

campus insights

Harvard Student Agencies

GEN Z RESEARCH

SEASONAL DEPRESSION

January 2024



www.campus-insights.com



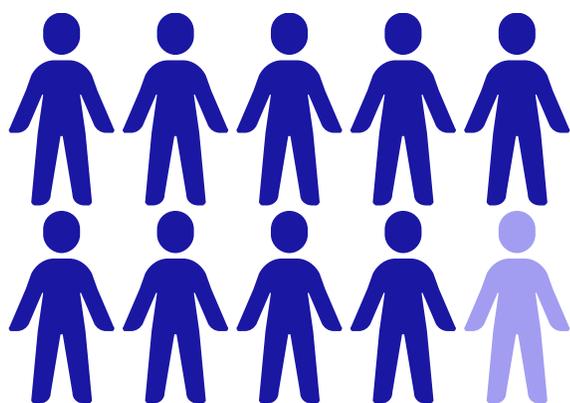
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Abstract

Campus Insights aims to investigate compelling Gen Z trends and topics. As such, for the month of January, **Campus Insights surveyed Gen Z's opinion on seasonal depression**. A change in seasons and seasonal depression have become so intertwined in the status quo with the term seasonal depression encapsulating this phenomenon. Seasonal depression is a type of depression that occurs at a specific time of the year – usually coinciding with the fall and winter months when it gets darker quickly. Seasonal depression can impact one's mental health, energy, mood, productivity, and well-being.

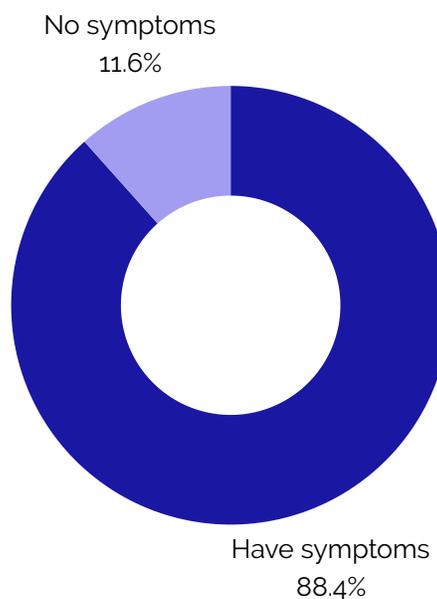


9 out of 10

respondents have noticed a change in mood, energy levels, and/or mental health

88.4%

have noticed symptoms commonly associated with seasonal depression

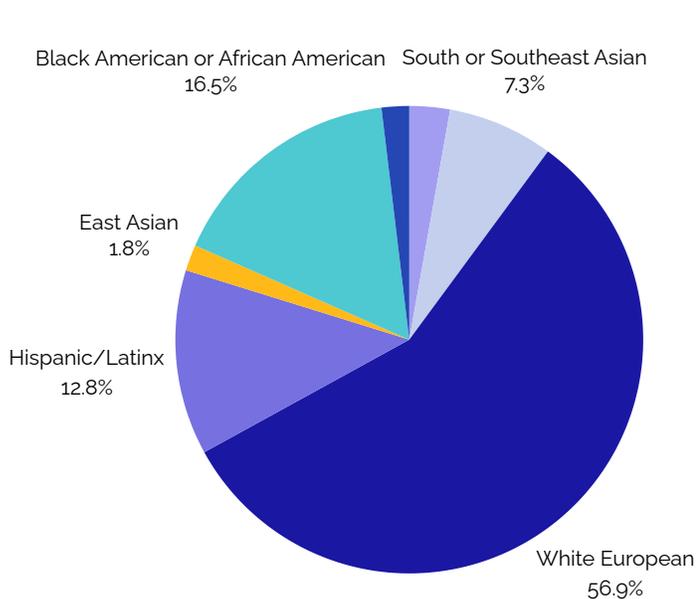


Methodology

To understand the culture surrounding seasonal depression and Gen Z mental health concerns, Campus Insights conducted a survey of **online respondents** of varying backgrounds from across the country. The survey—entirely assembled, synthesized, and analyzed by the CI team—gathered **112 respondents**. This report utilizes survey results to provide a comprehensive understanding of seasonal depression, incorporating both data and quotes.

