



*"Especially in the digital age, people
want everything now, now, now"*



Unplugged

Can School Nurses Calm an Overstimulated Generation?



Introduction–Brittany Russell, RN, BSN, NCSN

20+ years of
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School Safety
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Disclaimer

1. No financial affiliation with any organization or product
2. I am not perfect...I like watching reels on FB
3. My children are iPad kids....





Goals/Outcomes

1

A clear understanding of how digital environments are driving student anxiety

3

Tools for responding to anxiety in real time

2

Insight into age and gender specific patterns nurses are already observing

4

Strategies to promote digital wellbeing and resilience within school communities



Mindful Moment

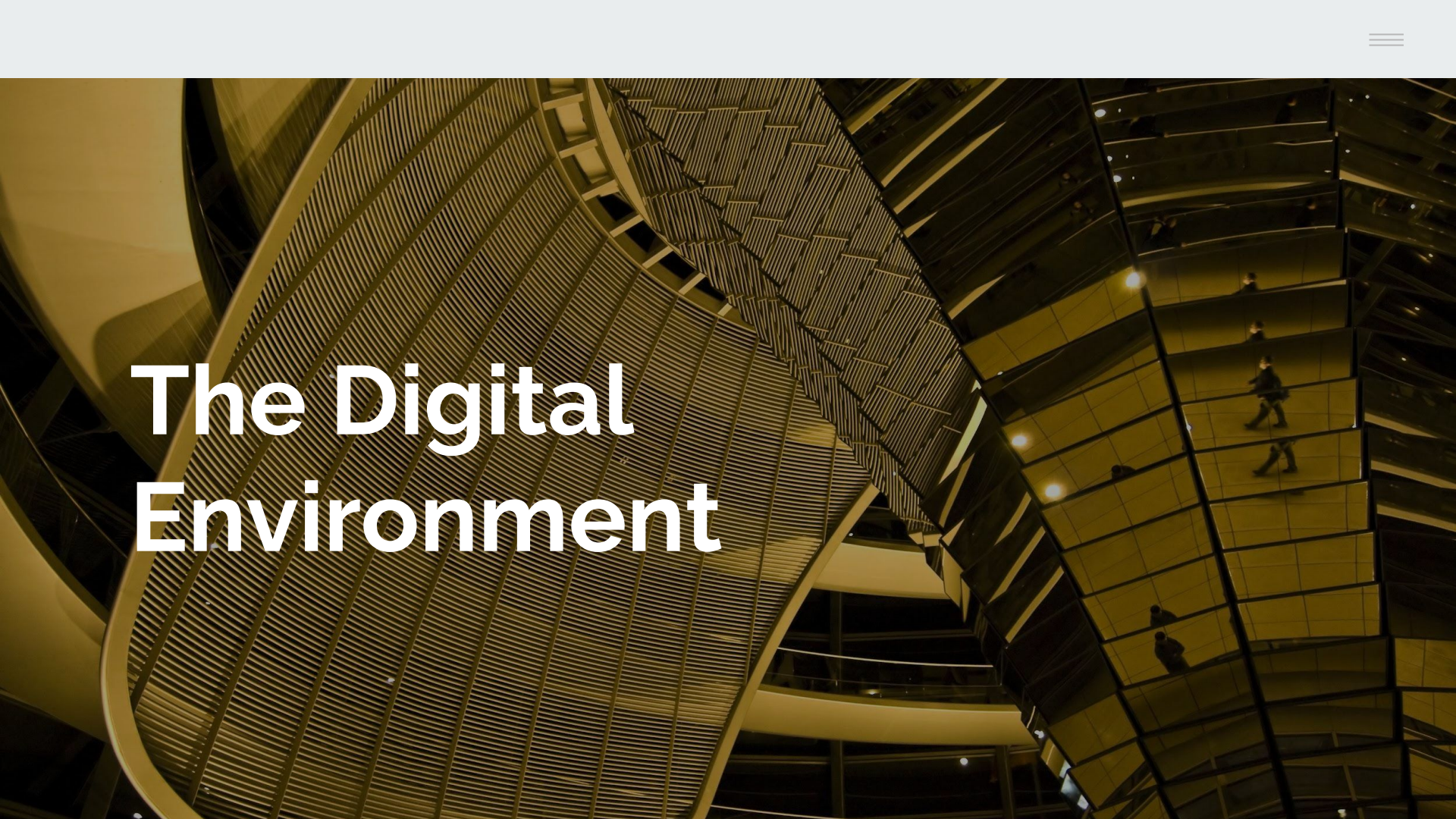
1 minute Pause





Mary Oliver

What do you plan to do with your one
wild and precious life?



