Happiness is supposed to be in a U-shape: the younger (or older) you are, the happier you are.*
But it’s not.

At least that is what our data says.
Born to inherit climate change, income inequality, broken political systems and now... COVID-19.
The Happiness Index
The Happiness Index is a measure of well-being that encompasses the dimensions of a good life. 410 youth between 12 -17 and 1030 young adults between 18-34 took the Happiness Index survey between March 1 and July 15, 2020 – the time of COVID-19 entering the US. The data is from a convenience sampling.

The data reflects how those who took the survey feel about where they are hurting and where they are thriving.

A score of 100 for any domain or question would be as happy as you can get. A score of 0 would be as unhappy as you can get.
Yellow for Youth (12-17 years of age)
Green for Young Adults (18-34 years of age)

Happiness Scores for 410 Youth (12-17) & 1030 Young Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Youth (12-17)</th>
<th>Young Adults (18-34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Life &amp; Affect</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-being</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Balance</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Culture</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average of all domains for youth is 57.5 and for young adults is 54.7. We expect scores to be 70-80 based on the U-shape.

In other words, the answer to whether youth and young people are happy is: **meh.**
What does the data mean?
Data stories for youth and young adults in the face of COVID-19
Youth and young people are not satisfied with the quality of their exercise.
About 15 minutes a day of cardiovascular exercise a day can help stave off depression.* In these times of restricted choices, make special effort to get exercise.

There are many ways to improve satisfaction with life. An important but often overlooked one is:

**Play**

Go outside everyday & move!
Youth and young people are not feeling particularly positive about themselves.

In general, I feel very positive about myself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth (12-17)</th>
<th>52.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young adults (18-34)</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How you feel about yourself is directly connected to your well-being and success in life.*

4 things that can improve how you feel about yourself*:

Don’t compare yourself to others.

Treat yourself kindly (practice self-compassion).

Realize your inner rock star without expectation.

Recognize that you are not your circumstances.

4 ways you can help others to feel better about themselves*:

Be attentive.

Listen and talk with acceptance and without judgement.

Celebrate and give praise for what is praiseworthy.

Be a positive role model – treat yourself nicely and say nice things to yourself about you.

On realizing your inner rock star.
1) Now is always the time to do what you dreamed, but thought was impossible.
2) Let go of what success looks like (climbing the highest peak, going viral, getting rich, etc.).
3) In terms of social media - now is not the time to restrict its use because it will cut in on face to face time. It is the time to use social media in pro-social positive ways - for you and the young ones in your life.
4) There are all sorts of social media outlets available for all kinds of self-expression – YouTube, Instagram, Blogging, etc.

Our advice to parents: have fun creating videos, sound files, pics etc. with your child. Post them and celebrate them with your young one.
Youth and young people feel lonely.

Do you feel lonely?

- Youth (12-17): 42.2
- Young adults (18-34): 41.5
People need people*. 

A fact: Fostering social connection during COVID-19 times is difficult. We all miss our families and friends.

Some hard facts that make this fact even harder: Suicide is the second largest killer among young people.*

Researchers fear social isolation from COVID-19 could lead to more people thinking about or committing suicide.

Now is not the time to ban some video games – particularly cooperative (rather than competitive) games that are played with (remote) friends or family members. An example is certain versions of Minecraft when played with a friend or family member on the same server. Take the time to play with the young people in your life.
Consider – with lots of time on the care - a COVID-19 bubble buddy. Someone or a family that you can get together with on a regular basis in a safe way. You both agree to restrict interactions with people outside your bubble but you have each other.

*Take lots of time figuring out how you and your buddy will adhere to your agreement. It is important to be careful with this suggestion, as if misapplied it could lead to contributing to the spread of COVID-19
While we self-quarantine, families stick together and if one person gets sick, everyone gets exposed. We accept that risk.
A bubble buddy or bubble family have the same exposure as your family. You would have exposure from them if someone gets sick. If you got sick, they would be exposed too.

So think carefully and decide wisely.
Youth and young people are not particularly optimistic.

I am optimistic about my future.

- Youth (12-17): 65.5%
- Young adults (18-34): 66.1%
Hope is an attribute of humanity.
Protect your hope & your heart.

Quit doom scrolling – endlessly consuming bad news.

Do not read the news before bed or when you first wake – be firm with yourself = an act of love and care.

Turn off the news feature on your device or restrict it to only good news feeds. Trust that you will learn about the important bad news that you need to know from other channels.
Build up your hope reserves.

Make plans to do fun things that you can do now, and carry them out. Spend time savoring the fun things you do.

Make plans to do things you would like to do, with the knowledge that your plans will change as circumstances change.

Reflect on the fun things you have done, focusing on the good times and good memories. Deeply enjoy each moment of happiness, pleasure or contentment when they arise.
Gather more ideas for your happiness with our Happiness & Health Report
Explore the Happiness Index Data
The Happiness Alliance provides tools, resources and knowledge for a new economic paradigm and personal happiness.

Take the Happiness Index to get your own self-assessment of your well-being.

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