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LETS TALK ABOUT
OUR KIDS AND THEIR

TECH
SHONA BEATS
CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH FOR YOUR FAMILY

SCREEN

TIME

The average UK child spends **3 hrs**
48 mins a day online.

That's **26.6 hours** a week

58 days a year

11 years 67 days over a lifetime





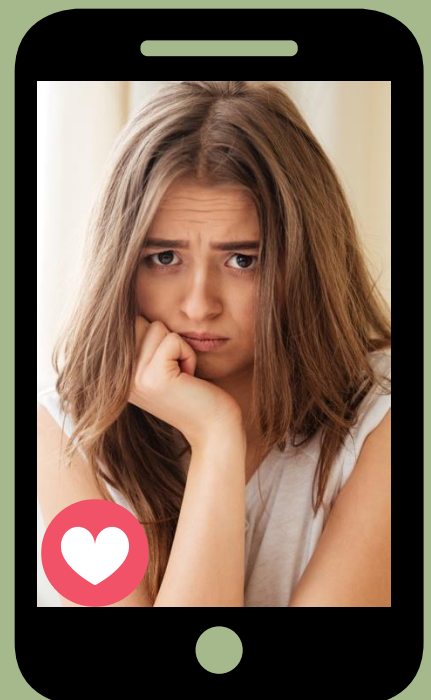
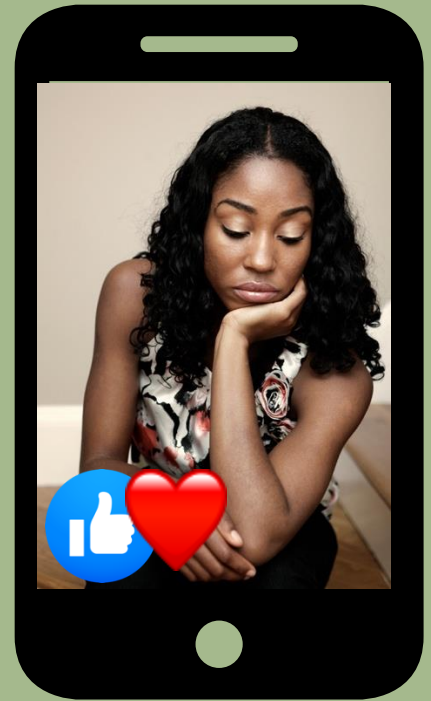
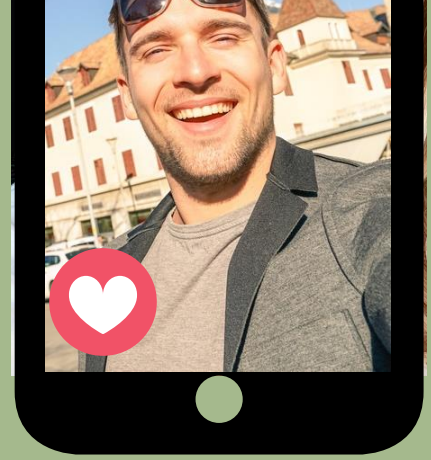
**YOU, AND YOUR KIDS
= ARE THE PRODUCT**

PERSUASIVE

TECH

Smart technology taps into our dopamine reward pathway making us all vulnerable to overconsumption.

So powerful is persuasive tech that it has been described as being akin to involuntary hypnosis.





- ▶ Dopamine is released during a reward which provides a learning signal to the brain.
- ▶ The greater the 'unexpected' reward the greater the learning signal.
- ▶ The motivational aspect of dopamine means that it can motivate us to do things that are good for us as well as those that are not.



