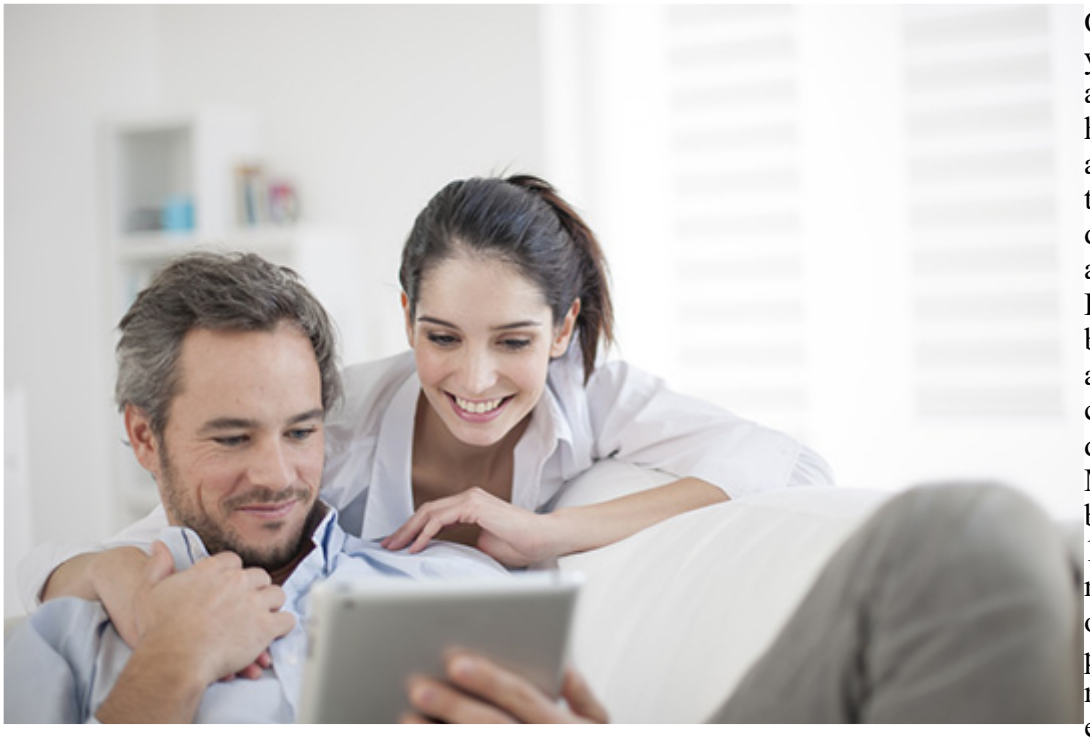
Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Generation X and mental health



Over the past 35 years, governments across the globe have focused on accommodating two enormous demographics – the aging Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) and their children, the demanding Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999). But in the middle, often overlooked by policy makers, marketers and especially mental health services, is a much smaller demographic called Generation X.

This group was so overlooked that it didn't even have a name until 1991 when Douglas Coupland published *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, and it's no surprise that they consider themselves a "lost" generation. Growing up with two working parents or single parents, they were also known as the latch-key kids, expected to take care of themselves until their parents came home from work. According to Coupland, this is a generation that was "rushed through childhood," becoming self-reliant and entrepreneurial.

Growing up in the space age watching *Star Wars* and *Star Trek,* Gen Xers led the technological revolution of the 80s and 90s – but, they're not as optimistic about the future as the Boomers. As teenagers they saw the idealistic 60s replaced by political turmoil, HIV/AIDs, increased crime, and economic uncertainty and as adults became sandwiched between caring for children and aging parents. Now, as they sit squarely in middle age, this generation is feeling the strain – and is still feeling ignored.

Mid-life crises

For anyone, middle age can be tough on mental health. It's a time when we re-evaluate our lives, dreams, relationships and careers and face the fact that our bodies cannot do what they once did! But Gen Xers face their own unique challenges, including:

- **Caregiving.** Forty-eight percent of Xers expect to provide primary physical and financial support to their aging parents.
- **Upsizing**. Young adults are staying home or moving back home – with their Gen X parents. Instead of downsizing as they age, Gen Xers are often *upsizing* to accommodate their grown children, parents and even grandchildren.

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- **Finances.** Many Gen Xers were negatively affected by the economic recession of 2006 and do not have confidence in governments for support in their old age. Many are also helping support both aging parents and college age or adult children.

Generation X is struggling with personal and professional responsibilities and is at high risk for anxiety-related disorders, depression and substance abuse issues. Their problem is finding the *time* to access support. Fortunately, there's a solution. Employee Assistance Programs provide sandwiched Gen Xers information, resources and counseling on a wide range of issues via web portals or apps that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.