

## Anxiety and stress

By Jasen Obermeyer

Today's kids, teenagers, and even young adults ? well, really, all of us ? deal more with anxiety and stress than any other generation. Anxiety can be small, worrying about passing a test, to extremes, like living with it every day so you can hardly eat or sleep.

But why is it so prevalent in today's world? You hear about on the news, psychologists, and doctors talk about it like it's a disease, as if society has a problem. I do believe society has a problem, though one that can be solved ? difficult, but solvable.

In our world today we almost live and breath with technology. I've talked about technology several times before, because it is so central to our society.

But again, is all that technology good? When I see certain family members and friends constantly checking their phones and tablets, going on social media sites and texting friends, I ask why.

Responses vary, but most seem to point to ?I don't want to miss anything.?

What are you missing? Is it so terrible, is it the end of the world if you don't respond instantly or miss something right at the moment it happens?

Social media can eat up a lot of your time, that nervousness to stay in touch with the world, because you don't want to be left out of it. I don't think the world will know, or even care, if you miss something at the moment it happens.

In everyday life, we are given choices; what to buy, what to wear, to eat, drink, and do. Choice is not a bad thing, but maybe too much overwhelms us. Globalization has created a whole new world, but making the world bigger means we bit off more of it than we can chew.

Today's youth are given so many choices in so little time to decide, it almost overwhelms them. And because of that, they feel the need to have that instant gratification, that satisfaction and decision; otherwise it seems to them the end of the world.

Kids don't need choices, at least not nearly as many as they're getting now, because they are so young. They need direction, it's a new world for them, and they don't understand it. By lowering their choices and options, they have time to make that one or two decisions much easier and less stressed.

A big part of that anxiety is the ever-changing world we live in.

For young adults like myself, today's world is scary, because of the uncertainty. During my parents' time, life was simple ? go to school, from elementary to high school, then post-secondary, and almost as soon as you finish, you have a job, a job they enjoy, good at, and one they will do for the rest of their lives.

Today it's much more complicated; go to school, from elementary to high school, decide on a career, find a part-time job, balance between school, the job, and a social life. Decide on a university or college, maybe take some time off, but then you change your mind, you go down a different path, look for another career. Then when you graduate, you don't have that job you're looking for, and everything comes cashing down on you.

Today's young adults, including myself, stress out all the time about finding work, firstly finding the career job you've wanted and worked so hard for, then if that doesn't work, find a job that's miserable. Choices seem to be bad or worse.

The fear of the unknown is very prevalent today, where one will succeed or not, finding a way to balance everything.

All this stress and anxiety, I believe, has caused children to grow up faster. Instead of playing and letting their imagination take over, they have to make choices, ones from quick decisions from eating or dressing, to long-term ones of choosing schools and careers, to ?make it big.?

Is that growing up really good for them? Is it worth it, all the sleepless nights, the headaches, the attitude and disobedience you see in public?

Anxiety and stress have been around forever, but it's much more prevalent today. Today's youth are already suffering from it, but maybe if we lessen the burden, and let kids be kids, it will be easier for the next generation.

My dad always told me whenever I complained about not being a grown up, ?enjoy being a kid while it lasts, because once you're a grown up, you'll be one for a long time.?

If I were a kid today, I wouldn't want to be a grown-up for the rest of my life.

Let their imaginations run free, let them wake up without a care in the world, just playing and having fun.

Anxiety and stress will always be in us, but should we let it take over?