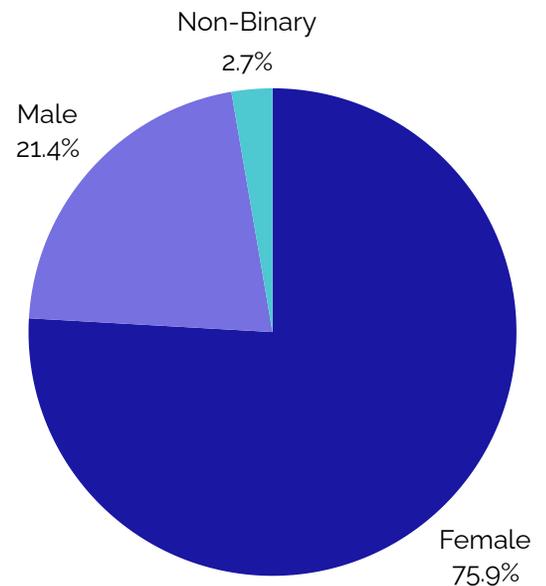
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Ethnic background of the respondents



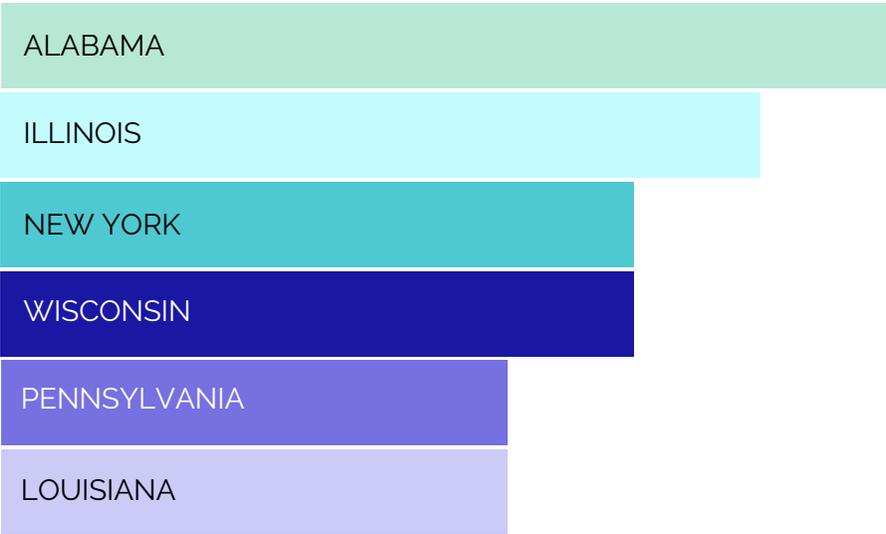
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Gender identification of the respondents



