Chapter 7
ONLINE SUPPLEMENT
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BOYS?

In this chapter, I tell a more speculative story about how the Great Rewiring affected boys using a "push-pull" analysis. I showed how the "real world" changed, since the 1970s, in ways that have made it less hospitable to boys and young men—leading many to feel more purposeless, useless, and adrift. That's the push, away from the real world. I then show how, starting in the 1970s and accelerating through the 2010s, the digital world brought more and more ways for boys to do the agency-building activities they craved, such as exploring, competing, playing at war, mastering skills, watching increasingly realistic pornography, all through a screen, and eventually, one that lives in their pocket. That's the pull.

I show that the net effect of this push-pull is that boys have—on average, and compared to girls—disconnected more from the real world and invested their time and talents in the virtual world instead. I argue that without more time, effort, enjoyment, and reward in the real world, boys growing up today will be less likely than previous generations to mature into reliable husbands, fathers, and employees.

In this document, Zach and I provide the original, color graphs from the chapter, updated with the latest data. We'll continue to update these figures. Additionally, you'll find supplementary graphs that provide additional nuance and insight that were streamlined out of the book for brevity. This document also contains links to our data sources and specific data points for our graphs. Feel free to use these graphs in essays and articles. You do not need to ask for my permission; just be sure to attribute the source as: *Source: Jonathan Haidt, The Anxious Generation, Online Supplement.*

I drew on the following collaborative review documents:

- *What is happening to boys? A collaborative review*
- *Digital media effects: A collaborative review*
- *Free play and mental health: A collaborative review*
- *Porn use and adolescent health: A collaborative review.*
- *Video game use and adolescent mental gealth: A collaborative review.*
- *Adolescent mood disorders since 2010: A collaborative review*.
- *Social media and mental health: A collaborative review*
- *I also drew on Appendix A: Timeline of The Great Rewiring*

I also drew on the following Substack Posts from *After Babel:*

- Haidt (2023). *Why I'm Increasingly Worried About Boys, Too.*

NOTES:

- Date created: May 25, 2023, Last Updated: October 22, 2026
- In the spirit of John Stuart Mill, we hope to engage with our skeptics with good faith. Please use any of the data below for your own analyses or to replicate our work. For all data, see:
  - Slidedeck with all graphs from this chapter.
  - Spreadsheet with all data points used to make the graphs in this chapter.
  - Many of the graphs in this book come from the Monitoring the Future database. You can download the dataset used for this book on GitHub.
- Please cite this document and the graphs from this document as Haidt & Rausch (ongoing). *The Anxious Generation, Online Supplement.*

If you are a researcher and would like to notify us about other data or add comments or counterpoints to this document, please request commenting access to the Google Doc, or contact Haidt directly, and he will set your permissions to add comments to the Google doc, or will paste in your comments. This document is evolving based on feedback.]

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Intro

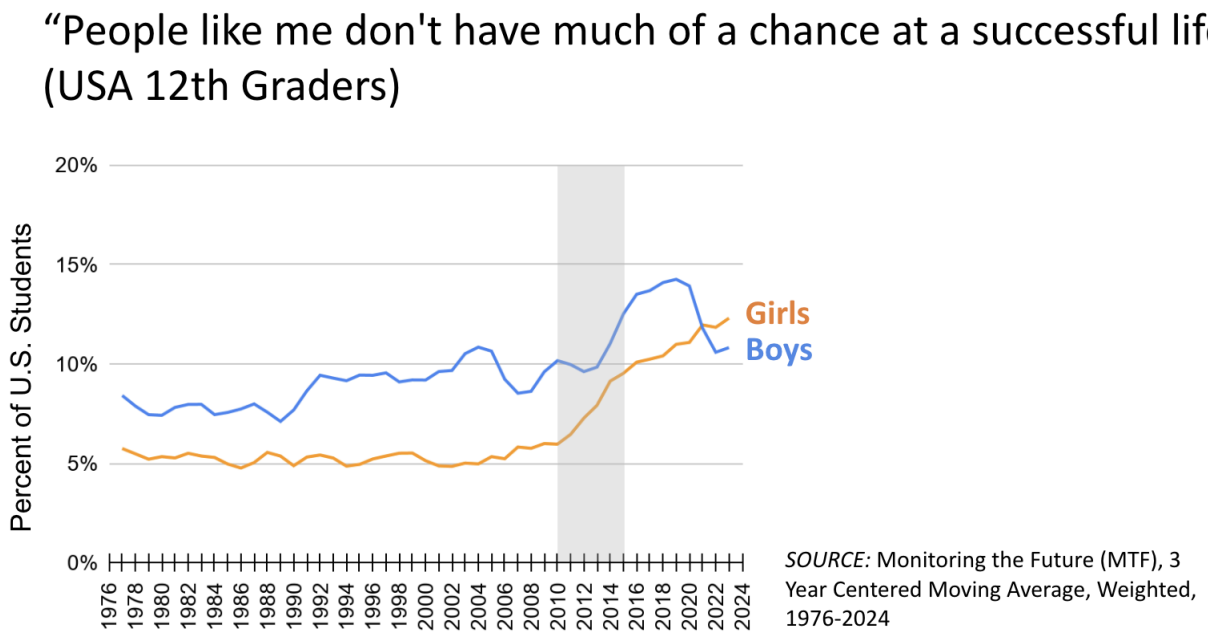


Figure S7.0.1 Percent of U.S. 12th Graders who "Agree or Mostly Agree" with the statement: People like me don't have much of a chance at a successful life. Three-year centered moving average (1976-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

