

HOW IS COVID-19 IMPACTING THE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF ADOLESCENTS?

JUTTA DOTTERWEICH, ACT FOR YOUTH

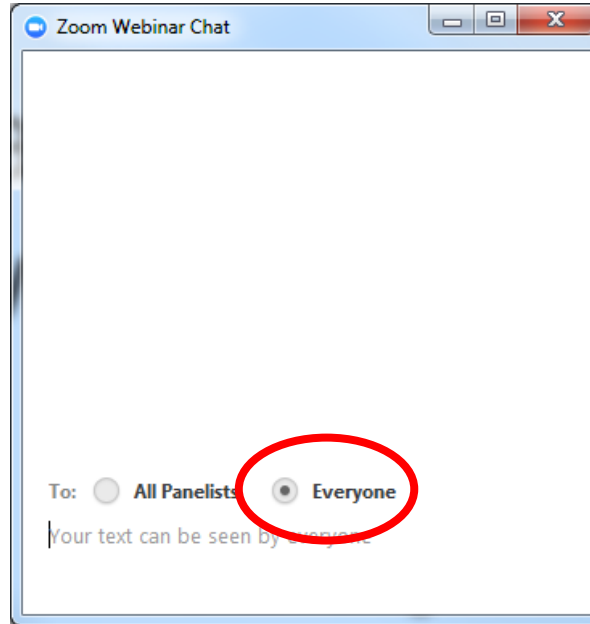
DECEMBER 16, 2020





Experiencing delays?

Try closing out the other programs running on your computer



Questions?

Use chat function. Post to Everyone.



Audio.

You control the volume. Please mute yourself during the presentation.

AGENDA

- COVID-19 challenges adolescent development
- What do we know so far?
- What do young people report?
- How do we support young people?
- Resources

Economic hardships

Trauma

Loss of loved ones

Loss of school community

Social Isolation

No prom

Uncertainty

No sports

Depression

Social media and gaming 24/7

Boredom

New responsibilities in family

No graduation celebration

Daily routines disturbed

A TIME LIKE NO OTHER

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS - DISRUPTED?

Adjust to maturing
bodies and feelings

Renegotiate
relationship with
adults

Take on increasingly
mature roles and
responsibilities

Develop identity
(different aspects)

Develop/apply abstract
thinking skills



Form friendships that
are close and supportive

Develop/apply more
complex perspective
taking

Develop/apply new
coping skills

Sense of purpose, agency
& autonomy

Identify moral
standards, values, and beliefs

Understand/express more
complex emotional experiences

Adolescent Brain Development

- Period of growth
- Brain centers still maturing
- Imbalance: Emotional brain in the driver's seat

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

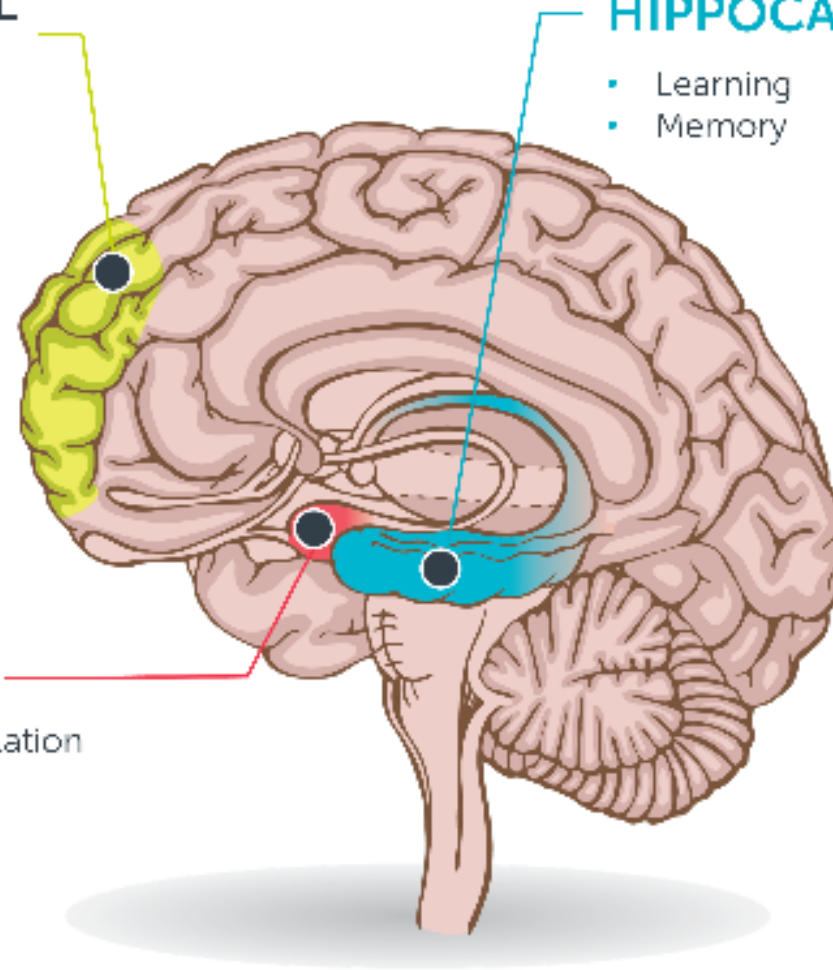
- Attention
- Concentration
- Focus

HIPPOCAMPUS

- Learning
- Memory

AMYGDALA

- Emotional Regulation
- Reactivity





WHAT DO WE EXPECT? HOW DO
YOUNG PEOPLE RESPOND TO THIS?

CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones, and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems.

