

RESEARCH ARTICLE

JASIST WILEY

From disorientation to preparedness: Information practices as scaffolding in acute crises

Lilach Alon¹  | Tali Malinoff² | Inbar Levkovich¹

¹Faculty of Education and Teaching, Tel-Hai University of Kiryat Shmona in the Galilee, Kiryat Shmona, Israel

²Department of Public Policy and Management, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel

Correspondence

Lilach Alon, Faculty of Education and Teaching, Tel-Hai University of Kiryat Shmona in the Galilee, Kiryat Shmona, Israel.

Email: alonlil@telhai.ac.il

Abstract

This qualitative study examines how adults in Israel enacted information practices during an acute national crisis. Using the information transitions framework, we investigate how concrete practices emerge and evolve across three stages: understanding, negotiating, and resolving. Semi-structured Zoom interviews with 18 adults were analyzed via thematic analysis. Findings show a staged progression across four information practice types. Seeking shifts from checking whatever is closest at hand to more deliberate information seeking. Validation moves from “good enough” judgments to more careful checking of evidence, and eventually to relying on trusted sources. Sharing changes from broadly passing things along to more deliberate, protective communication with specific people and groups. Personal information management (PIM) develops from improvised or absent organizing to gathering key items in one place, preparing for contingencies, and building simple routines that keep the most important information easy to find. Across stages, these practices function as scaffolds for adaptation: supporting rapid orientation in the understanding stage, evaluation and coordination in the negotiating stage, and continuity and preparedness in the resolving stage. The study further validates and specifies the transitions research and offers guidance for improving crisis communication and preparing everyday information spaces.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Sudden disruptions, whether personal, social, or geopolitical, often trigger an immediate need for information (Rahmi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). People search for updates, verify facts, save resources, and reach out to others to make sense of changing circumstances (Ruthven, 2019; Zhao et al., 2025) and regain a sense of control (Jia et al., 2024). These everyday information practices, although often fragmented and improvised, contribute to people's ability to adapt, cope with, and continue functioning in the face of uncertainty

(Savolainen & Thomson, 2022). Recognizing the stakes, UNESCO (2020) stressed that timely, trustworthy information is essential for public confidence and coordinated action during crises, urging governments and platforms to preserve open channels when rules and risks evolve by the hour.

In other words, engaging with information practices during transitional times, specifically crisis events, appears to support adjustment to change (Krtalić et al., 2024; Savolainen, 2023). This study aims to understand how stage-specific information practices promote this adjustment to change and how these practices evolve

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2026 The Author(s). *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of Association for Information Science and Technology.

as a crisis unfolds. Despite the growing interest in crisis informatics and everyday information behavior, we still lack a comprehensive account of which concrete practices matter at different points across disruption.

Two theoretical approaches offer useful foundations for this study. The first is the information transition framework, which describes how people's informational challenges and needs shift as they experience significant changes in their lives. Ruthven (2022) developed this framework to understand how people manage information during everyday life transitions, such as becoming a parent, retiring, or migrating. It conceptualizes transitions as trajectories in which people move through stages of trying to understand what has happened, negotiating possible responses and futures, and eventually, settling into new routines and identities.

The second approach centers on information scaffolding, which shows that information-seeking, organizing, and sharing behaviors help people navigate complex transitions, such as moving into adulthood (Ferguson et al., 2025), migration, and career challenges (Alon, 2025; Krtalić & Dinneen, 2022), as well as migration more broadly (Allard, 2022; Krtalić & Ihejirika, 2023). This perspective emphasizes not only what people do with information, but also how these practices provide cognitive, emotional, and social support at times of uncertainty, loss, or reorientation.

Yet these studies rarely link concrete practices to a staged framework of change, particularly in the context of acute transitions. Hence, in this study, we bring the two perspectives together: we use the information transition framework to locate participants' experiences within stages of change and the scaffolding perspective to examine how these specific information practices function as supports within and across these stages. This integration allows us to trace how the same information practices take on different meanings and functions over time, and to show more precisely how information behavior sustains adaptation in the wake of sudden disruption.

Accordingly, the current study examines stage-specific information practices during an acute crisis using a focused case: how Israeli adults engaged with information across armed conflicts since October 7, 2023. The conflict itself is not the focus; rather, it provides an empirical setting to test whether practices identified in transition research emerge under real-world conditions of uncertainty and time pressure. We ask what concrete information practices individuals manifest during a crisis and how these practices evolve across the three stages of informational transition: understanding, negotiating, and resolving. In addition, we examine how these practices function as cognitive, emotional, and social scaffolds at different points in the crisis trajectory. By doing so, the

study shows how concrete information practices unfold within the three stages of transition. It also links the information transition framework with information scaffolding and provides an evidence base for improving crisis communication. Further, it shows how everyday information practices can help people adjust to disruption and regain stability during crises.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Information behavior during acute transitions

Life transitions are periods of change that require people to alter their behavior, relationships, and assumptions to accommodate new roles or circumstances (Schlossberg, 1981, 2011). Classic milestones such as graduation, marriage, parenthood, retirement, and relocation disrupt established routines and oblige people to renegotiate their personal and social identities (Anderson et al., 2012; Raanaas et al., 2019). Information behavior scholarship shows that people respond to such disruptions by intensifying their engagement with information sources (Gibson et al., 2025; Savolainen, 2023; Willson, 2019). Information behavior refers to the spectrum of human interaction with information, encompassing not only actively seeking, using, and sharing information but also the passive, unintentional, and even avoidance-based actions people take in relation to it (Bates, 2010). This field of study, rooted in library and information science, explores why and how people engage with information in diverse contexts to design better information systems, services, and resources (Huvila & Gorichanaz, 2025).

A specific subset of life transitions consists of changes driven by crisis or disruption. These include sudden disruptions such as armed conflict, natural disasters, and public health emergencies (Myles et al., 2018; Settersten Jr et al., 2020). In such situations, people must orient themselves rapidly within information environments that may be unfamiliar, fragmented, or unstable (Savolainen, 2021). At the same time, infrastructures for communication are often strained: official channels may be overloaded, reliable data may be scarce, and opportunities for careful verification are limited (Kaufhold et al., 2020). Crisis contexts therefore pose dual challenges: identifying information that is accurate, timely, and situation-specific (Caidi et al., 2010), and deciding how to search, whom to trust (Savolainen, 2023), and how to keep and organize what has been found.

Research on crisis information behavior shows how people engage with information practices to cope with acute events. Early work distinguished between patterns of intensive monitoring and patterns of limiting or

avoiding exposure to threat-related information (Miller, 1987), which can be understood as different ways of seeking, filtering, and managing contact with information. Later studies suggest that individuals move between these patterns over time rather than fitting neatly into one style (Lachlan, DiCairano, & Gilbert, 2024). During the 2020 Oregon wildfires, residents initially engaged in broad, high-frequency monitoring via television and National Weather Service alerts, then shifted to a narrower set of highly trusted local and official channels as the situation evolved (Lawson et al., 2024). Surveys from Hurricane Ian similarly report concentrated searching early in the event followed by more selective, lower-frequency checking once people felt adequately informed (Lachlan, DiCairano, & Spence, 2024).

Recent conceptual work on information avoidance shows that such adjustments are not simply “non-seeking” but comprise practices that moderate interaction with information by regulating its intensity, controlling engagement, and excluding particular topics or sources based on perceived relevance, quality, or timeliness (Hicks et al., 2025). From this perspective, crisis-related information monitoring and reductions in exposure can be seen as intertwined seeking and avoidance practices rather than mutually exclusive styles.