3

Top states of the respondents



4

Years of education of the respondents

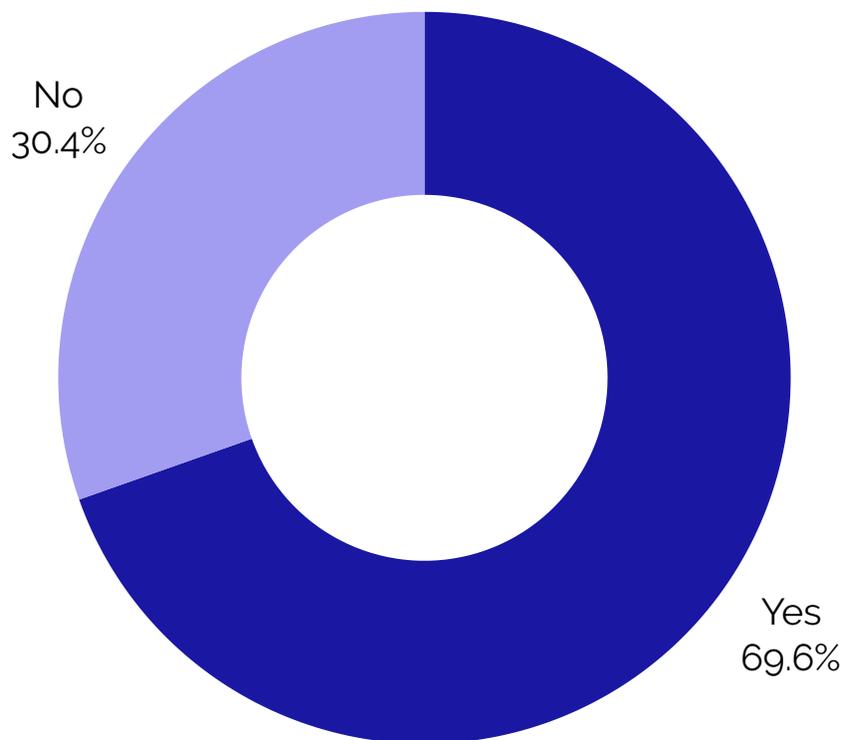


- College Students
- College graduates
- High school graduates
- Other (less than high school, PhD, etc.)

Seasonal Depression

Seasonal depression is a type of depression that coincides with the fall and winter months as the weather, darkness, and other seasonal factors can impact one's mental health, well-being, and productivity. **Gen Z** is a generation that **advocates for more transparency about mental health** and as such, more and more young people are discussing seasonal depression with their friends and/or being more open about their struggles.

Over two-thirds of the sample report having a history of mental health issues or seasonal depression.

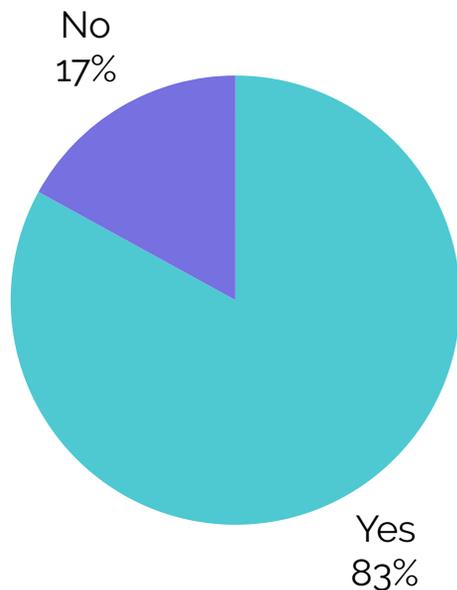


Mental Health

Recently, there has been growing awareness of mental health concerns with Gen Z being more candid and transparent about struggles with mental health. In the digital age, Gen Z is leading a profound cultural shift towards **destigmatizing mental health** and promoting self-care. With a generation that values authenticity and openness, discussions surrounding mental well-being have become increasingly prevalent across social media platforms, school campuses, and workplaces. Gen Z's embrace of technology has facilitated access to resources, fostering communities of support and amplifying voices advocating for mental health awareness. This is illustrated through young people responding that changes in mental health are prominent among peers, young people discussing mental health with peers more, and more.