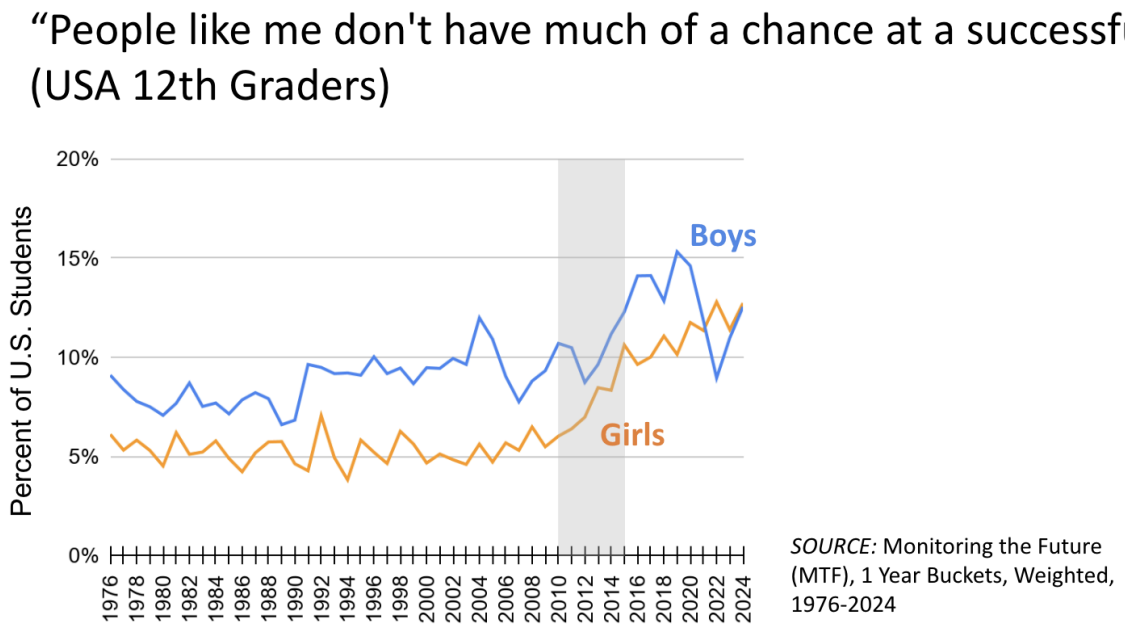
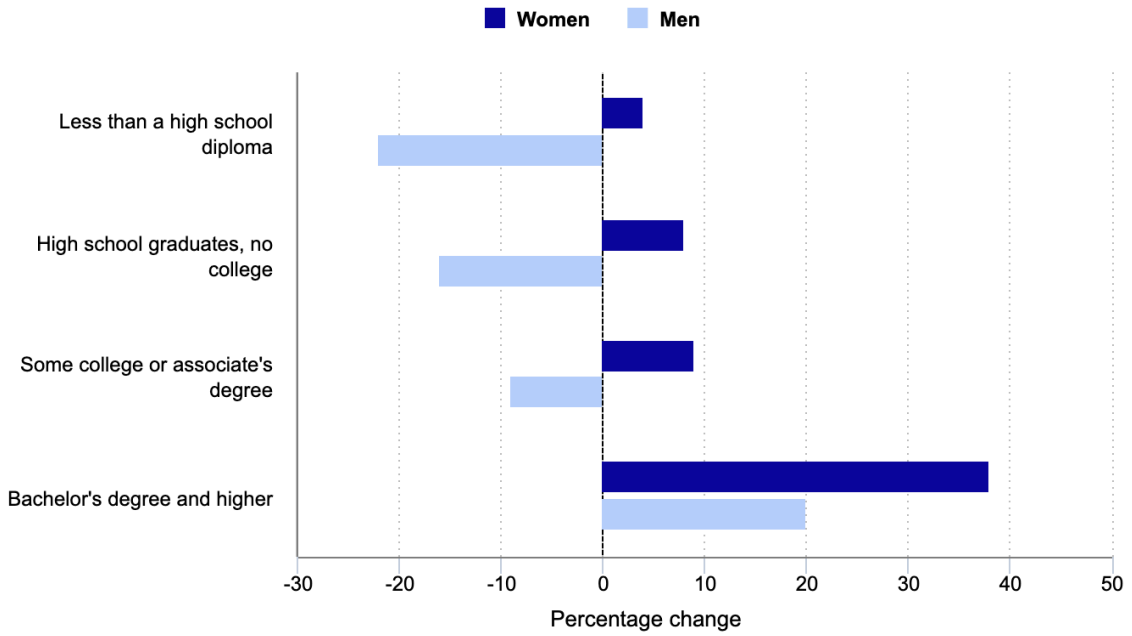


Figure S7.0.2 Percent of U.S. 12th Graders who "Agree or Mostly Agree" with the statement: People like me don't have much of a chance at a successful life. One-year buckets (1976-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

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The Long Decline of Males

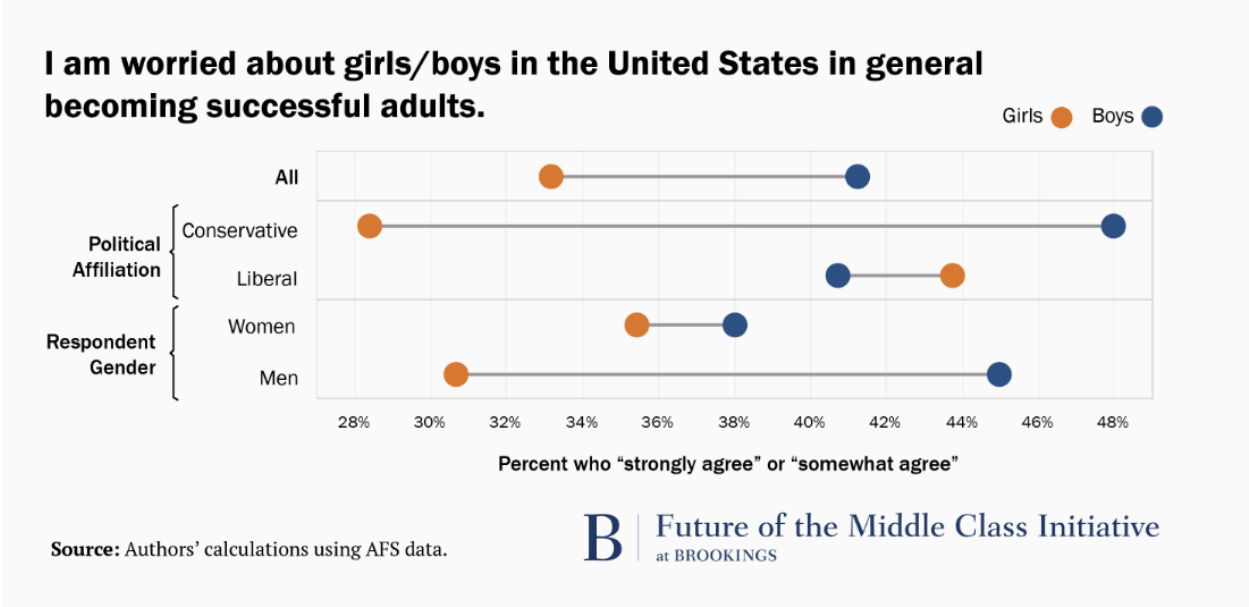
Chart 4. Percentage change in inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings of women and men, by educational attainment, 1979–2021



Hover over chart to view data.
Note: Data relate to earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, age 25 and older.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

View Chart Data

Figure S7.1.1 Percentage change in inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earning of women and men, by educational attainment. Source: Bureau of Labour Statistics.



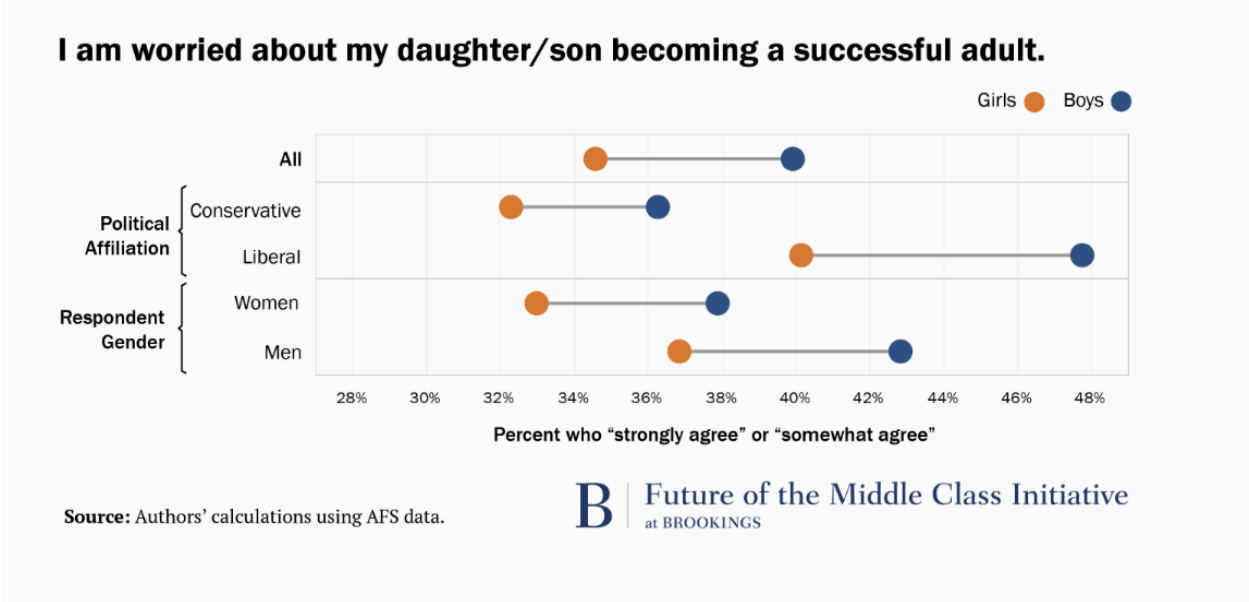


Figure S7.1.2 parent beliefs about the opportunities of boys and girls, and perspectives of their own sons and daughters. Source: [Brookings Institute.]