Additional studies of wartime contexts point to comparable patterns in source selection and validation: in Lithuania during the war between Russia and Ukraine, people reported sustained use of television and public radio, cross-checking these with international outlets and prioritizing sources perceived as reliable, while relatively few relied mainly on social media (Willson & Maceviciute, 2025). This literature highlights adjustments in information seeking and source validation during crises, but pays less attention to how these practices cluster across different stages of a crisis or how they intersect with everyday practices such as information sharing and personal information management (PIM).

Ruthven's (2022) theory of information behavior in life transitions conceptualizes transitions as trajectories structured by three overlapping stages of practice: understanding, negotiating, and resolving. These stages are patterns rather than fixed steps; individuals may move back and forth between them as new questions, constraints, or opportunities arise during the transition. In the understanding stage, individuals work to determine what the new situation requires of them. They engage in broad, often exploratory information seeking, consult knowledgeable others, and gather examples, forms, timelines, and narratives to reduce basic uncertainty. In the negotiating stage, they begin to act more concretely within the transition: testing possible paths, making key decisions, and selectively focusing on information that directly

informs these choices. In the resolving stage, the new situation becomes sufficiently familiar for some scaffolding to recede; information structures stabilize, reminders and distinctions are streamlined, and information practices are increasingly folded back into everyday routines.

Subsequent empirical work has adapted this framework to a range of life transitions. Pääaho and Huttunen (2025) draw on Ruthven's intermediate transitions theory to divide the hypothyroidism journey into nine stages, from “life before” and “life after,” and show how health information needs, use, and barriers vary across the transition. Du (2023) combines the transition framework with an information journey lens to examine late-life Chinese migrants' settlement in Australia, treating the understanding, negotiating, and resolving stages as anchors for describing their evolving information journeys. Alon and Krtalić (2024) apply information transition theory to multilingual personal information management (MPIM) among voluntary migrants, conceptualizing it as part of broader information transitions shaped by life changes. Ruthven (2025) and Krtalić et al. (2024) further demonstrate the flexibility of the framework by using it to analyze, respectively, searches for existential authenticity and tattooing as informational transitions, each highlighting how different configurations of understanding, negotiating, and resolving are reflected in people's information practices over time.

Although these studies show that the information transitions framework can illuminate diverse and often prolonged life changes, very little work has examined acute crisis transitions. We still lack empirical analyses of stage-specific information practices under conditions of sudden disruption, time pressure, and ongoing threat. The present study addresses this gap by applying the framework to an acute national crisis and documenting how information practices in the understanding, negotiating, and resolving stages support adjustment and partial stabilization over time.

2.2 | Information behavior as scaffold during acute transitions

Information behavior takes shape through information practices. These are situated activities through which people identify information needs, seek and evaluate information, share information with other people, and organize or withhold information to accomplish tasks (Bergman & Whittaker, 2016; Jones et al., 2015). Information practices occur in digital and physical contexts, on devices, in notebooks, through conversations, and across digital platforms such as e-mail, cloud storage, or messaging apps (Alon & Nachmias, 2020; Dinneen &

Julien, 2020). By engaging with diverse information practices, such as naming, tagging, filing, deleting, backing up, and retrieving, people maintain their collections of information items (Jacques et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2017).

Research has shown that information practices can serve as scaffolding during periods of change and transition (Alon, 2023; Ferguson et al., 2025; Krtalić & Dinneen, 2022). The notion of scaffolding originates in developmental psychology and educational research, where it describes temporary structures or supports that enable learners to carry out tasks that would otherwise be beyond their current capabilities (Wood et al., 1976; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Scaffolds are gradually withdrawn as competence and confidence grow. Extending this idea to information behavior, we use the term information scaffolding to refer to temporary constellations of information practices that help people endure and navigate periods of change by reducing uncertainty, maintaining a sense of control, managing affect, and planning next steps (Alon, 2023; Alon, 2025).

Previous studies have applied this scaffolding perspective to a range of life transitions. Alon (2023) shows that early-career researchers engaged in information seeking and personal information management as scaffolds when moving between roles and institutions, using routines such as targeted searching, maintaining transition-related collections, and tracking deadlines to manage uncertainty and plan future steps. Alon and Krtalić (2024) and related work on migration and PIM (e.g., Krtalić & Dinneen, 2022; Krtalić & Ihejirika, 2023) similarly conceptualize PIM practices as scaffolding that helps migrants navigate fractured and multilingual information landscapes. These practices also help preserve continuity across places and languages, and sustain identity-relevant collections over time (Dinneen et al., 2024). Overall, these studies demonstrate that information practices can provide cognitive, emotional, and social support during life transitions, but they do not examine acute crises or link scaffolding systematically to a staged model of change.

During acute transitions, information practices help people adapt to disrupted landscapes, regain orientation, make decisions, and preserve continuity (Bannell & Sexton, 2024; Savolainen, 2025). In crises such as wars, natural disasters, and pandemics, these practices function as scaffolding, providing temporary supports that sustain individuals through upheaval. This scaffolding is built through targeted seeking and credibility checks (Alon, 2023) and through deliberate exposure management or purposeful avoidance when information becomes overwhelming (Hicks et al., 2025). It is also maintained by sustaining social ties through information sharing (Krtalić & Ihejirika, 2023) and by PIM activities such as organizing, archiving, and curating digital and

material resources (Dinneen & Julien, 2020; Dinneen & Krtalić, 2020). Together, these practices create an information scaffold that enables people to function, decide, and adapt amid acute disruption (Alon, 2023).

Guided by the “information practices as scaffolding” approach, this study focuses on four information practice types that recur across transitions and are expected to be critical in sudden crises. These include: (1) information seeking; (2) information validation; (3) information sharing; and (4) PIM.

Information seeking refers to purposeful efforts to locate timely updates, guidance, and resources while managing exposure by deciding when to engage with or avoid distressing updates to prevent overload (Hicks et al., 2025; Krtalić & Ihejirika, 2023; Moffatt & Heaven, 2017). Alongside seeking, information validation includes checking credibility, cross-verifying facts, consulting trusted sources, and calibrating one's understanding by comparing transition experiences with those of others (Andalibi & Garcia, 2021). These practices are intertwined with information sharing, which involves circulating updates, interpretations, and resources through social media, private messages, group chats, or community spaces, thereby supporting collective sense-making, emotional connection, public remembrance, and co-constructed narratives (Gong et al., 2021; Haimson et al., 2021; Savolainen, 2025). Finally, PIM encompasses the saving, organizing, retrieving, and archiving of digital and physical items, such as guidelines, permits, records, contacts, and personal notes (Bergman & Whittaker, 2016; Dinneen & Julien, 2020). This helps sustain coherence, preserve memory and identity, and maintain a sense of control during a crisis (Krtalić et al., 2021; Lindley, 2012).

Prior research has documented how seeking information, verifying its credibility, organizing personal information spaces, and sharing information items with others supports adjustment across diverse transitional contexts. Yet, these studies do not specify how practices cluster at different moments in the trajectory of change. Together with the information transitions framework, we therefore treat these four information practice types as potential scaffolds whose salience and form may shift across the understanding, negotiating, and resolving stages of an acute crisis. The present study strengthens this line of work by focusing on four types of information practices and examining how each type emerges, recedes, or transforms across three stages of an acute crisis transition.

2.3 | Research questions

By combining the three stages of information transition (understanding, negotiating, resolving) with four information practice types (seeking, validating, sharing, PIM),

this study develops a framework that cross-cuts stages with information practice types to track which practices emerge at each stage, how they shift over time, and how they support navigation of acute crises. Accordingly, we ask the following research questions:

RQ1: How did participants describe and make sense of information practices (seeking, validating, sharing, and PIM) during the crisis, and what contextual factors and tensions shaped these practices?

