



#AndOwningIt: Turning Generation Z's Insecurities into Securities

Generation Z (13 to 23-year-olds) is often under the spotlight. Following the financial crash in 2008 and social media's rise in prominence ever since, this generation is constantly facing new challenges. It is therefore vital we learn how Generation Z feels about their lives. The research conducted by Kaspersky Lab and research firm Censuswide, showed that there is an anxiety epidemic – with 87% of Gen Z-ers feeling anxious about something, and with the majority of them not seeking help for it.

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Methodology and main findings

This study was conducted online by the research firm Censuswide in February 2018. 1,003 UK Generation Z respondents (13-23 year olds), split equally between men and women, were surveyed online.

Main findings

Where is this anxiety coming from?

45% of those surveyed said they feel anxious about their appearance – more anxious than they feel about their career prospects, money or terrorism

- **Appearance is the top-rated anxiety for Generation Z.** 45% of those surveyed said they feel anxious about their appearance – more anxious than they feel about their career prospects, money or terrorism.
- **Friendships are also a key source of anxiety.** 32% of Generation Z feel anxious about their friendships, with the opinions of friends playing a massive role in every aspect of their lives. 11% strongly agree that they have feelings of insecurity about their friendships, but admit to continuing to maintain them out of a fear of being bullied or isolated, becoming lonely, or having rumors spread about them.
- **Careers and money are also playing on the anxieties of Generation Z.** 41% said they feel anxious about the future careers, and 37% identify a lack of money as a concern. This is a time of great uncertainty and change for young people – they are graduating from school, passing exams, choosing universities and possible career paths. The feeling of uncertainty about their futures could perhaps be fueling fears of failure in anticipation of the big decisions they are facing.
- **Girls seem to suffer more than boys.** The research shows female Gen Z-ers have more insecurities and suffer greater anxiety than their male counterparts. In fact, 56% of female Gen Z-ers compared to 33% of male Gen Z-ers admitted to feeling anxious about their appearance, whilst nearly double the amount of girls than boys change their eating habits because of appearance related anxieties. Body improvement and fitness content on social media makes 16% of young women feel bad, compared to just 7% of young men, and the research also found that 36% of women have skipped a social event in the past year due to social anxiety.

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Running a social life on digital platforms

- Social media has become a key factor in defining how young people feel about themselves and others around them. More than half of young people (57%) are spending most of their time online and interacting with people through social media more than they do in person.
- Overall, there is a positive association with seeing a friend's post on social media. In fact, 40% of those surveyed said they feel happy and 21% said they feel relaxed when they look at other people's posts. However, there is still a significant number of young people who feel anxious about some aspects of online and digital communications, like getting negative comments on their social posts (25%), cyberbullying (21%), their phone battery (24%) and not getting enough likes (11%).
- The rise in social media and watching others receive 'likes' and 'favourites' across different platforms has led to young people craving more recognition and validation. Almost all the young people surveyed (98%) stated that getting likes on the images or videos they've posted of themselves makes them feel good, and the same is true when it comes to pictures of others taken by them. 91% have stated that getting a positive public message from a friend makes them feel good. The content does not even need to include themselves or their friends – simply being involved in a conversation feels good.

98% of Generation Z said that getting likes on images/videos they've posted of themselves makes them feel good



- At the same time, social media and online communications makes Generation Z feel worse about themselves. Thus, 17% of young people admitted that looking at friends' social media posts makes them feel left out of things, 14% feel jealous, and at least one-in-10 feels lonely, unattractive, insecure and less fortunate than those who are doing the posting.
- The research shows a generation obsessed with image crafting. Generation Z is taking photos in any social situation – snapping away to capture memories and then sharing them online. Despite taking an average of nine photos on a night out, Gen Z-ers are only posting five of them and spending an average of an hour and 11 minutes 'crafting' them before posting. This level of curation shows that social media is painting an unrealistic picture of perfection, which Gen Z-ers are constantly comparing themselves to.

