

Verizon  
Up To Speed Live  
Friday, January 15, 2021



*\_Redefining Communication Access*

[www.acscaptions.com](http://www.acscaptions.com)

—

[MUSIC].

>> Welcome to Up to Speed Live.  
>> Up to Speed Live Friday edition let's bring in Hans.  
>> We want to give you a full update.

>> Introducing the Verizon Visa card.  
>> We've got some 5G news.  
>> We're taking touchless to the next level with curbside pickup.  
>> I think when you look at the quarter there's a lot to be proud of.  
>> The team will be really fast to be out there.  
>> The world's first 5G laptop.  
>> The note 20 is the perfect phone for work and play.  
>> Yesterday was the commercial launch of 5G Mobile Edge Compute.  
>> It wasn't until I was at Verizon I -- I was allowed to be comfortable I still didn't

have to feel ostracized it's a great feeling.

>> I've never worked for a company that's as loving and caring for their employees as Verizon is.

>> I really got into this because I love connecting with people.  
>> I literally wrote my next book during the quarantine.

>> In every adversity there's the feat of a greater opportunity.  
>> I've been trying to wiggle my way into this Verizon family for so long.

>> The culture here at Verizon of running to a crisis really shines in these times.  
>> I want our Black employees to know that they matter and they are valued.  
>> We are in challenging time and this has led to difficult conversations but they are

very necessary conversations.

>> Everyone has an opportunity to be a part of the solution.

>> Up to Speed is one of the highlights of the day.

>> Oh, my gosh we have to tell people.

>> I'm so excited I almost forgot to tell you my name.

>> My name is Rahm Meyer I'm the head of connected infrastructure business at Harmon.

Harmon is a leader in automatic technologies, especially in the areas of 5G and Edge. Harmon's mission is to deliver the best consumer experience per mile by pushing the technology to its limits.

The V2X is a technology that allows vehicles to talk to its environment and that includes other vehicles.

Pedestrians, it can communicate to the infrastructure.

So it allows you to get notifications about adverse weather conditions.

Dynamic road conditions even vehicles that are not in your visibility and we don't stop there we take the same protocol and extend it to also now enable non-safety use cases and this is consumer experiences, productivity, streaming that's where we see the best value out of what this can actually do.

Think of a scenario where there's a vehicle that has applied a harsh brake.

And you are somewhere right behind it and you want that notification to come in so you are able to make the right call in real-time.

5G is one technology that allows you to bring down the latency then you need to be conducting a fair amount of computation in the mile and that's the power of Edge Computing and something that can happen when 5G and Edge come alive.

[MUSIC].

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Hello and welcome to Up to Speed Live thank you so much for joining me this Friday I'm Diana Alvear.

And I'm just going to come right out and say it, the last couple of weeks have been a little bit stressful.

And of course this follows a year full of stress.

And so today we want to spend the time that we have together to reflect a little bit. Learn.

Talk to one another.

And maybe come away feeling better and better equipped to handle everything that we're handling right now.

Obviously what I'm talking about is dealing with crises.

And 2020 had its share.

I'm just going to tick through a couple of them right now, the pandemic, the economic fallout, racial and social injustice.

Natural disaster after natural disaster.

Politics.

There's been so much stressing all of us collectively out.

And for those of us that are parents and that have kids who are looking to us to help them navigate through these crises, it can be a lot.

So if you're feeling tapped out, we have some solutions for you right now.

In fact, our Next20 conversation that we'll be airing directly after Up to Speed is devoted to the topic of how to help your kids navigate crises.

We spoke to two incredible experts Dr. Rachel Busman from the Child Mind Institute and Dr. Shairi Turner of the Crisis Text Line.

Here is a preview.

>> How did becoming active -- what kind of impact does it have on our kids in terms of coping with a crisis.

>> Yeah, it's important to focus on what we can control.

There's nothing worse than feeling out of control.

In any capacity.

No one really likes to feel out of control.

And to try to control the uncontrollable isn't -- isn't fruitful.

Right?

So I do think that in times of stress, whether it's stress or if we're talking about political or sociopolitical crisis, what we're talking about sometimes for kids, teens, especially, and adults is taking some action.

Some safe and sort of tangible action.

Can feel like you are contributing.

Can feel like you are doing something.

So for some, it means I'm acknowledging, I see you, I hear you, I'm an ally.

For others it means like, I'm angry and I want to do something.

But I don't know what to do.

So something -- doing something concrete means like I am helping, I am localizing my resources but I'm not just spouting you know on Facebook.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: So as you can see, this is real actionable stuff.

And we discuss a lot of kinds of things from the signs you have to be on the lookout if your kids are starting to suffer from anxiety or depression or anything that's super troubling to what you can do about it.

To if you have teenagers and you can't really talk to them about it, the resources that they have available to you.

And by the way, last year Verizon Media donated \$10 million in ad credits to groups responding to the COVID-19 crisis specifically focusing on mental health. And through our Volunteer Portal you can be trained to volunteer through the Crisis Text Line.

It is an amazing service and these are just one of the many ways that you can serve this Monday.

It is of course Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day, the National Day of Service.

You can find all of those opportunities through our Volunteer Portal.

And you can help us with our commitment to Citizen Verizon.

And if you do service that day, we want to know all about it.

Let's see that slide.

We have a way for you to shout it from the rooftops on social we have these Martin Luther King Day action cards.

We want you to go to VZWeb and download them and then let us know about the good things you're doing.

Because I truly believe that when you see good people doing good things that inspires you to do the same.

And we can have a whole groundswell of service on that very important day.