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Boys Who Fail to Launch

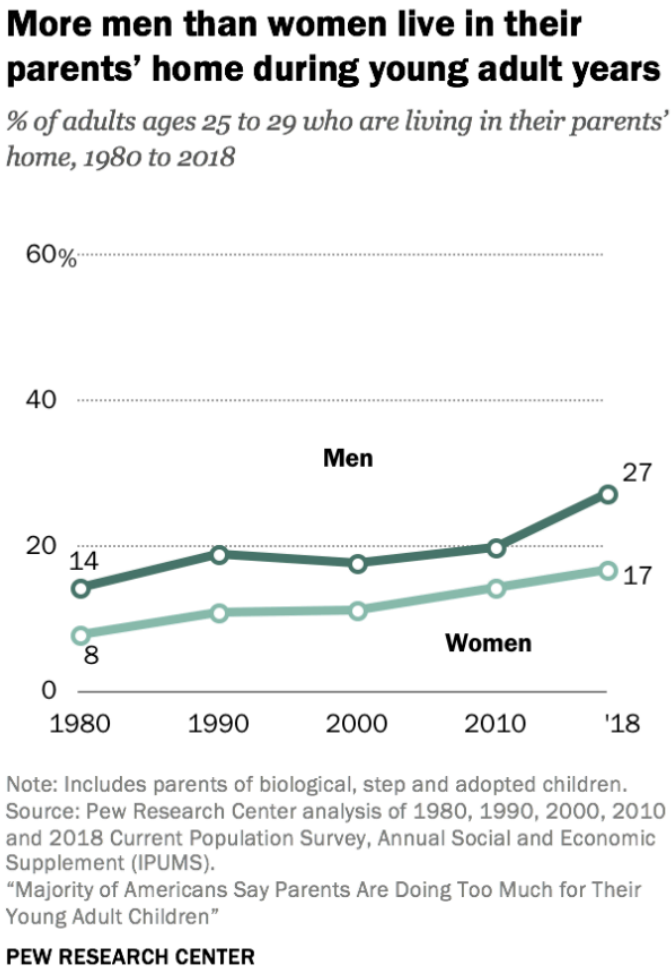


Figure S7.2.1 Majority of Americans Say Parents Are Doing Too Much for Their Young Adult Children. Source: Barrosa, Parker, & Fry (2019), Pew Research Center.

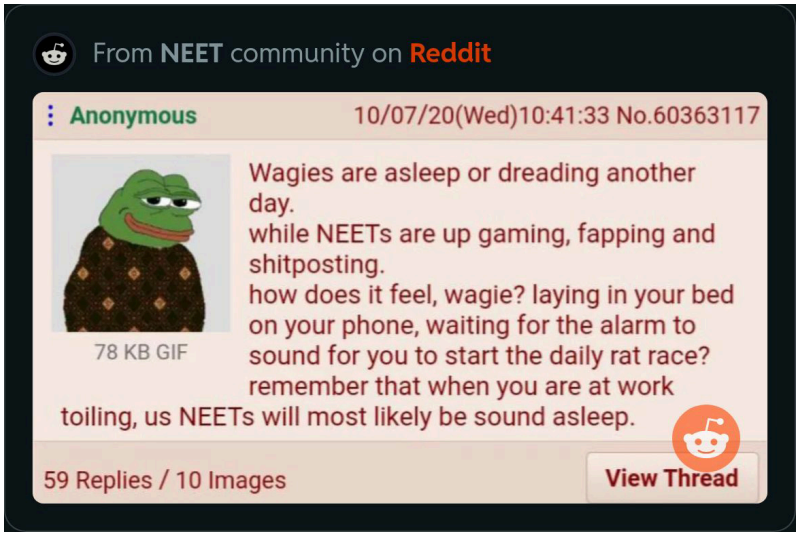


Figure S7.2.2, A post on the social media site, Reddit.

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Boyhood Without Risk

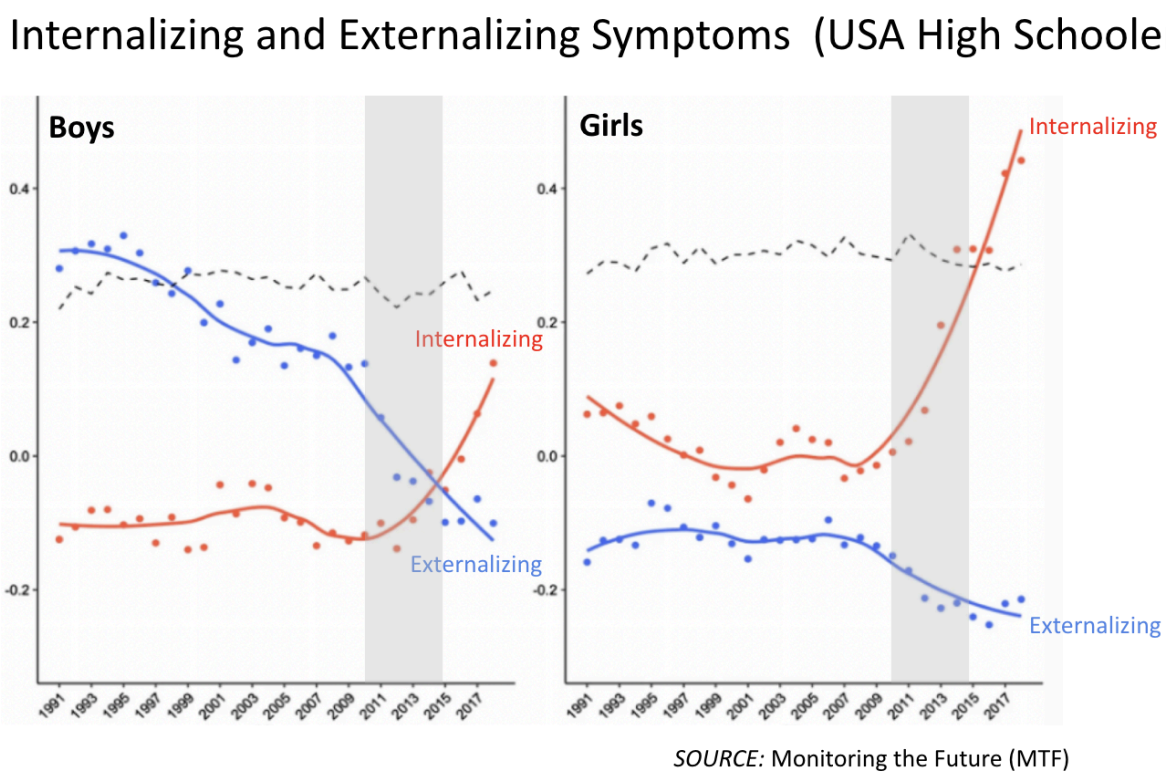


Figure S7.3.1: In the 2010s, externalizing scores dropped for both sexes while internalizing scores rose. Gen Z boys now look like Millennial girls from the 1990s. Source: Askari, Rutherford et al. (2022). [Vertical line and labels added by Zach]

