




THE PROBLEM

All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM


- Let's first review a bit of information about social skills deficits.
- I'm not going to drown you in research statistics.
- I'll share some basic information on this problem so that you have some context before we move into the reasons it's a problem and what to do about it.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Time spent in person versus online
 - "If someone doesn't tag you it means that you are no longer friends or they are mad at you." (Sales, 2016)
 - iGen spends less time at parties, and the number of teens who get together with friends every day has been cut in half in just fifteen years, with especially steep declines recently. (Twenge, 2017)



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Time spent in person versus online
- Though kids are spending less time in person together, they still crave in-person interaction:
- Nearly all 18-19 year olds in a college freshman survey said they would rather see their friends in person than communicate electronically. (Twenge, 2017)



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

"The timing of the recent, severe drop in going out and getting together with friends is highly suspicious: it occurred right when smartphones became popular and social media use really took off."

-Jean Twenge

All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- "Rights of passage" have fallen to the wayside (Twenge, 2017):
- Fewer teens meet to hang out, go on dates, drive around in a car just for fun, go to movies, or go to parties.
- Less likely to take part in every single face-to-face social activity measured across 4 data sets of 3 different age groups.
- They haven't replaced that time with family time either.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Decreased social skills
 - Much of social competence is learning how to read subtle cues in body language and facial expressions (Pea et al., 2012).
 - What screen-related social anxiety looks like (Dunckley, 2015).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Decreased social skills
 - A study examining empathy score trends of college students from 1979 to 2009 found a particularly sharp drop after the year 2000 (Konrath, O'Brein, & Hsing, 2011)
 - The same stress reactions that affect mood and cognitive symptoms also impact social relationships (Dunckley, 2015).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Decreased social skills
 - Studies found that the mere presence of a smartphone takes our attention away from real connections (Przybylsk & Weinstein, 2012).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Suicide and homicide trends (Twenge, 2017)
 - Since 2007, homicide rates among teens has declined, but suicide has increased.
 - The steady decline in teen homicide from 2007 to 2014 looks very similar to the decline in in-person social interaction.
 - 46% more teens committed suicide in 2015 than in 2007.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Screen versus non-screen time and mental health (Twenge, 2017)
 - Teens who spend more time on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, and those who spend more time on non-screen activities are more likely to be happy.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Screen versus non-screen time and mental health (Twenge, 2017)
 - 8th graders who spend 10 or more hours per week on social media are 56% more likely to be unhappy than those who don't.
 - Those who spend 6 hours per week on social media are 47% more likely to say they are unhappy.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Screen versus non-screen time and mental health (Twenge, 2017)
- Those who spend more time with their friends in person are 20% less likely to be unhappy.
- Teens who spend more time on non-screen activities are less likely to be depressed.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Screen versus non-screen time and mental health (Twenge, 2017)
- 8th grade heavy users of social media increase their risk of depression by 27%.
- Advice for a happier life? Put down the phone.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

THE PROBLEM

- Now that you have a little more context around the problem, let's explore the reasons we are seeing this problem in our kids.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.




WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM


- We will review the following 3 reasons for the social skills deficits we are seeing in our kids:
 - Decreased in-person interaction
 - Vicious cycle
 - Missing opportunities to develop social skills



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Decreased in-person interaction
 - Kids are seeing their friends in person an hour less a day than previous generations, which means an hour a day less spent building social skills, negotiating relationships, and navigating emotions (Twenge, 2017).
 - Preliminary evidence is showing that this decline in in-person interaction is leading to inferior social skills (Uhls et al., 2014).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Vicious cycle (Dunckley, 2015)
- If a kid has some social difficulties, a trap parents fall into is becoming overly permissive with screen privileges, which sets the stage for a vicious cycle because it promotes dependency on the screen.
- Eventually, the thought of being without devices may cause the kid to feel highly anxious.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Vicious cycle
- As social support decreases, depression worsens - studies suggest that children or teens with social anxiety are at higher risk for depression (Stein, et al., 2001).
- Kids who experience social anxiety, or who are socially incompetent are particularly at risk for developing dependence on electronic media (Richards, McGee, Williams, Welch, & Hancox 2010).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Vicious cycle
- The more a kid hides behind a screen, the more socially awkward he or she becomes, creating a self-perpetuating cycle (Richards, McGee, Williams, & Hancox 2010).
- Research indicates that relationship problems show up at home as the more time a kid spends on the internet the less healthy the parent-child relationship (Richards, McGee, Williams, & Hancox 2010).