3 THINGS:

CLICK, LIKE, OR SHARE

TIME

Facebook founded 2002

First iPhone 2007

App Store 2008, **Google play** 2012

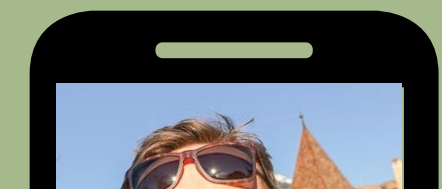
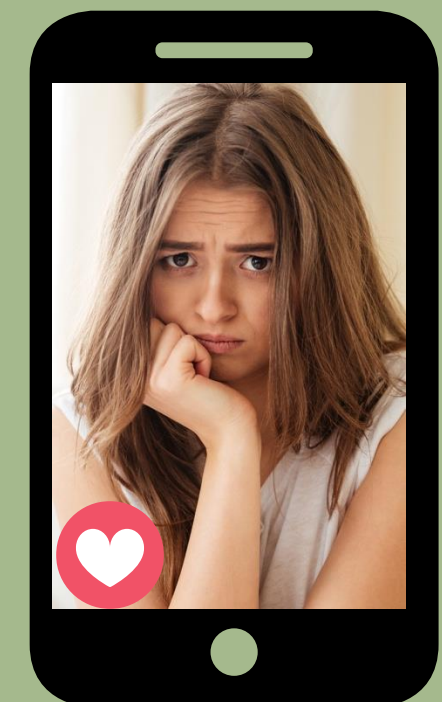
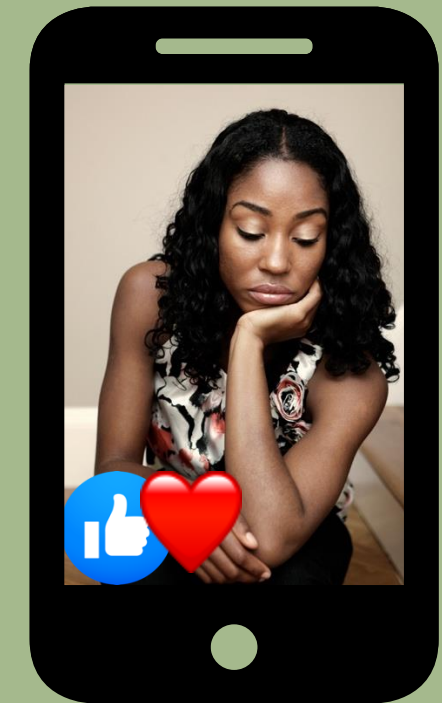
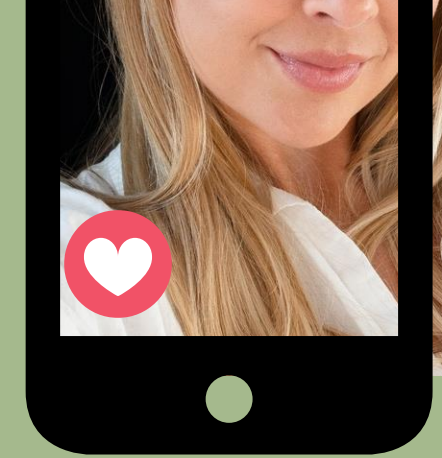
Like button and algorithmically created news feeds on Facebook 2009

Retweet on twitter 2009

Push notifications 2009

Front-facing cameras 2010

'selfie' Oxford Dictionary word of the year 2013





Children with **Problematic Smartphone Usage (PSU)**

are **twice** as likely to experience **anxiety** and **three** times as likely to experience **depression** compared to children without PSU