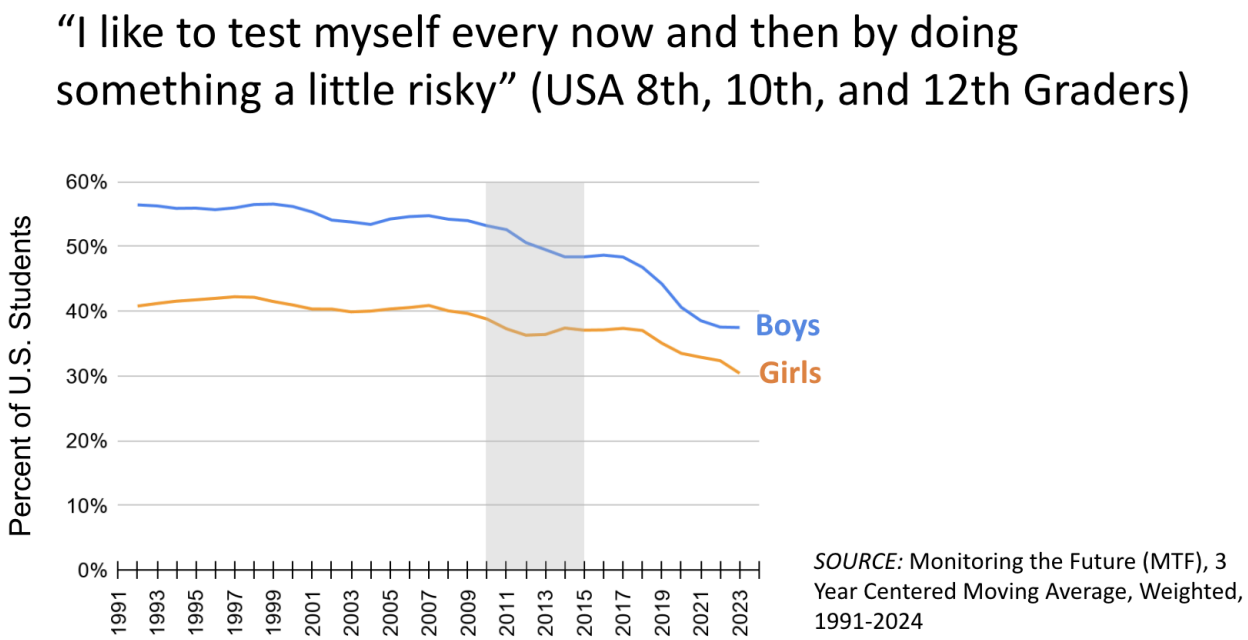


Figure S7.3.2 Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little bit risky." Three-year centered moving average (1991-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

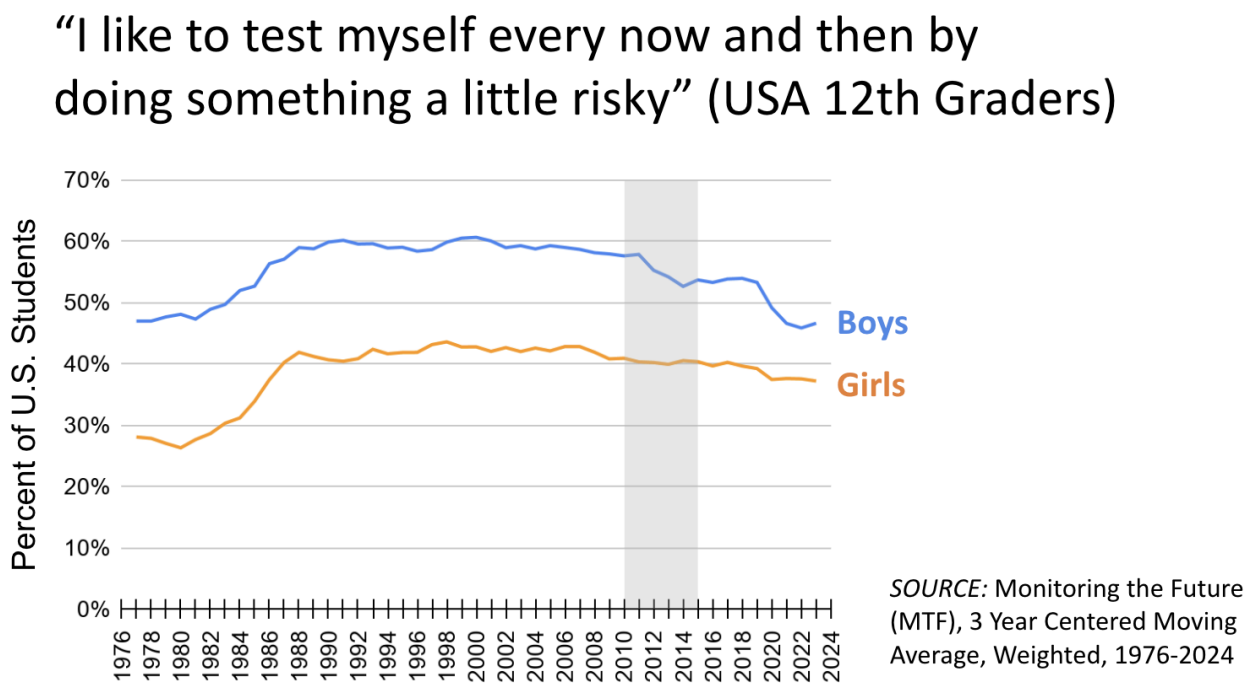


Figure S7.3.3 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little bit risky." Three-year centered moving average (1976-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

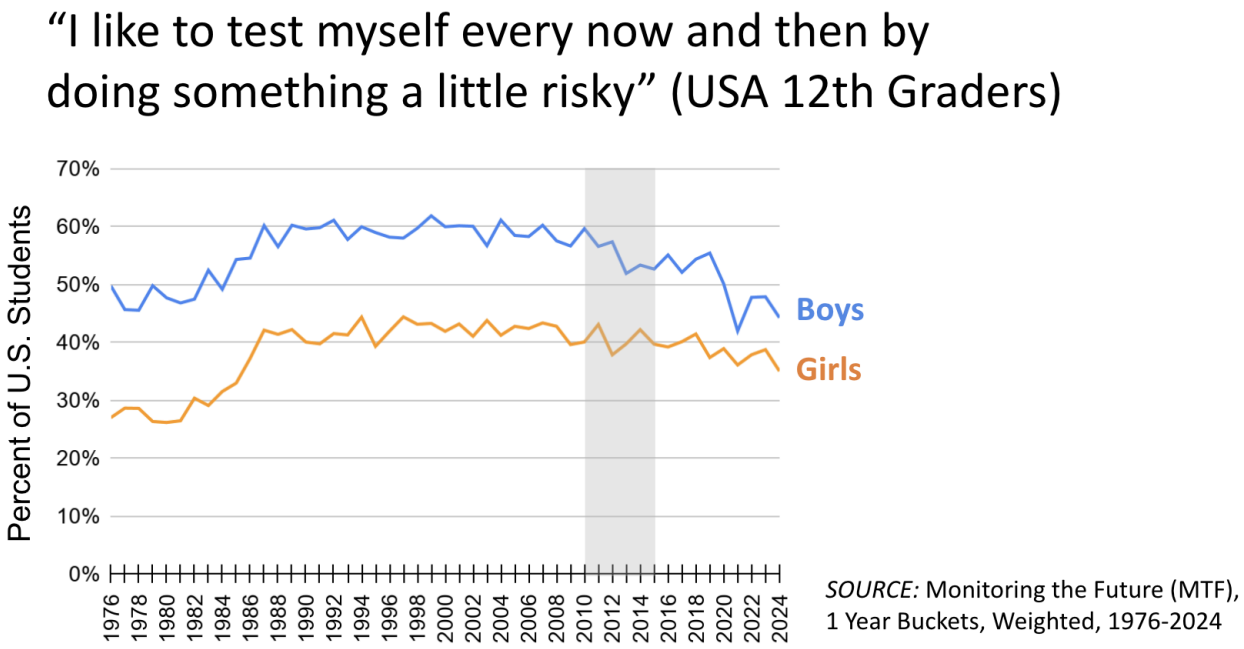
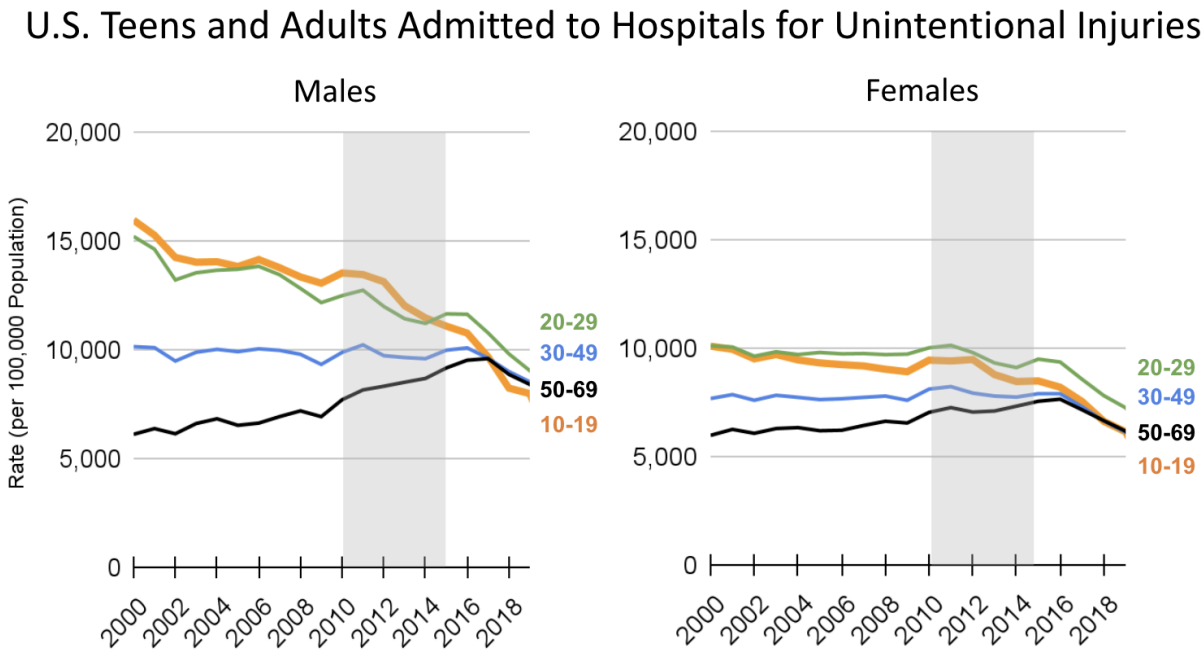


