

*Reddit
Hot Take:*

Mental Health

*How younger generations are embracing their
mental health struggles and healing in solidarity*



Compared to their predecessors, younger generations identify and embrace **mental health challenges** head on.

By de-stigmatizing the topic and proactively seeking help, **innovation** in new forms of therapy and self-care emerge.

Implications—

Mental health is no longer taboo- Gen Z and Millennials are open to creative solutions in order to benefit their mental wellness.

01. Be The Next Hobby

Hobbies are poised to become a vital form of therapy. Redditors subconsciously knew this, as 44% started doing more hobbies since the start of the pandemic to improve mental health. How can your brand inspire and facilitate the discovery or engagement of new hobbies and interests?

02. Gaming for Good

Redditors are self-prescribing video games as a form of self-care and relaxation. Gaming is the 3rd largest category on Reddit mentioning “self-care” *ahead of* Health Living. Video game brands are poised to position their titles, especially adventure and low-stakes titles, as a beneficial part of their consumers mental health journey.

03. Embrace Imperfection in The Workplace

Mental health is pivotal to a younger workforces holistic wellness. In order to align with these values, companies should encourage an open dialogue and provide resources for mental health. By showcasing transparency and proactive offerings, employers signal that they care about the entire health journey.

04. Empower “Self-Care”

Beyond face masks, people are looking for novel ways to de-stress and reduce anxiety. Mentions of “self-care” in r/teenagers is up 39% YoY. Highlight unexpected aspects of your product that enable self-care.



Now: What's Happening?

Embrace Imperfection

Trend Summary: By acknowledging and engaging with their mental health, Gen Z are on a healthier journey than their predecessors.

Even beyond the pandemic, Gen Z are tackling mental health *head on* and there is a power in embracing what was once stigmatized. The younger generations are more likely to self-diagnose and create a dialogue around mental illness, rather than pretending as if everything is okay.

They are proactively seeking therapy and community, from r/depression to r/teenagers, while finding comfort in the fact they are not alone.

Younger generations have put mental health on the main stage, and therapy and self-care are becoming just as important as a healthy diet and exercise.

Embracing uncomfortable truths about one's mental health is setting younger generations free.

¹Quantcast, 2022.

²Reddit Internal Data, Global, 2022. April 2022 vs. April 2021.

³GlobalWebIndex, US, 2021.

44%

Of r/Depression is 18-29 years old.¹

+38%

Increase in mentions of “therapy” in r/teenagers YoY²

Power in Vulnerability

Gen Z are quick to embrace and address mental health challenges

+39%

Increase in mentions of “self-care” in r/teenagers YoY³

+94%

Gen Z redditors say they have a **mental condition** vs. Boomers. Gen Z is less likely to say they have a sleep-related condition than Boomers³



Millennials opened the door to mental health

The working generation of Millennials are not to be forgotten, as the realities of adulthood and volatile global events have them seeking mental health resources.

YoY increases in r/lostgeneration, a subreddit dedicated to working class millennials and their shared experiences

5.9x

**Increases in mentions of
“mental health” YoY**

6.5x

**Increases in mentions of
“therapy” YoY**

7.7x

**Increases in screen
views YoY**



We're All Not Okay

During the years of the pandemic, the struggle and spotlight on mental health was felt worldwide. Even older generations, who were less likely to acknowledge struggles with anxiety or depression, admitted to the downward mental spiral of quarantine.

The intense stress and anxiety of the time impacted redditors physical health during COVID, making the issue of mental health unavoidable.

The silver lining of shared misery being that mental health discussions became the norm, at least for a short while. For some, it may have been a temporary state of struggle with mental illness, for others, it shined a light on a lifelong battle.

As the worldwide conversation dies down, younger generations are fighting for mental health to be a priority.

¹GlobalWebIndex, US, 2021.

²Reddit Internal Data, Global. 2020 vs. 2019.

1 in 3

Redditors say their **mental health** got worse during Covid¹

1 in 4

Redditors say their **physical health** got worse during Covid¹

Mental Spiral

COVID impacted all redditors and their mental health... for the worse

+50%

Increase in mentions of **"anxious"** between 2019 and 2020²

+42%

Increase in mentions of **"stressed"** between 2019 and 2020²



Reddit brings community to all those struggling

Everyday, redditors turn to **mental health** subreddits for the feeling of community... to not feel **alone**.

Monthly Views to:

14.8MM
r/ADHD

5.8MM
r/Depression

3.7MM
r/Anxiety

3.3MM
r/CPTSD
[Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder]

2.3MM
r/BPD
[Borderline Personality Disorder]

2.2MM
r/Bipolar

1.6MM
r/MentalHealth

1.5MM
r/TalkTherapy



Younger generations start to think of hobbies as integral to mental health

“ [Hobbies] provide distraction, novelty, cognitive stimulation, belongingness as well as enhancing coping skills and agency and ... provide social support, all of which are positively associated with mental health.

But **hobbies** specifically also provide sensual engagement, **self-expression, creativity, and relaxation.** ”

– *Support for Social Prescribing?* (Fancourt et al., 2019)



Prescription Hobbies

As society treats mental health with the frequency that they treat their physical health, the need for mental health resources will increase. Professional help will always be vital, but treatments will become more accessible, less formal, and more adaptable to people's natural interests. Hide the medicine in peanut butter.

