



WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter

we're so glad you're here!

MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH INSIGHT

The Male Loneliness Epidemic: Men's Mental Health Affects All of Us

If you've spent any time online lately, you've probably heard about the male loneliness epidemic or the manosphere. Depending on who's talking about it, you'll hear one of two stories.

- One says men are victims of a changing world that left them discarded and disrespected.
- The other says men created this problem themselves and now they're simply experiencing the consequences.

Like most things, the truth lives somewhere in the middle.

I hear women describe emotional labor, unequal partnerships, weaponized incompetence, and partners who seem emotionally unavailable. Those experiences are real, and they deserve to be taken seriously. In my work, I also hold space for the reality that many men are profoundly lonely, isolated, depressed, and disconnected from meaningful relationships. These truths are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they're deeply connected.

Where Did this Come From?

In short, let's be real – this problem came from women gaining more independence and freedom. BUT, let's take a moment to be curious about the nuance around that...



For hundreds of years women have been taught to turn towards each other when struggling and lean on each other while men have been taught to hate, isolate, and demean themselves and others. Generations have progressed and now partners expect emotional availability, more involved parenting, shared mental load, unprompted thoughtfulness, and genuine vulnerability. The skills many men were discouraged from developing have now become essential to finding a long-term partner and remaining in a happy and healthy relationship.

Generations of boys and men were taught crying was weakness. Vulnerability was embarrassing. Needing people was something to outgrow. Many boys learned that any emotion other than anger was uncomfortable and unmanly. They learned that adapting to your environment and displaying care was not going to get you the promotion and money to provide. They were socialized to maximize their circumstances to their own liking rather than compromise and/or adjust to others.

Women hear discussions about the male loneliness epidemic and think, *I've been asking the men in my life to go to therapy, communicate better, take on some of the mental load, and develop emotional intelligence for years.* Many men have been given opportunities to grow and have chosen not to. Some continue to avoid difficult conversations. Many don't stand up for women in rooms they are not in. A good chunk still expect women to perform all the mental and emotional labor in relationships. Some refuse therapy while expecting their partners to absorb the consequences. Those choices matter and have caused a lot of harm.

At the same time, it's difficult to ignore that generations of boys were raised in environments that often rewarded emotional suppression or dismissive behavior. Most people don't intentionally choose the emotional tools they were (or weren't) given as children. That doesn't remove accountability, but it does provide context. *The same way we understand how trauma affects relationships without excusing harmful behavior, we can recognize that cultural expectations have shaped many men's emotional lives without removing their responsibility to change.* We can understand the behavior as a foot-in-the-door for being part of change.

Supporting Men Doesn't Mean Betraying Yourself

This is where many women understandably hesitate. If we talk about men's struggles, are we minimizing women's? And that's a completely valid question.

When men struggle to build emotionally healthy relationships, everyone around them feels the impact. Partners become overwhelmed carrying emotional labor alone. Children lose opportunities to see healthy emotional expression modeled by fathers and father figures and they lose opportunities to experience the emotional closeness of truly getting to know who their children become as adults. The health of men's mental health affects everyone, *not* because women should fix it, but because we're all connected to one another.

The version of feminism that I choose to subscribe to as a therapist and woman is one of fluidity, warmth, strength, nurturance, and community. We are wonderful at building community, adapting, and creating in ways that many men have never been encouraged to experience. When we can share that with our sons, brothers, and husbands without coddling, they can forego the socialized shame around vulnerability, emotion, and empathy. Rejecting rigid gender roles benefits and empowers everyone. Supporting healthier men doesn't require lowering expectations or your standards. You don't have to tolerate disrespect or abandon boundaries. You have to let yourself feel the rage of injustice, and the hopelessness of your own loneliness and still stay rooted in your strength, fluidity, warmth, and nurturance as a woman. You have to remain open and hopeful despite feeling the opposite sometimes. That's not anti-feminist, that's rooted in who we are as women.

For my men reading, this is your sign to be thoughtful consistently. You can't just buy the flowers one time or grocery shop twice without calling to ask which brand you're supposed to get. You are all smart and capable; to better manage your own mental health, you have to learn to be mindful of others. Work as hard on relationships as you do for your fantasy football league, approach your emotions with the same compassion you do for your favorite athlete that's having a bad season, follow up and check in with your loved ones the same way you do that same pond or hunting spot that's given you the best catch.