RQ2: How did participants describe shifts in information practices across the three information transition stages (understanding, negotiating, resolving) during an acute crisis?

3 | METHODS

3.1 | Generative AI use

We utilized generative AI tools to enhance language. All AI-generated output was carefully reviewed to ensure alignment with the research objectives and the accuracy of the content. The authors take full responsibility for the final content of this submission.

3.2 | Participants and context

The study was conducted with Israeli adults following October 7, 2023, during a period of armed conflict characterized by temporary evacuations, service disruptions, and prolonged uncertainty (Grinshtain & Haruv, 2025; Levkovich & Labes, 2024; Shinan-Altman & Levkovich, 2025). In the current study, we do not examine the conflict itself; rather, we focus on people's information behavior and practices under acute, evolving conditions (see also Levkovich et al., 2025).

Participants were 18 Hebrew-speaking adults (13 women, 5 men) ages 19–68 ($M = 45.83$, $SD = 14.42$). All had lived in Israel within the past 2 years and described experiencing multiple significant national crises (e.g., earlier wars, periods of sustained rocket fire, and other large-scale emergencies), which formed the backdrop for their experiences during the October 2023 war and its aftermath. Recruitment followed a snowball strategy: initial contacts were reached through social media and personal networks and then invited to refer others. To capture diverse perspectives, we sought variation in gender, age, education, occupation, family status, and geographic location across Israel's north, center, and south. Participants included single and partnered adults as well as parents of school-age children. Education levels ranged from undergraduate to doctoral degrees, and

occupations spanned education, public service, health-care, technology, and self-employment.

3.3 | Interviews and procedure

The study adopted a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews to examine how individuals described and managed information practices during an acute national crisis. The interview protocol was designed to elicit concrete episodes and reflections related to seeking, validating, sharing, and PIM, in alignment with the study's theoretical framework.

The Hebrew-language protocol was developed by the researchers to align with the theoretical framework of the study. The semi-structured interview guide was piloted with two Hebrew-speaking adults who met the inclusion criteria but were not included in the final sample. Based on the pilot, we refined several question wordings for clarity, adjusted the order of topics to move from concrete experiences to more reflective questions, and added follow-up probes to elicit specific examples of information seeking, validation, sharing, and PIM during the crisis. These changes helped ensure that the interviews remained focused, comprehensible, and rich in practice-level detail.

The final interview protocol (see Appendix) included questions focusing on participants' initial reactions to the crisis, their methods of seeking, validating, sharing, and organizing information, and their use of digital tools. To enrich these accounts, the interviews also incorporated short reflective activities, such as walking through digital or physical information spaces and mapping sources or routines that helped participants illustrate and concretize their practices.

Interviews were conducted in Hebrew via Zoom between mid-June and mid-September 2025 and lasted about 45 min each. Participants were asked to reflect on their information practices during the war that began on October 7, 2023, including the conflict between Israel and Iran. At the start, the interviewer explained key terms: information behavior as everyday practices of seeking, validating, sharing, and PIM, and information items as any physical or digital materials such as notes, documents, photos, passwords, reminders, and social media messages. Participants received a full study explanation and provided informed consent. They were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could skip questions or withdraw at any time.

All interviews were conducted and transcribed in Hebrew. The first author, a native Hebrew speaker, conducted the initial coding and thematic analysis on the Hebrew transcripts to preserve linguistic and contextual

aspects. Selected quotations were then translated into English for reporting in this paper; translations were produced by the first author and checked by the other authors (also Hebrew native speakers) to ensure that key meanings and emphases were retained.

All transcripts were anonymized and assigned a coded identifier (e.g., P1, P2) to protect confidentiality. All procedures in this study complied with institutional research ethics guidelines and received Institutional Review Board approval.

3.4 | Data analysis

Data were analyzed using a theory-informed qualitative thematic analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Honoré et al., 2025). Specifically, we used the information transition stages and the four information practice types as analytic organizing lenses for tagging and comparing episodes, while themes were developed iteratively within and across cases to capture patterned meanings, tensions, and variation in how participants described their practices.

First, in within-case coding, each transcript was read several times and coded for significant statements about information-related experiences. At this stage, we applied two analytic tags to relevant segments: (a) one of the three stages of information transition (understanding, negotiating, resolving), based on how participants positioned the episode in the crisis trajectory, and (b) one of four information practice types (seeking, validating, sharing, PIM). Stage assignment involved interpretive coding judgments based on how participants temporally and situationally positioned episodes in their retrospective interviews.

Second, in case synthesis, we examined how the coded segments clustered within each transition stage and developed provisional themes that described what it meant, for participants, to live through that stage, while keeping track of which practices were involved. Third, in cross-stage comparison, we compared themes across stages, asking how the same practice types (e.g., seeking or PIM) took on different forms and functions in understanding, negotiating, and resolving, and refining themes so that each represented a coherent stage-level pattern of practice. Finally, we conducted rigor checks (peer debriefing, discrepant-case analysis, and maintaining an audit trail) to strengthen analytic consistency and transparency.

To support this process, we used a theory-informed coding framework that specified the three stages of information transition and the four information practice types as analytic organizing categories. Table 1 summarizes

TABLE 1 Theory-informed coding scheme.

Dimension	Categories	Description
Information transitions (higher-order themes)	Understanding	Orienting oneself and reducing uncertainty.
	Negotiating	Exploring options, comparing sources, and testing new practices.
	Resolving	New information practices stabilize and integrate into routine.
Information practices (sub-themes)	Seeking	Locating information from various sources.
	Validating	Assessing information credibility and trustworthiness.
	Sharing	Exchanging information with others.
	PIM	Organizing, preserving, and retrieving personal information.

this coding framework, including the operational definition and illustrative indicators for each stage and each practice type.

4 | FINDINGS

Findings are organized according to the three stages of the information transition framework (Ruthven, 2022): understanding, negotiating, and resolving. Each stage is presented as a higher-order theme that captures how participants experienced that phase of the crisis. Within each stage, we then examine the four information practice types (i.e., seeking, validating, sharing, PIM) and show how these practices operated as scaffolds and shifted across the transition.

4.1 | Understanding: Orienting to the war

The first stage of the transition was marked by efforts to orient to the sudden disruption of October 7. Participants recalled how the attack shattered their routines and generated an urgent need to make sense of a confusing and frightening situation. All of them described profound disorientation and a struggle to comprehend events as they unfolded: “On the first day I kept the shutters closed and watched the news to understand what happened” (P17); “I jumped up from bed in the middle of the night and ran

to the safe room; I panicked and checked for updates” (P13). Some emphasized the gaps and contradictions in the information they initially encountered: “My daughter said, ‘Mom, is something happening in Israel?’ I checked the news app, and the information did not make sense” (P8); “The phone rang, and my family member told us a war has started. We didn’t know anything” (P7). Others stressed how information overload intensified their uncertainty: “I didn’t really understand where this came from, where it’s headed, or what it even is right now. I just could not handle the flood” (P9); “There was so much noise, I needed to filter it” (P15).

Information seeking in this stage was characterized by immediacy and improvisation. Participants relied on whichever channels were closest, turning to television, social media, phone calls, or even neighbors to regain situational awareness: “I was anxious [...] I was checking Ynet [a local news app] and turning on the news. I basically lived with the TV in those first days” (P1). Others emphasized the role of smartphones and apps in seeking for immediate updates: “I was on my phone to see updates to understand what was happening” (P13). Social media platforms provided on-time information and images: “I scrolled Instagram to see what happened” (P13); “I went to Telegram for the first time and joined news channels” (P14). A few participants, however, preferred physical proximity to mediated accounts: “I went out to the balcony to hear from the neighbors. I decided I wouldn’t turn on the TV news” (P3). Others switched immediately to broadcast media: “We opened the news immediately” (P4); “At night we even turned on the TV news which we never do at home” (P18).