Okay.

And speaking of service, speaking of being able to be handle crises I am so excited about this next segment we say Forward Together and we mean it we are so blessed to have a leader on the VLC who always seems to know what to say especially during our most challenging times so with that I would like to welcome to the show Craig Silliman. Craig thank you so much for being here and my very first question to you is, how are you doing?

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Well, thanks, Diana, thanks for inviting me and Happy New Year to you, it's always a pleasure to see you and great to see you here in the new year.

And you know, I'm actually doing pretty well I'm doing great actually that may sound like a crazy answer to you given all we're dealing with and it seems like everything that gets pushed to our screens is strife and anger and death but I'm -- notwithstanding the craziness I'm dealing with every day I'm actually doing really well.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I am so happy to hear that.

That's precisely why you're here because a lot of us aren't doing well and we try to keep a good face and act like we've got it together but the truth is that a lot of us are struggling I'm not afraid to say that I have struggled especially in the last year. So how do we move through this, how do we heal?

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: So I think first I was so interested to hear that clip because I

don't want to be pan glossy about this there are bad things happening all over the place our lives involve suffering but I spent a lot of time over the holidays thinking about our psychological well-being is not defined by what happens to us.

Our psychological well-being is defined by how we react to what happens to us.

So one of my New Year's resolutions was that I was going to approach 2021 with hope and optimism.

One of the things I resolve to do is every day think about something that I feel grateful for.

And it's funny when you start looking for things you're grateful for you find them everywhere.

I'll start just with the company.

I am really, really excited about Verizon in 2021.

We know that what we're doing right here, all of this distance working and connecting over video depends on the services we provide.

But it's easy when we're all going to workday today to forget how important and meaningful that is.

I just think that's tremendous when a tech connects someone's home to FiOS and suddenly a grandmother can see her grandchild on video we were part of facilitating that moment of joy.

When we put up a new wireless radio and suddenly an area has connectivity that didn't have it before and it makes someone's life a little easier, we made that happen.

When a group of friends get together and watch an NFL game on the Yahoo Sports app, we created that experience.

And to me what's also really cool is not a single one of us could do any of those things alone.

It's the very purpose of why we have a company.

We all bring our unique skill sets together.

And only together can we make those things happen.

Whether we do it well or do it poorly can affect whether peoples' lives are a little easier or not a little better or not so that's great I think that's so exciting because we have not only jobs but we have jobs that have a real purpose.

And listen, COVID.

There's no way around it.

COVID is awful.

It's destructive, it's disruptive.

But even this dark cloud I think has a silver lining.

If you think about the things that we used to do that were fairly routine, going out to dinner with friends or going to a show or just giving a friend a hug, you think about being able to do that again in the future.

You get kind of like this spark of this excitement.

And that's pretty cool it's like those first days of spring after a long cold winter when you just feel more alive like the colors are more vibrant and the smells are just overwhelming and I think if there's one gift of COVID it's going to be that it will reintroduce these sparks of joy in parts of our lives that we have just come to take for granted.

So look, I'm dealing with craziness all day long but I'm pretty excited and I'm pretty optimistic and pretty hopeful about 2021.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I love you mentioned gratitude because the other day I don't remember if it was Tuesday or Wednesday it's been a long week but my mom got her first shot, her first vaccine, and I let out the biggest exhale when that happened.

You're right, like now I can plan.

And I can think, okay, I'm going to see my mom at some point and she's going to stay healthy so yes there's so much to be grateful for.

I'm grateful for that.

I'm with you on that one, Craig.

But not just COVID, though, I mean, we're talking a week or so removed from what happened they Capitol.

It's like you can't get away from it, right?

Because the news is just like on you about the different preparations that are happening and there's this sense of unease.

And after a year of just crisis fatigue.

So how do we do this?

How do we move forward?

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Yeah, that's a hugely important question and I don't want to pretend to have all of the answers.

I don't want to trivialize it by pretending to have all of the answers I think there's a lot we need to do but I do think there are some things that are pretty clear.

First I think we need to take a serious and really well-informed look at the role of technology in all of this.

We've created these echo chambers of distortion.

That's shaping how each and every one of us processes what's going on.

And really our sense of reality and we need to understand, too, that that's not just an accidental byproduct of these technologies.

It's a core feature.

Because the coin of the technology realm is eyeballs, it's attention.

So all of the algorithmic technologies drive to more extreme content, more dramatic content.

So it drives to the extremes.

We know that.

There's a lot that's talked about.

But something that's not always talked about quite as much is that these products are also built on decades of research on cognitive psychology.

And that research has taught us that we can kind of push the buttons of the human brain to get certain emotional reactions fairly predictably and fairly precisely.

So we've gotten to a point where we have technologies that combine information technology and a lot of research on cognitive psychology to build things that, frankly, are too sophisticated for our human brains to filter through as far as how we're being manipulated, how we're being driven to believe certain things, you know, click on certain things.

Think about things certain ways.

We don't expect that we can put an untrained child at the wheel of a large automobile and not expect bad things to happen we don't expect people to just use will power to deal with addictive substances but sometimes we're surprised when we're repeatedly tricked into clicking on things and believing things when the core technologies are built with these psychological tools in them.

So I think we need to grapple with the ethical and frankly the legal and regulatory implications of that.

So that's one thing.

Secondly, I think we need to ask a lot more questions about why people are behaving the way they are behaving.

And I think we need to ask the right questions.

So we absolutely need to condemn violence.

Like what we saw at the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday.

But we can't stop there we have to go further and say why were those people there in the first place.

