

**CHM Leadership Certification
Level 11, Course #3**

**CARING FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF GEN Z
AND GEN ALPHA (A)**

**Marissa Leslie, MD, Adventist Healthcare
(Presenter's Notes)**

Objectives:

- Definitions
- Comparison between Gen Z and Gen A
 - **Mental Health Perceptions
 - **Technology
- SDA Health Message & Mental Health
 - **How does the SDA health message promote good mental health?
 - **What can we do to promote mental wellness among Gen Z & Gen A

McCrimdle Research (Australia)

A look at the generations:

- Builders
- Baby boomers
- Generation X
- Generation Y
- Generation Z
- Generation Alpha

Characteristics of Gen Z

- Generation Z are the largest generation ever, almost 30% of the world's population. Globally there are almost 2 billion of them.
- They are the first fully [global generation](#), shaped in the 21st century, connected through digital devices, and engaged through social media.

Generation Z Facts

- Also known as 'generation connected' or 'dot com kids'
- 1 in 2 predicted to obtain a university degree
- By 2025, will make up 27% of the workforce
- Predicted to work 18 jobs across 6 careers and live in 15 homes in their lifetime
- There are 2,000,000,000 Gen Z's globally
- Use slang like 'Fam', 'FOMO' and 'YOLO'

Characteristics of Generation Alpha

- Born 2010, they are the first generation who will be entirely born and shaped in the 21st century. This first generation we will see in record numbers in the 22nd century.

- They are logged on and linked up – known as ‘digital natives.’ Most materially endowed and technologically literate generation to ever grace the planet!

Generation Alpha Facts

- 2.8 million Gen Alpha’s born around the globe each week.
- They are mobile, global, visual, digital, and social.
- Very independent—make their own decisions.
- Diverse in taste, lifestyles, and points of view.

Mental Health Perceptions

Gen Z

- Mental health aware
- Facing real world challenges: Stressors, Awareness & Reduced stigma
- 37% have received therapy (Millennials 35%, Gen X 26%, Baby Boomers 22%, Silent Generation 15%)
- Technology as a part of the problem and solution

Gen A

- Mental health aware
- Lack of Quality Free Time (12 hours less on average)
- Correlation of increased prevalence of depression and anxiety by 5-8 times.
- Technology as a part of the problem and solution

Gen Z’s Mental Health Strengths and Challenges

- 91% of Gen Z respondents report experiencing physical or psychological symptoms due to stress (APA, Stress in America Survey, 2018)
- 70% of all teens across all genders, races, and family income levels say that anxiety and depression are significant problems among their peers. (Pew Research Center)
- 45% of Gen Z report that their mental health is very good or excellent according to the American Psychological Association. Other generational groups fared better on this. (Millennials, 56%, Gen X, 51% and Boomers, 70%)
- First generation to be exposed to potentially harmful content through social media at a young age (e.g. self-harm videos) (verywellmind.com)
- Social media pressures (harassment, bullying, need to conform)
- Social media has also normalized mental health problems
- Stigma is called out as unacceptable – strength
- Isolation
- (verywellmind.com. “Why Gen Z is More Open to Talking About Their Mental Health,” March 2021.

Gen A’s Mental Health Strengths and Challenges

- Modified childhood
- Information literate: Access to large amounts of information (good and bad)
- Decreased play

- Detect Inauthenticity quickly
- Diversity, inclusion & social responsibility are a part of their fabric
- Prudent with money
- Huge potential spending power
- (neo.academy, “Generation Alpha – How to Engage Them,” August 2021)

What does the SDA Church Say about Mental Health?

- Fundamental Belief 7 explicitly states that human beings are made in the image of God as “an indivisible unity of body, *mind*, and spirit.”
<https://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/humanity/nature-of-humanity/>
- Ellen White wrote that “the relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death. . . In the treatment of the sick the effect of mental influence should not be overlooked. Rightly used, this influence affords one of the most effective agencies for combating disease (*Ministry of Healing, 241*)

What Can the Church Do to Care for the Mental Health of Gen Z & Gen A?

Rule 1: Be Authentic and Build Trust (starts with us as leaders; pray for sincerity and a genuine Christian experience for yourself). This generation can see your authenticity miles away.

Rule 2: Speak to Them About What Matters to Them, It is not business as usual.

- Listen to them; Talk to them
- Involve them in the church
- Include them in program design
- Find out what matters to them
- Can connect to the right people when they need help with mental issues.

Rule 3: Peer Recommendations and Social Marketing, Not Top-Down Communication.

- Accept peer endorsement a great deal—what do global leaders say?
- Be aware of social marketing strategy, the power of testimony.

Rule 4: Focus on Making Your Technology Platform Appealing.

- Need to go beyond using PowerPoints to talk to Gen Z & Gen A about mental health
- Use social media to communicate with them – such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, texting, etc.

Rule 5: The Church Must Adapt.

- Adapting to work with this generation
- Partner with them to see how the church can help them
- Church community is very important to provide social friendships and belonging

- Ask them how we can minister to them