Validation practices were limited at this point: “There was total chaos with no order to the information, and I could not tell who was telling the truth” (P8). P15 deliberately avoided unverified channels when first sought updates: “My son’s friend mentioned Telegram and I said: Don’t open it. There’s no filter there and we don’t know what’s true yet.”

Even in this unsettled phase, some participants engaged in information sharing: “Right away I was busy getting information out to my community abroad [...] there’s a war here and a war of advocacy and diplomacy” (P2). Sharing also carried the weight of testimony: “It was important they hear it with their own ears from someone they know, like collecting testimonies in World War II” (P2).

Finally, participants improvised PIM practices as they began to grasp the implications of the crisis. For some, this meant recognizing a lack of preparation: “I didn’t save or organize anything, because everything kept changing” (P1). For others, it involved capturing fragments for memory: “I photographed events and things on

my phone to have them as a keepsake for the future” (P6).

Together, these accounts show how the understanding stage was dominated by attempts to regain orientation through rapid seeking, minimal validation, urgent sharing, and improvised PIM. These practices served as the first scaffolds of coping, helping participants restore a sense of direction.

4.2 | Negotiating: Sorting and organizing

As days passed, participants moved beyond the shock and disorientation and entered a negotiating stage that reflected a more deliberate stance. Participants began to sort through the flood of information. They also reported on expanding the range of sources they consulted and testing different ways of seeking, validating, and organizing what they encountered. Information practices became less about immediacy and survival and more about expansion, triangulation, and coordination, as individuals tried to establish a clearer picture of unfolding events and regain a sense of control.

Information seeking became more systematic and multi-sourced, focusing on building a reliable, usable information landscape rather than initial orientation. Participants described intentionally broadening their horizons and searching for sources that spoke directly to their needs: “We looked for sources that speak directly to our situation” (P4). For others, escalation triggered shifts in practice, leading them to refine which sources to prioritize: “I stopped watching TV news; it was too much. I preferred text-only updates” (P18); “I chose a few channels and a few accounts that summarized the news” (P3). P14 chose information sources that made him feel more in control: “I searched for news channels that felt more supportive.” In some cases, participants became more engaged with news than before the war: “Previously I hardly knew what was going on; now I want to see what’s happening” (P13).

Validation practices also grew more explicit and became a more intentional effort. Participants moved from heuristics to systematic comparisons, often weighing sources: “I checked all the channels, Telegram, TV channels, Facebook, everything with caution” (P6); “If I see it in several places, on the news app and across Instagram accounts and comments, I trust it” (P13). Others tied reliability to visual evidence: “Where there was an image, it was real” (P6); “Some things on the news had videos, and those felt more real” (P14); “I trust Telegram because it brings videos from what’s actually happening outside” (P16). Others critically assessed institutional information sources against informal ones: “I found that

non-formal sources reported more reliably” (P5); “I didn’t listen to politicians or army leaders, rather to reporters in the field” (P16). Others preferred relying on personal judgment rather than institutions: “I do not expect much from the municipality or government. I listen to the radio, but mostly read between the lines and trust my own judgment” (P2).

Information sharing diversified and became more expansive and restrained, balancing the imperatives of advocacy, coordination, and emotional care. Some turned to official local channels as reliable venues for circulation: “We used the official WhatsApp groups of the local authority to share and receive updates” (P5). Others engaged in outward-facing advocacy: “I wrote three blogs for the press during the Iran escalation¹ and did a lot of Zooms with my community abroad” (P2). In parallel, neighborhood and community coordination featured strongly in participants’ accounts: “I contacted the neighbors via WhatsApp and informed them that if they need anything they should come to us” (P5); “Neighborhood coordination happened through WhatsApp groups” (P12). Others mentioned sharing and receiving only important information: “Important updates came from the school’s and city’s WhatsApp groups” (P14); “I shared what was urgent, at home and at work” (P16); “If it was relevant for my work-related circle, I passed it to our group and we discussed it” (P17). Participants also engaged in protective non-sharing, deliberately withholding information that might spread fear: “We forward only things with proof, because there were a lot of rumors” (P3); “If I heard something that could really worry my dad, I didn’t share it” (P7).

PIM practices became central during the negotiating stage as a way to turn uncertainty into order. Participants described preparing “go bags” or centralizing essentials in safe rooms and shelters. One explained, “I prepared a bag and later a trolley with passports, wallets, cash, everything we would need, and also the hard drive with all the family photos that were not in the cloud” (P8). Others echoed this readiness: “The bag was by the front door so I could grab it instantly” (P10); “I put the passports in a small bag, essentials for a day or two” (P2); “I took some clothes, shoes in case we had to walk over rubble, and my ID; I put my whole wallet in the bag” (P13). Others focused on centralization: “We centralized everything in the safest place in the house; my storage room became the safe room” (P5). For some, organizing photos and records was also a way of reclaiming control: “I bought an external hard drive to store all the photos” (P3). Beyond preparedness, PIM carried affective dimensions. One participant noted that documenting experiences helped with both coping and memory-making: “Taking photos in the safe room during missile attacks

helped me calm down, and later it’s a memory; we can even laugh about it” (P13). Similarly, another said, “I photographed events as a keepsake for the future” (P6).

Overall, the negotiating stage shows how information practices became deliberate, coordinated, and multi-layered. Participants moved from disorientation to organized strategies that balanced reliability, advocacy, protection, and preparedness.

4.3 | Resolving: Rebuilding a routine

The transition from negotiating to resolving was marked by a gradual narrowing of practices. After the experimentation, expansion, and coordination that characterized the negotiating stage, participants described how their information practices began to stabilize into new, sustainable routines. They no longer consumed information with the same intensity or diversity, but instead streamlined sources, relied on trusted cues, and incorporated preparedness into everyday life.

Information seeking shifted from expansion to reduction, revealing a consolidation of information-seeking into smaller, more sustainable patterns. Participants described cutting back on the many channels they had added during the escalation, settling into smaller sets of sources that felt manageable: “Around October 7 I added a lot of extra channels, but now I have removed them. At first I joined Telegram channels, but later deleted them and cut off” (P11); “I had two apps for alerts, but one of them wasn’t always accurate, so I deleted it” (P14). For some, this meant deliberate avoidance: “Now I don’t open the news at all” (P2); “I barely watch TV now” (P7). “I try to limit my news consumption. I read only headlines on the news app or talk with colleagues” (P8).

Information validation also reflected this shift. While in the negotiating stage participants compared platforms and weighed evidence, in the resolving stage they described a steady practice of doubt and reliance on trusted individuals: “I became more skeptical about information. With the AI content, you don’t know which videos are real or fake, so I tried to look more critically” (P12); “It’s important to remember what happened and to know the truth, not to believe every bit of nonsense” (P13). Trust was concentrated in small, reliable circles: “From my friends I get concise information about what happens, without the endless story-spinning” (P2). As P12 summarized: “I tried to be as critical as I can. This information is how I organize the world for myself” (P12).

Information sharing followed a similar trajectory, moving from broad coordination and advocacy in the negotiating stage to selective and restrained

communication in the resolving stage. Participants reflected on pulling back, preferring non-sharing: “Over the last three months [i.e., after the escalation with Iran] I have shared less, kept my distance, and felt more protected” (P12); “I almost never share war-related content” (P17). P2 described the same restraint: “Sometimes I choose not to amplify something on purpose and avoid sharing posts.” Others explicitly avoided spreading rumors: “I chose not to share rumors that I’ve heard. I did not know the source and assumed it could only create hysteria” (P8).

