



Gen Z: Navigating Unique Pressures and Striving for Balance in a Modern World

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Introduction

As a school counsellor and senior wing psychology educator, I observe first hand - the unique challenges that (Gen-Z) students encounter compared to earlier generations. Since I work with kids every day, my main focus is to provide a protected space or environment where they are free to express themselves without any fear, especially if they don't have that kind of one-on-one support their personal lives.

Today's youth is surrounded by extremely high stakes demands, ranging from social media's dominance to family expectations and to the constant pressure of "hustle culture." Children who are driven to succeed, frequently believe that their worth is based primarily on their triumphs, which causes many of them to perceive themselves and their worth by what they deliver and their achievements; often causing them to feel inadequate and lead to them repressing their own feelings due to constant urge of being 'perfect'!

Social media channels present a glorified culture - Basically an illusion of a paradise of success, beauty, and happiness-which escalated these demands. Children often compare their lives and identities to these idealised figures that are portraying the best life of themselves on social media - which can make them feel inadequate if they believe they fall short. They have built emotional walls and hidden their true & raw selves because of this perfectly curated culture, fearing that they fall behind of this criteria set by the digital world!

Striking a Balance: Academic Pursuits and Social Media Demands!

For high school students, striving to stay connected online while studying and academics - leads to an endeavouring

demand for independence and balance. Mostly everyone, including adults nowadays are seeking validation through these platforms, and genZ have an invisible and unknowing urge to get validated online and offline to. Parents often find all of this particularly difficult because they may not completely comprehend the additional digital pressures that can cause Gen-Zs to burn out, feel agitated and may assume that they are constantly "rude" and doesn't comply to the rules!

Also, Strict guidelines around Gadget usage or digital devices, including restricting social media or screen time, can occasionally backfire and cause these Gen-Zs to become rebellious. Instead, I personally advise all the new generation parents to establish flexible boundaries, such as limiting times, but the most crucial thing is to give "the time." When we as parents are able to understand kids and provide a space where they are allowed to do what they love, they will respect back and create their own boundaries as to not break their guardian's faith!

They are also able develop a more positive relationship with technology and success when they are given the opportunity to explore the digital world more thoughtfully through a balanced approach! If a child is completely banned from using phones or gadgets might be able to cause aggravation and a sense of exclusion! They may act out or take drastic actions as they feel manor FOMO and the feeling of 'why only me' which leads to this sensation of isolation since they feel unable to engage in the activities that others are always engaging in.

Therefore, Setting defined boundaries, such as designated hours for phone use, and providing justifications and reasons for these clear, visible and flexible boundaries are more

effective than imposing complete bans. It becomes more of a mutual understanding when they are involved in the process rather than a Norm!

Emotional Conveyance: The BOYS!

Boys often labelled and taught to be the stronger ones; ones who shouldn't express what they feel as it may misunderstand them to be delicate! From early years, they experience additional societal expectations on masculinity and in addition to today's world, also need to be up to date on social media. Boys are generally discouraged from displaying their emotional side and weakness since hustle culture usually matches success with strength. Instead of seeking support, showcasing their vulnerable sides, boy's uses the path of anger or frustration as an outlet for their feelings. As much as we are providing a space for girls to be open up and stand up for themselves; we should not forget the struggle boys possess too; both the genders should go hand in hand providing non-discriminatory space for both!

Quest for Excellence: From Academics to Social Validation!

Today's youth experience an unrelenting pressure to succeed in all facets of life, from obtaining excellent grades to living the "ideal" lifestyle, to have an impeccable appearance and to rush to financial success! Every part of their world has been impacted by this never-ending quest for perfection. Many students believe that in order to get accepted into a reputable university and to get into the appropriate academic stream, they must do everything surpassingly well. Each and every stage, from test results to college applications, can seem like a turning point, as though their value as individuals is dependent on these advancements (according to them).

They may feel as though they are competing in an impossible race due to the pressure to succeed in every pursuit. At this point, the intervention of parents, teachers, mentors, and counsellors becomes pivotal. We as adults can remind them that their worth goes well beyond any grades or social media views or reach or number of followers they have - by helping them to find balance amidst chaos!

Some Ways; A GenZ Parent can Support their Child

Here are some crucial tactics -

- **Be their safe haven:** Encourage open and honest discussions about the difficulties children go through and it's okay if they are not succeeding at all ends - Life is not about being the winner but about being the person with the utmost dedication! Also, not to work hard for the fruit of success but the Journey ahead.
- Providing them an Ear and make them understand that they are in their own league. No comparisons; as every person is different with different capabilities. As Adults, we should refrain from interrupting or making judgements right away. Instead, pay close attention and acknowledge their emotions, since this can help counteract the fears and self-doubt that hustling culture frequently exacerbates.
- **Establish Flexibility and Balanced walls:** Young people are already under pressure from hustle culture to always be connected, up to the mark and work hard. While reasonable guidelines for screen time and activities are crucial, some leeway also lets kids unwind and take a vacation from the demands of constant performance anxieties!

Equipping a Generation to See Far beyond the Outputs and Results!

When all is said and done, we want the youth to understand that they are appreciated for who they are, not for what they achieve. In a culture that frequently connects efficiency with personal value, this guarantee is crucial to their success. We can help students build better Interpersonal relationship with success, self-worth, self-image, and emotional well-being by fostering supportive environments where they feel free to be who they truly are. In addition to building resilience, this well-rounded approach equips today's students to prioritize their own well-being in a world that is becoming more complex by enabling them to address life's obstacles with clarity and confidence.