



BOONE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*Discover life together.*

# The Anxious Generation

A conversation about phones, social media and adolescent  
mental health

# Overview

## Presentation

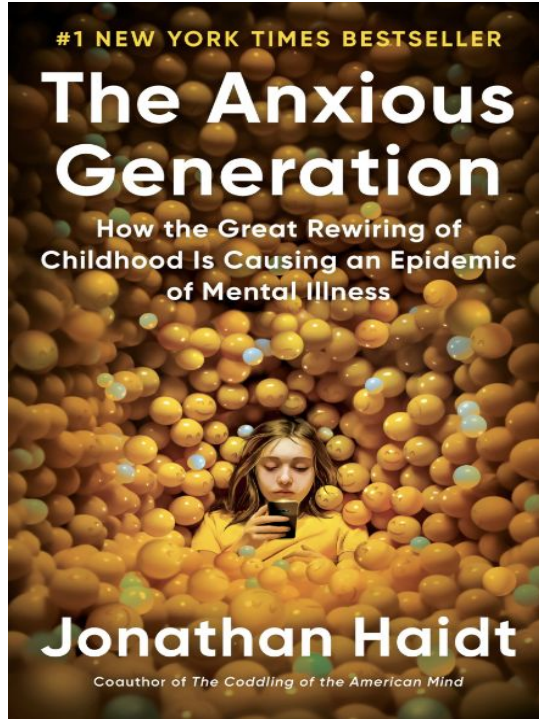
- The Anxious Generation
- BUMC Digital Fast for Lent

## Break

## Discussion/Q and A

## Prayer

# The Anxious Generation - by Jonathan Haidt



## Jonathan Haidt

- Professor at NYU in social psychology
- Also authored *The Righteous Mind* (2012) and *Coddling of the American Mind* (2018)
- Released in March 2024: NYT best seller list since its release

# Timeline



**2007: iPhone  
released**



**2009: “like” and  
“share” buttons**



**2010: Front  
facing cameras  
= selfies**

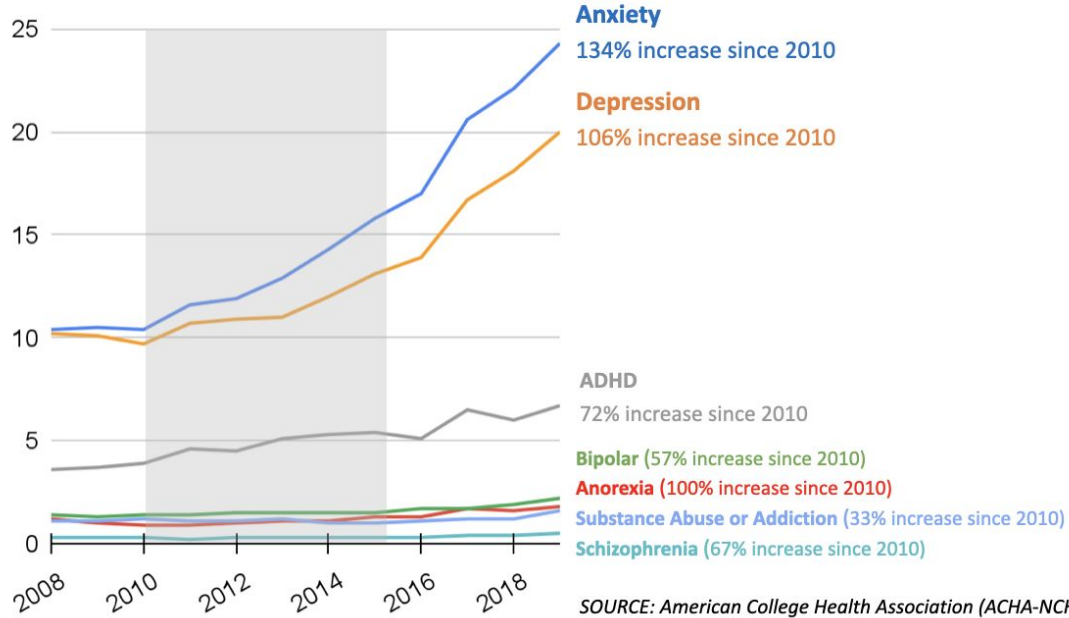


**2012: Facebook  
buys Instagram**



**2010-2015: The  
Great Rewiring**

Percent of U.S. Undergraduates Diagnosed with a Mental Illness



# Surge in Suffering

# KEY POINT

- ***Overprotection*** of kids in the real world
- **PLUS**
- ***Underprotection*** of kids in the virtual world
- **= Mental Health Crisis (Gen Z, Gen Alpha)**
- **\*\*Play based to phone based childhood**