Mental disorders among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, which cause distress and problems getting through the day.

INCREASE IN MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Under “regular” circumstances

- 13-20% of children under 18 experience a mental health disorder in a given year
- Only about 50% of these children with mental health disorders receive specialized mental health care

Prediction: Impact of COVID-19

- Increase of disorders to 25-30% of all young people

Gil Noam, PEAR Institute, Associate Professor of Psychiatry,
Harvard Medical School
Webinar: Mental Health and Youth Development: Priorities for the
Summer and Beyond

CDC DATA JUNE 2020

During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use*

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS



STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS



SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE†



*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24–30, 2020

†In the 30 days prior to survey

For stress and coping strategies: bit.ly/dailylifecoping

CDC.GOV

bit.ly/MMWR81320

MMWR

Higher rates for young adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers and unpaid adult caregivers

3 – 4 times higher than comparable data from 2019

Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020 | MMWR (cdc.gov)

RECENT STUDIES: CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Impact of COVID-19:

- Increased stress
- Increase in anxiety
- Increase in depression
- Smart phone addiction

CDC

- Increase in mental health related ED visits



WHAT DO ADOLESCENTS SAY?

- *Teen Mental Health*, Harris Poll (National 4-H) June 2020
 - Online survey, 1,516 participants (ages 13-19), across US
- *Are the Kids Alright?* California Partners Project, Child Mind Institute & Material+, November 2020
 - In depth interviews and week-long diary entries (of youth and parents) documenting daily behaviors (sleep, exercise, internet use, and corresponding mood), 46 participants, living in California

HARRIS POLL (4-H STUDY)

THE STATE OF TEEN MENTAL HEALTH



Teens in America are facing unprecedented stress today, amplified by COVID-19

Many believe COVID-19 will have lasting long-term impacts on their generation, their families, and society overall

67%

“Sometimes the pressure I feel at school, home, etc. feels like too much to handle.”

43% also say, “the way things are going, I don’t know how I’m going to cope with the stress if it continues at this pace.”

64%

“The experience of COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on my generation's mental health.”

71% also feel misunderstood by other generations, saying, “most older people do not understand the struggles of young people today.”

65%

COVID-19 has negatively impacted the mental health of society overall.

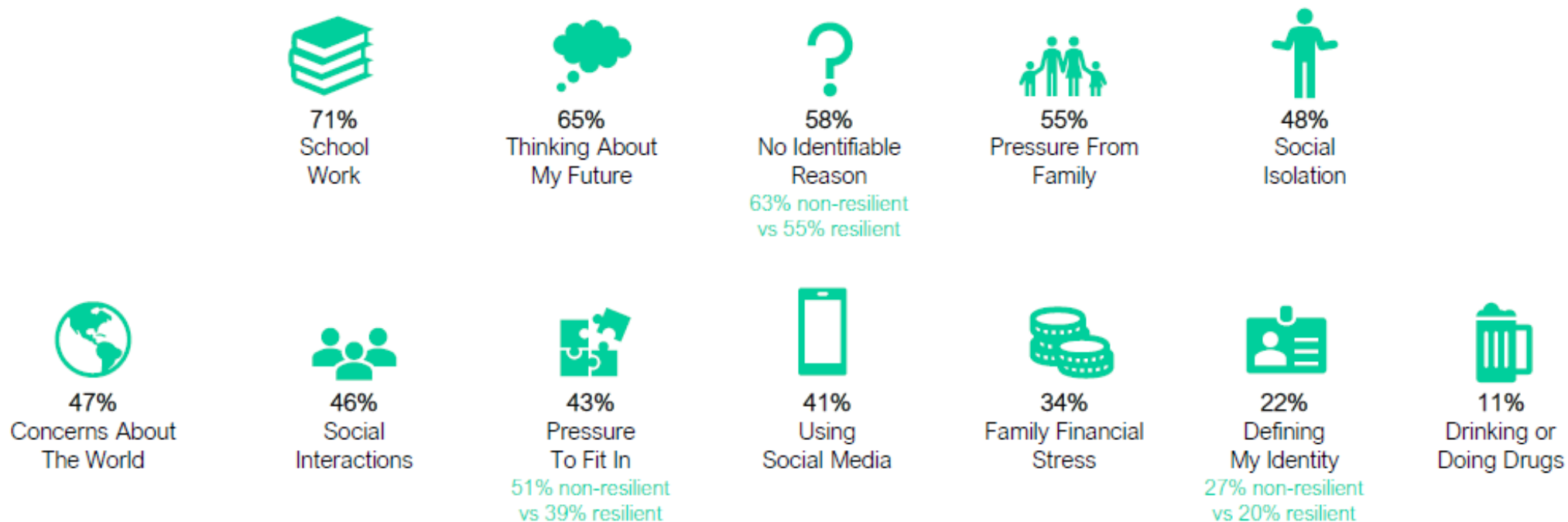
65% also say, “the current pandemic has increased stress on my family.”



School and an uncertain future are top stressors for teens during the pandemic

Teens who are less resilient are also more likely to face mental health issues as a result of ambiguity

Which of the following can make you anxious or depressed?