Figure S7.3.4 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little bit risky." One-year buckets (1976-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]



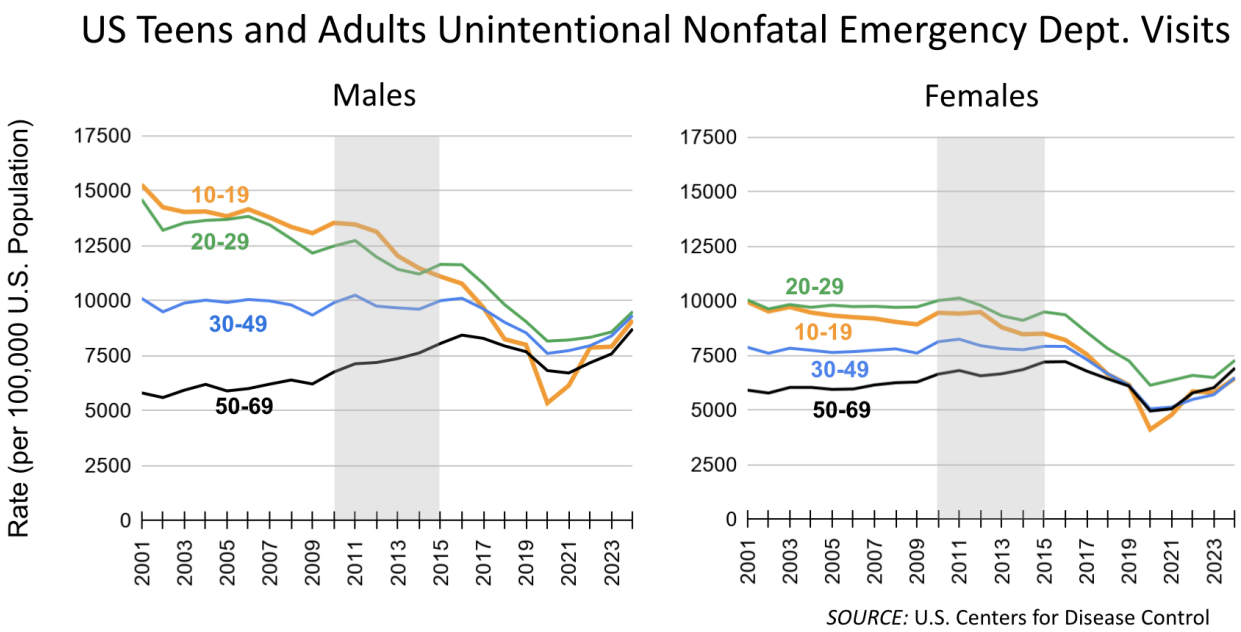


Figure S7.4.1 On the left: U.S. Males admitted to hospitals for unintentional injuries, by age group. On the right: Same, for U.S. females. Orange line is ages 10-19, the age group that used to have the highest rates of injury and now has about the same as all other age groups. Source: Nonfatal Injury Reports (2001 - 2024), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. This dataset only goes back to 2001. [TAG 2026 Spreadsheet]

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The Virtual World Welcomes Boys

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The Virtual World Consumes Boys

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Pornography

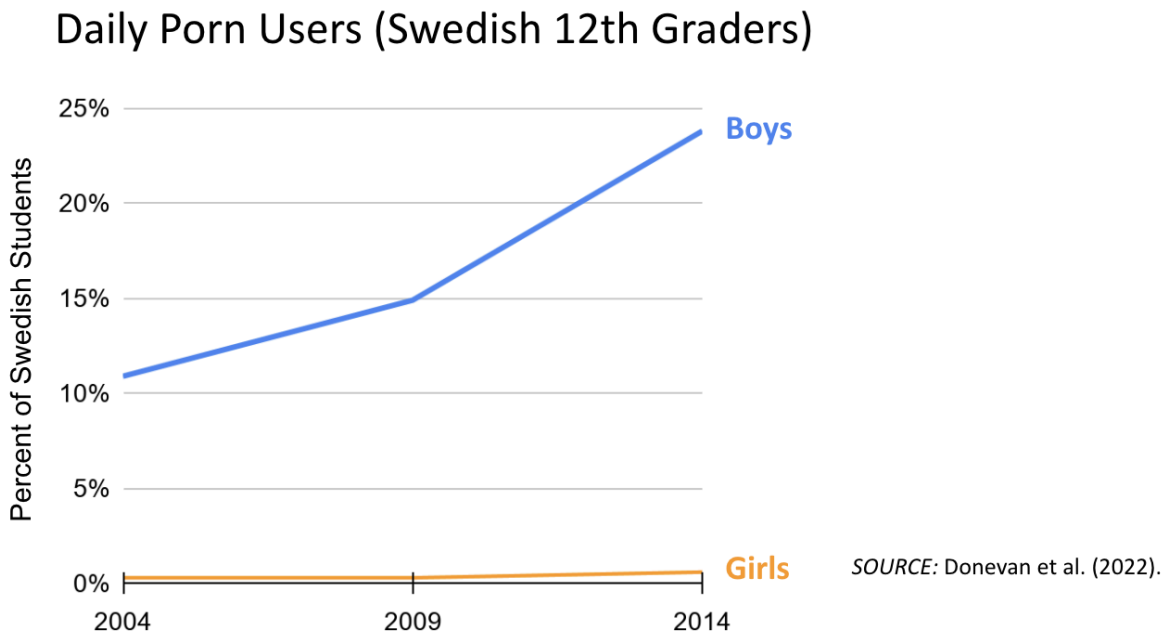


Figure S7.5.1 Percent of Swedish 12th Graders who watch pornography "more or less daily" Donevan et al. 2022. [TAG 2026 Spreadsheet]