# Four foundational harms (of Phones)

Social deprivation



```
graph TD; A[Social deprivation] --> B[Sleep deprivation]; B --> C[Attention Fragmentation]; C --> D[Addiction]; D --> E["**Causes of the Great Rewiring"]
```

Sleep deprivation

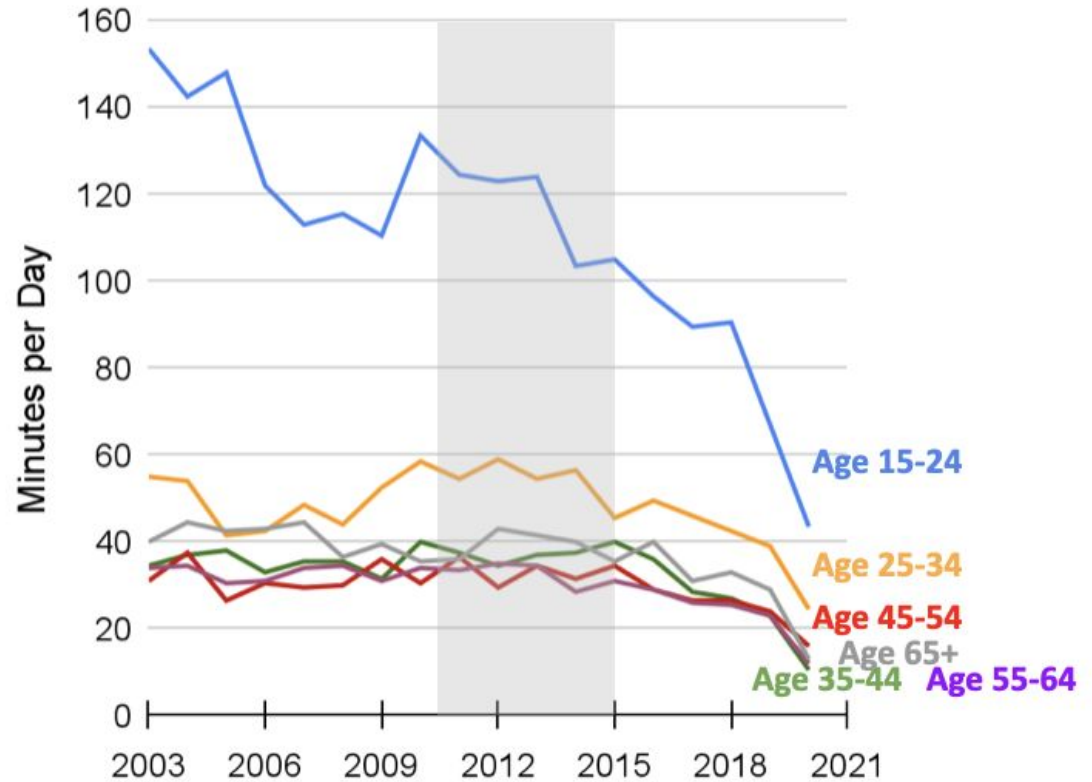
Attention Fragmentation

Addiction

**\*\*Causes of the Great Rewiring**

# Foundational Harm #1 - Social Deprivation

## Daily Avg Time with Friends (minutes)

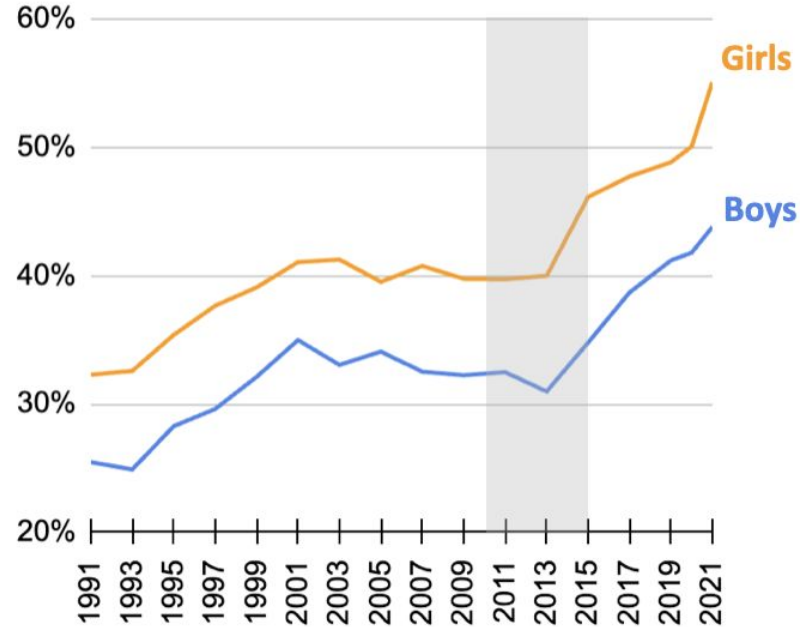




# Foundational Harm #2 - Sleep Deprivation

---

Sleep Less Than 7 Hours a Day (USA 8th, 10th, and 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future, Pooled Average, Weighted, 2020 and 2021 separate, 2-year-buckets

# Foundational Harm #3 - Attention Fragmentation

- University of Michigan/Common Sense Media
  - Teens receive **average** of 240 notifications/day
  - 25% during school
  - 5% at night
  - 1 notification every 4 minutes (when awake)
- \*\*Average teen spends 7 hours/day on their phone

# Foundational Harm #4 - Addiction

---



Anne Lembke (Stanford psychologist) - “Dopamine Nation”



“The smartphone is the modern day hypodermic needle, delivering dopamine 24/7 for a wired generation.... The universal symptoms of withdrawal from any addictive substance are anxiety, irritability, insomnia, and dysphoria”