And I think it's important to ask the why questions, not the who questions.

I think we have a tendency to ask who was there.

And I think implicit in that is kind of a belief that if you identify someone for me then I can fill in the rest.

If you tell me that they are White or Black or they are rich or poor or they are rural or they are urban, we somehow believe, oh, yeah, I know what those people are like.

No, we don't actually.

And we need to ask why.

Why were they there was it because they were angry and frustrated why were they angry and frustrated they feel disenfranchised why do they feel disenfranchised is it because they believe a certain thing why do they believe a certain thing ultimately it comes down to empathy how do I get inside that lived experience of that person so I can get to the root cause of what's really going on rather than just putting labels around identity groups so that's a second thing.

Third thing I think we have to hold our political leaders accountable.

Listen disagreement and argument are part of the system.

And you know what, I'm glad I live in a country where we can publicly argue and disagree about things, I think that's a fantastic thing.

But there are norms and parameters within that which that needs to take place.

You and I can argue about something we can actually disagree quite vehemently and that's okay but the minute I reach across the table and hit you that's not okay that's outside the bounds of what's acceptable behavior and we call them our political leaders and leaders lead a leader doesn't stand at the back of the mob and egg them on into violence a leader doesn't stand in front of an emotional crowd and whip up that emotion and say that other group is to blame go get them that's what a demagogue does a leader listens and hears the emotion and figures out how to channel that into constructive solutions so we need to say to our elected officials we need you to be leaders, disagreement and argument is okay but demagoguery is not okay.

The business community plays an important role in that because the business community is a political process so the we have both a role and an obligation to stand up to our elected officials and say we will support certain norms of behavior, there's certain norms of behavior we simply will not support that wouldn't be consistent with our corporate values.

And we expect you to behave the same.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I love so much of what you're saying right now and it kind of highlights something that I think has been with some people or at least I've seen on social media about how much news it's made that companies, including Verizon, have been withholding -- have decided to withhold PAC contributions for example.

And it really speaks to business stepping up and taking a leadership role in these societal situations.

Can you speak a little bit about that?

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Sure.

And you have seen it and you have really seen a large part of the business community come together and speak with a fairly unified voice on this starting with some of our largest trade associations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable that represent some of the largest companies in the country.

And they put out a series of statements over the last couple of weeks.

And there are kind of two big themes.

One is there's a lot of work that needs to be done in this country.

We need to deal with COVID.

We need to deal with the economy.

We live in a dangerous and complex world.

And there are foreign policy issues that need to be dealt with.



The election took place.

The election has results.

It's over.

It's time to get back to work and focus on these important issues that are important to business, important to citizens, important to the country as a whole.

That's one thing you're hearing from the business community.

The second is just the issue I was just addressing.

Saying, listen, we expect you to argue and disagree over policy issues.

That is absolutely expected.

But condoning violence is not okay.

That wouldn't be consistent with any of our corporate values and it shouldn't be consistent with any of our political values, our political system.

You have to respect the process.

And we expect you to behave within certain norms.

To be clear, the business community is not taking partisan sides.

This isn't about Republicans versus Democrats and Democrats versus Republicans, this is about individual members in each party.

For example at Verizon we have always worked very hard to engage in a very balanced way with both sides of the political aisle including our political giving we're -- we always strive to make it equal that will be true going forward not about shifting from Democrats to Republicans or Republicans to Democrats this is about which Republicans will we be supporting and which will we not which Democrats will we support and which will we not and what will define that is partly their policy positions but also do their words and actions comport with our corporate values which are respect for others and frankly having vigorous debates but stopping at the door of condoning violence that's what you're seeing going on in the business community including Verizon and we're joined by a really broad swath of business communities on that.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: That's one of my favorite things about being a V Teamer is the fact that we're expected to live out our values.

We're expected to live out the credo.

So you know, I'm glad to hear that.

And speaking of politics we have a new Administration that will be taking over on the 20th and what do we know about Verizon moving forward once there's a new Administration, can you tell us a little bit about that.

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Absolutely.

First you mentioned the inauguration let me mention because I know this is in the news a lot there's discussion of potential violence and unrest we certainly hope that there won't be but from a security perspective we prepare for the worst and hope for the best. So we are doing a lot of work all day long preparing for that from a security perspective

I'm obviously not going to give our whole playbook there we don't do that from a security defense perspective.

We just know that Dan Maloney and all of the folks on the Security Team are working this all day long we are closely coordinating with Federal and state law enforcement officials making sure everyone is coordinated on what's going on that we have the proper intelligence, we have the right security assets and the right people as we have always talked about as we have talked about throughout COVID our first priority is the health and well-being of all of our colleagues and we're really focused on that as we move to the days to come we hope it won't be necessary but we'll be fully prepared if anything happens broadly as we get past the inauguration as you know we have a new Administration we have the Senate that's now flipped from Republican to Democrat so there are a couple of things that we know.

And first of all, we know that generally speaking, not always, but generally speaking, Democrats have a tendency to probably be a little more prone to look at regulation as a solution.

We are used to operating in highly regulated environments, we know how to do that. That's not a problem.

We will work still to be first and foremost focused on serving our customers.

And we will just engage in those debates.

As I've said before all of the V Teamers there's a role for the Public Policy Team in that but there's a role for all of us because ultimately regulators key off of customers.

And if customers feel like they are being cared for, if they feel they can trust what they are being told if they get what they are being promised the regulators feel like they can stand back.