When sharing did occur, it was often grounded in direct evidence: “I went straight to film near the place where the missile struck, and showed it to friends” (P2). At the same time, the content of sharing evolved toward memory and memorialization: “Before the war I shared only personal things, but now I share alerts, posts about deceased people, and memorials” (P13). As she added: “It’s important to remember [...] the people who went through this, those who were killed, that matters to me” (P13).

PIM practices also transitioned from ad hoc preparations to sustained routines. Whereas in the negotiating stage participants assembled go-bags, in the resolving stage they integrated preparedness into their daily lives: “I keep coming back to the idea that it is important to have a valid passport and cash in hand” (P12). Others echoed the constant presence of essentials: “I carried my passport everywhere in a pouch with both of our passports; I felt that would save me” (P12). For some, backing up information remained crucial: “Everything is backed up- passports, IDs” (P4); “Everything on the laptop was backed up in case something happened” (P14); “I made sure that everything is backed up for me on the phone and cloud” (P7). Still, not everyone sustained such practices: “I thought about backing up my photo albums, but I did nothing. At the end it’s about realizing what is more important to you” (P10).

Overall, the resolving stage demonstrates how participants transitioned from the experimentation and coordination of negotiating toward routines of reduction, skepticism, selectivity, and preparedness. In this phase, information practices became less about navigating uncertainty and more about sustaining control and continuity in a prolonged crisis environment.

4.4 | Summary of findings

Table 2 summarizes the findings, presenting each practice across the three stages of transition, outlines the progression from one stage to the next, and identifies the

primary scaffolding role these practices played in helping participants cope and adapt.

5 | DISCUSSION

This study investigated how adults in Israel engaged in information practices, such as seeking, validation, sharing, and PIM, during an acute national crisis. The study’s framework suggests that these practices function as scaffolding for adjustment and preparation across the three stages of information transitions (Ruthven, 2022). The findings show that across the three stages, the participants managed recurring tensions between speed and credibility, immediacy and overload, and vigilance and emotional burden. These tensions shaped how they sought, validated, shared, and organized information and explained the progression from orientation to evaluation and coordination to selective routines.

Across the three stages, the four information practice types formed configurations that reflect crisis-specific conditions of uncertainty and time pressure. Information seeking was often compressed into brief, frequent checks oriented to immediate and highly local concerns (“what is happening now, near me?”), rather than extended searches.

Participants shifted between active information seeking and deliberate information avoidance as the crisis unfolded. At some points they searched intensively for updates, while at others they limited exposure in order to reduce overload and remain functional. This pattern aligns with Hicks et al. (2025), who argue that information seeking and information avoidance are not opposites, but intertwined practices through which people moderate engagement with information. In our study, these adjustments supported both cognitive and emotional scaffolding under acute crisis conditions.

Validation relied on fast “good enough” triangulation through a small set of anchor sources or trusted contacts, with participants acknowledging that they rarely had time or emotional bandwidth for thorough comparison. Information sharing operated as part of a safety infrastructure, especially in family and neighborhood groups, where circulating alerts, confirming who was safe, and passing on official instructions were integral to coordination. PIM focused on quick-access orientation and preparedness, such as pinning key channels, saving screenshots of instructions, and maintaining ad hoc lists of shelters, contacts, and essential documents. Overall, these patterns reveal how familiar and routine information practices are adapted when people must act under ongoing threat and severe time constraints.

TABLE 2 Information practices, transitions, and primary scaffolding role across the three-stages.

Practices	Transition stages			Transitions summary	Primary scaffolding role
	Understanding	Negotiating	Resolving		
Seeking	Immediate orientation via nearest channels.	Expansion and triangulation across platforms.	Narrowed, sustainable flows, one trusted source.	From urgency to testing, consolidation into routine.	Supports orientation, monitoring, and adjustment.
Validating	Minimal validation.	Evidence checks, official versus non-official sources.	Validation narrows to a small circle.	From reliance on heuristics to systematic triangulation, then routinized skepticism.	Supports trust, sense-making, and decision-making.
Sharing	Early outward routing to overseas contacts.	Diverse routing and calibrated sharing.	Selective communication, emphasis on evidence.	From signaling to coordination, then restrained memorialization.	Supports social connection, coordination, and care.
PIM	Ad hoc or absent PIM.	Contingency preparation.	Routinized preparedness and information prioritization.	From improvised to preparedness, then habitual integration.	Supports continuity, preparedness, and control.

At the understanding stage, participants worked to establish what had happened, where it was unfolding, and the immediate implications for themselves and for close others. Their accounts resembled patterns documented in the first days of forced migration, where fractured information landscapes produce “information precarity” (Berg, 2023). In such contexts, people cast a wide net, scanning across any available channels to piece together fragments of guidance while navigating scarcity, overload, and intense time pressure (Lloyd, 2017; Lloyd, 2020). During this stage, the validation capacity was limited, often relying on the proximity of the source or quick redundancy checks. This aligns with stage-based accounts of early crisis search (Rahmi et al., 2019) as well as with crisis informatics research describing reliance on heuristics and the constraints of verification during the first hours of disruption (Palen & Anderson, 2016; Reuter & Kaufhold, 2018). Participants also turned toward channels they perceived as safer or more comprehensible, including closed groups, family and community networks, and resources in their native language, reflecting adaptations observed in migration contexts (Emmer et al., 2020; Georgiou et al., 2024). Interpreted together, these practices reveal how the understanding stage served as a scaffold for rapid orientation and emotional containment during acute uncertainty.

In the negotiating stage, participants shifted from rapid orientation (brief, high-frequency scans of nearby channels to grasp what was happening) toward more active triangulation (deliberately cross-checking information across a small set of trusted sources). Seeking was no longer about scanning everything at hand but about deliberately combining official advisories, interpersonal

updates, and community channels to construct a fuller picture (Dekker et al., 2018). Validation also became more structured: participants cross-referenced multiple sources, checked provenance and time stamps, and consulted knowledgeable peers (Alon, 2023). Many relied on images and on-the-ground posts to corroborate reports. Yet, research on the Russia-Ukraine war, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 2022, shows that while such materials can sharpen situational awareness, they also spread faster than professional fact checkers can verify, complicating credibility judgments for non-experts (Zecchinon & Standaert, 2025). Studies of messaging platforms used during wartime further demonstrate that the same channels valued for speed and locality are also venues for coordinated narratives and toxic discourse (Bawa et al., 2025; Ghasiya & Sasahara, 2023; Oleinik, 2024; Tretiakov et al., 2025). In this context, participants in our study adopted more audience-aware sharing practices: routing verified items to specific recipients, withholding uncertain content, and using small peer networks to calibrate interpretations. These patterns resonate with prior work on collaborative sense-making in crisis and transition contexts (Gong et al., 2021; Haimson et al., 2021; Keller et al., 2020). Alongside these practices, participants introduced light-touch PIM, such as creating ad hoc lists, shared spreadsheets, or bookmarking those feeds in which they had high levels of trust. These practices functioned as scaffolds that sustained coordination and continuity as the pace of information remained high. In the negotiating stage, information practices served as scaffolds for judgment, coordination, and regulation of information exposure, helping participants decide what to do, coordinate with others,

and manage how much information they let into their lives. These practices went beyond the orientation of the early days and became more deliberate ways of adapting to the crisis.

