

THE NEGATIVE AFFECTS OF DIGITAL AGE ON TEENS : WHAT CAN WE DO?



**Texas Health Occupation
Association**



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No Disclosures

Phone-Based Childhood



The Problem



**What
Government can
do**



**How it affects
Students**



**What Schools and
Parents can do**



THE PROBLEM

Mental Health issues (depression, anxiety, suicide, etc.) among teens has more than doubled since 2010 worldwide. This coincides with the growth of smartphones and social media

“**Play-based Childhoods**” have
been replaced with
“**Phone-Based Childhoods**”

Major Depression Among Teens

Major Depression Among Teens

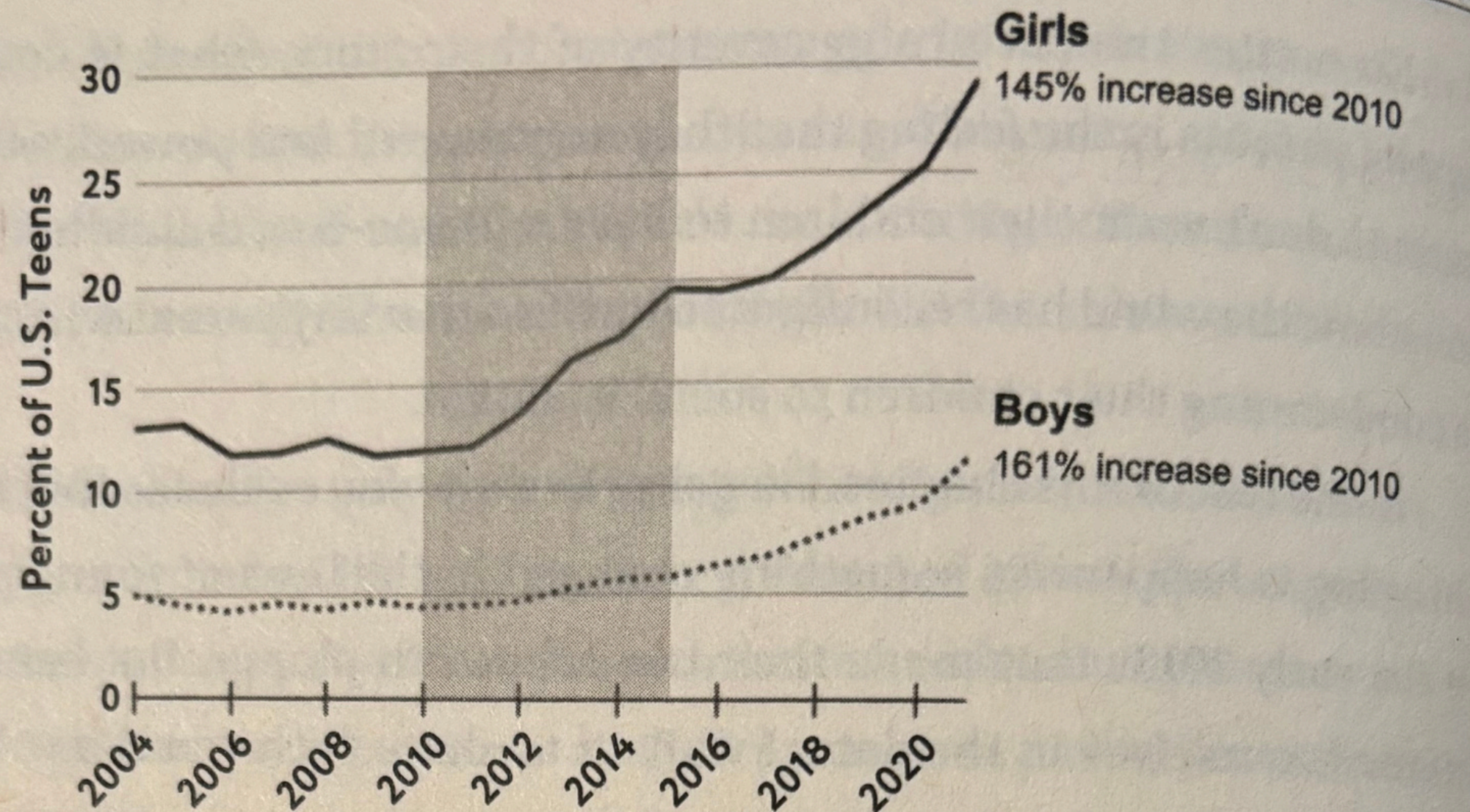


Figure 1.1. Percent of U.S. teens (ages 12–17) who had at least one major depressive episode in the past year, by self-report based on a symptom checklist. This was figure 7.1 in *The Coddling of the American Mind*, now updated with data beyond 2016. (Source: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health.)³