It's only when the regulators feel that customers aren't being given a fair shake that they feel the need to step in every single day when we're interacting with customers we have a chance to send the message that says that's what we're focused on and we will care for those customers and that will shape part of the regulatory environment that's one big theme.

A second theme you'll hear discussed a lot that is relevant to us is corporate tax rates. That's something that the administration has talked about.

Again from a public policy perspective we'll engage in that debate.

But I think we all have a role in that because people talk about well what happens to all of that money that's coming in as customers pay us for services?

The answer is there are a couple of things.

One of the big areas that we spend money on is of course all of our salaries so there are hundreds of thousands of families who are able to live good lives because of the jobs that we have because of the services we provide.

And I think that's important.

It's important to us obviously but it's important to policymakers another huge area of our

spend is of course building out the network.

We spend billions of dollars every year building out the network which is more needed than ever.

So I think all of us have a role with our families, our friends, people in our community. Explaining, hey, Verizon is a big company.

What is it you're doing out there in our communities.

You can say not only are we supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs but we every day are expanding these networks so that we can learn from home.

We can work from home.

We can communicate with each other.

We can be entertained.

We can connect.

And I think when we tell that story, all of us, that's compelling, too.

And then finally, I think one of the big focus areas that's really not about the change in Administration but it's about COVID is Broadband availability.

Everyone is focused on Broadband because we're doing this.

We're working in this distributed way.

Kids are going to school this way.

We want to make sure that everyone, including those members of our society, who are more stretched financially, have the ability to do that.

And the good thing is we have a great story to tell.

We have just expanded our FiOS offerings to give even more choice to people who are stretched financially.

We are going to be engaged in a public policy debate.

You're going to see more from us on that in the days and weeks to come.

We have a great story to tell.

And we'll be able to engage with policymakers as we talk about, yeah, how do we make sure that everyone in this country has access to great Broadband services so we can live our lives the way we're living them now.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I have to tell you Craig I have friends in your public policy group who are just fantastic.

I'm not going to name check anybody but I've had fascinating conversations because you're right, I mean, the company depends on public policy in order to be able to do what it does and then I have awesome friends in the network group too who have walked me through building out 5G cities and what it takes it's really mind boggling these are really important issues moving ahead I'm so glad you mentioned digital inclusion I'm going to shout out my shirt but we have Citizen Verizon as a reason digital inclusion is one of our pillars and important to us as a company and it's part of our very brand we want to do this kind of work and I'll use that to segue into Monday because that is of course the day we honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a lot of us have been

thinking about his words, his life, his service.

We're in interesting times when we need to lean on his words more than ever.

So I just wanted to ask you a little bit about your thoughts on Dr. Martin Luther King.

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: That's a great question Diana and as we're in this time and we think about we're so divided and how do we move forward, it's hard not to think, especially right now as we head into Monday, about Martin Luther King, Jr. and kind of lessons from his life.

And we are already seeing a lot of images of him as we head towards Monday we'll see a lot more on Monday.

When I think about him, the thing -- one of the images we'll see the most of course is going to be the image of him standing on the space of the Lincoln Memorial giving the I Have a Dream speech during the March on Washington in August of 1963.

And look, it's an iconic image and it's one of the greatest most powerful speeches ever given in the English language.

But to me when I think about his greatness and his genius, that's actually no what I think about and I think in some ways that's misleading because you see that image and he's there in front of this sea of an adoring audience you get this image of someone who has all of the power at his fingertips who is triumphant, who is -- whose victory is imminent whose racial equality is imminent of course we know that wasn't true it isn't true when I actually think about Dr. King's genius I think about him a couple of months before that in April of 1963 when he wrote a letter from Birmingham jail there he was, he was sitting in jail at Birmingham, Alabama he had been arrested for leading a parade without a permit and he was besieged from all sides moderate clergymen were criticizing him for what they saw was stirring up trouble unnecessarily.

They felt like he was moving too quickly they were urging him to be more patient saying look let racial justice come on its own timeframe on the other side you have people like Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X sharing the vision who criticize him for peaceful protest and insisting on non-violence demonstrations and resistance and they felt things weren't moving fast enough and they felt like more direction action was needed and they felt even sometimes violence was what was needed to wake up the country.

He's sitting there in jail and all of the institutional power was with Bull Connor and the Birmingham police and they had the dogs and fire hoses on their side and then finally public opinion was against him we forget now because we so idolize Dr. King but at the time the majority of the U.S. population had a negative impression of him.

So in some ways you think of him sitting there in jail in April of 1963 and it's hard to see the path to victory from there.

And yet in April 1963 the pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer's church of Dr. Martin Luther King was sitting there while he was there in jail in a few days the pastor of that church will walk through the front door of the Capitol head held high and be sworn in as a U.S. Senator in large part of what his predecessor did so many years ago and you say how

does that happen.

How do you go from someone sitting there apparently powerless in jail to bending the arc of history.

I think probably Dr. King would have said yeah by the standards of the day the institutional power is all against me but that doesn't mean I'm powerless because in the long run moral character matters.

In the long run truth prevails.

And goodness is rewarded.

Organization is powerful.

Empathy is indispensable.

If you know how to understand the technology and mass communication, you can use it to build empathy you can use it to heal the visions instead of to create them and maybe more than anything in the long run, history honors those who appeal to the better angels of our nature.

It honors those who give a vision of a better version of ourselves of a better version of what our society could be.