The Digital Environment



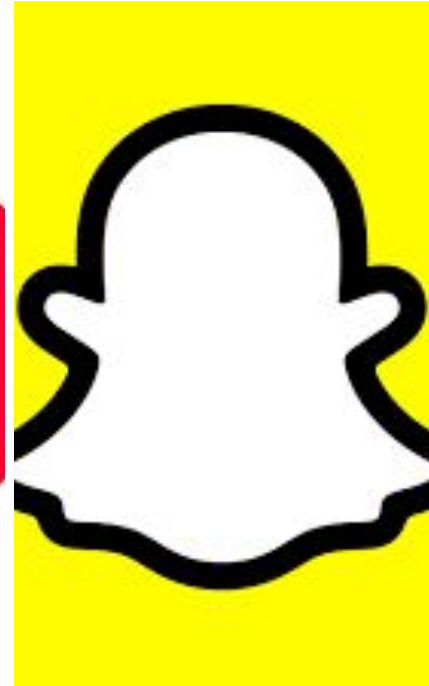
Social Media in Teens

Top Websites for teen use:

Youtube: 9 in 10 teens (90%)

TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat: 6 in 10 teens (60%)

Facebook: 3 in 10 teens (30%)



On average teens have 60-80 apps on their phones with 8-12 getting heavy daily use



Digital Use in Schools

Start of 1:1 technology started in early 2000s

Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI)-largest 1:1 technology initiative in the country with the deployment of 80,000 devices for teachers and students

Exploded during the COVID 19 Pandemic





Digital Use in Outside School

- Infancy (0-2 yrs) 1 hour 3 minutes
- Early Childhood (2-8 yrs)
 - (2-4 yrs) 2 hours 8 minutes
 - (5-8 yrs) 3 hours 38 minutes
- Tweens (8-13 yrs) 5 hours 33 min
- Teens (12-17 yrs) 8 hours 39 minutes

American Academy of Pediatrics–2025 Survey





Mindful Moment

60 Second Stretch and Release





End of Play

Shift from play based, in person childhood to supervised childhood

- 01 | Rise of anxiety
- 02 | Sleep issues
- 03 | Comparison loops
- 04 | Loneliness*
- 05 | Loss of language skills





Girls

- Comparison
- Exclusion
- Anxiety of appearance
- Reduced focus and regulations

Boys

- Gaming addiction patterns
- Withdrawal
- The great failure to launch
- Reduced focus and regulation

Nonbinary and Gender Questioning



Maine Students-Mental Health

2025 Results

26% mental health is not good (High School)

23% mental health is not good (Middle School)

2023 Results

34 % mental health is not good (High School)

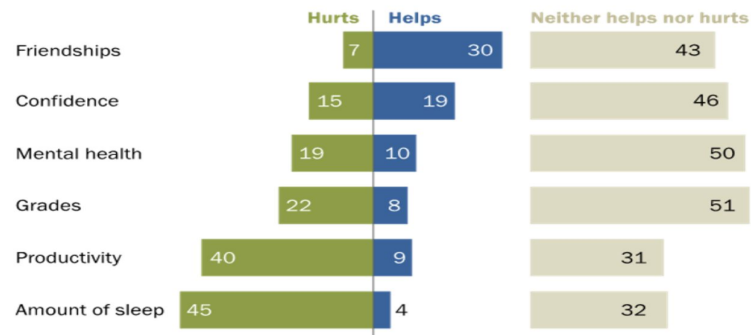
27% mental health is not good (Middle School)



What do teens say?

Teens are more likely to say social media sites hurt than help their sleep, productivity and mental health, but see a more positive impact on their friendships

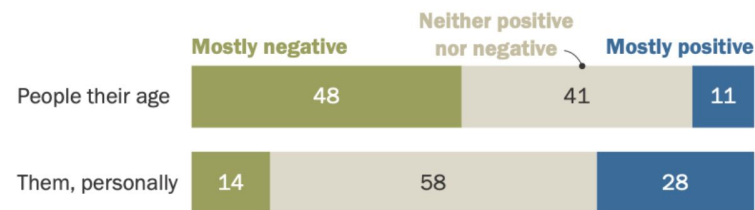
% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say using social media ___ each of the following **a lot/a little**



Note: Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Sept. 18-Oct. 10, 2024.
"Teens, Social Media and Mental Health"

Teens are more likely to think social media are bad for their peers than for themselves

% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say social media have (a) ___ effect on ...



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Sept. 18-Oct. 10, 2024.
"Teens, Social Media and Mental Health"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Mindful Moment

5 Senses Check In





What is anxiety?

0 1 Nervousness or Anxiety



Healthy Emotion

Prepares people for challenges. It is expected and should be proportional to the challenge

Anxiety Disorder

- Generalized Anxiety
- Separation Anxiety
- Social Anxiety

0 2



0 3

USA TODAY 8m ago
This Vincent Van Gogh self-portrait was accidentally discovered on the back of his painting

FOX 15m ago
This is a test of list view

Digital Use and Anxiety

Think about our activity at the start of the presentation.



Health Offices

“My office is like Switzerland.” Paulette Luckette,
RN, NEA Member



Health Offices

Increased Visits

Psychosomatic Symptoms



Strategies

Offline Activities

School gardens, walking clubs, cooking classes, first aid education, walking breaks, mindfulness activities, etc

Bell to Bell Smartphone Ban

LD 1234

Make Reading a Core Value

Read alouds, staff and student book clubs, encourage reading vs audio books (those are okay), explore the library and local libraries, reading challenges like old school Book It!

Device Boundaries

No devices for students (including smart watches), encourage parents and staff to not use their phones during school hours or events, model good behavior*

Tech Free Days/Screen Free Week

School day set up around not using devices (good prep for when the power goes out); resurrect Screen Free Week



Mary Oliver

“If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don’t hesitate. Give in to it...It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that’s often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don’t be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb.”



Thank you

[Reference List](#)