King's College London, 2024



Self-Harm Episodes, U.K. Teens

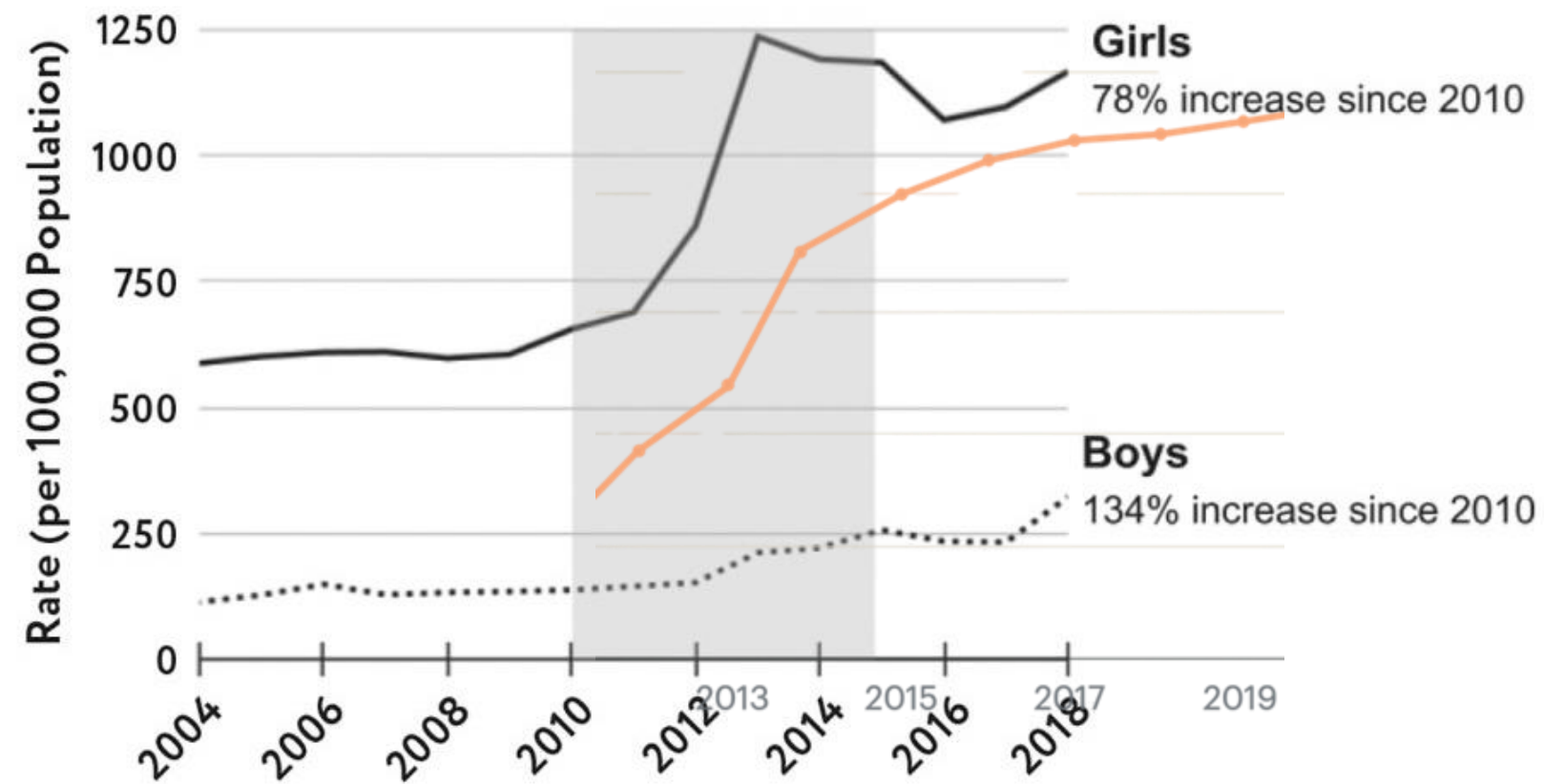


Figure 1.9. U.K. teens' (ages 13–16) self-harm episodes. (Source: Cybulski et al., 2021, drawing from two databases of anonymized British medical records.)⁵¹

MENTAL

According to NHS data in the past decade childhood outdoor accidents have reduced 70% but **self-harm has increased 93%.**

Depression by Level of Social Media Use, U.K.

