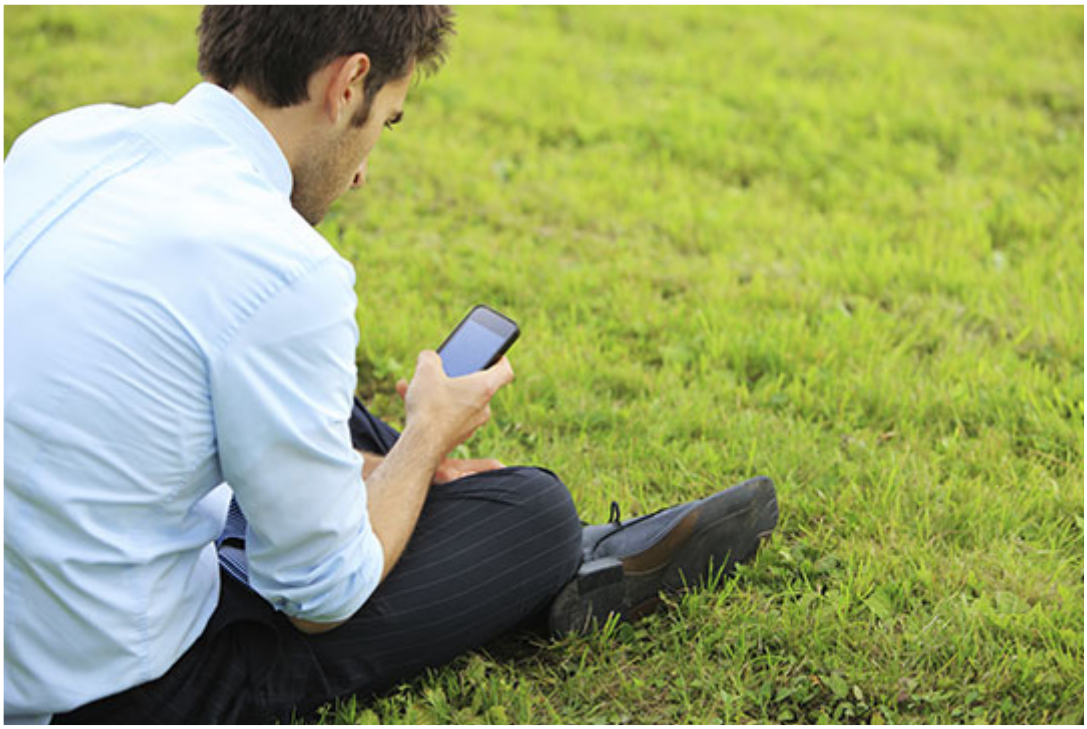
Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

#Mentalhealthtrends



As the first truly digital generation, Millennials often have trouble disconnecting from their smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other devices. As a result, they're constantly bombarded with texts, tweets, emails, news feeds, notifications and alerts. Add to that the stresses caused by their high expectations, a precarious economy and an unpredictable world and it's not surprising that they're reporting record rates of depression and anxiety.

Social media and mental health

Social media gives our friends, family, and even strangers around the world a glimpse into our lives. We share what makes us laugh, voice our views, and create a community. However, social media also allows people to present edited or idealized versions of their lives. This can cause feelings of insecurity and inadequacy for many of us. We may feel our jobs are not as interesting, our relationships not as happy and fulfilling, and our social lives not as exciting.

The very community we create on social media can also have a negative effect on our mental health. Because we're communicating with like-minded people we grow to expect positive feedback to our posts. Unfortunately, we have less control in the real world where relationships are complicated, work is stressful, and people often disagree with our views on life. Our popularity and acceptance online rarely spills over into real life.

How can this stressed generation get help? Through social media and other technologies of course!

New tools for a new generation

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Millennials have changed the way information is accessed and shared, and they're changing the way mental health services and support is being delivered. The main ways they're doing is with:

- **Social media.** Sites such as Facebook and Tumblr allow users to share their feelings and experiences with the community they've created or in complete anonymity. They can reach out at anytime, from anywhere and receive support and feedback. For people who have difficulty expressing their feelings with words, simple emojis (small "smiley face" icons) let others know of their frustration, distress, anger or sadness and will receive supportive comments.

  There are also dozens of pages set by individuals to offer peer support or by government agencies and not-for-profits to provide information and answers to questions.

  In addition, social media sites recognize that many young adults are struggling with depression and anxiety and have responded. Facebook and Tumblr in particular have partnered with mental health organizations to reach out to those in crisis and direct them to appropriate help.

- **Websites.** There are many websites dedicated to providing information and support for mental health issues, from large international agencies like the World Health Organization, national institutions such as the American Psychological Association and state, and other non-for-profit organizations.
- **Apps**. A growing number of apps are available to support good mental health. They run the gamut from guided meditations, mood monitors, journaling, sleep induction, mental health evaluators, and even life coaching.
- **Web portals.** More and more companies and health care providers are using web-based health portals that can include video conferencing with health professionals, information on a wide range of illnesses and issues, health assessments, health records administration, patient monitoring, and even educational initiatives using virtual reality and video games.

Because Millennials are more comfortable communicating digitally and are used to 24/7 access to information, they'll continue to embrace new ways to access mental health information and support. The challenge for the health sector to keep up with them because Generation Stressed is here to stay.