By the resolving stage, participants shifted from rapid orientation and active triangulation to narrower and more sustainable patterns of information use. Rather than continually adding new sources, they monitored a short list of trusted channels and relied on a small circle of close contacts (Emmer et al., 2020). Sharing became protective, with participants careful to withhold items that were unverified or that might unnecessarily alarm recipients. Exposure management was integral to this phase. Participants described limiting updates and relying on a small circle of trusted sources, echoing research showing that choosing not to follow certain channels can be a helpful way to protect oneself and cope in high-risk situations (Hicks et al., 2025). This pattern also aligns with findings on balancing vigilance with emotional burden in existential threat scenarios (Savolainen, 2025). Validation became a steady habit of doubt, with participants distancing from mainstream outlets and turning to concise, trusted contacts for updates. PIM also evolved: participants described assembling go-bags, centralizing and backing up essential records, creating quick-access sets of information for identification and medical documents, and setting simple checklists to ensure retrieval under pressure. Prior work typically frames PIM as the everyday maintenance of personal information spaces (Jones et al., 2017); here it appeared as a preparedness-oriented variant that preserves continuity when routines are disrupted. In the resolving stage, participants used information to weave the crisis into everyday routines in ways that felt manageable. Preparedness lists, pinned channels, and small collections of key documents became part of day-to-day life, helping them keep a sense of continuity, decide what to pay attention to and what to ignore, and hold on to parts of their identity that mattered to them.

Taken together, the stage analysis shows that participants' progression through the crisis is defined less by the passage of time and more by distinct configurations of practice. Understanding was marked by broad seeking and heuristic validation that scaffolded immediate orientation. Negotiating involved triangulated seeking, structured validation, calibrated sharing, and preparatory PIM that scaffolded evaluation and coordination. Resolving consolidated into selective flows, protective non-sharing, and routinized preparedness, scaffolding continuity and longer-term adaptation. Our findings make the scaffolding role of information practices explicit across three functions. These cognitive, emotional, and social functions are presented here as analytic lenses; in practice,

the same information practice often supported more than one function at once. Cognitively, seeking, validating, and PIM primarily supported orientation, sense-making, and decision-making under uncertainty. Emotionally, these same practices also helped participants regulate exposure, reduce overload, and preserve functioning. Socially, sharing and coordinated information exchange primarily supported care, coordination, and connection across family and community contexts.

This study has theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for understanding information behavior during crises. Theoretically, it further validates the information transition framework by grounding its stages in specific, observable practices and showing their temporal development. This practice-level account highlights how seeking, validating, sharing, and organizing information, function as scaffolds that help people move from disorientation toward stability. Beyond identifying where practices appeared across stages, our findings suggest that information practices are stage-reconfigured in acute transitions: the same practice (e.g., seeking, validation, sharing, or PIM) changes in form and function as participants move through shifting demands. This adds a functional layer to the transitions framework by showing how practices are reoriented from rapid orientation, to coordination and decision support, to continuity and preparedness. The findings also refine the scaffolding perspective by showing that scaffolding is dynamic and selective rather than stable: cognitive, emotional, and social supports are assembled, intensified, reduced, or reorganized depending on the stage-specific pressures participants are managing. In this sense, the study contributes a stage-sensitive account of how information practices scaffold adaptation during acute crisis transitions.

Methodologically, the study shows how transition stages can be operationalized through qualitative coding of practice episodes and participants' temporal positioning of those episodes in retrospective interviews. This makes stage patterns analytically explicit and open to inspection while still involving interpretive coding judgments.

Practically, the staged progression translates into different strategies for individuals, policymakers, and digital platforms. For individuals, it suggests first briefly widening information inputs at the onset of crisis, and then deliberately narrowing attention to a small number of high-trust channels. It also points to the value of simple validation routines that slow down action on unverified content, more selective and audience-sensitive sharing, and maintaining a lean "information kit" with essential documents and backups. For policymakers, it highlights the need for stage-aware communication: transparent updates in the early hours, close collaboration with

community networks during the negotiation stage, and a stronger emphasis on preparedness messages as resolution begins. For digital platforms, the model supports stage-specific tools, from concise verified summaries in the first hours, through lightweight cross-checking features during negotiation, to customizable “crisis dashboards” that help people track ongoing stability.

Conducted in one national context with a modest sample ($N = 18$) and focused on a war-related crisis, the study's findings may not generalize to other acute disruptions such as natural disasters, pandemics, or large-scale health emergencies. Because the sample was highly educated, participants may have had relatively stronger skills and confidence in searching, evaluating, sharing, and organizing information, which may limit transferability to populations with lower educational attainment or lower information literacy. Although the study examines conditions of uncertainty and time pressure, the data were based on retrospective interviews. Participants described concrete episodes from the first months of the war, and the practices we report reflect what they say they actually did to seek, validate, share, and manage information during that period, but these accounts are reconstructed from memory and filtered through later reflections. Because the interviews addressed highly sensitive experiences, and some participants may have been in acute or ongoing stress or trauma, recall, willingness to disclose, and interpretation may have been affected.

In addition, although participants described concrete episodes from the first months of the war, the exact timing of later reported practices (e.g., whether they occurred days, weeks, or months after the initial events) was not always recoverable from retrospective accounts and likely varied across participants. Accordingly, our stage-based analysis should be interpreted as a reconstruction of narrated patterns of change rather than a precise longitudinal timeline of behavior. Finally, we did not systematically assess factors that can shape information practices and outcomes, including prior mental health, media literacy, socioeconomic status, caregiving responsibilities, and access to digital infrastructure.

Therefore, future research should extend our findings in several ways. For example, it could combine in-depth interviews with diaries or experience sampling in order to capture stage shifts as they unfold in real time. Future studies might also use trauma-informed procedures and systematically assess potential moderators such as prior mental health, media literacy, socioeconomic status, caregiving responsibilities, and access to digital infrastructure. Finally, comparative work across acute crises (e.g., earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes, pandemics) and cross-national studies of different media ecologies and

government communication could test whether similar stage-specific patterns emerge across contexts.

6 | CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that information practices reorganize systematically across the stages of an acute crisis, moving from rapid, minimally validated seeking in the understanding stage to triangulated seeking, structured validation, calibrated sharing, and preparatory PIM in the negotiating stage, and finally to narrowed inputs, selective sharing, and routinized preparedness in the resolving stage. These findings show how seeking, validating, sharing, and PIM act as scaffolds that help people move from disorientation toward greater stability, thereby further validating and specifying the transition framework by grounding its stages in concrete, observable practices. The stage-by-practice framework also provides practical guidance for crisis communication and everyday preparedness: briefly widen inputs for orientation, then narrow to trusted channels, use simple validation workflows, share information selectively, and maintain essential backups and go-bags. By identifying which practices matter when, this research highlights information behavior not merely as a response to disruption but as an active support for decision-making, emotional regulation, and social coordination during crisis.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data generated and analysed during the current study are not publicly available in order to protect participant privacy and confidentiality.

ORCID

Lilach Alon  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2998-8414>

ENDNOTE

¹ The “Iran escalation” refers to a brief, 10-day round of hostilities between Israel and Iran in June 2025, which was widely understood by participants as a continuation and intensification of the broader war that began on October 7, 2023.