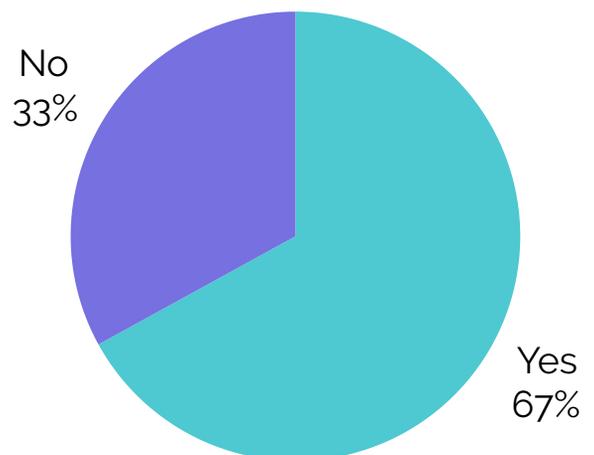
1

Changes in mental health are prominent among peers



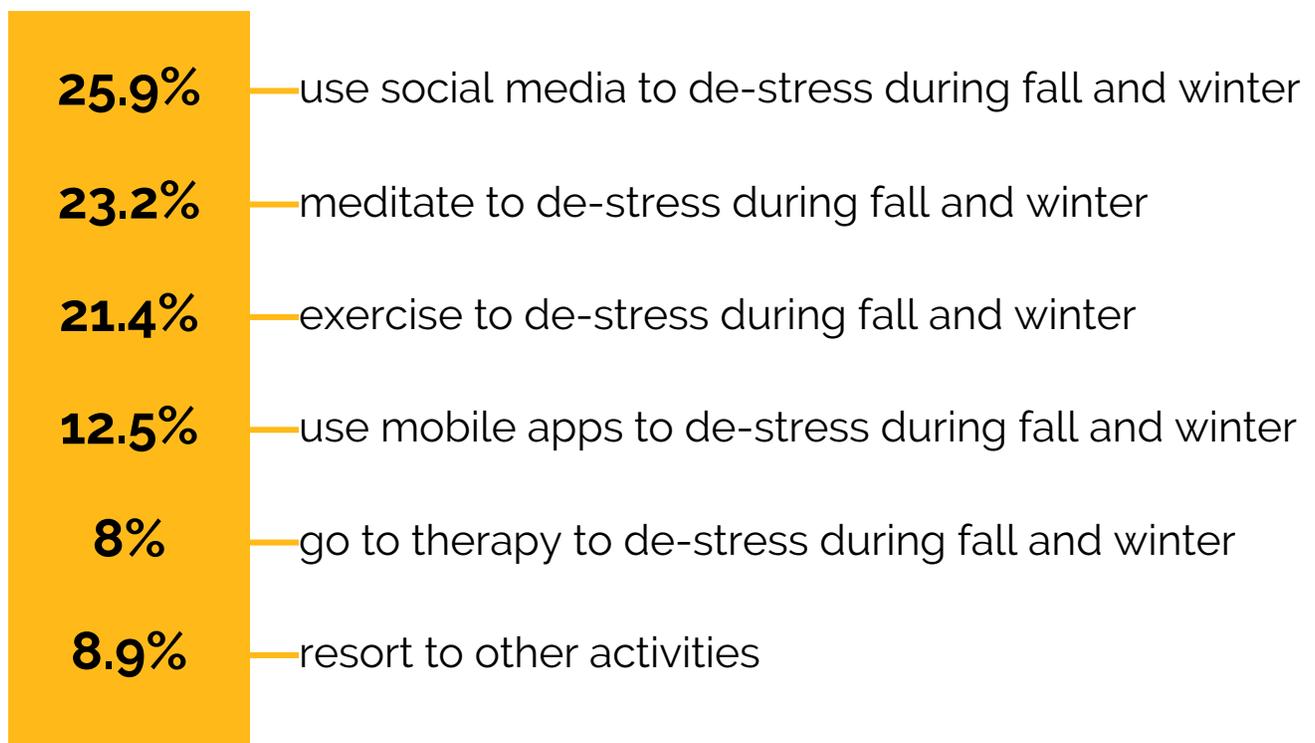
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Young people discuss mental health with their peers

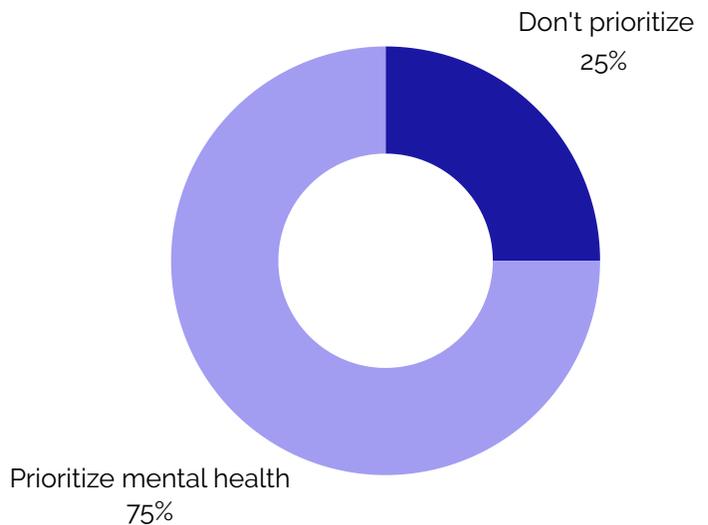


As Gen Z continues to redefine societal norms and advocate for mental health awareness, they are shaping a future where seeking support for mental well-being is not only accepted but encouraged. Through their collective efforts, they are dismantling barriers, challenging stigma, and paving the way for a more compassionate and understanding society.