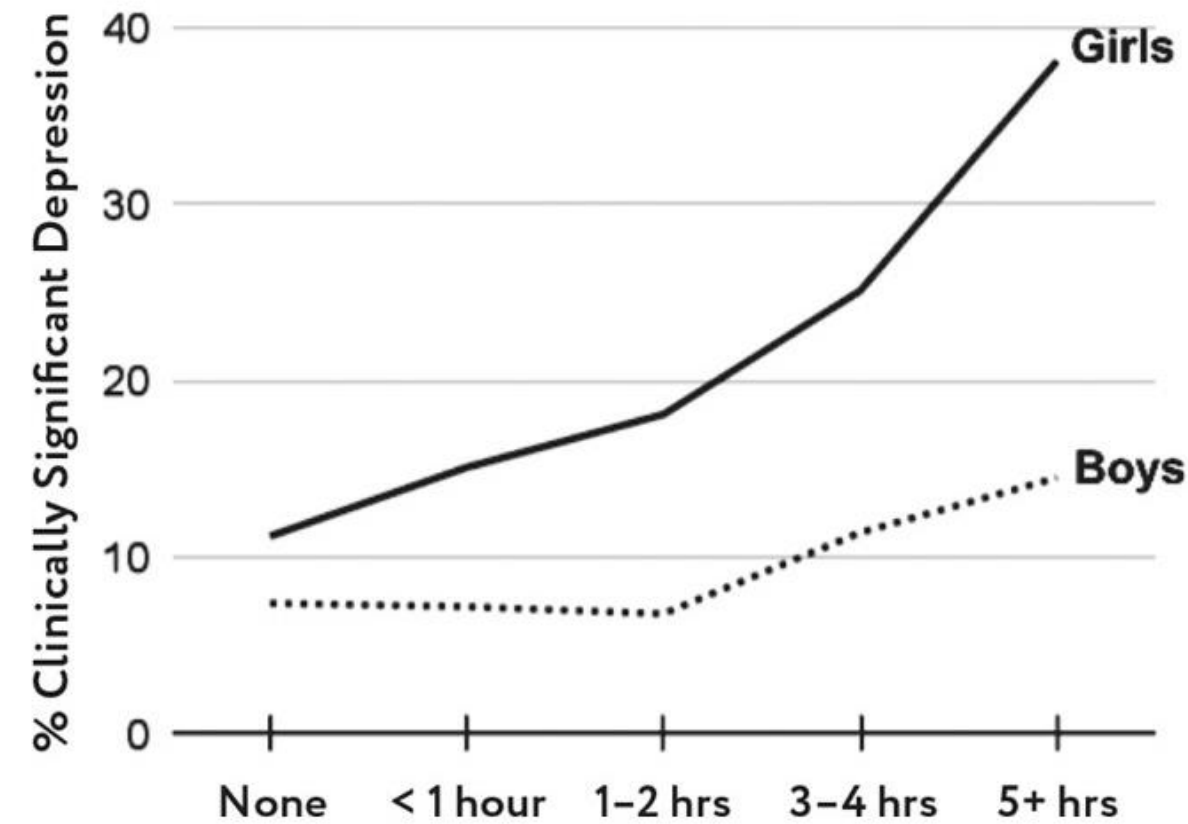


Figure 6.2. Percent of U.K. teens depressed as a function of hours per weekday on social media. Teens who are heavy users of social media are more depressed than light users and nonusers, and this is especially true for girls.

