

# THE ROWLAND foundation

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ROWLAND FOUNDATION RELEASES DIGITAL WELLNESS RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS



Vermont educators and Rowland Fellows (*left to right*) Lissa Knauss of Montpelier High School, Carrie Felice of Peoples Academy, Sarah Ibson of Harwood Union Middle School, and Anne Bergeron of The Sharon Academy

BURLINGTON, VT – The Rowland Foundation has released a resource guide designed for educators and their students to explore the impact of technology use on different aspects of health and well-being. *Digital Wellness: Building a Healthy Relationship with Technology* was created by Vermont educators and Rowland Fellows Anne Bergeron, Carrie Felice, Sarah Ibson, and Lissa Knauss, and will be available on the Rowland Foundation’s website.

Drawing on the latest scientific research available, *Digital Wellness* defines four filters that readers can use to practice healthy, mindful, constructive, and kind technology use, and includes activities connected to each filter that can be implemented in the classroom or at home. The team also field-tested their work in schools and incorporated input from teachers, students, parents, and administrators from schools around the state.

“There are plenty of dire warnings out there about the potential harms of social media and other technology,” Carrie Felice said. “But we wanted to use a more positive approach, by giving people tools and resources to help them develop better relationships with the devices and apps that they use.”

The project was funded by the Rowland Foundation, whose mission is to invest in Vermont teachers to positively change the culture and climate of schools. Each year, the Foundation offers up to six fellowships to middle- and secondary-grade teachers to lead transformative projects in their schools. Since it was founded in 2008 by Barry and Wendy Rowland with former Executive Director Chuck Scranton, the Foundation has awarded over \$7 million in Fellowship awards to teachers from over 40 schools around Vermont. There are now nearly one-hundred Rowland Fellows around the state.

In 2021 the Rowland Foundation created the Rowland Encore Grant program to give veteran Rowland Fellows the opportunity to collaborate on projects that cross disciplines and school districts, make regional or statewide impact, and advance the Foundation’s mission. “This program makes it possible for us to continue to invest in Rowland Fellows as educational leaders in Vermont, while also demonstrating how great things can happen when educators cooperate across school districts,” said Michael Martin, Executive Director of the Rowland Foundation.

Bergeron, Felice, Ibson, and Knauss are the first team to be funded through the Rowland Encore Grant program. They work at four different schools in Central Vermont: Anne Bergeron is an academic coach at The Sharon Academy; Carrie Felice is a counselor at Peoples Academy; Sarah Ibson is a teacher at Harwood Union Middle High School; and Lissa Knauss is a counselor at Montpelier High School. The team knew that they wanted to use their

Rowland Encore Grant to research ways to help teachers and students better navigate the digital landscape, “As educators we see the effects of social media and technology on mental health and behavior in our daily interactions with students,” Felice said. “We’ve found that with a non-judgmental approach, most people are grateful to have a way to open up this conversation.”

Executive Director Martin expects the *Digital Wellness* guide to have resonance beyond Vermont. “This material is field-tested, data-driven, and so timely,” he said. “Our practices in the classroom need to keep pace with how kids are using technology and media in their lives. This resource provides concrete ways to help students develop healthier relationships with technology. The Rowland Foundation is proud to have funded this work, and we are excited to share it with Vermont educators.”

Readers can access the new resource guide here:

[Digital Wellness: Building a Healthy Relationship with Technology](https://shorturl.at/yzEGO) <https://shorturl.at/yzEGO>

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**Digital Wellness**  
Building a Healthy Relationship with Technology

AUTHORED BY  
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Lissa Knauss

## The 4 Filters

Use these **4 filters** to evaluate whether you are using technology in a purposeful, healthy manner.

- Constructive**  
Is this a good use of my time?  
Am I watching, listening, or doing so many things at once that I'm not doing any one thing well?
- Mindful**  
Am I fully present and enjoying the moment or am I focused on capturing it for others (or mindlessly scrolling or browsing)?
- Kind**  
Am I being supportive and compassionate?  
How will my words and actions make others feel?
- Healthy**  
Is what I'm doing healthy and safe for me mentally, emotionally, and physically?