

DIGITAL WELLNESS STARK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Here's our first newsletter to end 2025!

Welcome to our Digital Wellness newsletter! We are thrilled to share with you the latest developments in our mission to make a positive impact in our community.

First, we would like to express our gratitude to all of you who wish to learn more about digital wellness and how to have healthy digital habits.

Our goal is to empower Stark County families to adopt healthier digital habits through a trusted community-driven initiative. Our committee consists of health departments, Stark County Educational Service Center, Stark County Prosecutor's Office, StarkMHAR, Ohio Guidestone, local schools, hospitals, mental health advocates, and youth.

We are also excited to announce that we have a website for easy access to all the resources and information about digital wellness that we have compiled.

Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Enjoy the first edition of our newsletter! As we continue to grow our efforts, we plan to send this newsletter at least once a quarter.

Thank you for your interest! Have a very happy new year- we're looking forward to 2026!

-Patti Fetzer and Kay Conley

Committee co-chairs

Highlights:

Committee
Recommendation:

[The Anxious
Generation by
Jonathan Haidt](#)

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Digital Wellness
Website
Launched!

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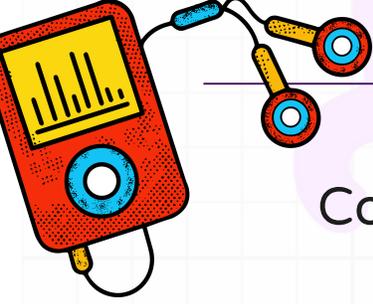
Resource Corner:

[The Digital
Wellness Lab.org](#)

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IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF THIS INITIATIVE, PLEASE EMAIL
DIGITALWELLNESS@STARKHEALTH.ORG OR CONTACT KAY CONLEY AT
330-451-1446.





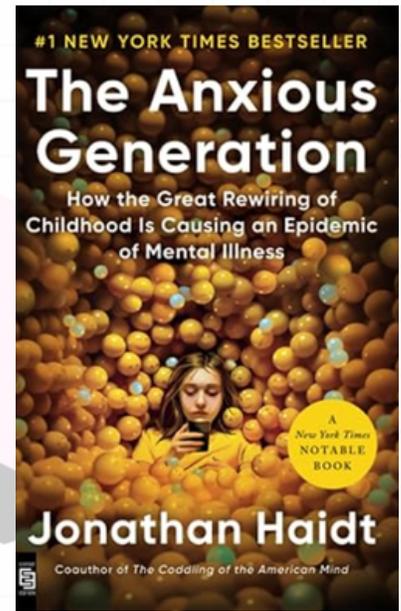
Committee Recommendation

The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt

This book explores why anxiety, depression, and loneliness have increased so much among young people. Haidt argues that two big changes are at the center of the problem: kids spending much more time on smartphones and social media, and kids having far fewer chances to play freely and independently.

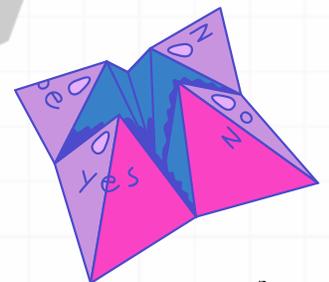
Using research from psychology and brain science, Haidt explains how growing up with constant phone use affects children's emotional and social development. Social media can lead to nonstop comparison, pressure to fit in, poor sleep, and online bullying.

At the same time, many parents—trying to keep kids safe—limit independence, which prevents children from learning confidence and resilience through real-world experiences. Haidt notes that social media tends to harm girls' mental health most, while many boys become withdrawn through excessive gaming and screen time.



The book ends with clear, practical suggestions for parents, schools, and communities. Haidt encourages delaying smartphones and social media, giving kids more independence, and bringing back unstructured play. While the problem is serious, his message is hopeful: with thoughtful changes, we can help kids grow up healthier and more emotionally strong.

WORTH THE READ!

