



MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Coalition to Empower our Future
Re: Three-in-four NY Parents Support Comprehensive Youth Mental Health Solutions Over Narrow Ones; Four-in-five Believe Heavily Restricting Technology Will Have Unintended Consequences
Date: June 2026

Overview

The Coalition to Empower our Future partnered with Mercury Analytics to conduct an online survey among 600 parents in New York, as well as live conversations with parents across New York. This research took place between April 2 and April 10, 2026.

This research finds that when it comes to solving the youth mental health challenge, parents in New York strongly support comprehensive solutions and believe that narrow, ban-based solutions will cause negative unintended consequences. They want digital literacy solutions that equip young people to use technology responsibly and succeed in a highly digital world.

Key Research Insights

Three-in-four parents in New York support comprehensive solutions to youth mental health over narrow ones. New York parents believe that a broad, varied range of factors drive youth mental health challenges, so they support comprehensive solutions to address these challenges rather than solutions that target a single factor. They see a role for many parties, including parents, mental health providers, schools, and communities.

Q: Thinking about solutions to youth mental health and wellbeing, which of the following do you think is the best approach, even if neither is perfect?



QUOTES FROM NY PARENTS ON WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS:

*"We have to come up with the solutions together with psychiatrists, with therapists, [with] scientists. **We have to all [do it] together.**"*

*"**It takes a village.** It's more than a school or a parent. It takes help and resources."*

*"**It starts with parents, of course, but it's on all levels – schools, communities, and mental health providers.**"*

Four-in-five New York parents agree that a narrow, ban-based approach to youth mental health can have unintended negative consequences. Parents in New York say bans and sweeping technology restrictions put kids' personal safety at risk, especially in schools. They believe kids will always find a way to use technology, with or without their parents' supervision and whether it's banned or not.

Q: Please indicate if you **agree or disagree** with the following statement:

*"A narrow approach to youth mental health and wellbeing that **bans or heavily restricts youth access to phones and technology** will cause negative unintended consequences for young people."*



QUOTES FROM NY PARENTS ON THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF A NARROW, BAN-BASED APPROACH:

"Bans, with no questions asked, are not a good solution because it'll be like 'okay, I'm not allowed to do this, so now I have more of an inclination to do this.'"

*"Schools in America are so unsafe. **Kids need their phones to call their parents or 911.**"*

*"I don't think [banning phones] is enough on its own, and I can say for myself, living in a household where I wasn't allowed to have a phone and social media **didn't stop me from having a phone and social media. Kids are going to get around that.**"*

Nine-in-10 New York parents say that young people *and* their parents need to be taught how to use technology safely and responsibly. Specifically, they say artificial intelligence (AI) is a significant part of this conversation. Parents feel responsibility in teaching their kids how to navigate AI and other technology, and some feel behind the learning curve.

Q: Do you **agree or disagree** that **young people** should be taught how to use AI safely?



Q: Do you **agree or disagree** that **parents** should be taught how to use AI safely?



QUOTES FROM NY PARENTS ON WHY DIGITAL LITERACY IS IMPORTANT:

*“**Sometimes I feel like I don’t know the right way.** There’s so much out there that I haven’t learned about being safe on the internet.”*

*“As technology is evolving, as parents, **you have to evolve too.**”*

*“**If the parent is not tech savvy themselves, its hard.** I’m not really tech savvy – I didn’t know there was an option where they had to ask your permission. I didn’t know all of that.”*

*“It’s **necessary for the future to be fully digitally literate...** but with the rise of AI, safety is a key word.”*

Parents in New York overwhelmingly support implementing digital literacy solutions for young people, parents and educators. They say effective solutions equip young people, parents and educators to harness technology for good – for example, media literacy training programs for teachers; digital wellness guides for parents and families; and online safety lessons for students. They believe these solutions establish smart, clear guardrails for young people and actionable guidance for parents and educators.

Q: Below is a list of resources and tools some people have said can help support youth mental health. Please indicate how **effective or ineffective** each would be.

(Showing % EFFECTIVE)

Training programs for teachers on digital and media literacy to help them teach students how to evaluate online information	93
Parent/family digital wellness guides , resources that give parents research-based strategies and conversation tools to help manage their children's technology use	91
Online safety lessons for students , covering topics like cyberbullying, privacy and responsible online behavior	89
Student-led digital wellbeing groups , organized to promote healthier online behaviors and support mental and social well-being	88
Lessons on app engagement and design to teach students how platforms are built to influence behavior and hold attention	87
AI and online literacy lessons for students to teach them how algorithms, AI and online platforms work	87
News and information literacy resources for the age of AI to help students evaluate whether online information is credible, especially when AI is involved	87
Social media literacy curriculum for students to help them understand how social platforms shape attention, behavior, and online experiences	86

QUOTES FROM NY PARENTS ON WHY THEY SUPPORT SPECIFIC DIGITAL LITERACY SOLUTIONS:

*"If schools are putting screens in front of kids, like in my child's kindergarten class where we're expected to provide iPads, **then I expect them to also teach online safety and computer safety [to students].**"*

*"I think [digital wellness guides] would be a great tool...it always starts at home. That's where your kids are first. **If we started talking about digital literacy and how to keep our kids safe on the internet in parenting classes and books,** the way we talk about breastfeeding or changing diapers, we'd be able to navigate that space because we'd already have those tools."*

*"I think [training programs for teachers on digital literacy] **should be offered in elementary schools,** not [waiting] until middle or high school. It's too late at that point."*