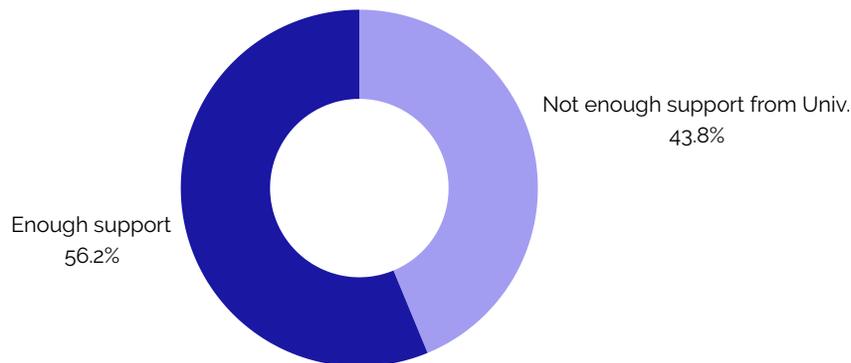
As mental health becomes more normalized, Gen Z identifies strategies to address their mental health issues. Of the following, **social media was the most popular option for Gen Z to de-stress** or unwind.



75%
of respondents prioritize
activities that help them de-
stress during fall and winter



Despite there being overwhelming mental health concerns among Gen Z, almost half of the respondents believe their **academic institution does not provide adequate resources** to address their mental health concerns.



The most common concern is the lack of accessibility to counselors and therapists. One respondent wrote,

"It's difficult to find information for [mental health] support and even harder to make an appointment, a lot of unknowns around options."

Social Media

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok offer spaces as creative outlets and community building, but they also present a double-edged sword when it comes to mental health. From mental health advocacy campaigns to online therapy resources, **social media has become a powerful tool for raising awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues.**

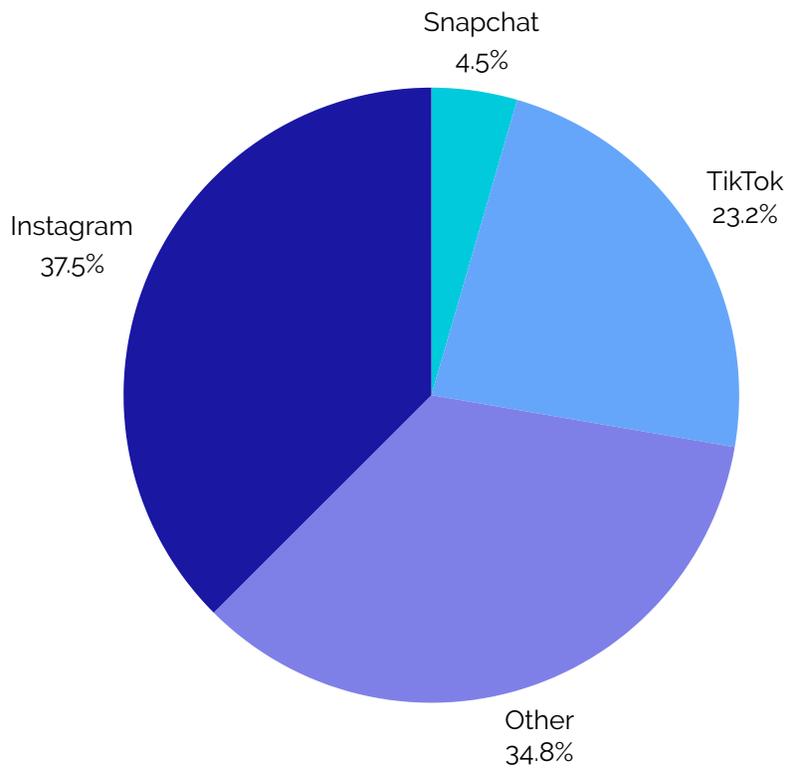
However, the constant exposure to curated images, unrealistic standards of beauty, and the pressure to present a perfect life online can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy, comparison, and anxiety. This has been linked to diminished self-esteem and increased feelings of loneliness, as individuals perceive their own lives as falling short in comparison to the highlight reels of others.

Constant usage of social media can disrupt sleep patterns, contribute to feelings of FOMO (fear of missing out), and blur the boundaries between online and offline interactions, leading to feelings of disconnection and isolation.

