

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION

JONATHAN HAIDT

The spike in youth mental illness that began around 2012 corresponds to the explosive growth in smart-phone use among tweens and teens.

Gen Z was the first to go through the sensitive period of puberty with smartphones and social media in their pockets. But this “phone-based childhood” is not suitable for human development. Kids need a “play-based childhood.”

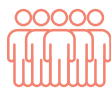
Jonathan Haidt's
The Anxious Generation shows how we can reclaim childhood, pull it away from phones, and reverse the rising tide of anxiety and depression.

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Parents need solutions for our Anxious Generation's mental-health struggle. Haidt's book offers clear plans for action:

- Find and dedicate yourself to community in real life when your children are young—in the neighborhood, at school, at camp, in religious community
- Find community for yourself as a parent. Avoid catastrophic thinking. Especially for parents born after 1980, question the values we were taught regarding “safety.”
- Give children the things they need to develop competence in the real world:
 - Free play as much as possible
 - Fewer activities with adult coordination
 - Rustic summer camps
 - More time in nature
- Keep tech out of kids' hands when they are very young; then have clear tech rules for the family
- Limit screen time; have a budget that kids help determine
- No smartphones until high school. Coordinate that policy with other parents.
- Stick to “dumb phones” and phone watches in older elementary school and middle school years
- No social media until high school



FOR TEENS

Give them responsibility (apprenticeship, job, driver's license, etc.). Have the best part of an '80s teenagerhood!



FOR SCHOOLS

Schools should be phone-free from K-12, to improve learning and relationships. Elementary and middle schools should give far more play and encourage antifragility and independence.



FOR BIG TECH

Assume a duty of care for minors. Enforce age limits. Stop using engagement-based algorithms on minors.



FOR GOVERNMENTS

Help schools to give more recess and free play. Raise the age of “internet adulthood” from 13 to 16, and enforce it by requiring companies to verify ages.



FOR EVERYONE

Advice on how to apply ancient spiritual practices that counteract the ill effects of modern technology