(Source: Millennium Cohort Study.)¹¹

Nsatisfied with Oneself

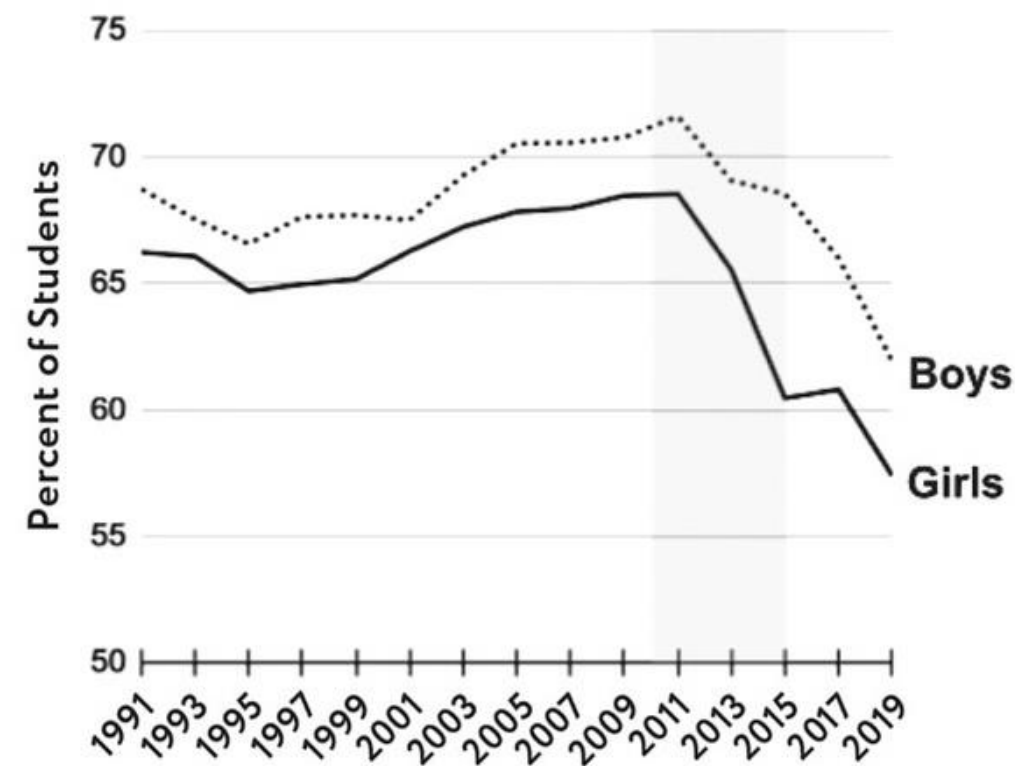


Figure 6.5. The sociometer plunge of 2012. Percent of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who said they were satisfied with themselves. (Source: Monitoring the Future.)

Figure from *The Anxious Generation*,
Jonathan Haidt



Young people are comparing their real selves with other peoples' curated images and highlight reels.

LONELIN

16-24 year olds are the **loneliest** group in society and the more friends you had on Facebook the more likely you were to feel lonely.

All in mind, BBC radio 4 loneliness survey, Oct 2018





94% of children are exposed to
porn by **14**.

Middlesex University report for NSPCC and the children's
Commissioner

WHAT ARE THEY

The **average** first
exposure to porn is **12**
whilst doing their
homework.

Rothman, E. F. (2021). Pornography and
public health. Oxford University Press





**Because social media apps are caught in
a race for our attention, what do they
promote?**

**provocative & attention-grabbing
content**

THE TIKTOK

EXPERIMENT

Dummy accounts set up for 13-year-old girls



- ▶ Content about suicide shown within 3 minutes.
- ▶ Content about self-harm shown within 8 minutes.
- ▶ “Vulnerable” profiles received 12 times as much explicit content.

WHAT ARE THEY SEEING?

The Children's Commissioner Rachel de Souza
spoke to a class of 15-year-olds:

75% had seen a beheading video



SLEEP

Pre-teens lose the equivalent of a **nights sleep** per week to social media.

73% of teenagers take their phone to bed with them.