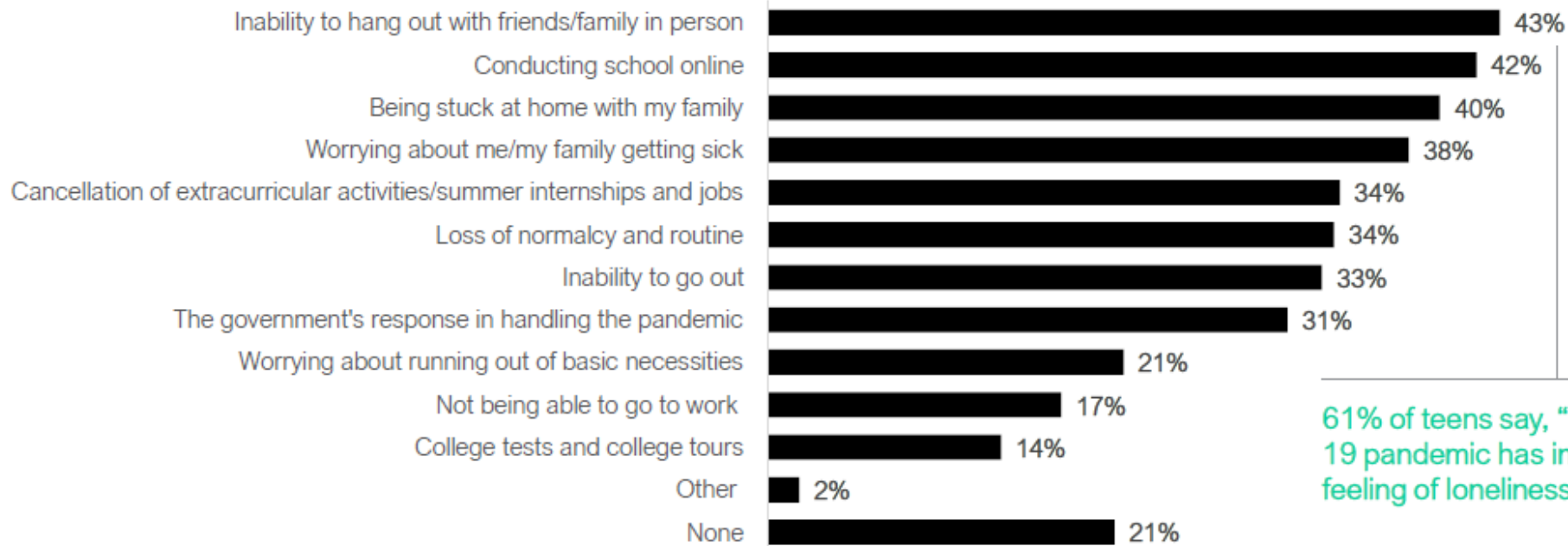




COVID-19 has also brought on its own set of unique stressors

Many struggle with isolation as 6 in 10 teens say their sources of support are harder to reach during COVID-19 than usual

During the COVID-19 pandemic, has any of the following made you feel anxious or depressed?



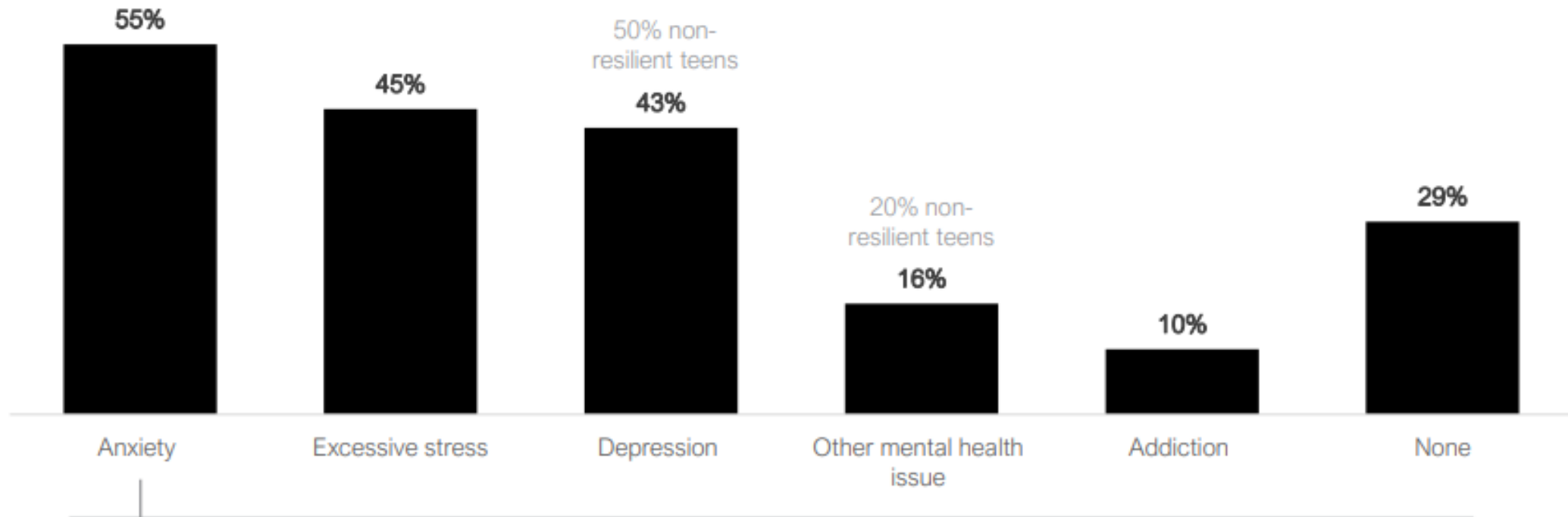
61% of teens say, "The COVID-19 pandemic has increased my feeling of loneliness."



In this stressful climate, 7 in 10 teens have experienced struggles with mental health

Non-resilient teens are especially likely to battle depression and other mental health issues

Have you ever experienced any of the following?