MENTAL ILLNESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

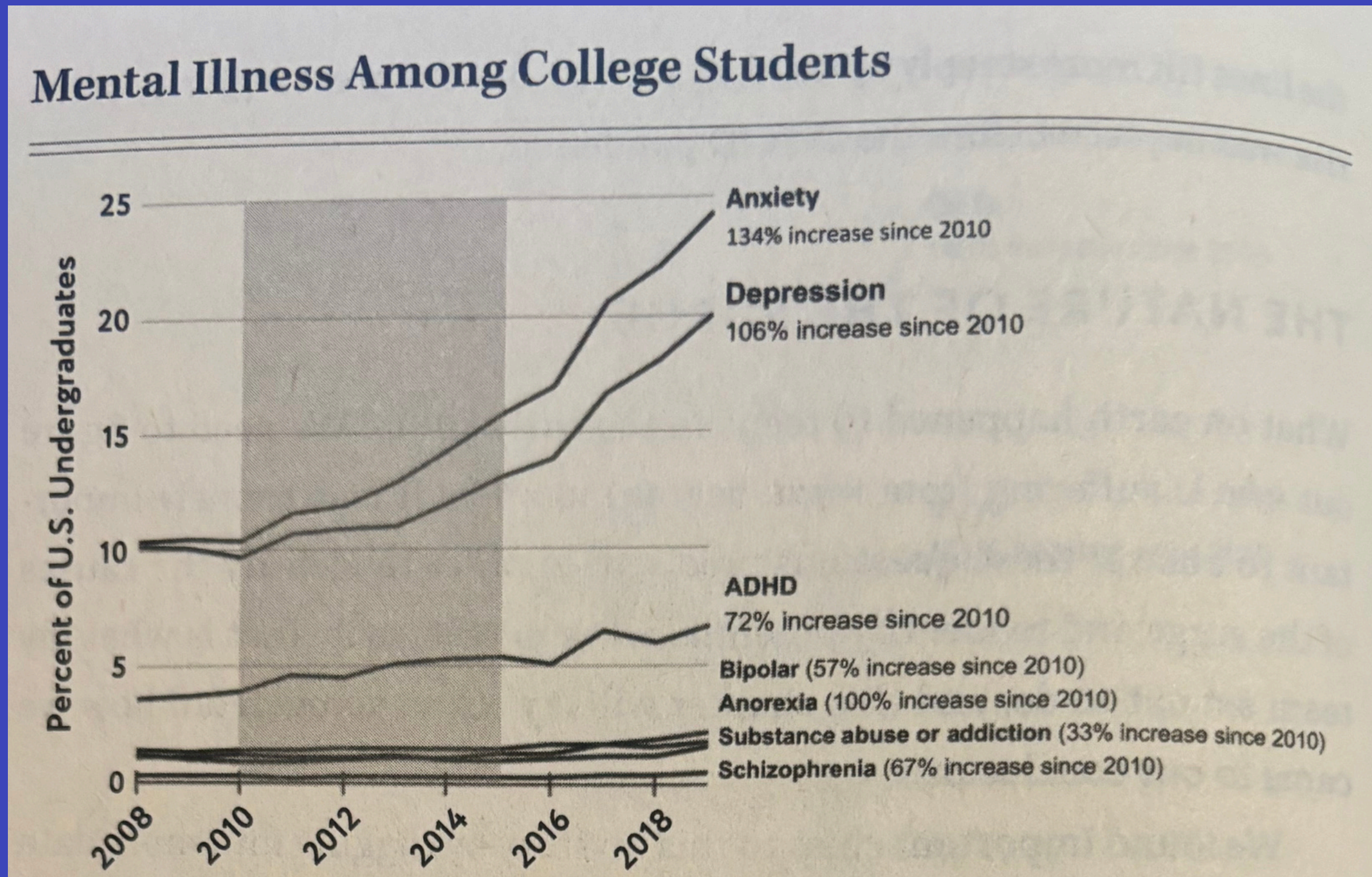
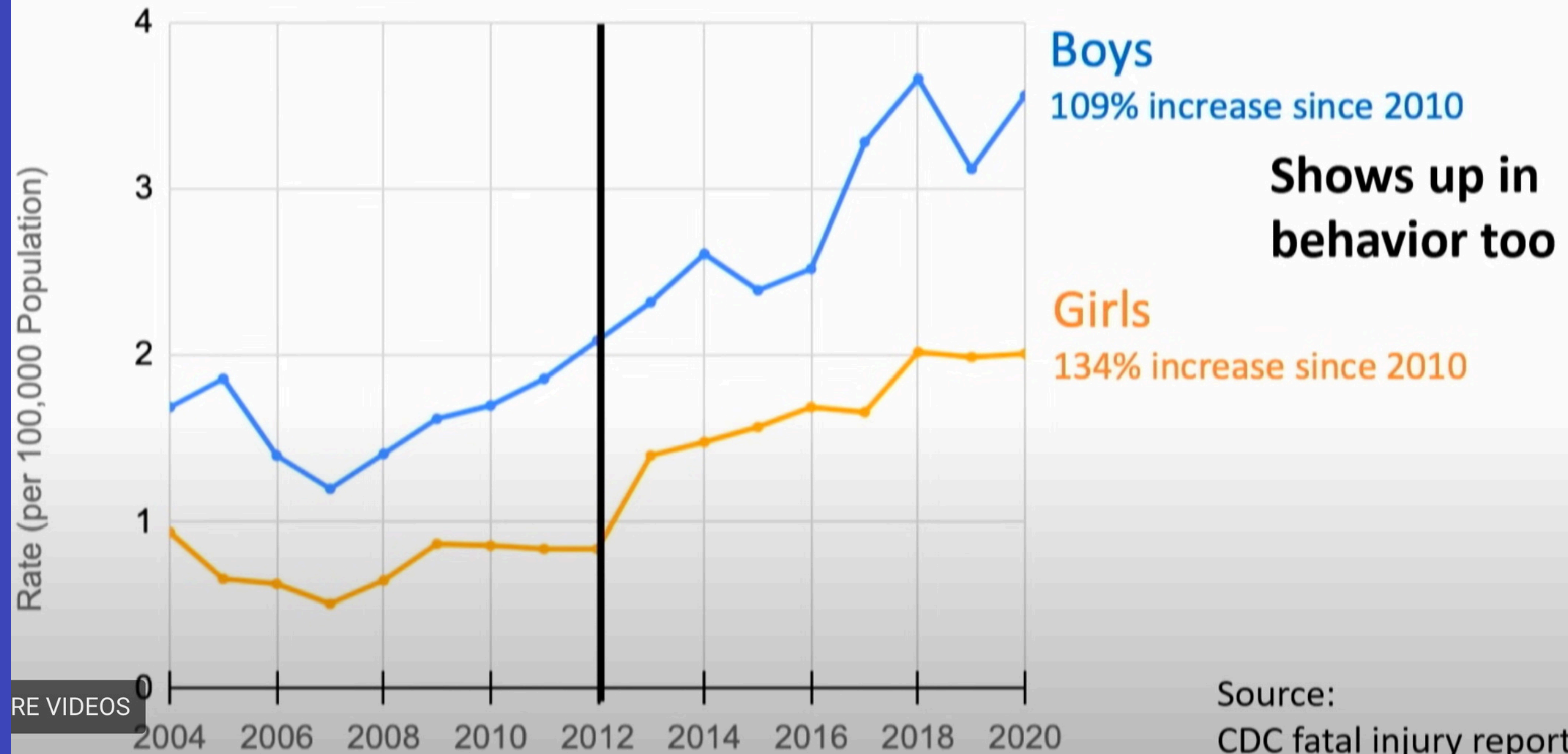