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Missing opportunities to develop social skills
 - The reason why social skill deficits are increasing is straight forward.
 - With less in-person interaction, nuances of social skill development are being missed.
 - Electronic messaging is always available and sometimes preferred because it's less anxiety provoking compared to in-person interactions.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- Missing opportunities to develop social skills
 - The ability to learn how to connect with others is being lost.
 - Together, but not truly together.
 - What does life look like down the road after these opportunities have been missed?



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHY IT'S A PROBLEM

- So a quick recap, we reviewed these 3 reasons for the social skills deficits we are seeing in our kids:
 - Decreased in-person interaction
 - Vicious cycle
 - Missing opportunities to develop social skills



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.



WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT


- This section covers major concepts for improving social skills
- It is not intended to be prescriptive
- It is intended to provide guidance toward your own personal strategies



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

- We will review the following 3 ways to improve your child's social skills:
 - Model by decreasing screen time as a household
 - Schedule phone-free socializing
 - Increase in-person social time



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

- Model by decreasing screen time as a household
 - Parents must have skin in the game and model the right behavior.
 - “Do as I say, not as I do” mentality doesn’t get you closer to the goal.
 - The most immediate, clear and accessible intervention.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

- Schedule phone-free socializing
 - Get kids involved in social activities where they cannot have their phones present, such as sports, martial arts, music or art clubs.
 - Have a device basket in your house for specific times when phones are placed in it, such as when friends are over, during breakfast, lunch and dinner.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

- Increase in-person social time
 - You can't learn social skills in a book, it happens on the streets.
 - Get your kids together with other kids as much as possible.
 - The competitive advantage with the ability to connect with others.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

- Just a quick recap, we reviewed these 3 ways of improving social skills:
 - Model by decreasing screen time as a household
 - Schedule phone-free socializing
 - Increase in-person social time



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

REFERENCES

- Dunckley, V. (2015). *Reset your child's brain: A four-week plan to end meltdowns, raise grades and boost social skills by reversing the effects of electronic screen time*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Konrath, S.H., O'Brien, E.H., Hsing, C. (2011). Changes in dispositional empathy in American college students over time: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15(2), 180-198.
- Pea, R., Nass, C., Meheula, L., Rance, M., Kumar, A., Bamford, H., Nass, M., Simha, A., Stilleren, B., Yang, S., & Zhou, M. (2012). Media use, face-to-face communication, media multitasking, and social well-being among 8 to 12 year old girls. *Developmental Psychology*, 48(2), 327-336.
- Pyykkylä, A.K., & Weinstein, N. (2012). Can you connect with me now? How the presence of mobile communication technology influences face-to-face conversation quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 30(3), 237-246.
- Richards, R., McGee, R., Williams, S.M., Welch, D., & Hancox, R.J. (2010). Adolescent screen time and attachment to parents and peers. *Archives Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 164(3), 258-262.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.

REFERENCES

- Stein, M.B., Fuetsch, M., Muller, N., Hofer, M., Lieb, R., Wittchen, H.U. (2001). Social anxiety disorder and the risk of depression. *Archives General Psychiatry*, 58(3), 251-256.
- Twenge, J. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy - and completely unprepared for adulthood* and what that means for the rest of us (1st ed., p. 96)*. New York: Abia.
- Uhlis, Y.T., Michikyan, M., Morris, J., Garcia, D., Small, G.W., Zgourou, E., & Greenfield, P.M. (2014). Five days at outdoor education camp without screens improves preteen skills with nonverbal emotional cues. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 39, 387-392.



All rights reserved © 2020 Learning with Dr. B.