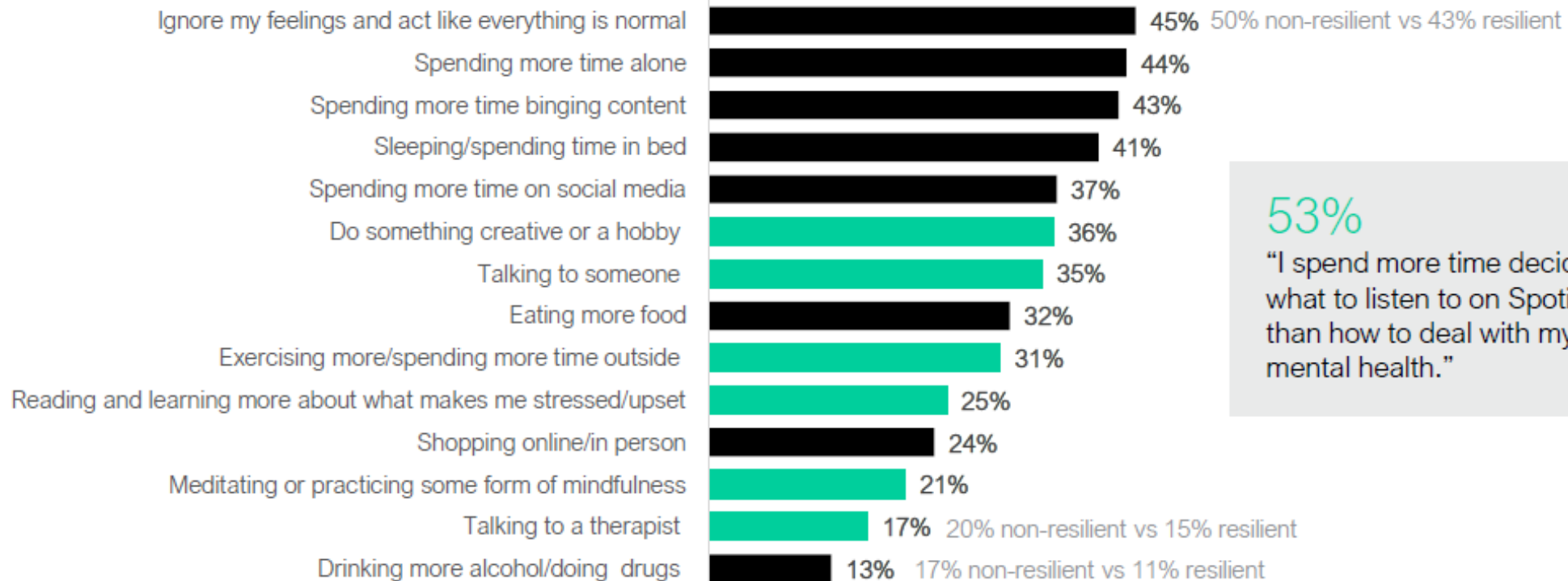
Half of teens say they feel anxious or depressed “more frequently than their peers” (48%)

Most are ignoring their feelings to cope, especially non-resilient teens

They are more likely to turn to screen time bingeing content and social media than talking to someone about their issues

Which of the following do you use to help you when you feel anxious or depressed during normal times?