Figure 1.2. Percent of U.S. undergraduates with each of several mental illnesses. Rates of diagnosis of various mental illnesses increased in the 2010s among college students, especially for anxiety and depression. (Source: American College Health Association.)⁹

US Teens, Suicides (Ages 10 – 14)



YEAR	INVENTION	EFFECT
1990's	Internet/Personal Computers	None
2002-3	Laptop Computers Became common	More freedom/less supervision
2010	iPhone 4 Released	Front-facing Camera
2011	Instagram App (purchased by Facebook in 2012)	10 Million Viewers
2013	Instagram (Smartphone only)	90 Million Viewers
2012-3	77% FlipPhones 23% Smartphones	Unfiltered Internet at fingertips
2015	Teens 2 Hours/day Social Media 7 Lesure hours/day	Video Games, Netflix, Youtube, porn
2016	Teens: 79% had Smartphones	Increased Unfiltered use of internet unsupervised

IMPACT
Addictive Behavior (FOMO) (with the mere presence of cell phones notifications)
Classroom Distraction
Academic Performance/Cheating
Social-Emotional Learning
Mental Health
Executive Functioning
Safety



FUNDAMENTAL HARMS

1. SOCIAL DEPRIVATION
2. SLEEP DEPRIVATION
3. ATTENTION FRAGMENTATION
4. ADDICTION

Warning Signs of Suicidal Ideation

- According to the American Association of Suicidology, the acronym ***IS PATH WARM?*** can be used to recognize some of the most common warning signs

-
- *I Ideation*
 - *S Substance Abuse*
 - *P Purposelessness*
 - *A Anxiety*
 - *T Trapped*
 - *H Hopelessness*
 - *W Withdrawal*
 - *A Anger*
 - *R Recklessness*
 - *M Mood Changes**

Mental Health Emergency Action Plan

- Educate yourself on the signs and symptoms of mental illness and suicide.
- Always look for signs and symptoms of suicide
- Actively listen to the individual without judgement.
- Reassure the individual that you only want to help them stay safe and get any assistance that they need.
- Be Aware of your reporting obligations. **Do not** promise to keep secrets..
- Identify your local care team and referral options.
- Know who to call in the event of immediate danger or a crisis situation.

SUMMARY

- BETWEEN 2010-15 TEENS SOCIAL LIVES MOVED TO SMARTPHONES, SOCIAL MEDIA, ONLINE VIDEO GAMES, AND INTERNET BASED-ACTIVITIES
- THIS FIRST GENERATION TO HAVE SMARTPHONES BECAME MORE ANXIOUS, DEPRESSED, SELF-HARMING, AND SUICIDAL
- GIRL'S WERE HIT HARDER THAN BOYS (ESPECIALLY PRETEENS)
- GIRL'S INTERNALIZE: (DISTRESS, ANXIETY, FEAR, SADNESS, HOPELESSNESS, RUMINATION)
- BOYS EXTERNALIZE: (CONDUCT DISORDERS, ANGER ISSUES, VIOLENCE, RISK-TAKING)
- SUICIDE RATES AMONG TEENS BEGAN TO RISE AROUND 2008 FOR ADOLESCENTS, MUCH HIGHER IN THE 2010'S