**1 in 5 are bullied
online**

CYBERBULLYING & MENTAL HEALTH

Of those bullied:

70% were adversely affected

24% self harm

22% change their own
appearance

13 % delete the app

Online bullying in England and Wales - Office for
National Statistics (ons.gov.uk), 2020

Ditch the label, The Wireless report , 2017

GAMING



▶ Three-quarters of UK 5- to 15-year-olds played games online in 2021

▶ 3-4% of gamers develop gaming disorder

THE OPPORTU NITY COSTS

- ▶ Children spend twice as long looking at screens as playing outside
- ▶ $\frac{3}{4}$ of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates



**WE HAVE OVERPROTECTED OUR
CHILDREN IN THE REAL WORLD WHILE
UNDERPROTECTING THEM ONLINE**

Jonathan Haidt

REFLE

CT

▶ What **access** do you want the **internet** to have to **your child**?

▶ What **age** do you think (play based) childhood should **end**?



SOLUTION

WHAT CAN WE DO?
NS



MODEL GOOD HABITS

TOP TIPS



▶ If you can, consider delaying the smart phone for as long as possible.

▶ If your child does have a phone, focus on healthy boundaries and staying safe online.

Basic phones allow your child to connect with others via text and calls. New models coming soon.



STEP WISE PROGRESSION



Delay the first phone.
Consider a basic phone first.



14+ Consider a smartphone
phone with strict controls.



16+ A cautious trial of selected
social media with private
settings and time limits.



Greater responsibility and
freedom online.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT DELAYING THE FIRST PHONE

- 1) Listen to your child and validate their feelings.
- 2) It's not never; it's just not yet.
- 3) Just because everyone else has something it doesn't mean it's the best thing for you.



Everyone else in my child's class has a phone...

This is why this movement is SO important. We can change the culture.

We're living apart and my child needs a smartphone to communicate...

Children can communicate with each parent on a simple phone and use an iPad for Facetime calls if required.

But my child needs a smartphone for train tickets and bus tickets....

You can still buy tickets in person.

I need a smartphone to track my child...

You can use an air tag (or similar) to track your child.