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Video Games

On Video Game Addiction: The Game Addiction Scale for Adolescents (GASA) includes seven criteria including:

- **Salience:** Playing a game becomes the most important activity in a person's life and dominates his or her thinking (preoccupation), feelings (cravings), and behavior (excessive use).
- **Tolerance:** The process whereby someone starts playing games more often, thereby gradually building up the amount of time spent on games.
- **Mood modification:** The subjective experiences that people report as a result of engagement in games. This dimension was previously labeled euphoria (Griffiths, 1995, 1997), referring to a "buzz" or "high" that is derived from an activity. However, mood modification may also include tranquillizing and/or relaxing feelings related to escapism.

- **Withdrawal:** Unpleasant emotions and/or physical effects that occur when game play is suddenly reduced or discontinued. Withdrawal consists mostly of moodiness and irritability, but may also include physiological symptoms, such as shaking.
- **Relapse:** The tendency to repeatedly revert to earlier patterns of game play. Excessive playing patterns are quickly restored after periods of abstinence or control.
- **Conflict:** This refers to all interpersonal conflicts resulting from excessive gaming. Conflicts exist between the player and those around him/her. Conflicts may include arguments and neglect, but also lies and deception.
- **Problems:** This refers to problems caused by excessive game play. It mainly concerns displacement problems as the object of addiction take preference over activities, such as school, work, and socializing. Problems may also arise within the individual, such as intrapsychic conflict and subjective feelings of loss of control.

Source: Esposito et al. (2020). An Investigation into Video Game Addiction in Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Medicina.*

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All Screens and No (Real World) Play

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Freedom, Technology, and Meaninglessness

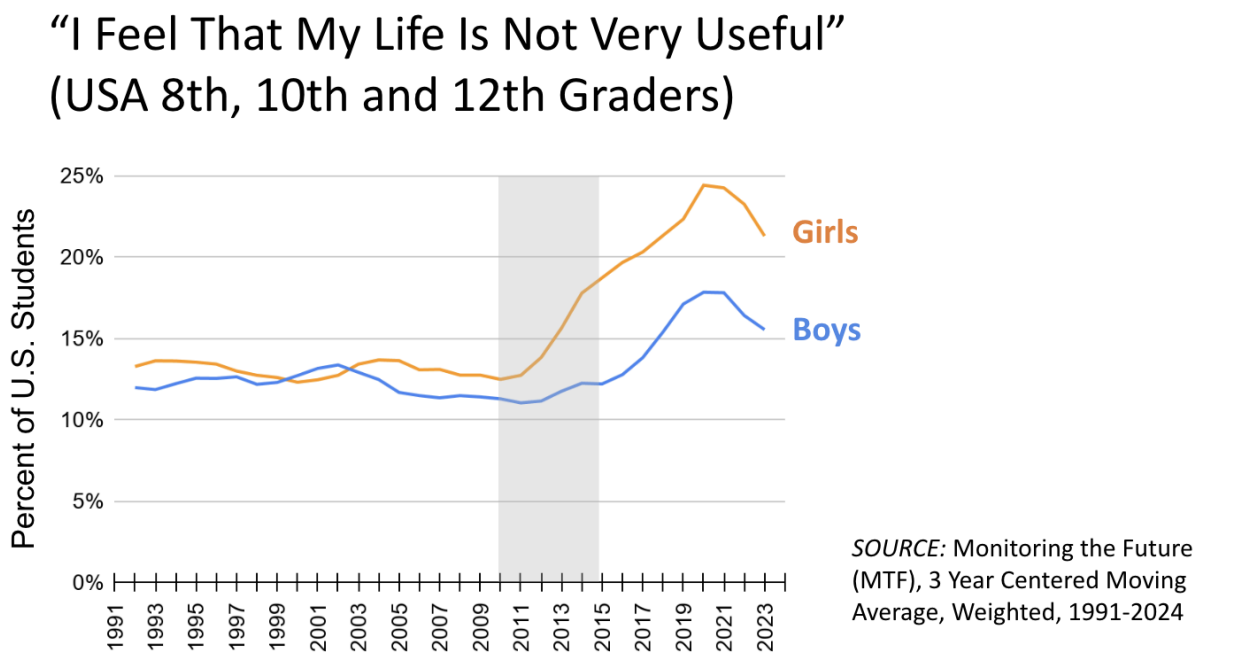


Figure S7.6.1 Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, & 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I feel that my life is not very useful." Three-year centered moving average (1991-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

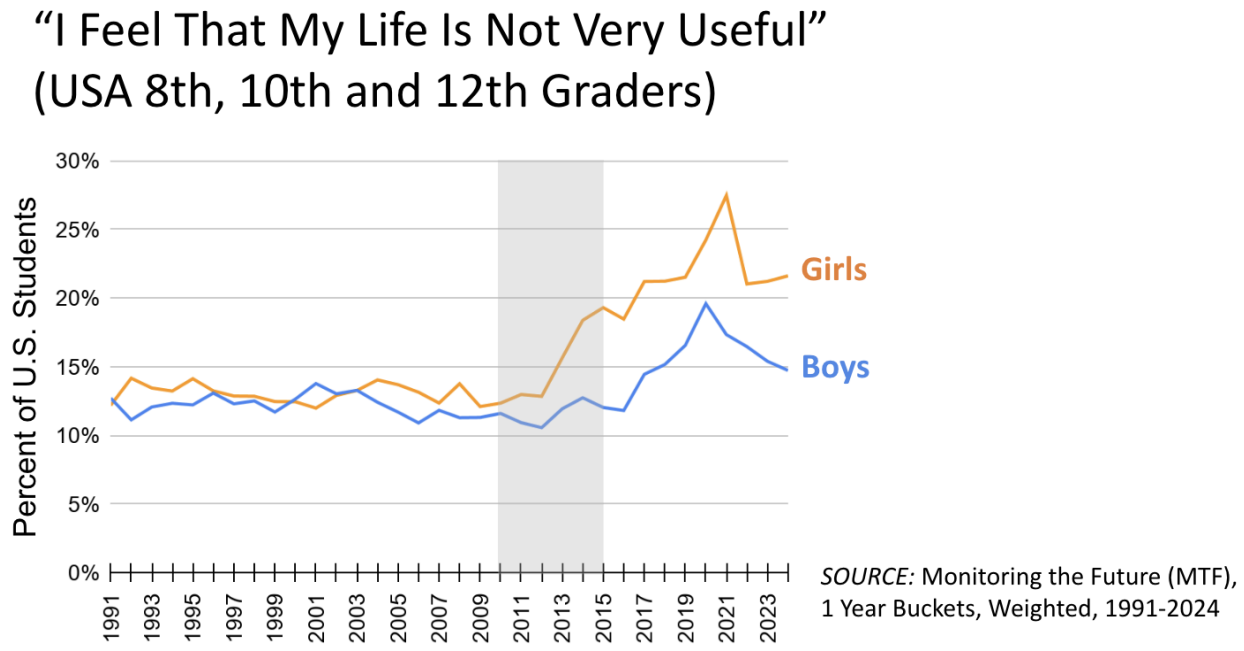


Figure S7.6.2 Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, & 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I feel that my life is not very useful." One year buckets (1991-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