\*Phones lead to **dopamine dysregulation**

# Four foundational harms (of Phones)

---

Social deprivation

---

Sleep deprivation

---

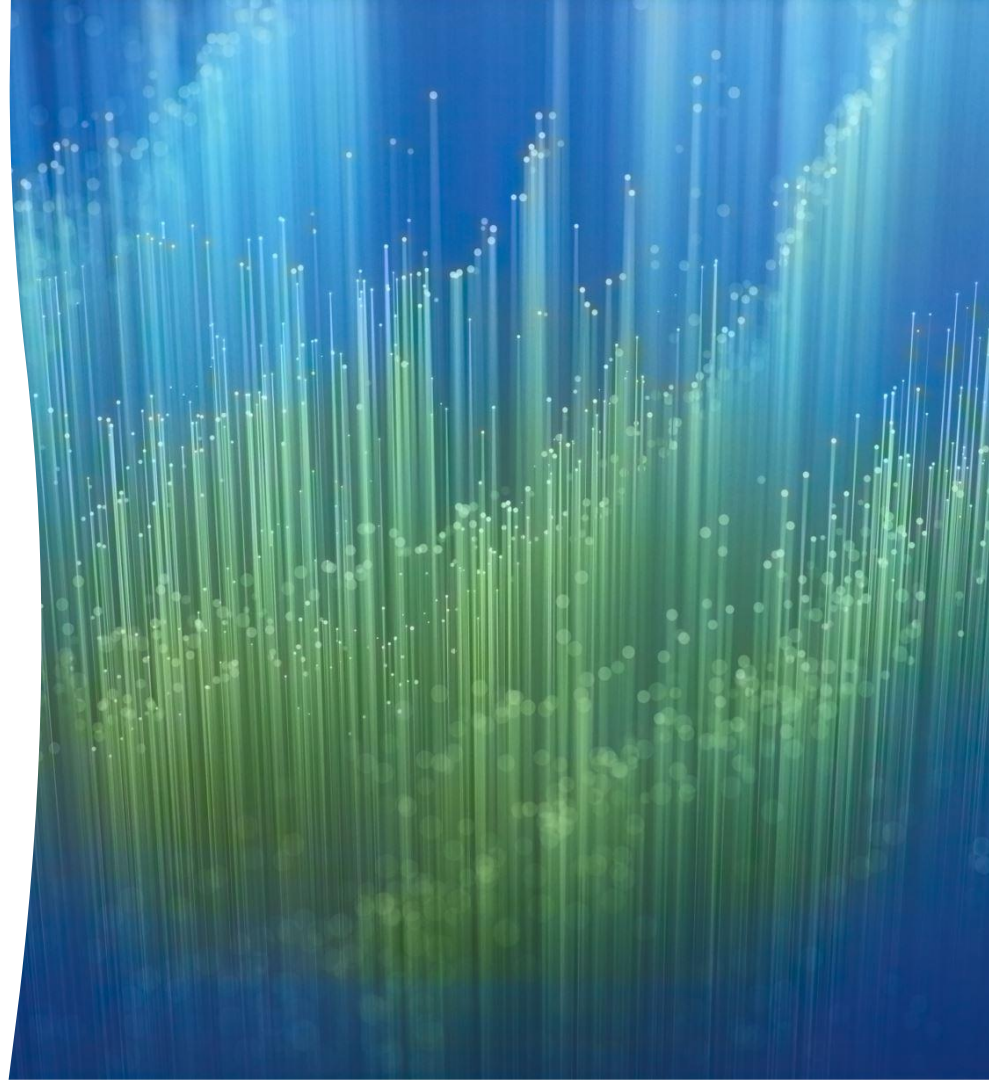
Attention Fragmentation

---

Addiction

---

**= GREAT REWIRING**



# Key Recommendations

No smart phones before high school



No social media before age 16



Phone free schools



Play based childhood

# Phones block SIX Spiritual Practices

Shared sacredness (Time, Place, Objects)

Embodiment

Stillness, Silence, Focus

Transcending the Self

Slow to Anger, Quick to Forgive

Find Awe in Nature

# **From Lost Connections by Johan Hari**

---

## **Seven Positives for Childhood to build resilience**

---

- 1. Shared feelings with family members**

---

- 2. A sense of belonging**

---

- 3. In person support during negative times**

---

- 4. A sense of security and protection**

---


- 5. Supportive friends**

---

- 6. Community Traditions**

---


- 7. Two non-parental adults**



**What does  
this have to  
do with  
Christian  
Discipleship?**

***Romans 12: 1-2***

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.





# BUMC Digital Fast for Lent

## What is Lent?

- 40 day time after Ash Wednesday to prepare Christian believer for Easter
- Commemorates Jesus' 40 days in the desert preparing for his public ministry
- Starts in 2025 on March 5th

## Why fast?

- Imitates Christ's sacrifice in the desert

# BUMC Digital Fast for Lent

- Avoid social media
- Make your smartphone “dumb”
