



REMEMBER

- They've grown up in a time of redefined families, identities and sexuality. As a result, morality is emotional, individualistic and situational.
- Stress is a daily reality; discomfort is unacceptable; making mistakes is to be feared.
- There's a growing exhaustion from never recharging away from technology; few margins for solitude or silence exist.
- On-demand entertainment makes them unable to handle boredom, and feel entitled to get what they want when and how they want it. With short attention spans, teens crave immediate & constant feedback. 12% are diagnosed as ADHD.

BUT...

- They want to change the world - and they believe they can! They value diversity and plurality and, when engaged in a cause, are entrepreneurial and tireless.
- They can be transparent, self-reliant and responsible. Honesty & integrity are high values they are looking for.
- They're Generation 'we' not Generation 'me', especially excited about being "people leaders" and truly making a difference in the big issues around them. God's desire for reconciling the world through a revolution of love makes sense to them.



RECOGNIZE

- Gen Z kids were born from 1997- 2010 and represent 17% of the Canadian population. They are also known as the iGeneration, the distracted generation or 'screenagers'.
- Teens are tech savvy. They've grown up being served media and messaging from birth, and have adapted to quickly sort through and assess enormous amounts of information effortlessly.
- 87% regularly use a cell phone - the communication method of choice - and dedicate 6-10 of their waking hours to screen time. Screens are seen as an extension of themselves, and stress is experienced during time away.
- While their "at risk" behaviours are far lower than previous generations, so is their mental health. Stress and anxiety are at an all time high for these young people.



RESPOND

- **Work with them.** Think about partnership, not dictatorship: teens want to buy in, have freedom to question, express dissent, and wrestle with ideas together with you.
- **Explore identity.** Help them discover who they are apart from their curated identity on social media.
- **Be prepared.** Recognize that many have had early and prolonged exposure to the online world of cyberbullying, sexting, and porn. Talk about this with them.
- **Show them.** Model and help them practice empathy, face-to-face conversation, and the importance of community to push back against the loss of these skills due to the overwhelmingly private & screen mediated relationships in their lives.
- **Stir up courage.** Give them freedom and encourage them to explore and move past their fears! Help them begin to find independence in healthy ways if they've been raised by over-involved parents and help their parents understand the changing role they may have as their child grows.
- **Make spaces for collaboration.** They're super creative & collaborative (online & in person)—get them working together for important causes! These kids have the ability to be self-directed & passionate - help them discover how to direct their energy toward being who God created them to be in ways that impact the world around them.
- **Introduce them to Jesus.** Gen Z has grown up with less church & religious input in their lives than nearly any generation before them. We have the one thing they're not able to buy online—Jesus.



GEN Z

Building Relationships with



RESOURCES

visual.ly/generation-z - An excellent Gen Z infographic for a quick overview.

axis.org/resource/gen-z-parent-guide - A guide to understanding the unique challenges & gifts of Gen Z.

Books: **iGen** by Jean M. Twenge and **Gen Z Unfiltered** by Tim Elmore with Andrew McPeak.