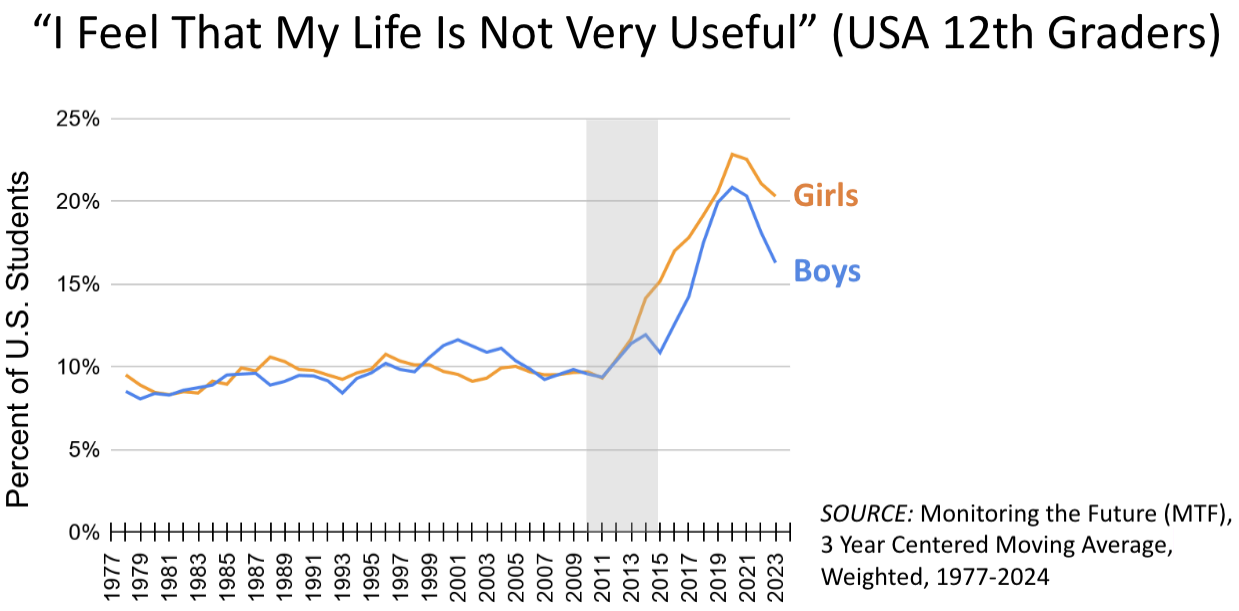


Figure S7.6.3 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I feel that my life is not very useful." Three-year centered moving average (1977-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

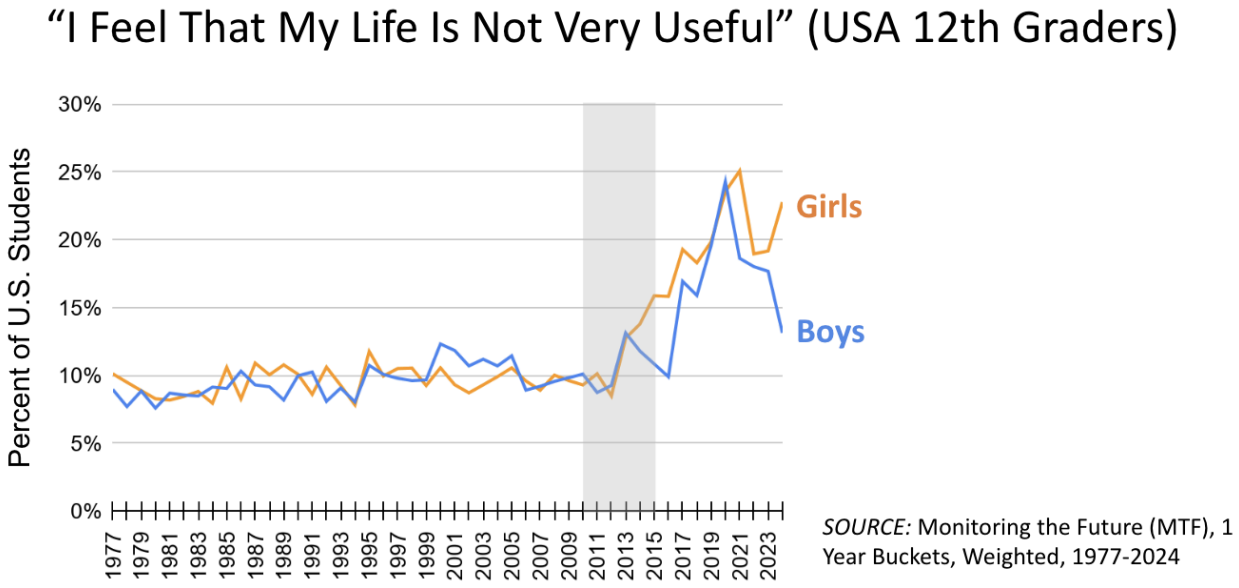


Figure S7.6.4 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement "I feel that my life is not very useful." One-year buckets (1977-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

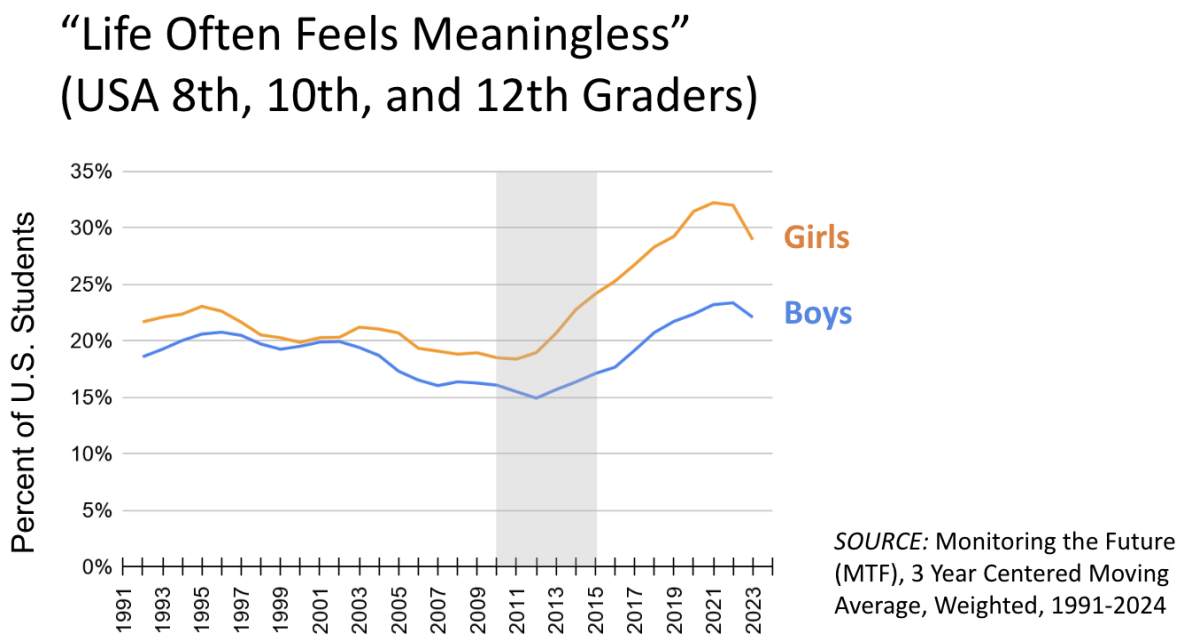


Figure S7.6.5 Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, & 12th graders who agreed with the statement "Life often feels meaningless." Three-year centered moving average (1991-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

