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A student stares blankly at their computer on the night of Wednesday, May 14, 2025, in Seattle

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Are we numb to violence?

By [Anya Farwell](#) The Daily

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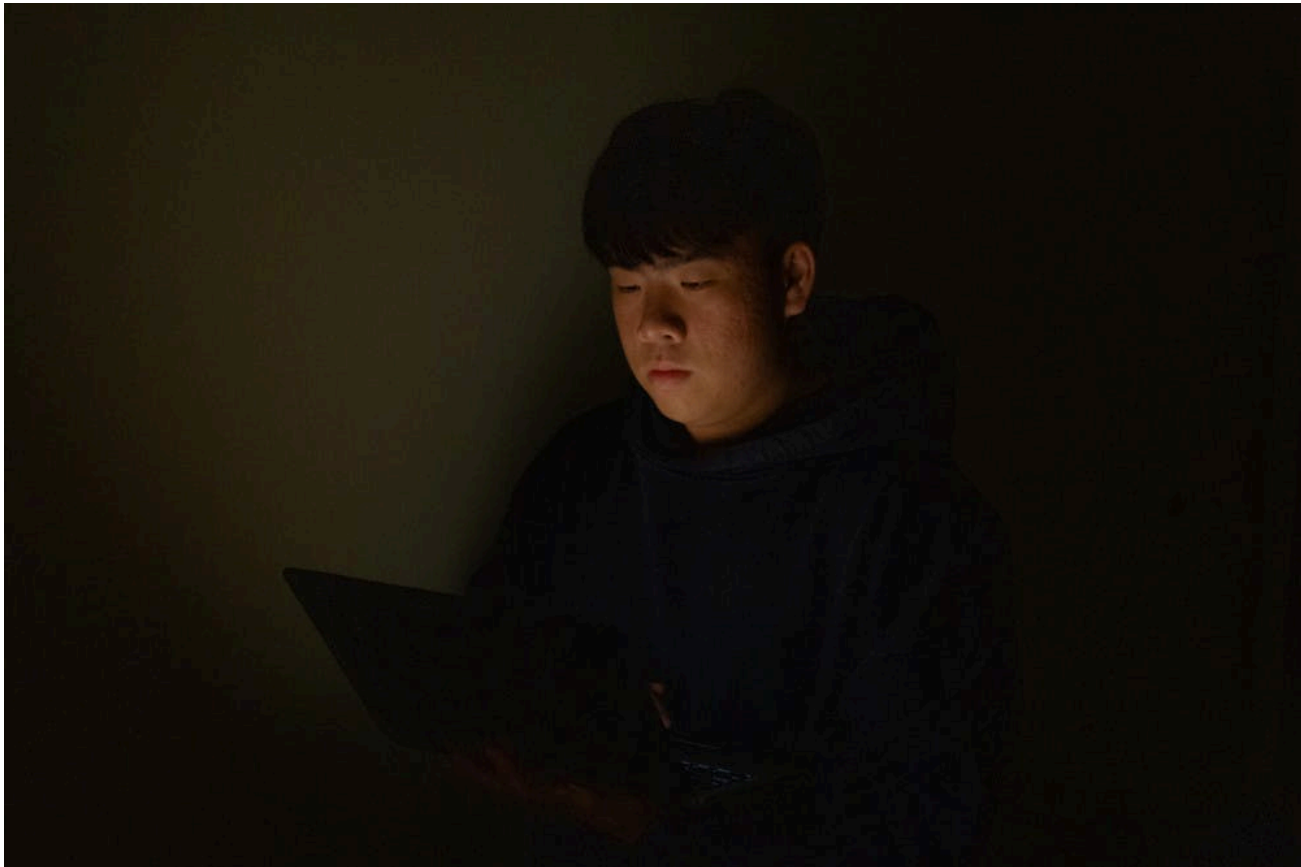
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Social media is an escape for many.

We use it throughout the day to curb nervousness and as a space to disassociate and mindlessly scroll. With quick, 20-second videos displaying popular dances and people sharing satirical snippets of their daily lives, it is a world devoid of seriousness.

In recent months, violence has taken center stage in the news and media. Although news networks have always been a front for political disruption, the media has seemed to take a turn for the worse in the past months, now being used largely for fear-mongering with news that preys on a lack of media literacy.

Take the Florida State University shooting, to which President Donald Trump responded, "Things like this take place," in a broadcast video released by the White House on April 17.