  - Move anything off your phone that you can do on your computer
  - Remove “distraction” apps: social media, news, games, videos, shopping
  - Keep “utility” apps: phone, text, maps, weather, calendar, camera
- Limit work digital technology to work computer during work hours
- Turn off notifications
- Remove phone from bedside during the night
- Set phone to grayscale
- What about other screens?
- \*\*Consider fast from TV, gaming, tablets (or for certain days)

# BUMC Digital Fast for Lent

## •**Days 1-10: DETACH**

- How can you best eliminate distraction from your digital devices?
- What do you notice about how you are feeling?

## •**Days 11-20: DISCOVER**

- What emerged in the absence of constant digital engagement?

## •**Days 21-30: DELIGHT**

- How are you cultivating joy in your new space and time?
- How are you enjoying God's creation, relationships and activities in His world?

## •**Days 31-40: DETERMINE**

- How are you going to decide about new rhythms for digital engagement?



**Questions?**



# Discussion #1

What are the biggest questions that you have about the Anxious Generation presentation?

Prepare a list of your Top 3 questions to share with the group



# Discussion #2

What is the most challenging part of parenting when it comes to technology and phones?



# Discussion #3

What do you think about the Digital Fast for Lent? What questions do you have?

## Discussion #4

What are ways that our church can help you navigate these challenging issues?

What kind of follow up would you like to see after this event?