SUMMARY CONTINUED

- FROM 2009-2012 *FACE-TO-FACE TIME FOR TEENS DROPPED FROM 122 MINUTES PER DAY TO 67*
- **SLEEP DEPRIVATION** DUE TO SMARTPHONES HAS CAUSED A DECREASE IN BOTH THE **QUALITY** AND **QUANTITY** OF SLEEP
- SLEEP DEPRIVATION IS LINKED TO **DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, IRRITABILITY, COGNITIVE DEFICITS, AND POOR LEARNING**
- STUDENTS GET HUNDREDS OF NOTIFICATIONS PER DAY, FRAGMENTED ATTENTION SPAN)
- SOCIAL MEDIA TRIGGERS DOPAMINE (PLEASURE WITHOUT ACTUAL SATISFACTION). IT MAKES YOU WANT MORE OF WHAT TRIGGERED THE EMOTION



HOW IT AFFECTS STUDENTS ACADEMICALLY

Dividing attention (electronic device and the classroom lecture) can **negatively affect long-term retention of the material.**

The presence of a cell phone can diminish attention (FOMO) and deficits in task performance, especially when they require greater attention and cognitive demands



STUDIES

DIVIDING CLASSROOM ATTENTION REDUCES EXAM PERFORMANCE

IMPACT OF MOBILE PHONES ON STUDENT LEARNING

SMARTPHONE USE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

MERE PRESENCE OF SMARTPHONES DECREASES COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

THE COST OF TEXTING IN THE CLASSROOM

NON ACADEMIC INTERNET USE IN THE CLASSROOM

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

ANXIOUS GENERATION RESEARCH



WHAT CAN BE DONE: GOVERNMENT

CLEAR POLICIES AND GUIDELINES (RAISE INTERNET
ADULT AGE, ETC)

INVEST IN DIGITAL LITERACY EDUCATION

PROMOTE TECHNOLOGY-FREE LEARNING AREAS

RESEARCH AND PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

SAFE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS: ANTI-CYBERBULLYING
LAWS, ETC.

TEXAS

HOUSE BILL 1481

BEGINNING ON SEPT. 1, STUDENTS IN TEXAS WILL BE BANNED FROM USING CELLPHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES DURING SCHOOL HOURS.

- **SCHOOLS MUST EITHER PROHIBIT THE DEVICES ON CAMPUS OR PROVIDE SECURE STORAGE FOR THEM, WITH PUNISHMENTS FOR VIOLATIONS.**
- **LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL BE WORKING OVER THE SUMMER TO COME UP WITH A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NEW LAW.**

HB HOUSE BILL 1491

HOUSE BILL 1481

HOUSE BILL 1481 GOES INTO EFFECT SEPT 1, 2025, REQUIRING ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOLS TO ADOPT POLICIES PROHIBITING STUDENTS FROM USING PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES WHILE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

DALLAS ISD PROHIBITS CELLPHONES DURING INSTRUCTIONAL CLASS TIME. STUDENTS CAN HAVE CELLPHONES, BUT THEY MUST BE KEPT OUT OF SIGHT AND REMAINED OFF DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

THEIR POLICY CALLS FOR THE FOLLOWING FINES:

1ST VIOLATION: PHONE CONFISCATED, RETURNED TO PARENT/GUARDIAN

2ND VIOLATION: PHONE CONFISCATED, RETURNED WITH A \$5 FEE.

3RD VIOLATION: PHONE CONFISCATED, RETURNED WITH A \$10 FEE.

4TH VIOLATION: PHONE CONFISCATED, RETURNED WITH A \$15 FEE.

REASONS CITED FOR THE NEW LAW

DISTRACTION: DISRUPT THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT BY DIVERTING STUDENTS' ATTENTION FROM CLASS ACTIVITIES.