REFERENCES

- Allard, D. (2022). “So many things were new to us”: Identifying the settlement information practices of newcomers to Canada across the settlement process. *Journal of Documentation*, 78(2), 334–360. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-02-2021-0024>
- Alon, L. (2023). Information seeking and personal information management behaviors as scaffolding during life transitions: The case of early-career researchers. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 77(2), 354–372. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-01-2023-0027>

- Alon, L., & Krtalić, M. (2024). "I wish I could use any language as it comes to mind": User experience in digital platforms in the context of multilingual personal information management. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76(4), 686–702. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24964>
- Alon, L. (2025). Adaptive practices as scaffolding for affective challenges in knowledge workers' personal information management. *Journal of Documentation*, 81(3), 617–737. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-11-2024-0284>
- Alon, L., & Nachmias, R. (2020). Gaps between actual and ideal personal information management behavior. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 107, 106292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106292>
- Andalibi, N., & Garcia, P. (2021). Sensemaking and coping after pregnancy loss: The seeking and disruption of emotional validation online. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 5(CSCW1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3449201>
- Anderson, M. L., Goodman, J., & Schlossberg, N. K. (2012). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory with practice in a diverse world* (4th ed.). Springer Publishing Company.
- Bannell, K., & Sexton, A. (2024). Affect and rapid response collecting: Exploring the significance of emotion in UK archives' COVID-19 collecting projects. *Archives and Records*, 45(2), 153–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2024.2351378>
- Bates, M. J. (2010). Information behavior. In M. J. Bates & M. N. Maack (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of library and information sciences* (3rd ed., pp. 2381–2391). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9780203757635>
- Bawa, A., Kursuncu, U., Achilov, D., Shalin, V. L., Agarwal, N., & Akbas, E. (2025). Telegram as a battlefield: Kremlin-related communications during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. *Proceedings of the Nineteenth International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 19(1), 2361–2370. <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v19i1.35939>
- Berg, M. (2023). Information-precarity for refugee women in Hamburg, Germany, during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(15), 2982–2998. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2022.2129271>
- Bergman, O., & Whittaker, S. (2016). *The science of managing our digital stuff*. The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23870>
- Caidi, N., Allard, D., & Quirke, L. (2010). Information practices of immigrants. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 44(1), 491–531. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aris.2010.1440440118>
- Dekker, R., Engbersen, G., Klaver, J., & Vonk, H. (2018). Smart refugees: How Syrian asylum migrants use social media information in migration decision-making. *Social Media+Society*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764439>
- Dinneen, J. D., & Julien, C. A. (2020). The ubiquitous digital file: A review of file management research. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 71(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24222>
- Dinneen, J. D., & Krtalić, M. (2020). E-mail as legacy: Managing and preserving e-mail as a collection. *portal Libraries and the Academy*, 20(3), 413–424. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2020.0022>
- Dinneen, J. D., Krtalić, M., Davoudi, N., Hellmich, H., Ochsner, C., & Bressel, P. (2024). Information science and the inevitable: A literature review at the intersection of death and information management. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 75(3), 268–297. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24861>
- Du, J. T. (2023). Understanding the information journeys of late-life migrants to inform support design: Information seeking driven by a major life transition. *Information Processing & Management*, 60(2), 103172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2022.103172>
- Emmer, M., Kunst, M., & Richter, C. (2020). Information seeking and communication during forced migration: An empirical analysis of refugees' digital media use and its effects on their perceptions of Germany as their target country. *Global Media and Communication*, 16(2), 167–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766520921905>
- Ferguson, R. D., Willson, R., & Moffatt, K. (2025). "Am I being responsible?": Navigating coming-of-age transitions through personal financial information management. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 77(3), 455–472. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24990>
- Georgiou, M., d'Haenens, L., Zaki, A., Donoso, V., & Bossens, E. (2024). Digital skills of and for lives marked by vulnerability: Being young, refugee, and connected in Europe. *European Journal of Communication*, 39(3), 277–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231241245321>
- Ghasiya, P., & Sasahara, K. (2023). Messaging strategies of Ukraine and Russia on telegram during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. *First Monday*, 28(7–8). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v28i8.12873>
- Gibson, R. C., Meiklem, R., Moncur, W., & Ruthven, I. (2025). Online information disclosure and information privacy practices during significant life transitions: A scoping review. In *Proceedings of the 2025 ACM SIGIR conference on human information interaction and retrieval* (pp. 42–56). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3698204.3716445>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Gong, C., Saha, K., & Chancellor, S. (2021). "The smartest decision for my future": Social media reveals challenges and stress during post-college life transition. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 5(CSCW2), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3476039>
- Grinshtain, Y., & Haruv, M. (2025). "We are neither here nor there": Considerations of internal migration within forced displacement among evacuees in Israel's northern periphery. *Geo-Journal*, 90(2), 60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-025-11309-5>
- Haimson, O. L., Carter, A. J., Corvite, S., Wheeler, B., Wang, L., Liu, T., & Lige, A. (2021). The major life events taxonomy: Social readjustment, social media information sharing, and online network separation during times of life transition. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 72(7), 933–947. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24455>
- Hicks, A., McKenzie, P., Bronstein, J., Seiden Hyldegård, J., Ruthven, I., & Widén, G. (2025). Information avoidance: A critical conceptual review. An annual review of information science and technology (ARIST) paper. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76(1), 326–346. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24968>
- Honoré, F., Lestienne, L., Vieux, M., Bislimi, K., Chalancon, B., & Leane, E. (2025). "A sign that I am not alone": A grounded theory-informed qualitative study on spirituality after suicide

