

Your mental well-being is going to be important when you are faced with reporting tense, politically charged story for an extended time duration. Prepare yourself for the long-haul and a coverage that is unlikely to subside in intensity anytime soon.

Your job as a journalist is vital to a community that is facing political uncertainty amidst a deadly pandemic. However, you will not be able to conduct yourself professionally if you undermine your personal wellbeing.

Think of this as a marathon for which you have conserve your energy.

### **Mental well-being**

- Pay attention to physical safety measures
- Be attentive to your personal circumstances, if something is preventing or impeding you from reporting professionally, evaluate those circumstances
- If at any time you feel the story, related reactions or the aftermath could be too overwhelming for you, take appropriate safety decisions, even if that means pulling out of the story
- Communicate with trusted colleagues, workmates and managers on your concerns
- Create a circle of trusted friends, and family with whom you can talk openly about your circumstances
- Pay attention to behavioural changes in you or those closest to you, are you getting angrier, moody, uninspired, are you losing sleep?

A trusted network of personal friends and professional colleagues with whom you can discuss and assess the evolving circumstances is one of the most vital safety nets that will enhance safe reporting. You should work towards building those networks.

### **Breaks**

Long and short breaks are essential to maintain professional performance levels individually and at organisational level. A demanding, fast moving, chronic story can take the form of a treadmill, which we feel we are unable step off of.

Breaks however allow us to reenergise and take stock. They allow our bodies and minds to relax and refocus.

Breaks have to be instituted, sometimes with regimented sequencing, into our work-life, especially during important reporting assignments.

During long hours of working try to create short breaks which allow you to relax and reenergise. Try to spend at least a few minutes away from work terminals and newsrooms regularly, at least once every hour. Step outside or just do something to relax – close your eyes and breathe deeply for a minute.

One of the best work practices is to take 10-minute breaks every 60 minutes and do this for three hours of work. Then take a slightly longer break, before you return to the routine of 10-minute breaks every hour.

Similarly, we need to create long breaks that allow us to rest frayed body and mind. Spend time with loved-ones or doing things that you enjoy at the end of a hard-working day or a week.

Spending time with those you trust is also important for journalists to discuss their circumstances.

Breaks are also important when working remotely or from where you live when the work life boundaries are blurred.

Consider breaks, long and short, as pressure release valves.

### **Online**

The importance of online newsgathering, dissemination and audience engagement have never been higher than right now. Journalists are spending more time than ever online for their work. The combination of threats, abuse and fake-news creates a lethal digital reporting environment for journalists in Myanmar.

Journalists individually and at organisational level need to build awareness on identifying these threats and taking effective actions that will allow them to continue to work professionally and safely.

Already there are online threats and abuse visible in Myanmar. There is the very real likelihood that these threats, abuse and other dangers like trolling and doxing can be part of a coordinated networked attacks. Journalists need to be prepared to identify and act to minimise the impact of such attacks on their work and their personal lives.

Paying attention to screen time, online content consumption habits and trends is a good starting point.

More details on - Online Abuse: A Self-defence guide  
<https://dartcenter.org/resources/online-abuse-self-defence-guide>

Further information Dart Centre Asia Pacific – [cait.mcmahon@dartaspac.org](mailto:cait.mcmahon@dartaspac.org)