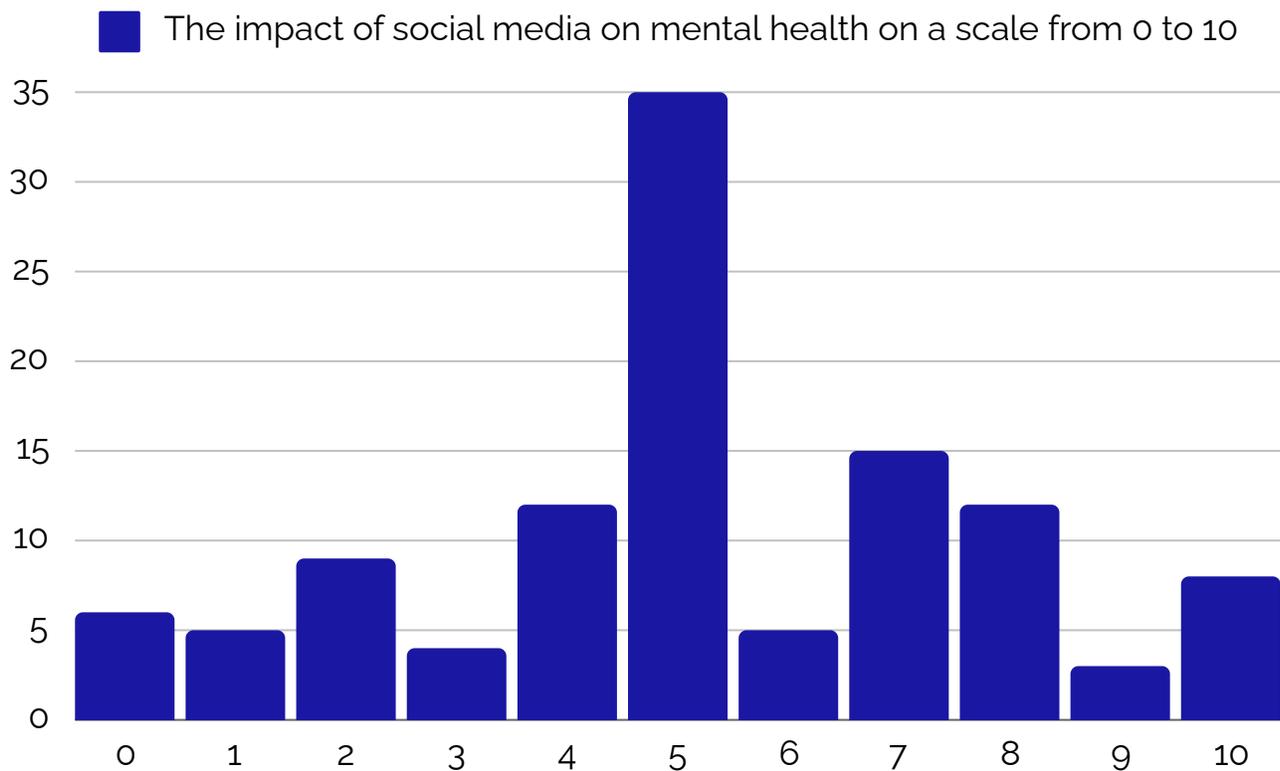
Instagram is the most commonly used app



in the winter season among Gen Z



Overall, the respondents feel that social media moderately affects their mental health.



Conclusion

Campus Insights received 112 responses to our January Survey and received invaluable insight on Gen Z opinions on mental health, seasonal depression, and culture. Going forward, we can conclude that seasonal depression is prominent among Gen Z and is being more of an area of concern for Gen Z.

Changes in seasons, usually from more daylight to less daylight, are linked with seasonal depression which has side effects such as decreased mood, energy, productivity, and more consequences. Gen Z has been more vocal about struggles with mental health, promoting candid discussions and transparency about coping strategies and ways to deal with seasonal depression. As Gen Z is school-aged, they are dealing with seasonal depression and/or mental health struggles while in school, resulting in calls for action for their institution to provide greater support. Overall, seasonal depression is a relevant topic in Gen Z culture and deeper investigation has revealed that Gen Z is not alone in coping with seasonal depression.

Campus Insights is a Harvard-based market research firm focused on Gen Z. We are a branch of Harvard Student Agencies, the largest student-run company in the world. Through recruitment, surveying, and comprehensive market research analysis, we help businesses connect with Gen Z.



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