While violence has always been depicted throughout media channels, some credit this drastic shift to the beginning of Trump's second term in office. With this change comes the shocking realization of the younger generation's surprising obliviousness to the increasing normalization of violence in the media. This prompts the question: Are we numb to violence?

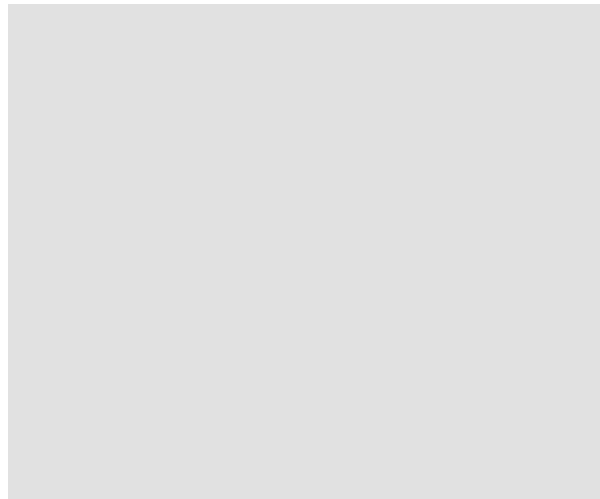
"Even though desensitization is instilled within our culture, I still feel very obliged to be taken aback," Valerie Dam, a third-year psychology and education major at UW, said.

With violence being displayed in the media more often, it can be seen at home on your screen when you least expect it.

"I definitely have a reaction to [violence] when I see it, but it's not a guttural reaction," De'von P., a senior psychology major at UW, said. "I try to censor myself from that violence."

As gun violence has increased exponentially in recent years, some would say it could contribute to our desensitization to violence. We always have to be wary of something around the corner.

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With social media's outstanding popularity, it caters to everyone's likes and dislikes with an infinite variety of content. Stumbling upon a violent video might inflict a fleeting moment of unease, followed by a quick, listless swipe to the next video without batting an eye.

"Social media really gives us the privilege to not care ... you can just scroll away, it's not happening in front of us," Dam said.

While this numb reaction might not be alarming, it does ignite questions about empathy and whether we have been numb to violence all along.

"The more exposed you are to violence, the less empathetic and hostile you are in general. Some people would say this is a myth,"... but violent media does correlate with more hostility and aggression in people," Dam said.

Researchers in the past have drawn connections between violence among teenagers and video games, television shows, and movies, where violence is overrepresented and dramatized. Overconsumption of this media may lead teenagers to believe that it is the norm.

Social media platforms such as X have been known to showcase shockingly violent videos with no incentive for the company to restrict viewers or have the video taken down. With the owner of the app, Elon Musk, being close to the Trump administration, it is not a shocking revelation that the platform is run this way.

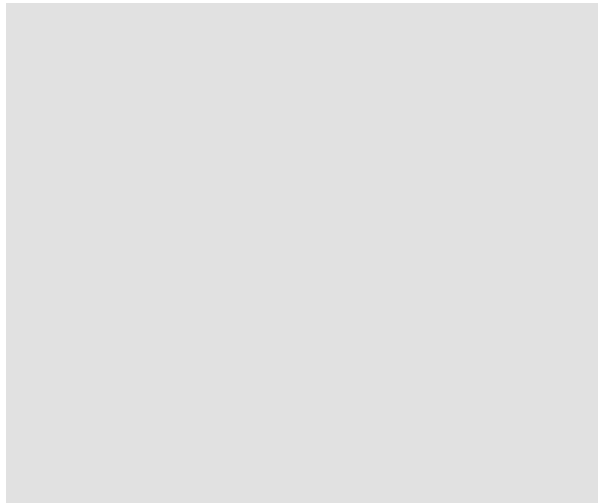
"Most of it is happening for the views and the shock value you get from it," De'von said.

As media platforms become increasingly unregulated, people freely share videos without facing any consequences. When did "fight or flight" get substituted with an immediate grab of the phone?

"The more people you have around, the less likely people are going to help," Dam said. "It's bystander bias."

With the oversaturation of media and its ease of consumption from your phone, it seems that everything is easily broadcast to you, ready and at your fingertips. While reading news on a daily basis can expand the mind to the world around you, it can also cloud someone's perceptions of reality, making molehills out of mountains.

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