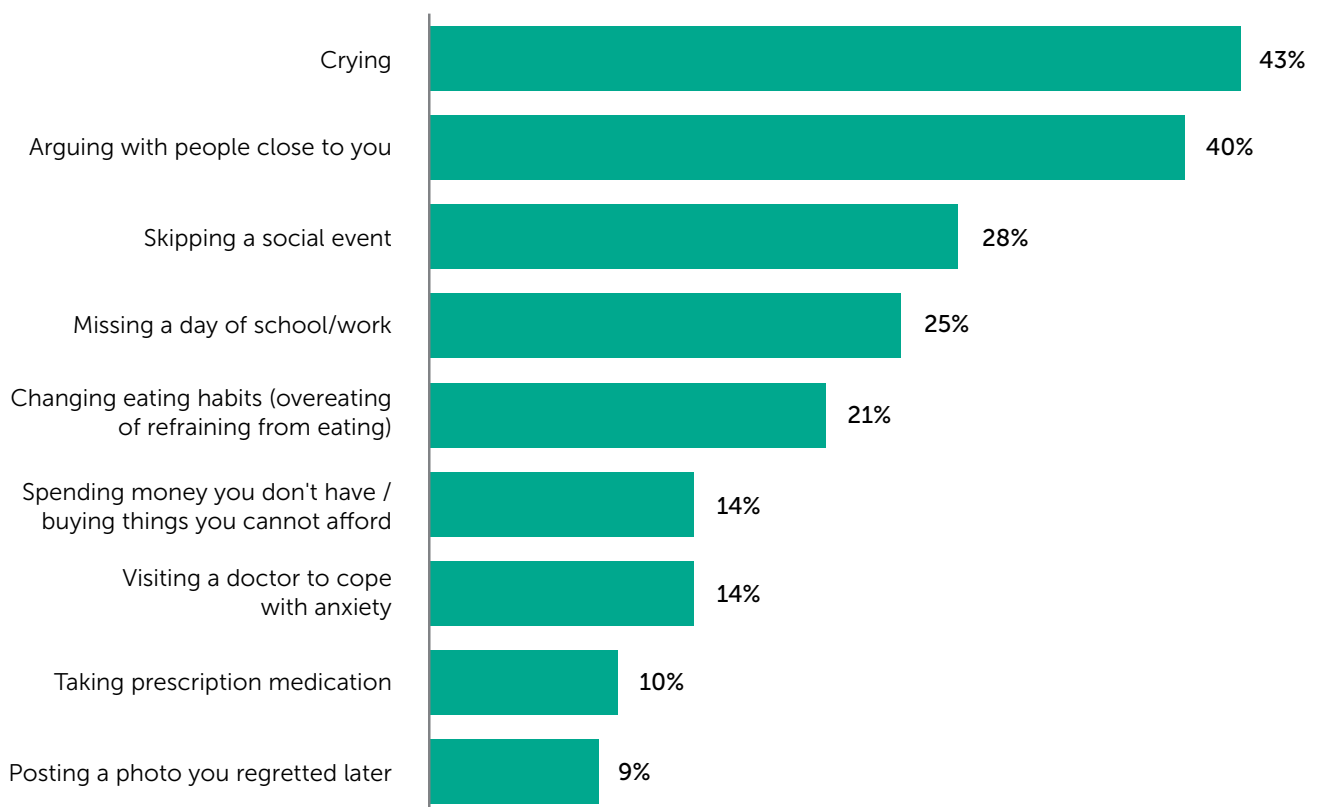
The results of feeling anxious: tears, arguments and missed deadlines

The consequences of feeling anxious vary, and include both emotional responses as well as actions that could be detrimental to a young person's success and happiness – both socially and academically.

The largest consequence was crying, with 43% saying they've shed tears because they feel anxious. More than a quarter of respondents said they have missed social events (27%) as well as a day of school or work (25%). A fifth (21%) admitted to changing their eating habits.

However, the key finding is that 86% of those surveyed did not visit a doctor to help them cope better – and that is why being able to talk about mental health is so important. Young people are suffering, and with 40% of them saying they have argued with people close to them due to feeling anxious, they are left struggling to maintain their relationships.

The top 10 consequences of feeling anxious



It's time to own it

Kaspersky Lab is committed to turning insecurity into security. We have been supporting families and corporations for many years with award-winning technology, and now we want to help Generation Z overcome their insecurities in real life too. The survey has found that this generation is struggling as they try to cope with superficial standards set by their peers and brands on social media – such as definitions on what is sexy, successful, or ideal.

We have partnered with digital youth charity The Mix and launched a new campaign – **#AndOwningIt** – to help Generation Z take ownership of their insecurities and show that there are no barriers stopping them from being happy and achieving success. We hope this campaign will open up a conversation that will de-stigmatise mental health and turn this generation's insecurities into strengths. By working with The Mix, we hope to give young people the confidence to talk about, get help with, and overcome their insecurities.

Kaspersky Lab and The Mix are inviting people to participate in the campaign by declaring their support online through **#AndOwningIt** tagged posts on social platforms.

To buy a t-shirt, participate in the conversation or find out more about the campaign, search **#AndOwningIt** or visit <https://andowningit.teemill.com/>. For specific help in continuing to tackle anxiety or other mental health challenges, reach out to [The Mix](#).



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