IMPACT ON SOCIAL INTERACTION: HINDERS STUDENTS' ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS, (DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS), ESPECIALLY DURING LUNCH PERIODS, WHEN STUDENTS MAY OPT TO USE THEIR PHONES INSTEAD OF INTERACTING WITH THEIR PEERS.

CYBERBULLYING: ENABLING CYBERBULLYING, DURING THE SCHOOL DAY AND NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STUDENTS.

MENTAL HEALTH: THERE'S A GROWING AWARENESS THAT TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, SUCH AS ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION. BY LIMITING PHONE USE, SCHOOLS HOPE TO CREATE A HEALTHIER AND MORE FOCUSED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.



WHAT CAN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS DO

- 1. CLEAR RULES FOR PHONE USE (SCHOOL/HOME)**
- 2. COOPERATIVELY ESTABLISH SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROMOTE COMPLIANCE**
- 3. MODEL HEALTHY PHONE USE**
- 4. PHONE-FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**
- 5. MONITOR AND GUIDE ONLINE ACTIVITY**
- 6. TEACH AND ENCOURAGE DIGITAL LITERACY AND RESPONSIBILITY**
- 7. ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGE IN OFFLINE ACTIVITIES**
- 8. BRING PLAY BACK INTO THEIR LIVES**

PLAY



BENEFITS OF PLAY-BASED CHILDHOOD

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	Motor Skills
Creativity	Active Learning
Language Development	Physical Fitness
Emotional Regulation	Self Expression
Social Skills	Fun!!! (Get to be a kid)

An illustration on a dark blue background. On the left, a person with dark skin and hair in a bun, wearing a yellow shirt, sits at a white desk with a laptop. They are holding a black phone to their ear. Above them are two large purple question marks. To the right of the person is a white cloud with a blue outline. Further right is a magnifying glass with a blue lens and a yellow handle. In the bottom left corner is a yellow lightbulb. In the bottom center is a large yellow pencil with a pink eraser. The word 'CONCLUSION' is written in large white capital letters on the right side.

CONCLUSION

We can combat the negative effects of cell phones through a combination of **rules, education, tools, and culture-building**. The goal is to develop healthy, balanced relationships with technology that support, not hinder, their learning and social development

GOOGLE DRIVE SHARED LINK

PRESENTATION AND RESOURCES



CITATIONS

HAIDT, JONATHAN. THE ANXIOUS GENERATION, NEW YORK CITY, PENGUIN PRESS, 2024.

"ANXIOUS GENERATION." ANXIOUS GENERATION, 3 MAY 2025, WWW.ANXIOUSGENERATION.COM. ACCESSED 3 JUNE 2025.

AFTERBABEL. 3 MAY 2025, WWW.AFTERBABEL.COM. ACCESSED 3 JUNE 2025.

CHAT GPT. 3 MAY 2025, WWW.CHATGPT.COM. ACCESSED 3 JUNE 2025.

NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINER'S ASSOCIATION WEBINAR: MENTAL HEALTH SERIES: RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING A POTENTIALLY SUICIDAL PATIENT

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION: HOW THE GREAT REWIRING OF CHILDHOOD IS CAUSING AN EPIDEMIC OF MENTAL ILLNESS"

BY JONATHAN HAIDT MARCH 2024

A vibrant, stylized illustration on a dark blue background. In the center, the words "THANK YOU" are written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Surrounding the text are several cartoon-style characters and objects. On the left, a girl in a red dress holds a pink tablet. Below her, a girl in a yellow and red dress holds a black tablet. On the right, a boy in an orange sweater holds a black smartphone, and a girl in a teal shirt holds a black smartphone. Above the text, a large, stylized black arrow with a white outline points downwards. To the right of the arrow, a glowing yellow lightbulb with a black filament is shown. In the bottom center, a blue laptop with a green checkmark on its screen is surrounded by small yellow and pink starburst shapes. The overall style is flat and colorful, with a focus on digital technology and gratitude.

THANK
YOU