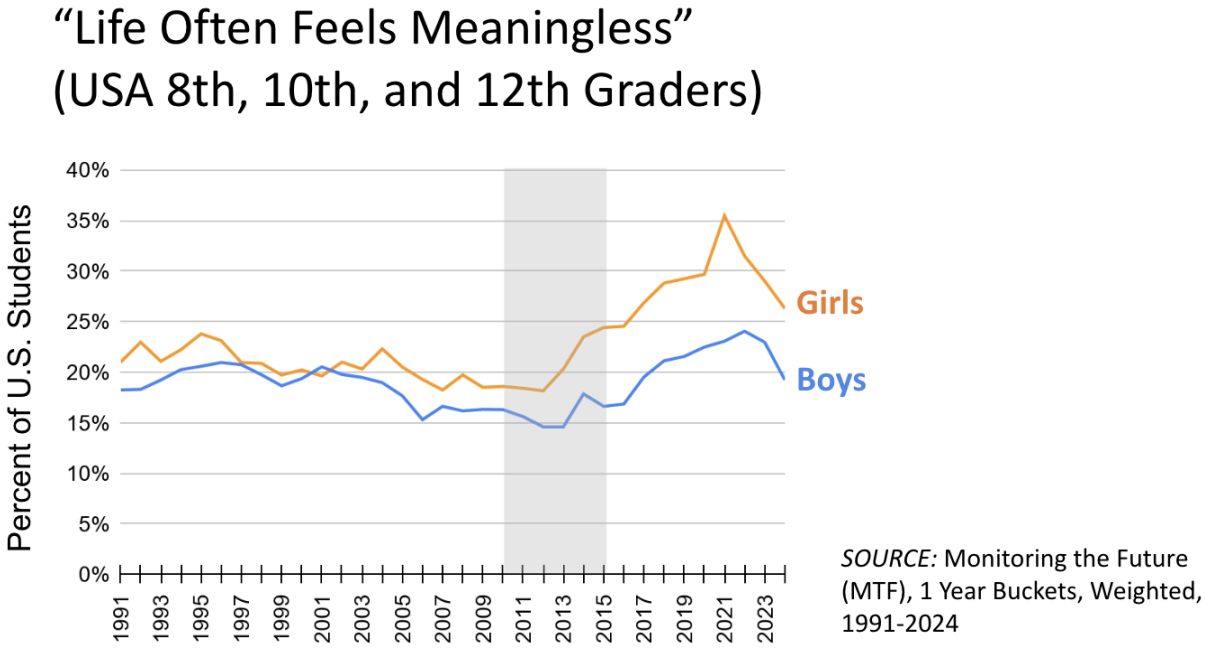


Figure S7.6.6 Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, & 12th graders who agreed with the statement "Life often feels meaningless." One year buckets (1991-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

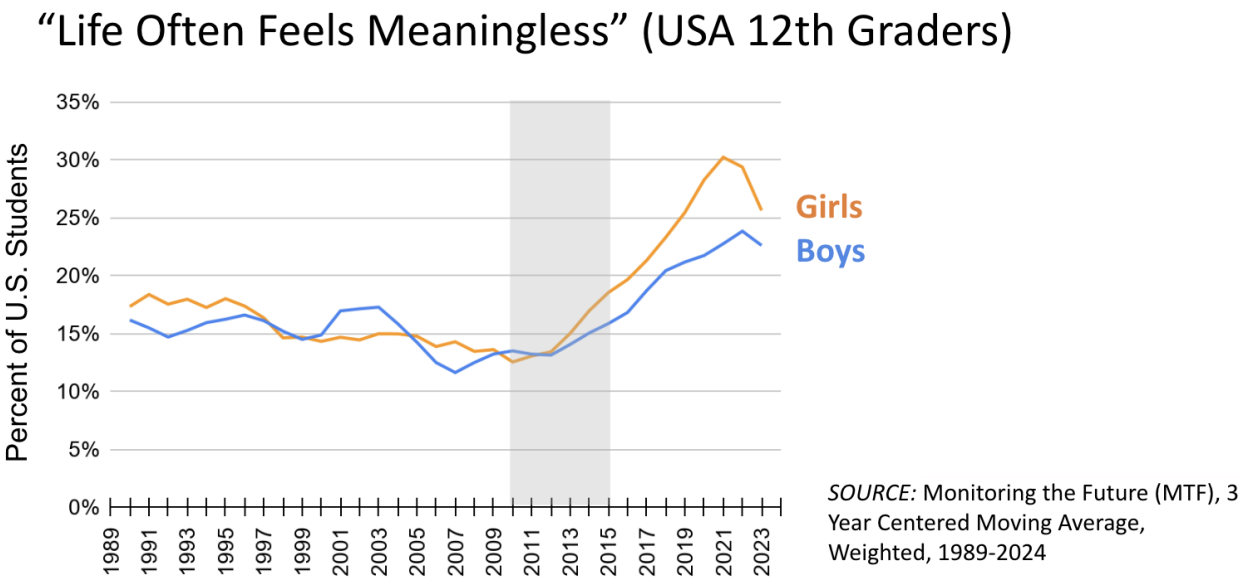


Figure S7.6.7 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement "Life often feels meaningless." Three-year centered moving average (1989-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

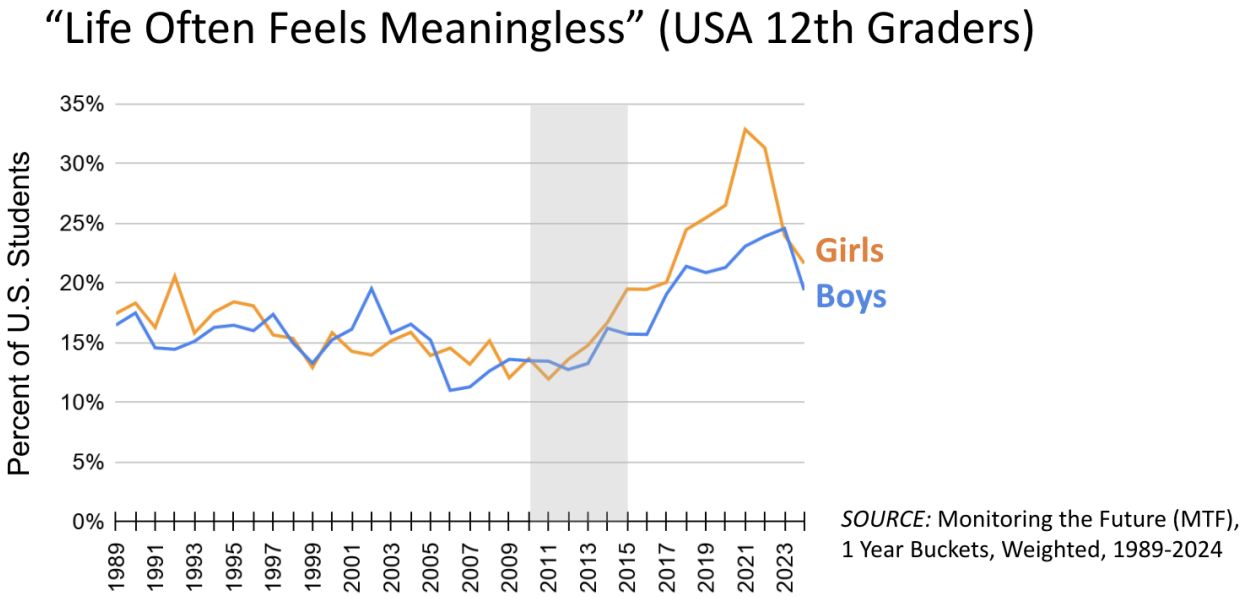


Figure S7.6.8 Percent of U.S. 12th graders who agreed with the statement “Life often feels meaningless.” One-year buckets (1989-2024). Source: Monitoring The Future. [Weighted] [TAG 2026 spreadsheet]

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Appendices: Post-Publication Additions