- bereavement. *Death Studies*, 49(6), 766–777. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2024.2355250>
- Huvila, I., & Gorichanaz, T. (2025). Trends in information behavior research, 2016–2022: An annual review of information science and technology (ARIST) paper. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76(1), 216–237. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24943>
- Jacques, J., Mas, S., Maurel, D., & Dorey, J. (2021). Organizing personal digital information: An analysis of faculty member activities. *Journal of Documentation*, 77(2), 401–419. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-03-2020-0034>
- Jia, M., Zhao, Y. C., Song, S., Zhang, X., Wu, D., & Li, J. (2024). How vicarious learning increases users' knowledge adoption in live streaming: The roles of parasocial interaction, social media affordances, and knowledge consensus. *Information Processing & Management*, 61(2), 103599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2023.103599>
- Jones, W., Capra, R., Diekema, A., Teevan, J., Pérez-Quinones, M., Dinneen, J. D., & Hemminger, B. (2015). "For telling" the present: Using the Delphi method to understand personal information management practices. In *In proceedings of the 33rd annual ACM conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 3513–3522). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702523>
- Jones, W., Dinneen, J. D., Capra, R., Diekema, A., & Pérez-Quinones, M. (2017). Personal information management (PIM). In M. J. Bates & M. N. Maack (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of library and information sciences* (3rd ed., pp. 584–605). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1081/E-ELIS3>
- Kaufhold, M. A., Rupp, N., Reuter, C., & Habdank, M. (2020). Mitigating information overload in social media during conflicts and crises: Design and evaluation of a cross-platform alerting system. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 39(3), 319–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2019.1620334>
- Keller, A. M., Taylor, H. A., & Brunyé, T. T. (2020). Uncertainty promotes information-seeking actions, but what information? *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 5(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-020-00245-2>
- Krtalić, M., Campbell-Meier, J., & Solhjoo, N. (2024). Evolving stories of self: Informational transitions and tattoos. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76, 959–973. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24985>
- Krtalić, M., & Dinneen, J. (2022). Information in personal collection of writers and artists. *Journal of Information Science*, 50(1), 189–203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01655515221084613>
- Krtalić, M., Dinneen, J. D., Liew, C. L., & Goulding, A. (2021). Personal collections and personal information management in the family context. *Library Trends*, 70(2), 149–179. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2021.0020>
- Krtalić, M., & Ihejirika, K. T. (2023). The things we carry: Migrants' personal collection management and use. *Journal of Documentation*, 79(1), 86–111. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2021-0236>
- Lachlan, K. A., DiCairano, J., & Gilbert, C. (2024). Examining the links between information sufficiency, news preferences, and protective behavior during Hurricane Ian. *Communication Studies*, 75(3), 265–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2023.2285968>
- Lachlan, K. A., DiCairano, J., & Spence, P. R. (2024). Looking beyond the television: Variability in information seeking patterns and mitigation behaviors during Hurricane Ian. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 23, 100336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2024.100336>
- Lawson, C., Adhikari, S., Gifford, C., & Fischer, L. (2024). Burning through information: An investigation of information sources and information seeking behavior during 2020 Oregon wildfires. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 113, 104841. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2024.104841>
- Levkovich, I., Elyoseph, Z., & Shinan-Altman, S. (2025). "Every day is like hell": Civilian abductees released from captivity in Gaza. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 30(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2024.2400122>
- Levkovich, I., & Labes, M. (2024). "I felt a sense of mission during moments of crisis": Mental health professionals' perspectives on their initial treatment of evacuees during the Israel–Hamas conflict. *Healthcare*, 12(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12111098>
- Lindley, S. E. (2012). Before I forget: From personal memory to family history. *Human Computer Interaction*, 27(1–2), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370024.2012.656065>
- Lloyd, A. (2017). Researching fractured (information) landscapes: Implications for library and information science researchers undertaking research with refugees and forced migration studies. *Journal of Documentation*, 73(1), 35–47. <https://doi.org/10.11645/11.1.2185>
- Lloyd, A. (2020). Shaping the contours of fractured landscapes: Extending the layering of an information perspective on refugee resettlement. *Information Processing & Management*, 57(3), 102062. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2019.102062>
- Miller, S. M. (1987). Monitoring and blunting: Validation of a questionnaire to assess styles of information seeking under threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(2), 345–353. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.2.345>
- Moffatt, S., & Heaven, B. E. N. (2017). Planning for uncertainty: Narratives on retirement transition experiences. *Ageing and Society*, 37(5), 879–898. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X15001476>
- Myles, P., Swenshon, S., Haase, K., Szeles, T., Jung, C., Jacobi, F., & Rath, B. (2018). A comparative analysis of psychological trauma experienced by children and young adults in two scenarios: Evacuation after a natural disaster vs forced migration to escape armed conflict. *Public Health*, 158, 163–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2018.03.012>
- Oleinik, A. (2024). Telegram channels covering Russia's invasion of Ukraine: A comparative analysis of large multilingual corpora. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 7(1), 361–384. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-023-00240-9>
- Pääaho, V., & Huttunen, A. (2025). Health information behavior during the life transition among people diagnosed with hypothyroidism. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76(7), 974–988. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24986>
- Palen, L., & Anderson, K. M. (2016). Crisis informatics- new data for extraordinary times. *Science*, 353(6296), 224–225. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aag2579>
- Raanaas, R. K., Lund, A., Sveen, U., & Asbjørnslett, M. (2019). Re-creating self-identity and meaning through occupations during expected and unexpected transitions in life. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 26(2), 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2019.1592011>

- Rahmi, R., Joho, H., & Shirai, T. (2019). An analysis of natural disaster-related information-seeking behavior using temporal stages. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 70(7), 715–728. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24155>
- Reuter, C., & Kaufhold, M. A. (2018). Fifteen years of social media in emergencies: A retrospective review and future directions for crisis informatics. *Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management*, 26(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12196>
- Ruthven, I. (2019). The language of information need: Differentiating conscious and formalized information needs. *Information Processing & Management*, 56(1), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2018.09.005>
- Ruthven, I. (2022). An information behavior theory of transitions. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 73(4), 579–593. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24588>
- Ruthven, I. (2025). In search of existential authenticity: Information behaviors during a time of personal transformation. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 76, 1647–1659. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.70019>
- Savolainen, R. (2021). Information landscapes as contexts of information practices. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 53(4), 655–667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000620982359>
- Savolainen, R. (2023). Everyday life as an evolving context of information behaviour. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 75(5), 940–960. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-03-2022-0116>
- Savolainen, R. (2025). Seeking and sharing information about the threat of nuclear war. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 57(1), 265–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006231219245>
- Savolainen, R., & Thomson, L. (2022). Assessing the theoretical potential of an expanded model for everyday information practices. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 73(4), 511–527. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24589>
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001100008100900202>
- Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 48(4), 159–162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01102.x>
- Settersten, R. A., Jr., Bernardi, L., Härkönen, J., Antonucci, T. C., Dykstra, P. A., Heckhausen, J., & Thomson, E. (2020). Understanding the effects of Covid-19 through a life course lens. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 45, 100360. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100360>
- Shinan-Altman, S., & Levkovich, I. (2025). War-time experiences and adaptation of foreign volunteers. *Military Psychology*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2025.2540657>
- Tretiakov, A., D'Antonio-Maceiras, S., Hernández, Á. A. D. S., & Martín, A. (2025). Toxic discourse in the digital battlefield: Analysing telegram channels during the Russia–Ukraine ‘conflict’. *Expert Systems*, 42(7), e70081. <https://doi.org/10.1111/exsy.70081>
- UNESCO. (2020). *The right to information in times of crisis: Access to information – saving lives, building trust, bringing hope!* World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Available from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374369>. Retrieved July 2025
- Wang, X., Yan, P., & Liu, C. (2024). Responsibility toward society: A review and prospect of Savolainen's everyday information practice. *Data and Information Management*, 8(3), 100070. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dim.2024.100070>
- Willson, R. (2019). Transitions theory and liminality in information behaviour research: Applying new theories to examine the transition to early career academic. *Journal of Documentation*, 75(4), 838–856. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2018-0207>
- Willson, T. D., & Maceviciute, E. (2025). Information seeking in a time of war: Coping with stress in Lithuania during the Russia/Ukraine war. *Journal of Documentation*, 81(7), 31–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-06-2024-0156>
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17(2), 89–100.
- Xi, J., & Lantolf, J. P. (2021). Scaffolding and the zone of proximal development: A problematic relationship. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 51(1), 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12260>
- Zecchinon, P., & Standaert, O. (2025). The war in Ukraine through the prism of visual disinformation and the limits of specialized fact-checking. A case-study at Le Monde. *Digital Journalism*, 13(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2024.2332609>
- Zhao, Y. C., Wu, D., & Song, S. (2025). Meaning-making during mental health struggles: Transitional information practices among individuals with obsessive-compulsive disorder. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 77(2), 347–366. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.25003>

How to cite this article: Alon, L., Malinoff, T., & Levkovich, I. (2026). From disorientation to preparedness: Information practices as scaffolding in acute crises. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.70078>

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Could you tell me about yourself and what everyday life looks like when there is no emergency?
2. Take me back to the moment you realized something unusual was happening. What did you do first and why?
3. In the first days, what were your main questions and concerns, and how did you try to address them?
4. Which information sources did you turn to, and what made those sources feel useful or accessible to you?
5. How did you judge whether information was trustworthy at that time?
6. How did engaging with information affect how you felt and your sense of safety or control?

7. Who did you talk with to make sense of events, and how did those conversations help?
8. What kinds of information did you share with others, and what guided your choices about what to share?
9. Was there information you chose not to share, and what were your reasons?
10. What steps did you take to save, organize, or protect important information or items?
11. As time went on, how did your information habits change in seeking, checking, sharing, or storing information?
12. When did things begin to feel more stable, and what changed in your approach to information at that point?
13. Looking back, what did you learn about yourself and what matters most to you in terms of information and records?
14. How would you prepare your information and documents for a future emergency, and what would you advise others to do?
15. What do you expect from public authorities and news media during emergencies, and how could they better support citizens' information needs?