■ Unhealthy coping mechanisms ■ Healthy coping mechanisms



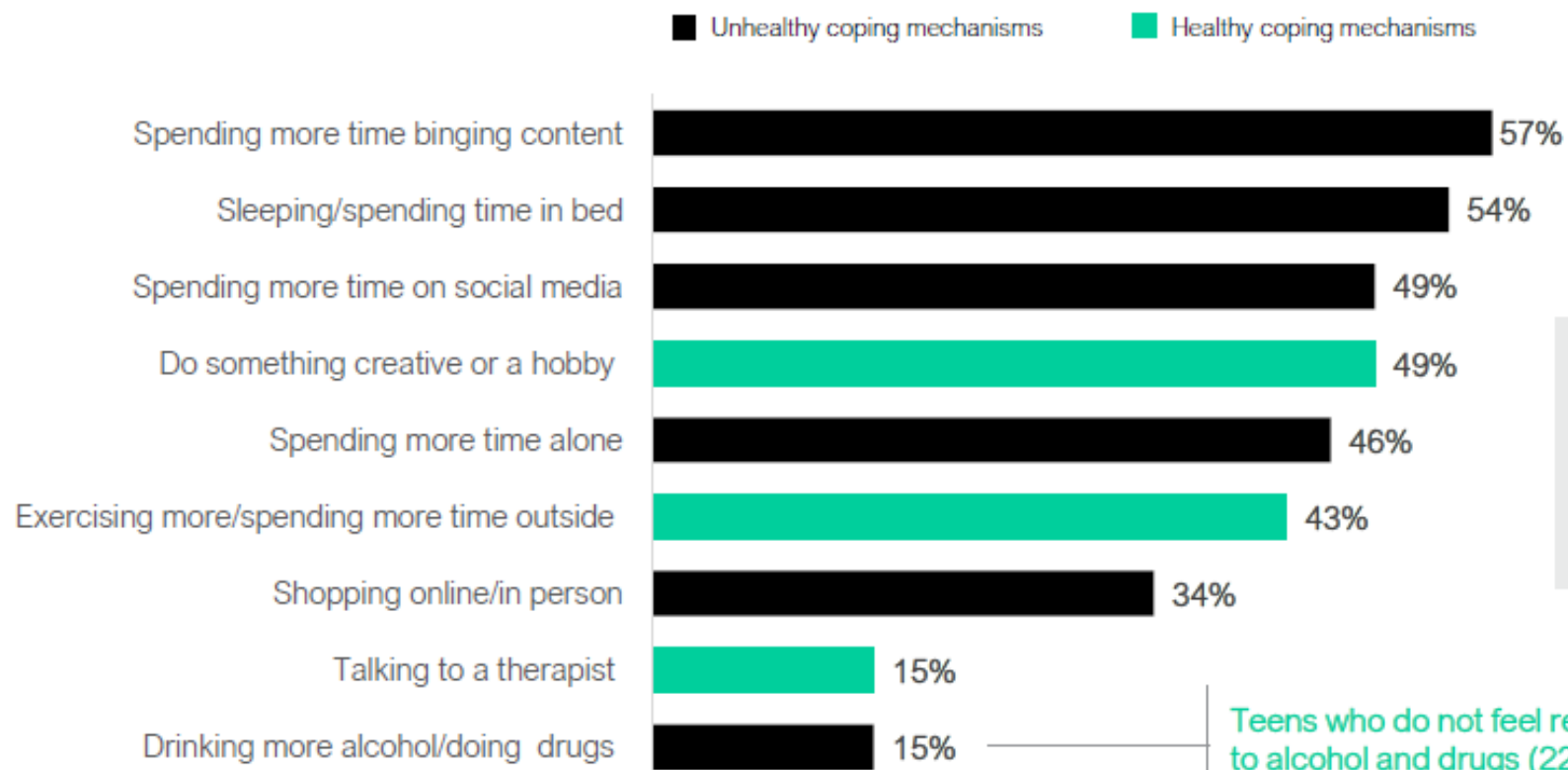
53%

“I spend more time deciding what to listen to on Spotify than how to deal with my mental health.”

Screen time and sleep are also rising as teens turn to 'vices' to cope during COVID-19

60% say, "it's hard to have healthy coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of COVID-19 under the current stay-at-home orders"

Which of the following do you use to help you when you feel anxious or depressed during COVID-19?



42% of teens admit they've been leaning into their 'vices' (e.g., unhealthy food, vaping) and unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with the impact of COVID-19.

Teens who do not feel resilient are twice as likely to turn to alcohol and drugs (22% vs 12% resilient teens)

Despite today's pressures, many teens do feel equipped to handle life's challenges

Specifically, teens who identify as resilient tend to be more confident in combatting mental health issues

68%

"I consider myself to be resilient."

67%

"I am confident in providing advice to help others with their mental health struggles."

72% resilient teens vs 57% non-resilient

61%

"I am confident solving my own mental health struggles."

68% resilient teens vs 46% non-resilient

58%

"I am confident in my ability to cope in a healthy way."

63% resilient vs 48% non-resilient teens

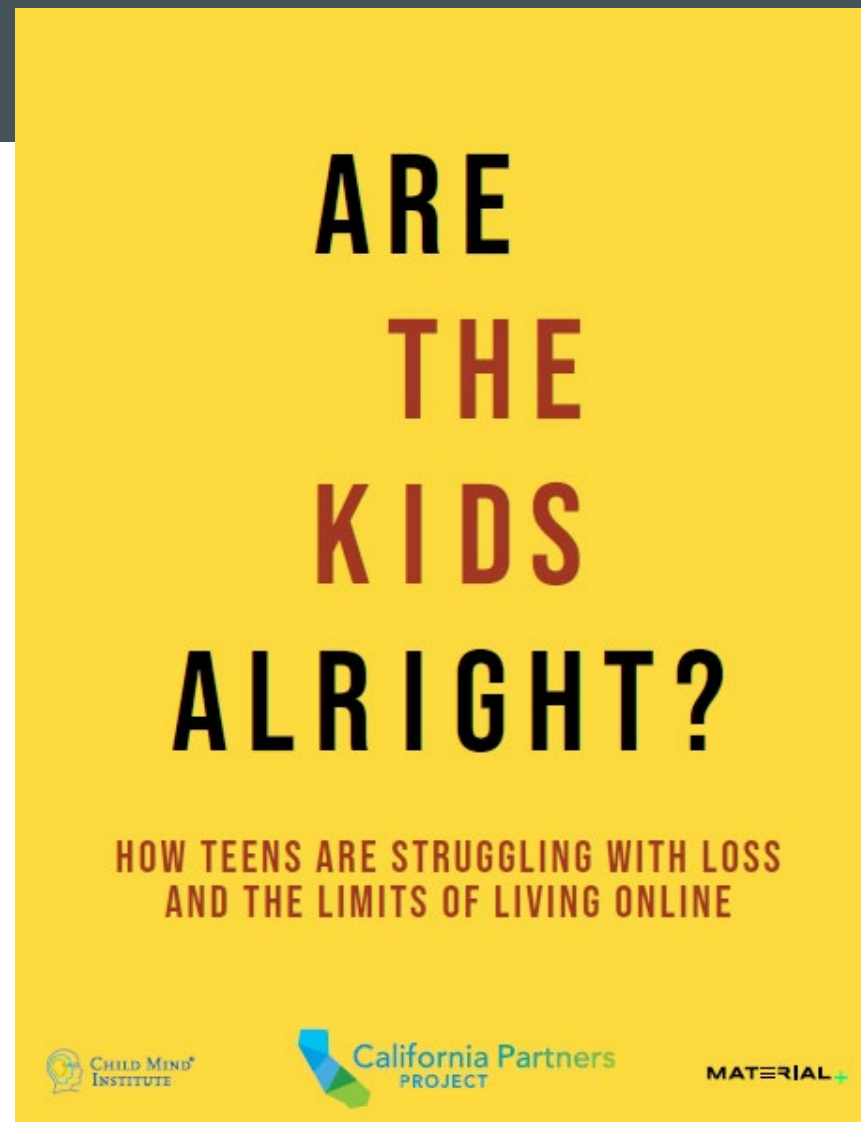


ANY TAKEAWAYS?