And that's why today Martin Luther King, Jr. is honored on National Mall as amongst our greatest Americans and I think if he were sitting here today and you asked him that question, he would say the very values that got us from 1963 to today in 2021 are the exact same values that we need to go from where we are today to where we need to be.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I think that's so beautiful and you know there's a quote, it's posted everywhere all the time but you know as you were talking I just kept thinking about when he said, let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice and we are at an inflection point right now and really I think this is when we have to lean into our values.

This is when we have to lean into our fight for justice and doing right by our neighbors and our fellow V Teamers and just we may disagree.

But we can do this.

Right?

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Yeah, and that's -- what you just said is so vital Diana, yes, the arc of moral justice -- the arc may bend towards justice but doesn't bend on its own we bend it each and every one of us has the ability to bend it so it has to be an active process.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: We absolutely needed you here Craig.

I thank you so much for coming on and talking to us.

Because I think sometimes we just -- we need to hear that this is a process.

And we need to hear that there are all of these forces that we don't even realize they

are at work even with verse moving us in the right direction but we're so grateful to have you here today.

I think a lot of people will feel better having heard from you thank you so much Craig.

>> CRAIG SILLIMAN: Thank you so much it's always a pleasure to spend time with you thanks for the invitation and Happy New Year again.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Happy New Year and for those who are watching we've been talking about crisis fatigue and crisis fatigue and I hope Craig's words uplift you and serve you throughout the weekend never forget he said it takes all of us to bend that arc and you can bend that arc on Monday.

You can do acts of service.

It is National Day of Service.

You can download those service cards for social on VZWeb and remember it takes all of us to make Citizen Verizon a living, breathing thing that will move us forward in the future.

So don't go anywhere.

We want you to stick around and watch our Next20 episode on how to talk to your kids about crises and I think part of the conversation has to be about how you can help them feel empowered by doing good things for the world.

I mean kids are the best when it comes to they want to help so find a way to get your kids to help and I want to tell everybody thank you for having me here I feel better I hope you feel better this is the power of Up to Speed.

Stay safe.

Do some good stuff this weekend.

And we will see you next weekend I'm Diana Alvear thank you so much for joining me today.

Until next time you're Up to Speed.

[MUSIC].

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Hi I'm Diana Alvear and welcome to Next20.

This is a series of conversations about racial, social and the business issues that are going to be defining the next 20 years.

These are the kinds of topics that we really need to dive deeply into.

And get a better sense.

Because they are going to be defining so much of what's to come.

So of course it's been ten months since COVID-19 first came on the scenes in the United States.

And life as we know it changed.

Trying to make this work with our kids.

Trying to learn remotely.

Trying to social distance.

Wearing those masks.

When George Floyd died and the whole racial justice movement and social justice movement started, I was very affected by that.

I had a hard time working.

We had a lot of very frank conversations at work about this sort of thing.

But then, you know, we also had to help our kids cope through this.

It's been hard.

Not only that, the mounting losses people have experienced personal losses in their own lives and this feeling of uncertainty and turmoil and what's going to happen next and sometimes it's easy to forget you think, oh, they are kids maybe they are not affected as much by all of these crises as we are.

Let me read you some stats that may change your mind on this.

From April to October, the proportion of mental health visits to pediatric emergency departments jumped 24% for kids ages 5 to 11.

5 to 11.

And then, even more so, 31% for kids 12 to 17 this is according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

So that statistic stopped me in my tracks.

Then another study in Italy and Spain released back in October found that 86% of parents reported changes in their children's emotions and behaviors during the pandemic and these kinds of changes included difficulty concentrating, nervousness, uneasiness and no brainer, right?

I mean our kids have lost their stability.

So we thought it was really important here at Next20 to have this conversation with you. Because so many of you are coping with these crises.

And then having to help your children cope with them, as well.

We have invited two incredible experts on this topic to walk us through this and give us some real techniques and contexts in which to help your children have these kinds of conversations and get through this together.

So it is my honor to introduce Dr. Rachel Busman She is the Senior Director of anxiety disorders at the Child Mind Institute.

And Dr. Shairi Turner, she is the Chief Transformation Officer at the Crisis Text Line.

And that's been a really cool development, by the way, being able to text in times of crisis.

It's just much easier -- much less barriers in the way to people getting help.

So I want to thank both of you for being here with me today.

And I'm going to start with Dr. Busman.

Thank you, again.

Tell me a little bit about what the Child Mind Institute does.

And how your work relates to our topic today.

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: As you said I run the anxiety disorder center at the Child Mind Institute.

We are a national nonprofit that's headquartered in Manhattan but we also have a office in San Mateo but during this time I think the idea of being borderless has really taken the front seat.

We are an organization that provides direct clinical care for children and families across the age range for a variety, all, learning disorders and mental health disorders.

We also have a mission to provide accurate and evidence-based information about mental health.

So that we do that through our public education efforts.

And we also have a really large presence just in terms of doing research and also providing intervention and information.

Really in schools.

In underserved populations.

Just in areas where kids might be at risk.

So I am excited to be here and just talk more about mental health.

And also hopefully telehealth, which I think you alluded to with crisis text, like texting, and just being able to immediately access help is so important.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Dr. Turner let's hear from you a little bit about what you do and why it matters so much at this time.

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: Thank you, Diana, for having me.

I'm Dr. Shairi Turner.

And I'm the Chief Transformation Officer at Crisis Text Line.

And Crisis Text Line is the only national and international free crisis hotline that's run on a text platform.

So we do not take calls.

All of our crisis intervention services are performed via text.

We are powered by volunteers who are supervised by mental health professionals.

It's an incredible concept.

And we in addition to providing these services, we collect data, anonymous data, to help support the efforts.

To help us to understand our texters.

