

Early research shows Gen Z perceives more dangers in life than previous generations

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There appears to be a common understanding that there is a mental health crisis among young people, but has society understood why?

As presented at the [2023 Society for Risk Analysis Annual Conference](#), Gabriel Rubin from Montclair State University conducted 40 interviews

with members of Gen Z (as of publication) in an [ongoing study](#) about risk factors that have led to the current mental health crisis in young people. So far, this study has identified risk factors such as [mass shootings](#), school lockdown drills, parental pressure, [social media](#) and the climate crisis.

Despite risk analysis research demonstrating that we live in one of the safest times ever, Gen Z experiences a disparity in risk assessment from their older counterparts, essentially having the perception that risk is everywhere they turn. One of the major takeaways from the interviews is that members of Gen Z are fed with a constant stream of news alerts that will overemphasize their threat level.

Gen Z is presented with a world where risk is black and white: things are safe (safe spaces, e.g.) or contain dangerous risk. Prior research has demonstrated that risk is not black and white—there are many risks in life and they can be weighed, yet Gen Z members view risk as either the presence or absence of safety in a situation.

This research has so far revealed that the disparity in [risk assessment](#) has led many [young people](#) to feel anxious, depressed and even suicidal—especially [young girls](#) and women. Messaging to Gen Zers needs to emphasize that there is a lot of gray area in risk and in life. Alleviating this crisis is one of the most challenging issues in America today. This research suggests that young peoples' inability to understand risk is a critical component of this crisis.

More information: Gabriel Rubin is presents this research Wednesday, Dec. 13, from 11:15-11:30 a.m., in the Westin Washington D.C

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