CALIFORNIA PARTNERS PROJECT

[Are the Kids Alright? | calpartnersproject](#)

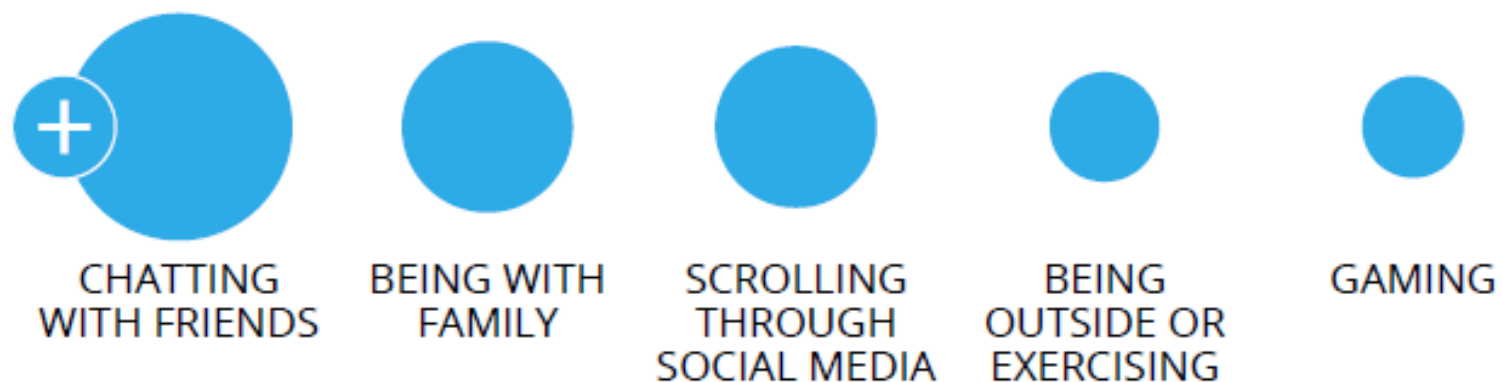
Includes toolkit for teens and parents



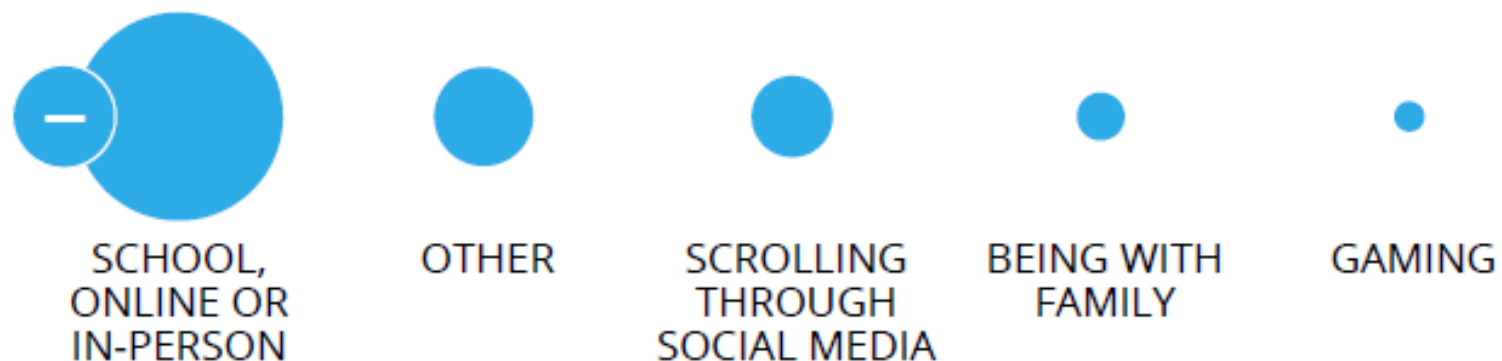
KEY FINDINGS

1. Teens are experiencing a tremendous loss due to school closure and social isolation
2. There is limited opportunity to do the “work of adolescence” and form their identities
3. Social media and gaming have become the main way to meet their social needs
4. The extent of tech use and its impact aren’t obvious, even to those closest to teens

What Contributed to Teens' Positive Mood



What Contributed to Teens' Negative Mood



SOURCE: Child Mind Institute/MindLogger. A total of 42 teens and 33 parents completed the survey. The graphics in this report aggregate their responses.

EXPERIENCING LOSS - STAGES OF GRIEF

“At first, it was this cool thing. We aren’t going to school. I remember the first few days I was still seeing people. I’m not going to get the virus from these people. It was such a far-off thing in my community.”

~Age 17, Sonoma County

“When it first started, when I heard we were not going back, it was pure shock. We were not able to see friends and go certain places and travel. It ruined my summer. With anger comes sadness.”