We have -- we are a data and tech company.

That supports our -- this mental health organization.

So in times like this, we accept anything as a crisis.

We are here to help anyone who feels that they are in need of support.

They can text in 24/7.

It's free.

We are a bit of a mental health emergency room for America.



Especially during these very, very confusing and complicated times.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Dr. Turner I'm going to stick with you because I would love to know a little bit more about what are the most common types of outreach that you're getting related to the pandemic, to these crises?  
How does it start when it comes to texting during this crisis?

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: So people can text in at any time.  
And they are received by a volunteer.  
They are assessed for their risk of suicide.  
They are then de-escalated.  
So there's an engagement via text to really help the person pinpoint and determine, adult or child, to pinpoint and determine what is the actual need.  
What is the crisis?  
So after every text conversation, both the texter and the volunteer can opt to complete a survey.  
So this helps us tremendously to understand what's going on across the country.  
What are the issues?  
So in 2020 what we saw, we saw that 36% of our conversations focused or included discussions of depression.  
35%, anxiety.  
33%, relationships.  
26% around school.  
And 23% around suicidal ideations.  
And then 28%, as you can imagine -- I'm sorry; 20% around -- focused on isolation and loneliness.  
So this is based on 1.4 million conversations that were engaged in between texters and volunteers in 2020.  
And for our purposes here, 48% of our texters are 17 and under.  
And 74% of them said in 2020 that they shared something with our volunteers that they had never shared with anyone else before.  
So we really see ourselves as a tremendous resource for teens and adults.  
But especially for teens who are such a text-based generation.  
It allows them the privacy and the access and the control to deal with their crisis independently.  
But receive the support that they need.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: Dr. Busman I want to turn to you about that what are you seeing with the Child Mind Institute in your work with kids?  
What do they need from us?

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: Our most frequent calls from families, from parents concerned about their kids, and kids being 7, 8, 10, 20, include things like anxiety.

Anxiety disorders.

Whether it be someone who had a pre-existing anxiety disorder.

And it sort of percolated during this time.

Because we know when we're more vulnerable -- when we're more vulnerable because of a stressor, that can make things that already exist worse.

We're also getting new calls about new anxiety.

And then again, school-related difficulties.

Just the difficulties navigating this really challenging environment.

Isolation and depression certainly for younger kids but definitely our teens who are really feeling in a lot of ways very disconnected.

For teens, your peer group is very, very important.

And even though, you know, some of the patients I work with know they have their friends, they chat with their friends via text frequently.

And even maybe have a socially distanced walk, they still feel that lack of actual being with.

Right?

I will also say that I've seen during this time incredible resilience.

And that's important.

Because parents in some ways like that's the best way they can help is to model certain behaviors.

And also remind their kids and teens that during this time, they have also been incredibly resilient, incredibly able to adapt.

I think just the idea of mask wearing is a great example.

I think many of us were probably thinking a year ago, my kid is going to wear a mask every day?

That's like never going to happen, right?

And they just do it.

And I've seen also kids -- I know families with kids who are -- kids have sensory difficulties or on the autism spectrum.

And yes, that adds an entire layer of challenge.

And I've also seen kids and teens do amazing it's important to work with families around how can we help, how can we arm around some skills for you and your child.

But also let's highlight your incredible strength and kid's incredible ability to adapt.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: There are so many families that are struggling with direct impact from a lot of what's been happening.

I mean, just, for example, maybe losing a family member or several family members to COVID-19.

Maybe their parents losing their jobs.

And you know when your parents are struggling for money.  
You feel it, it's scary.  
You don't know what's coming next.

Parents that are struggling with virtual learning and trying to make this work.  
An maybe they don't have access to internet, those kinds of things.  
Racial and social injustice.

For young kids feeling like this is an unsafe world and that they could be attacked or traumatized simply because of the color of their skin or because of the country they come from.

Or their parents especially wondering if their parents are going to be okay.  
So when the parents are directly affected, when you are struggling to deal with this sort of thing, what can you do for yourself to take care of yourself and be that safe place for your kids?

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: It's recognizing the signs of when you yourself, when your cup is half full, you can't pour into anyone else.

So for parents, things as simple as meditation and mindfulness and trying to stay present.

Because for all of us when it becomes a laundry list of concerns, it can feel so overwhelming.

And what I suggest to parents is to really identify what is the top issue, what is the most concerning thing, what puts your family most at risk.

And then what can I control.

We try to sometimes control the uncontrollable.

And that just increases anxiety.

But if you can really focus on what is the issue for today.

What can I do today that will help me or will help my family?

What can I do?

Can I focus on getting 15 minutes of exercise?

Can I go out and walk?

Can I make sure that I get a little bit of extra sleep?

These are all things that build into our own sense of resilience so we can support our children.

So how we eat, what we eat, drinking water.

Even a bit of exercise improves our mood.

Sleep and then identification of what is the issue for you for that day and who is your support system.

And recognizing that having your own support system can be a network of friends, family.

Or Crisis Text Line or other support services.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I want to remind our viewers that Verizon does have an EAP that you can take advantage of.

That's what it's there for.

If you are struggling, if you need a support system that doesn't necessarily exist currently in your life, EAP is a lifeline.

It's a resource that you can take advantage of.

Every employee at Verizon has access to that.

And Dr. Busman, I wanted to go to you because we did see something extraordinary over the summer when it came to the crises around race and social justice and we saw our young people get to work.

We have seen them get to work with the climate crisis and then we saw a whole other side of them this summer marching and doing things.

