

NOTE: 10 MIN PRESENTATION

UNPLUGGED
REBELS
NZ



SLIDE 1

Introduction – quick overview of who you are, your background, what brought you to this point and why you are standing here today. This is obviously personal to you so it will be up to you to craft this for yourself.

Something like this might be useful:

Hi everyone thank you for having me, my name is and I am leading the campaign, Unplugged Rebels NZ in our school community. [Insert brief bio] Here is mine in case you are interested:

Hi everyone, thank you so much for having me. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Laura Massey and I am a mother of two children, a daughter aged 9 and a son who is almost 8. My background is in education, I was a secondary school teacher before having my children, I studied up to Post Grad level in Educational psychology, I am a certified youth mentor and I am going back to Uni next year to complete my Master in Counselling. I have a great interest in the education and social and emotional wellbeing of young people and I suppose that is the real reason I am standing here today.

I've been concerned, like many parents, about giving my kids smartphones. So I started speaking to other parents and the same answers comes back every time "I don't really want to give them one, but I also don't want them to be the only one in their class without one". Another common response is that "we feel that we need a way to be able to communicate with them when they are going to school/park alone" and also the fact that many of us upgrade our smartphones often so there is generally an older model hanging around that is easy just to pass on. Somehow, it has become the norm for children as young as ten to have their own smartphone, in a very short space of time.

I discovered the campaign, Unplugged Rebels NZ and immediately signed up to Volunteer as Ambassador to help raise awareness of the research and alternatives for our school. We are a collective of parents that are aiming to understand the effects of smartphones and social media on our children and to drive discussions on the reasons behind this and ultimately create change.

SLIDE 2

Throughout history, childhood has been based on play and now in one short decade we have gone from a play based childhood to a phone based childhood.

SLIDE 3

Mental health - the first generation of children who were given smartphones are now adults. In a global study of almost 30,000 young adults the results showed that:

- The later the age at which young adults first got a phone, the better their mental wellbeing as adults, particularly self-confidence and the ability to relate positively to others.
- Those who got their first phone at a younger age were more likely to experience negative thoughts and outcomes. (Sapien Labs: Age of first smartphone/tablet and mental wellbeing outcomes, 2023)

This is reflected in the following graph of the decline in the mental health of undergraduates from 2010 (the time when smartphones become widely used).

SLIDE 4

- Cyberbullying, trolling, shaming is often facilitated by social media. Some platforms have been designed explicitly to encourage users to anonymously broadcast their thoughts about other people (Ask.fm and NGL – Not Gonna Lie).

A study of 4,477 elementary, middle, and high school students found that 30% of participants reported personal victimisation from cyberbullying in their WhatsApp classmate groups.

Cyberbullying in NZ 3rd highest of 29 countries surveyed REFERENCE

SLIDE 5

In terms of media spaces where cyberbullying occurs, social networking sites are reported to be the primary site where cyberbullying takes place¹. 65% of New Zealand parents and caregivers said that social networking sites were the main place where their child was experiencing cyberbullying

SLIDE 6

Anxiety – Since 2011 cases of diagnosed anxiety in 15-24 year olds increased 259% in girls and 131% in boys.

SLIDE 7

Depression - Since 2012, major depression in US teens has increased 145% for girls and 161% for boys.

SLIDE 8

Self harm - Looking at this graph it is easy to assume this is a problem with girls in their older teens, and yes it certainly is. But the boys still have a 110% and 115% increase between the ages of 10-19, and girls in the younger age bracket of 10-14 have an increase by 242% from 2012 – around the time when Instagram started taking off.

SLIDE 9

Suicide - New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the second worst in the developed world at 14.9 deaths per 100,000 adolescents. This rate is more than twice the average among the 41 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries surveyed.

SLIDE 10

- **Exposure to sexual, violent content, sextortion and grooming – Huge topic**
Physical health – eye damage, obesity, spinal damage
- **Sleep deprivation**
- **Addiction**
- **Reduction in academic performance**
- **Affecting brain development - MRI scans of young children shows screen time reduces the size of the brain areas responsible for visual processing, empathy, attention, complex memory and early reading skills. REFERENCE**
- **Shortening attention span**
- **Loneliness**
- **Damage to social development and relationships**
- **Friends/online contacts replacing parents as primary attachment from an early age Social media making access to purchase drugs and other illegal substances much easier**
- **It's all undeniably bleak, but I'm coming here with hope and a choice.**

SLIDE 11

Thankfully there are many great devices out there suitable for our kids! We have a list of alternative devices on the website.

SLIDE 12

It's about what we do now as a community, we are the pioneers, we can and we must go first, we have the opportunity to lead the way for other schools and parents in our community and across the country. So I ask all of you to think not only of your child but of all children.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from a parent and GP Susie Davies:

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“In the last decade there have been 70% less outdoor accidents and 93% more incidents of self harm in children - as a GP, I can promise you it's much easier to mend a broken bone than a broken mind.”

Dr. Susie Davies of @papaya_parents Stats from NHS Database