREAT DURING A MORE FAVORABLE TIME OF YEAR, SUCH AS THE EARLY SUMMER.

③ MORE INTENTIONAL REFLECTION TIME STRUCTURED INTO THE AGENDA, THIS INCLUDES GUIDED GROUP AND INDEPENDENT REFLECTION TIMES.

Ready to Unplug?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TECH FREE ENVIRONMENTS OR PURPOSEFUL DETOXING, WE RECOMMEND:

- HAIDT, JONATHAN. *THE ANXIOUS GENERATION: HOW THE GREAT REWIRING OF CHILDHOOD IS CAUSING AN EPIDEMIC OF MENTAL ILLNESS*. 2024.
- THOREAU, HENRY DAVID. *WALDEN: LIFE IN THE WOODS*. 1854.