~Age 16, Sonoma County

“I was angry that sports and my whole life stopped with the pandemic... It’s our junior year in high school and that’s one of the most important, especially for sports. We haven’t been able to go to tournaments. College coaches are not traveling.” *~Age 16, Sonoma County*

“But once this started to happen, I kind of accepted that it’s kind of just another year of school and it’s going to be different and more difficult in some ways and easier in others.” *~Age 15, San Francisco County*

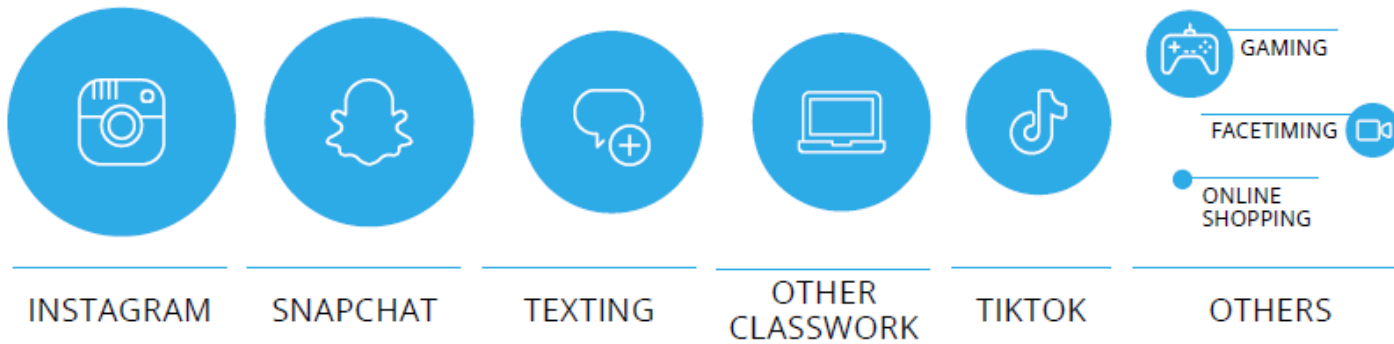
SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING MAIN WAY TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS

“TikTok is a good pass time, but it definitely doesn’t make quarantining better, I’d rather be with my friends.”
~Age 17, Alameda County

“TikTok is the one I spend the most time on because it has stuff I actually want to watch. If I don’t have anything to do, TikTok’s the obvious place to go.”
~Age 14, San Mateo County

Teen Multitasking During Online Learning

All respondents said they used other apps and devices while in class. Here’s what they did.



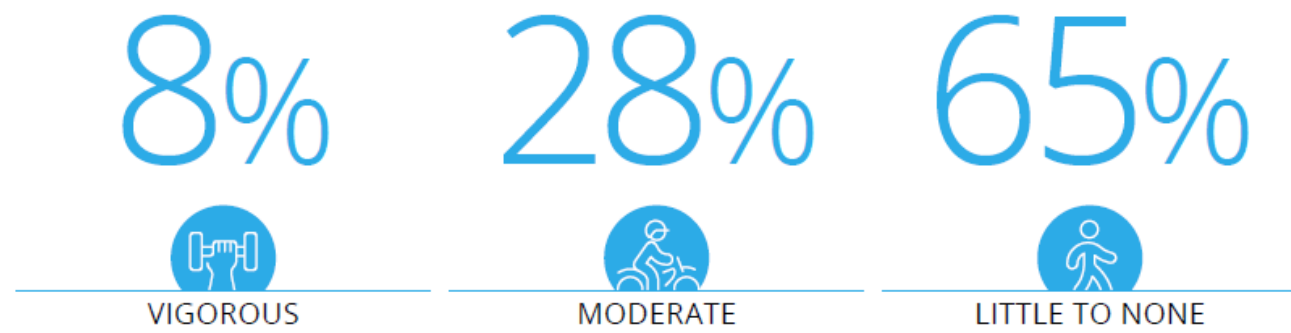
SOURCE: Child Mind Institute/MindLogger. Based on daily diary entries by 42 teens.

RECOGNIZING DANGERS OF OVERUSE

- “Addicted” to technology and apps
- “I could quit, but I don’t want to...”
- “I know it’s bad, but everybody is doing it”

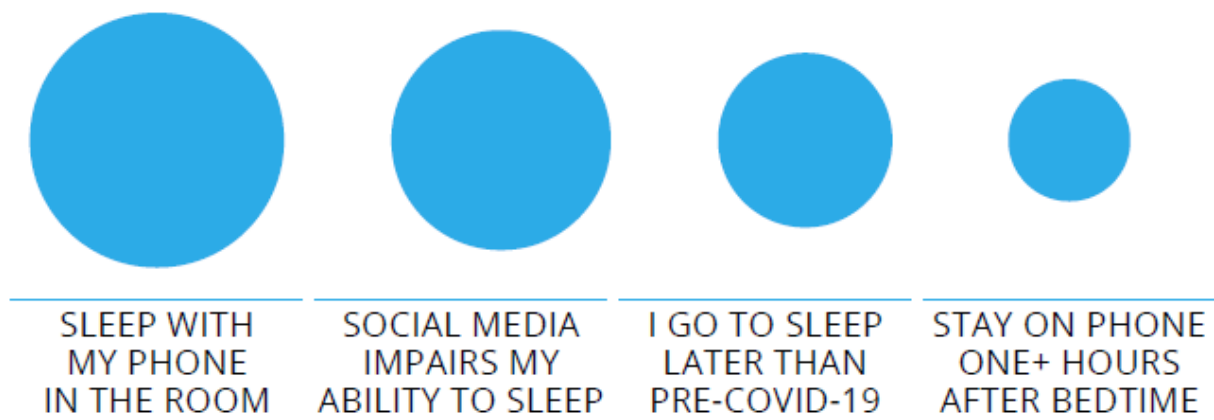


Amount of Physical Activity Reported Over One Week



SOURCE: Child Mind Institute/MindLogger. Based on 265 responses by 42 teens.

A Majority of Teens Reported Poor Sleep Patterns



SOURCE: Child Mind Institute/MindLogger. Based on daily diary entries by 42 Teens.

PARENT DILEMMA

Parent diaries
*Underreported their
children's screen time*

“We need help!”