So I wanted to talk to you about how does becoming active -- what kind of impact does it have on our kids in terms of coping with a crisis?

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: It's important to focus on what we can control.

There's nothing worse than feeling out of control.

In any capacity, no one really likes to feel out of control.

And to try to control the uncontrollable isn't fruitful.

So I do think that in times of stress, whether it's stress or if we're talking about political or sociopolitical crisis, what we're talking about sometimes for kids, teens especially and adults, is taking some action, some safe and sort of tangible action, can feel like you are contributing.

Can feel like you are doing something.

So for some it means, I'm acknowledging.

I see you.

I hear you.

I'm an ally.

For others it means like I'm angry and I want to do something but I don't know what to do.

So doing something concrete means like I am helping.

I am localizing my resources but I'm not just spouting on Facebook or something.

So I think taking action can make people feel like they are making a difference.

But I also think it helps with a sense of control.

Like there's something I can do that may have some impact.

And it's sort of directed towards something that's consistent with my own values.

So I think it's really valuable for the person.

I also think that when we -- it's you as a teen or an adult, whoever is doing this, is modeling for your -- for your peers, sometimes for your parents, or just saying like I am angry or I am confused or I'm scared and I'm taking action.

And then other people pick up on that.

And then it becomes a bit contagious.

So I see it as being really, really powerful in just a lot of ways.

And probably behind the scenes in ways we don't even know.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: This is taking place a week after the events of January 6th.

And to me I was trying to put this in perspective ahead of our conversation.

And it really felt a little bit like 9/11.

It really felt like we were watching something unfold on TV that was beyond comprehension but here it is happening live in front of us on the news.

And I wanted to find out -- and this is a question directed to both of you but I'll start with Dr. Turner, have you had an uptick in questions or outreach as a result of what happened last week?

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: We have seen about a 1% increase in conversations that are referencing Congress, mob, storming the capital, voting, Senate.

So all of the keywords that you would expect during a time like this, we are seeing a bit of an uptick in that.

So people are talking about it.

It's affecting their -- you know, their mood, their experience, their concern.

It is affecting whether they feel like they are in crisis.

Because they are coming to us to have conversations about this.

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: I think the answer is yes, we are.

And it just always reminds me as a parent and as a psychologist that to keep the dialogue open with our kids.

So we have all of these things that we think.

Right?

So I know I personally as a human and as a mother and as a psychologist reacted to the events.

Because I'm human.

Right?

But then when I talked to my son, I want to be careful not to put my own experience or my own perceptions on him.

Because what a child or a teen might be thinking about in terms of let's say Congress or democracy or mobs might be different than what I'm thinking.

So if we say, you know, hey, Diana, were you really worried about X?

That's different than saying, hey, what do you know about what happened last night?

Or tell me what you've been hearing about what happened at the Capitol.

What's on your mind?

Then that leaves it open for the child or the teen to say what they are thinking about.

And they might say exactly what you thought and you were like, all right, good I'm attuned to my kid or you might say oh that's so interesting.

I wasn't thinking about -- and I can't think of something in particular.

But again when we talked about going back to school or seeing friends or being disconnected, sometimes kids and teens what's on their mind is a little bit different than what we anticipated.

So it's so important to start the conversation with, what's on your mind?

What are you thinking?

What are you feeling?

And then that can guide you towards, I'm so glad you mentioned that.

That's really important.

Let's talk about that.

And then you always want to listen for misinformation.

Because, again, the media and the news gives us information.

But in a certain way.

And kids and teens tend to fill in gaps when they don't have it with knowledge as best they can.

So then we want to listen for, interesting, you said X.

Let me just tweak that a little bit.

That's not exactly what I understand.

Let's talk about that.

Does that make sense for you?

And again, it's a dialogue.

And then again, like many conversations with our kids, you know, sometimes they have a window of opportunity.

They don't want to have a two-hour conversation.

You say, all right, anything else you want to tell me about that?

Anything else you want to know?

Well you know what I bet this isn't the last time we're going to talk about it.

But just know if you ever want to talk, I'm here.

And it leaves it as this isn't something I'm afraid to talk to you about.

If you have a question, I'm going to answer it.

If you ask me something I don't know the answer to I'm going to say huh that's a really good question I don't know the answer to that but let's find out or I'll get back to you.

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: Those were excellent points Dr. Busman, the meeting kids where they are, don't have expectations of who they are, meet them where they are.

And then what's different I think for us, so as a pediatrician with my teenagers, it's different than when I was growing up where our parents were very much the source of information.

There is so much information sourcing out there for our kids that what we have to focus -- we have to focus our role on interpreting that information.

And sourcing out the misinformation.

And the only way that you can do that is through a dialogue Dr. Busman mentioned.  
An open dialogue where you stop.

You don't pretend to know it all.

And you let your child know when you don't know something or when you're afraid.

So to show fear and vulnerability can be very empowering to children.

Because they know that these are very human emotions and relevant to the times.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: A lot of parents might think, show fear?

Show anxiety?

Are you sure?

Is this not going to make them more scared?

So can we dive a little deeper into what you just said there?

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: So parents feel like I must be strong, I must be tough, I must be infallible.

And in fact, what that does is detached -- or it can detach children and teens from their own emotions.

Right?

So if they look to the parent and they say, all right, throughout all of this my parent has remained neutral or has not been impacted or affected, that is the emotion I'm supposed to express during these times.

So then that becomes discordant when they are actually feeling scared, anxious, lonely.

Right?

So it's important to have a balance as parents.

Because it can create anxiety for children and teens if their parents -- if they see their parents completely break down and not able to recuperate.