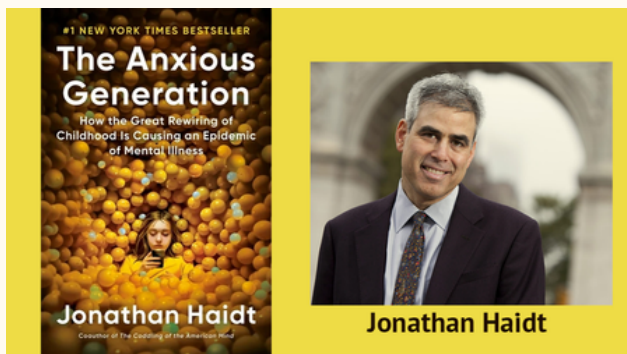
What Can Be Done

We don't solve the male loneliness epidemic by asking women to work harder. Nor do we solve it by blaming men for every struggle they experience. Instead, we hold both accountability and compassion.

Some places to start include:

- **Encourage boys to develop emotional language early.** Ask what they're feeling. Teach them that sadness, fear, disappointment, embarrassment, and grief all have a place.
- **Normalize therapy before there's a crisis.**
- **Value emotionally healthy masculinity.** Celebrate men who communicate, apologize, nurture, ask for help, and maintain close friendships.
- **Expect accountability.** Men are capable of learning new skills. Hold them to that expectation.
- **Encourage friendships that go beyond shared activities or drinking.**
- **Practice repair instead of perfection.** Healthy relationships aren't built by never making mistakes. They're built by acknowledging harm, taking responsibility, and repairing.

The male loneliness epidemic deserves attention, not because men deserve special treatment but because it affects us all when those around us are struggling with isolation & loneliness. The goal isn't to rescue men from the consequences of their choices. The goal is to raise boys and support men in becoming emotionally capable adults who can build relationships rooted in trust, empathy, accountability, and mutual respect. We don't have to choose between believing women and caring about men. We can and should do both.



Book of the Month

THE ANXIOUS GENERATION

A book about children growing up with social media and how that contributes to increased mental health struggles, social issues, and disconnection.

[READ HERE](#)



Free Resource

THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

A wonderful website that explores how we are all influenced a consumerist society. Can be helpful for parents, adults, and/or children!

[CLICK HERE](#)

Parenting Teens: The Complexities of Raising Children with Inherent Trust and Respect vs. Making Them Earn It

BETWEEN LIFE AND THERAPY NEWSLETTER FEATURE

If you've ever found yourself thinking, *my teen needs to earn my respect*, you're certainly not alone. It's a common parenting phrase I hear as a teen and tween therapist. Usually, it's said after a lie, sneaking out, disrespectful language, breaking curfew, or another behavior that leaves parents feeling hurt, frustrated, and unsure of what to do next.

But I want to offer a different perspective – I don't actually think respect or trust should be earned. That's a hot take, but hear me out...

Respect Is a Human Need, Not a Reward

Every person deserves basic respect. That includes your teenager. Respect isn't agreeing with your teen's choices or allowing poor behavior. Respect simply means treating another person with dignity, acknowledging their humanity, and communicating in a way that reflects that. Your teenager deserves respect because they're a person not because they've behaved exactly the way you want them to. Likewise, you deserve respect from your teenager because you're a person, not because you're their parent. Healthy family systems don't reserve respect only for people who behave perfectly. They practice respect consistently, even during conflict.

Trust is a little different. Trust is built and maintained. And trust can absolutely be damaged.

If your teen lies repeatedly, if they sneak out, misuse their phone or break rules. Those behaviors don't mean they deserve less respect. It means they've become less trustworthy and that's something to be curious about. Many parents hate to hear me say it but a degree of breaking trust or misbehaving is relatively normative for teens. They are testing the limits, exploring boundaries, and trying new things. They are going to screw up and probably not going to want to tell you. However, the way you as a parent demonstrate the importance of trust and respect, determines how your teen will react when they ultimately need you to be their guardrail.



Consequences Should Protect Trust, Not Punish Self-Worth

When trust has been broken, consequences matter because they teach integrity and accountability. They communicate that choices have real-world outcomes. They help teenagers develop responsibility. But consequences should directly address the loss of trust, not become a statement about your teen's worthiness of respect.

For example: If your teen sneaks out at night, it makes sense that they lose some independence for a while. If they lie about where they're going, it makes sense that you'll verify plans more closely. If they misuse social media, limiting access until trust is rebuilt is reasonable. Those aren't punishments because your teen is "bad." They're responses to damaged trust. Respecting your child doesn't mean avoiding hard conversations or giving endless chances. You can love your teen and respect them as a person while providing consequences if they do something to lose your trust.

Many teenagers become incredibly skilled at hiding mistakes not because they don't care, but because they believe one mistake means they'll become "the bad kid." If children grow up believing respect disappears every time they make a poor decision, they often stop coming to parents when they need help most.

But when they know: *I can make mistakes and I don't have to be perfect or I can mess up, have consequences and still be loved by my parents.* They're much more likely to repair mistakes and openly communicate with you instead of hiding them and trying to be more sneaky.

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