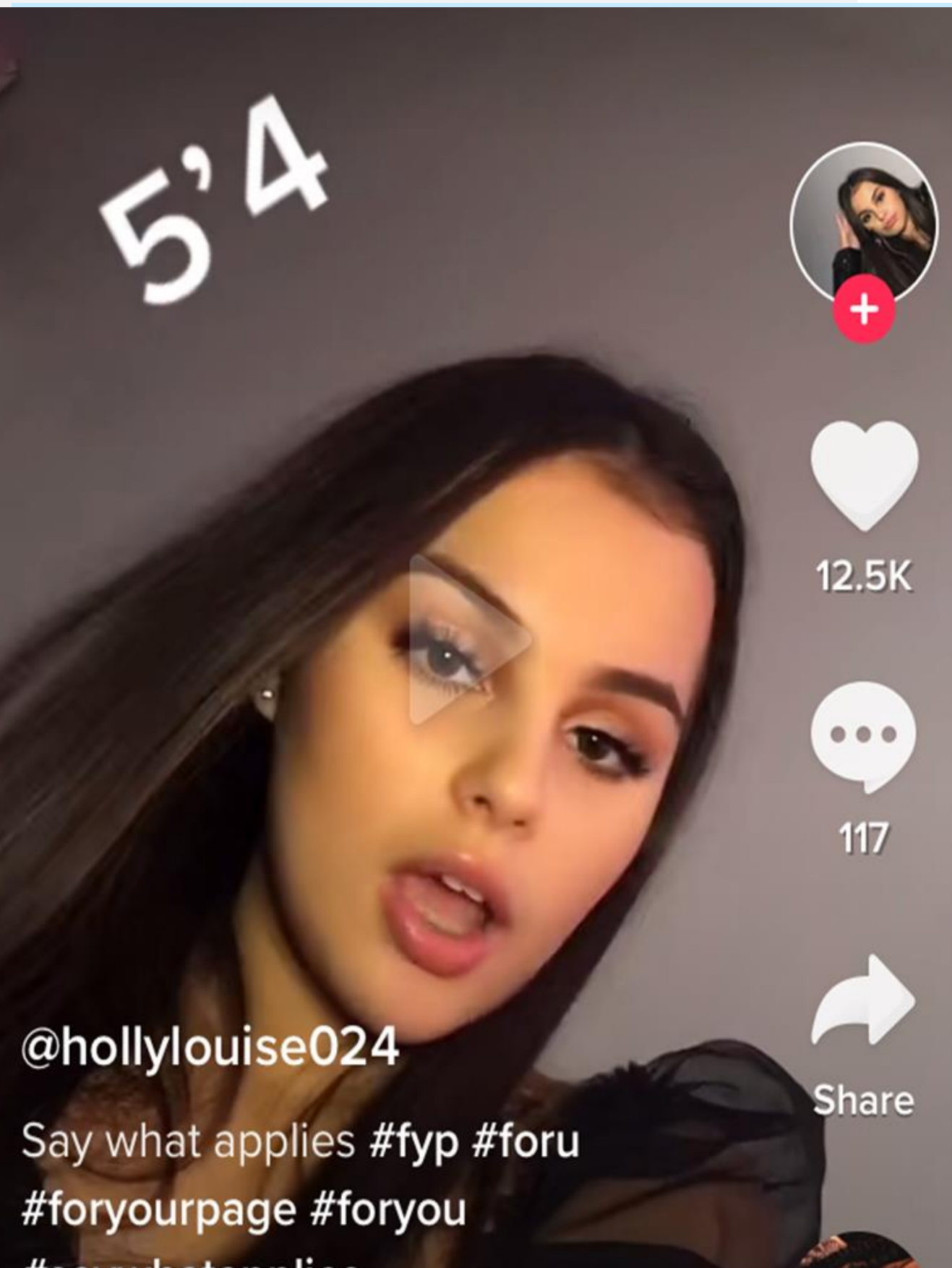
Can't we just use a stripped back iPhone with parental controls?

You can, but most parental control settings are easy to bypass.



- ▶ **Set screentime limits**
Set up limits on apps and downtime. Encourage do-not-disturb mode or use the Forest app.
- ▶ **Reduce distraction**
Try a flip cover, delete or hide apps, turn your phone off when not using or keep it out of sight.
- ▶ **Create screen-free spaces**
E.g. no phones at meal times or in bedrooms at night, no multi screening.

TOP TIPS FOR SMART



▶ **Delay social media**

Try and delay social media until the age limit (as a minimum). Check out apps before downloading them as a minimum set to PRIVATE MODE.

▶ **Block adult content**

Delete and block VPN downloads
Use parental control software- Qustadio
Block private browser mode.

▶ **Graded exposure**

Test the water and see how your child responds. review regularly and don't be afraid to delete! You don't need to be popular.

TOP TIPS FOR SMART

PARENT

POWER

The more of you that decide something, whether that's delaying or which apps to allow, the easier it becomes.

When a minority group pushing change was below 25% of the total group, its efforts failed. **But when the committed minority reached 25%**, there was an abrupt change in the group dynamic, and very quickly the majority of the population adopted the new norm.