Not able to build back up and talk through those emotions.

Showing emotions that are really relevant to the times is not that -- that's not something parents should shy away from.

Because it actually brings a dialogue together with their child, with their teens, about, this is how it makes me feel.

How does it make you feel.

And then you've opened the opportunity to really hear about, I'm afraid.

I'm anxious.

I'm scared.

Because it's an acceptable emotion to have.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: So let's talk a little bit briefly about what if parents start seeing troubling signs in their kids?

What if they start to see them becoming more withdrawn, more anxious, concerned over things that they don't need to be concerned about?

If you start seeing some of these signs, what should they do and I'm going to start with

you Dr. Busman.

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: Sure I think it's such a great question and it's one that comes up a lot first of all you're an expert on your kid you have to know what their baseline is.

So that's where you start.

Everybody -- there are lots of degrees of variation.

So if -- you know, it's very normal to see fluctuations in mood, irritability.

You know, withdrawal.

Just like one day being very social, one day wanting to spend time alone.

Those are not causes for concern.

What causes concern for me and what I have parents pay attention to are persisting changes.

So things -- key things for me are changes -- kids aren't going to say usually -- teens might but kids let's say in the 7 to 12 range might not say, you know, just so you know, I've been having some headaches and stomachaches and I think it's actually a manifestation of my stress.

That's not how it happens.

We see complaints of like stomach, head, throat sort of diffuse physical complaints.

Or increased irritability.

Right?

Because depression or mood problems can show themselves as sadness.

But often it's irritability, real crankiness.

And then changes in sleep and appetite.

So I think when those persist for let's say multiple days in a row, cause to raise your red flag, weeks in a row, absolutely.

And I think for teenagers, yes, they spend time in their rooms.

But we want to know what they are doing.

So if they are chatting with their friends or doing homework, again not so concerned.

But if you see withdrawal and sort of a disengagement from activities that used to be enjoyable.

Like I just don't feel like -- and I had a conversation with a teen that's struggling with depression just this week.

So they are really not doing so much of that anymore.

Friends want to get together but it's exhausting and I don't mean sleepy but slogging to do that.

That's concerning.

And that's where I think parents can know that real-time appointments are possible in some situations.

A lot of us are providing telehealth.

That means there's help out there even though what I think a lot of parents and kids are



saying is, yeah, but everybody is stressed right now.  
So like do I really -- is it worth talking to someone about it?  
And my answer would be, yes, the sooner the better.  
Because we arm ourselves with some skills.  
We maybe draw from skills we already have.  
It's a little bit of an emotional tuneup, right?  
It could be short.  
But then we want people to be feeling better and not struggling so much.  
So I know that was a little long winded but I think aches, pains, mood changes, I think when you see your kid fluctuating from baseline and I think especially for teenagers withdrawal from activities they previously enjoyed.  
Those are red flags for me.  
And I'm sure Dr. Turner is hearing things that are more crisis.  
But certainly like suicidal thoughts.  
Wishing that everything ended or really feeling you know really like more of those crisis points.

>> DR. SHAIRI TURNER: I think it's an opportunity, Diana, for us to normalize mental health, brain health, physical health, as a continuum.  
So insofar as if you get a cut -- if you cut yourself, you know -- and it's deep enough you think let me go get stitches or something starts to be infected let me go get treatment for it.  
It doesn't have to become extreme for us to seek care for our physical health.  
If we can look at and we can normalize for our kids and ourselves the same thing around mental health, where you don't have to be actively suicidal to say, maybe I need mental health help, you can be in the way that Dr. Does man mentioned any of those things, -- Dr. Busman mentioned increased sleep increased irritability, those are all just opportunities for you to say, am I doing okay?  
And if I'm not doing okay, pandemic aside, if you are not yourself, get help.  
The help is there.  
The telemental health makes it now potentially even more accessible.  
You have Crisis Text Line.  
There are all of these resources available virtually that people, adults, kids, should tap into.  
So that things don't go to the endpoint.  
Like let's get it early.

>> DIANA ALVEAR: I can't thank you both enough for just being so open and honest and really giving us workable strategies.  
And I think at the end of the day, just it really starts to feel like it comes down to love and empathy.  
You know, a love for your children, love for yourself.

Empathy for the world at large.

And creating that space, that safe space, for these conversations.

And again, those guidelines for the conversation, knowing that we have those resources, that we have the Crisis Text Line.

That we have a place like the Child Mind Institute.

And we have people like you who are dedicated to really helping our kids and people in general work their way through these kinds of crises, I never in a million years thought I would see a year like 2020.

And 2021 has not been much better just yet.

So I thank you for taking the time to -- thank you for taking the time to talk to us and again if you're watching this and you work at Verizon you have that EAP if you're struggling right now there's no need for you to struggle alone you have a phone you can pick it up and call somebody and there will be somebody on the other line ready to help you talk things through if your child needs to talk to somebody this Crisis Text Line is perfect for them but yeah it will take all of us together to get through all of this and again Dr. Busman Dr. Turner your work is so, so important we thank you and we thank everybody watching right now, this is why we do Next20.

This is why we have these conversations.

And we talk about the tough stuff because we need to talk about it so that we can, you know, come together and make a better world.

Not only for ourselves but especially for our kids who after everything they have been through, they deserve it so Dr. Turner Dr. Busman thank you so much.

This has been another episode of Next20.

We thank you for watching and we have another great conversation for you coming soon thank you so much.

>> DR. RACHEL BUSMAN: Thanks so much.

[MUSIC].