



AS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES RISE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, MTV/AP-NORC SURVEY REVEALS THAT UNPLUGGING FROM TECHNOLOGY IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF STRESS FOR 13-24 YEAR OLDS, INCREASING 23% SINCE 2007

Even with increased stress, a majority of Gen Z are optimistic they can drive positive change for the country, impacting culture and the workplace

Young people want to work for companies that prioritize mental health resources with more than two-thirds supporting paid days off for mental health

New York City, NY, December 16, 2021 — On the heels of the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy issuing an urgent and rare [advisory](#) noting that the pandemic intensified mental health issues among young people, a new survey from MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research reveals that unplugging from technology would create additional stress for 38% of Gen Z, an increase of +7 points of those aged 13-24 from 2007. This finding suggests that the upcoming generation that grew up with social media is feeling its impact on their mental health, more than Gen X and Millennials.

- When evaluating the state of the world and their role in it, this younger generation shows measured optimism, despite the increased sources of stress.
 - 66% feel their generation is motivated to make positive change in the country, but only 14% think they can have a great deal of impact on what the government does.
 - 51% of Gen Z thinks their standard of living is better than their parents' was at the same age while 23% think it is worse.
 - Comparatively, just 35% of Gen X think they are better off than their parents.
- Gen Z places a high value on how companies support mental health for its employees, suggesting that work-life balance is a priority for them.
 - 52% believe it's important for organizations to provide mental health resources.
 - 68% feel that paid days off for mental health should be offered.
- In addition to the stress of technology, this generation faces other challenges:
 - 55% of young people blame COVID-19 for making it more difficult to have fun.
 - 49% report that COVID-19 has made it more difficult to maintain mental health these days.
- The study also reported that body image is a major source of stress for 32% of Gen Z.
 - Notably, almost one in four males (24%) identified it as a stressor.
 - While stress over family relationships and uncertainty about the pandemic exceed this concern, body image outranks stress from climate change (27%).

“Gen Z is coping with record levels of stress which is directly affecting their mental health, making it all the more important that we give them the tools to help them take care of themselves and push for change in culture, work and among policymakers, said Chris McCarthy, President and CEO of MTV Entertainment Group. “Remarkably, young people remain optimistic about driving change, and by amplifying their voices we hope to help them harness their power to take action and demand change from business and political leaders.”

“The pandemic has made coping with stress especially difficult for young people. It’s harder for them to connect, maintain relationships, and have fun,” said Jennifer Benz, deputy director of The AP-NORC Center. “But the data also show that young people are aware of these impacts and are hopeful about the changes their generation can make.”

About the Study

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, with funding from MTV. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and MTV collaborated on all aspects of the study. This is the first in a series of collaborations between the MTV Entertainment Group and The AP-NORC Center.

Survey Methodology

The nationwide poll was conducted in English and Spanish between September 1 and September 19, 2021, using TrueNorth®, which combines a sample from AmeriSpeak, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago, with a non-probability sample. Online and telephone interviews using landline and cell phones were conducted with people ages 13 to 56 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 3,764 completed the survey—3,750 via the web and 14 via telephone—including 2,683 members of Gen Z ages 13-24, 668 Millennials ages 25-40, and 413 members of Gen X ages 41-56. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.3 percentage points.

For more information, please visit www.apnorc.org.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. In its 10 years, The AP-NORC Center has conducted more than 250 studies exploring the critical issues facing the public, covering topics like health care, the economy, COVID-19, trust in media, and more.

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