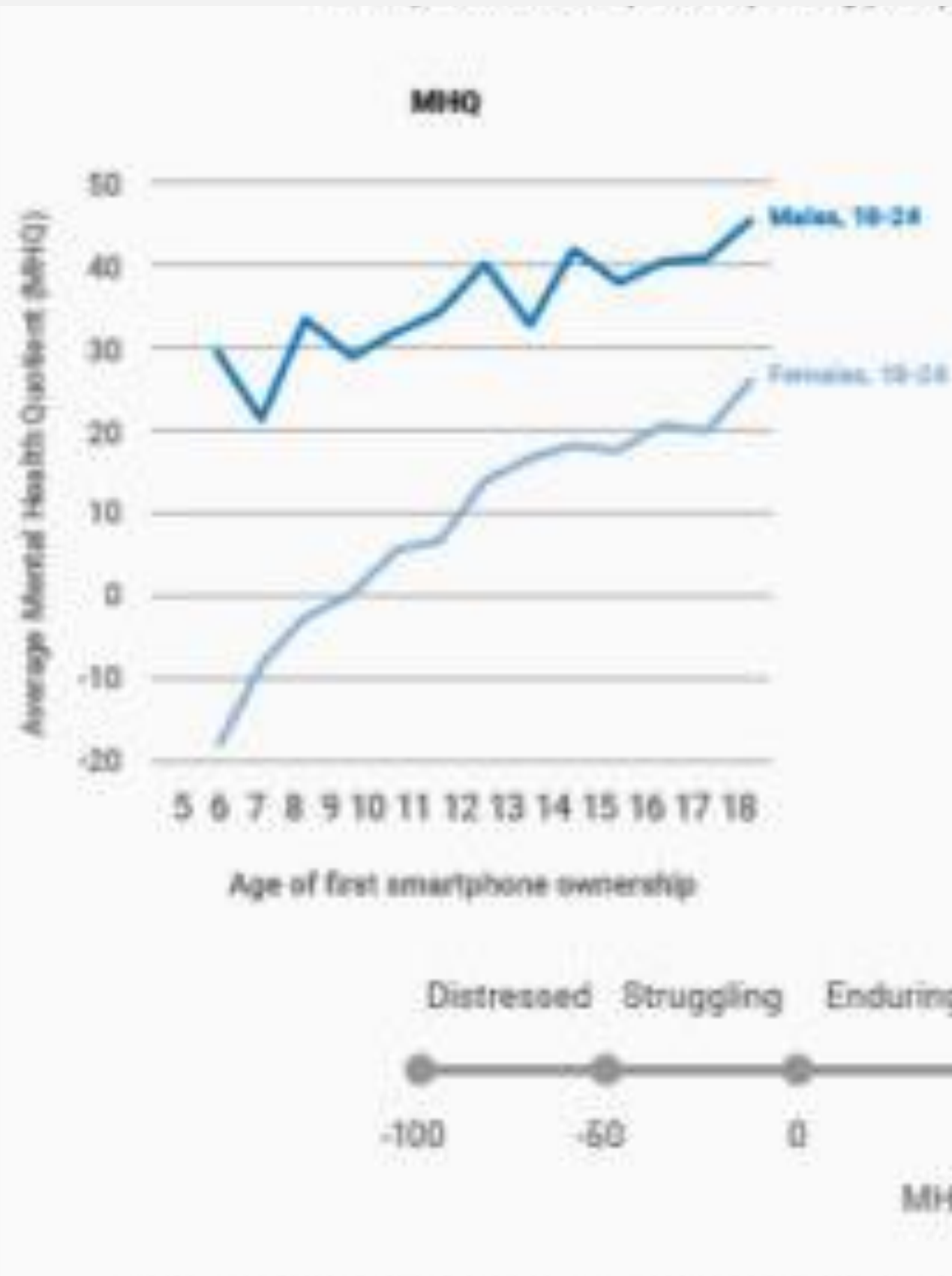


MENTAL

Mental wellbeing improved with older age of smartphone ownership.

HEALTH

The younger the age of first smartphone ownership the lower the mental health outcomes.



Age of First Smartphone/Tablet and Mental Wellbeing Outcomes

Sapien Labs, May 15, 2023



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You can't go back and change the beginning,
but you can start where you are and change
the ending.

C.S. Lewis



CALL TO ACTION

- 1) Talk to your child and other parents.
- 2) Join Smartphone Free Childhood.
- 3) Sign the pledge

RESOURCE



www.papayaparents.com **JUST GIVING**

@papaya_parents



smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk