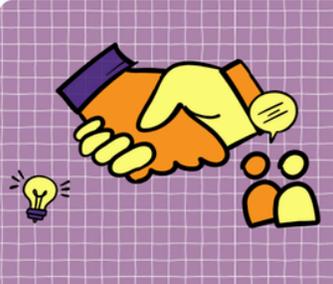


Do you need help to support your digital wellness?



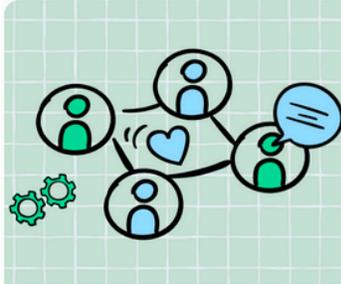
Effects of Digital Overload

Youth and families can be affected by digital overload in ways such as disrupted sleep, increased anxiety, and strained relationships. The good news is there is a healthier way forward.



What We Have Discovered

We have noticed youth want a digital balance without judgement or being told what to do, while parents can feel overwhelmed and unsure how to lead by example. Digital wellness benefits everyone.



Our Mission

Digital Wellness Stark County is a community-driven collection of trusted leaders who are here to empower healthier digital habits for youth and families across Stark County. Download our digital wellness toolkit to learn about resources for your family.

[Check out-- StarkHelpCentral.com/Digital Wellness](https://StarkHelpCentral.com/DigitalWellness)

What is StarkHelpCentral.com?

StarkHelpCentral.com is Stark County's resource navigation tool. For anyone facing challenges in life, StarkHelpCentral.com is a resource you can turn to for support. No matter the situation, hope is just a search away.

What is Digital Wellness?

Digital wellness refers to the practice of maintaining a healthy relationship with technology to support overall well-being—physically, mentally, and emotionally. It emphasizes using digital tools in a balanced way that enhances life rather than causing harm.

Some Core Principles of Digital Wellness:

- Mindful Usage: Being aware of how much time is spent online and why.
- Healthy Boundaries: Setting limits on screen time, notifications, and social media engagement.
- Purposeful Interaction: Using technology for productivity, learning, and connection rather than passive scrolling.
- Digital Literacy: Understanding the impact of algorithms, privacy, and online behaviors.

The Digital Wellness Stark County Committee partnered with StarkMHAR and United Way to provide a place to find resources to support digital wellness in this digital focused world.

The Digital Wellness section of StarkHelpCentral.com recently launched and is still building capacity to provide resources and links to the latest information for you, your family, and the community.

Please be patient as the site is still under construction. Updates will continue to be made in 2026.

For more guidance, check out the next article on the Family Digital Wellness Guide!





Boston Children's Digital Wellness Lab

Resource Corner: <https://DigitalWellnessLab.org>

The Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital is committed to advancing healthy digital media experiences for young people, from birth through young adulthood. Based at one of the nation's leading pediatric hospitals, the Lab builds an evidence base for digital wellness by conducting and translating rigorous research on the effects- positive and negative—of technology use.

The Digital Wellness Lab believes it is essential to develop guidance to direct the creation and use of interactive technology and media so that our young people can thrive and prosper in online spaces.

Resources available on their site for parents:

- The 5 M's of Digital Wellness
- Family Digital Wellness Guide (see below)
- Family Guides
- The Mediatrician's Guide
- Clinic for Interactive Media and Internet Disorders



Family Digital Wellness Guide

A guide for helping kids build healthy and safe digital habits

Digital technology has become woven into the fabric of childhood and family life. The Family Digital Wellness Guide recognizes that completely avoiding technology isn't realistic for most families, nor is it necessary.

Instead, this guide focuses on helping you use digital tools in ways that support your child's development, strengthen family bonds, and build healthy habits that will serve them throughout their lives.

This approach is grounded in developmental science and organized around five key principles—the 5 M's of Digital Wellness: Model, Mentor, Monitor, Mastery, and Meaning.

These principles acknowledge that children of different ages have different needs, capabilities, and vulnerabilities when it comes to technology use. The guide is broken down in the following ages:

- Birth-Preschool (0-5);
- Grade School-Tween (6-12);
- and Teen-Young Adult (13-22).