“I get worried about how to keep her entertained and not rely on social media for entertainment.”

“He plays a lot of video games and claims the games make him happy. [He's] just on-line school, game, TV, eat... days after days.”

“I worry – he stays in PJs and seems generally unenthused about everything except food and video games. I told him to get half an hour of sun and he jokingly said, ‘it's scary outside.’”

SUPPORTING TEENS

- Acknowledge what has been taken away
- Don't blame teens for their coping mechanisms
- Know the signs of depression and anxiety
- Be aware of the behavior you are modelling

What to look for

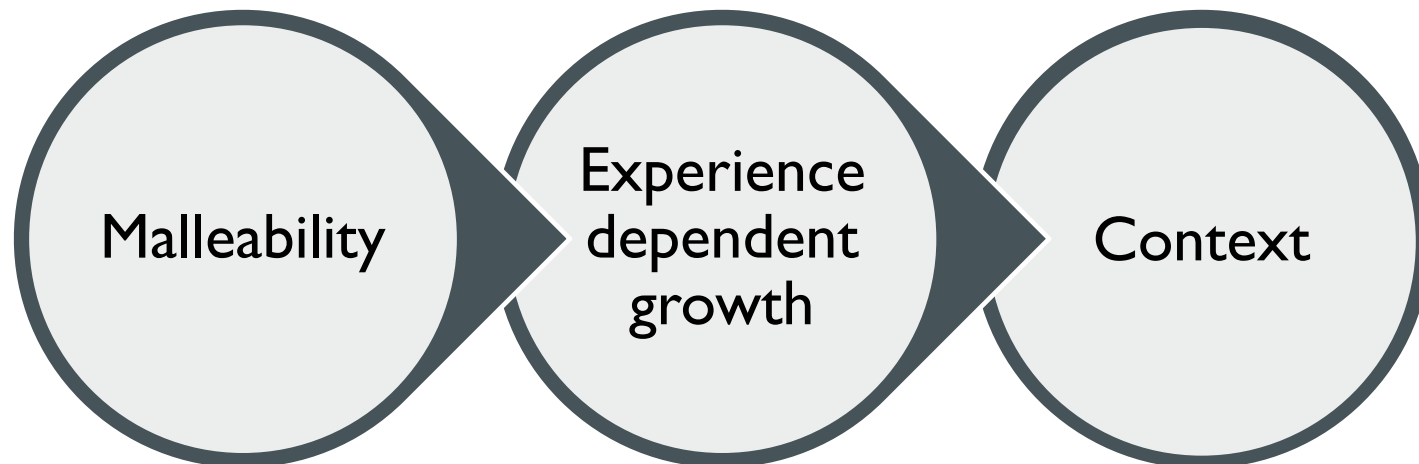
- *Feeling very sad or withdrawn for two or three weeks*
- *Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities*
- *Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships*
- *Drastic changes in behavior or personality*
- *Severe, out-of-control behavior*
- *Repeated use of drugs or alcohol*



ANY TAKEAWAYS?

EMERGING SCIENCE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (SOLD)

Brain Development



Cortisol and **oxytocin** are hormones that the body produces in response to context – cortisol in response to stress, oxytocin in response to love and trust.

HOW DO WE SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE?

New Three R's

- o Relationships: The science tells us that relationships are the active ingredient in the learning environment, and the antidote to toxic stress.
- o Routines: The brain is a predictive machine, and is calm when things are orderly, making routines and consistency vital pieces of environments that encourage brain development.
- o Resilience: The key to building resilience is recognizing that we all – adults and youth alike – have strengths to build upon. Asset-based approaches allow us to help them understand and manage their emotions.

RELATIONSHIPS



AT HOME

- Connect with students individually and through advisories
- 15-minute daily huddle for leaders and teachers
- Check in with families—ask about schoolwork, wellbeing, and how COVID is affecting them
- Use serve and return with younger children
- Group activities —games, cooking, etc.

RE-ENTRY

- All of the above
- Increased frequency for in-person advisories
- Looping

turnaroundusa.org

ROUTINES



AT HOME

- Establish daily times for lessons, reading, storytelling, homework and family meals
- Exercise at least 20 minutes a day and get a full night's sleep
- Learn a reflective, mindful practice, such as journaling
- Hold family COVID meetings
- Empower older children to plan routines and tutor siblings
- Set achievable goals for learning and wellness each day

RE-ENTRY

- All of the above
- Co-create norms and routines
- Empower students to design and use routine planners
- Use cognitive unloaders
- Focus on physical, emotional and identity safety
- Tiered support system implemented at all levels
- Build strong mental health and health partnerships

RESILIENCE



AT HOME

- Co-regulate emotions and responses to stress
- Limit media
- Solve problems together with children and celebrate successes
- Create things to look forward to

RE-ENTRY

- All of the above
- Apply a whole-child vision, inclusive of a safe, supportive environment, strong developmental relationships, and integrated academic, skill and mindset development



Thank You!



RESOURCES

Turnaround for Children -

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic Resources | Turnaround for Children \(turnaroundusa.org\)](#)

[Stress and the Brain | Turnaround for Children \(turnaroundusa.org\)](#)

CDC. Daily Life Coping/Stress and Coping - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/index.html>

The Five Steps (suicide prevention) [How The 5 Steps Can Help Someone Who is Suicidal - #BeThe1To](#)

Child Mind Institute - [Child Mind Institute | Transforming Children's Lives.](#)

CASEL - [Covid- 19 SEL Resources \(casel.org\)](#)

ACT for Youth: SEL Toolkit - http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/

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