Therapists have begun “social prescribing”, encouraging patients to take on new hobbies.¹ This method will enter the larger societal zeitgeist, with younger generations turning to new hobbies to self-medicate and self-soothe - without the need to be directed by a professional.

Hobbies will no longer be leisurely activities, but vital to maintain or improve mental health. By acknowledging that the problem is a societal one, younger generations are spurring innovation in mental health treatment.

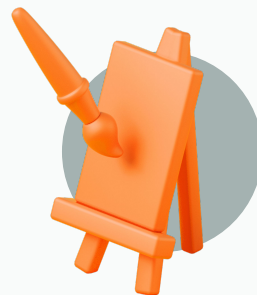
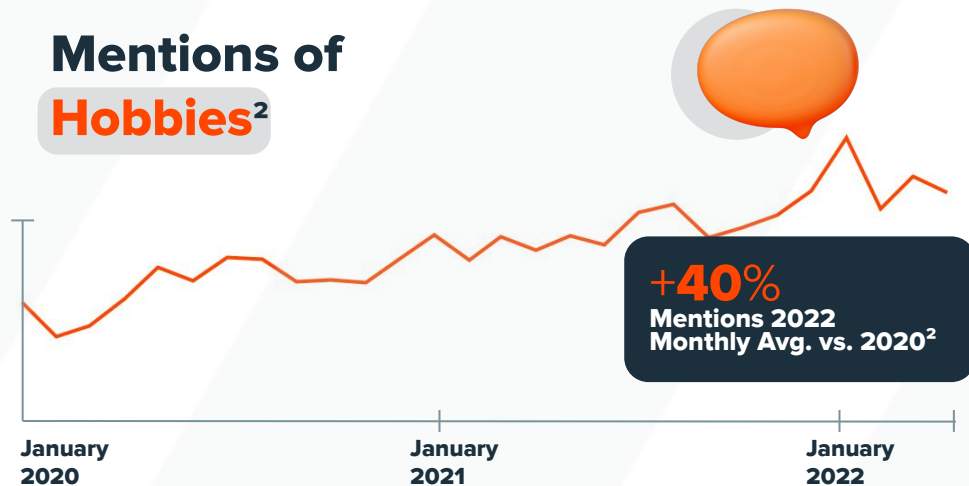
From gaming to knitting, hobbies are the next mental health prescription.

¹Fancourt et al., (2019). Support for Social Prescribing? Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics.

²Reddit Internal Data, Global, 1/1/20-4/31/22.

³GlobalWebIndex, Global, 2021.

Mentions of Hobbies²



44%

Of global redditors have been doing more hobbies since the start of the pandemic to manage their mental wellbeing³



Not enough therapists to go around

“Disturbing trend in recent years - especially during the pandemic - of serious increases in **depression and anxiety** across the population, but not **enough doctors and therapists** to treat these issues.”

—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022.¹

ACCESSIBILITY
SOLUTION

“In a study focusing on the effects of ‘simple, easy-to-use, **casual video games**’ on stress, anxiety and overall mental health, 12 out of 13 studies showed **positive outcomes** for those playing games.”

—Anxiety, Depression, Stress, and Low Mood: A Systematic Review. (Pine et al., 2020.)²

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, April 20). Anxiety and Depression - Household Pulse Survey - Covid-19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

²Pine et al.,(2020, August 12). The effects of casual videogames on anxiety, depression, stress, and Low Mood: A Systematic Review. Games for Health Journal.



Gaming emerges as a top hobby to deal with mental health

r/patientgamers

Relaxing games for anxious gamers?

I have a serious problem with my anxiety but ... playing games help me a lot... If someone knows about a game with only exploration goals or where you can go around doing nothing or only talk/help people?

384 Comments Award Share Save ...

BEST COMMENTS ▾



My first pick would be Abzu, it's a relaxing adventure game in the vein of something like Journey, but all in a beautiful underwater environment.



I really enjoyed Unpacking. It is on Game Pass. It is a simple low stakes game about unpacking boxes as you move into new homes but it uses brilliant environmental storytelling and pleasant sound design to make an enjoyable ASMR like gaming experience.



During the height of my wife's anxiety phase last year due to work, I introduced her to Stardew Valley. The satisfaction and happiness she derived from being in control of 95% of the game helped her greatly in recovering.



Gen Z and Millennials have already begun to “**prescribe**” themselves **low-stakes gaming** in times of stress, anxiety, and depression. Games that have relaxing, goal-setting, exploratory factors are a **behavioral xanax**.

Psychologists have taken notice and started to partner with video game developers/studios.

Games that combine the creative spark and joy of gaming studios with science-backed treatment methods will be your therapist's next “**medication**”.

#3

Gaming is the 3rd largest category on Reddit mentioning “self care”. More than Healthy Living.¹

8.4x

YoY incr. in views to **r/healthygamergg**, a subreddit dedicated to a Twitch streaming psychiatrist focusing on mental health and gaming²

¹Reddit Internal Data, Global. *3/1/22-4/25/22.

²Reddit Internal Data, Global. *March 2022 vs. March 2021.



Quantified Emotions

The “Quantified Self” movement, or self-knowledge by numbers, has taken the world by storm, bolstered by advances in wearable technology. With mental health becoming a vital part of a holistic wellness approach, our brains become the next hurdle to be *quantified*.

It's not a question of if, but *when*, devices are able to track our visual attention and dopamine levels. Wearables have already begun to unlock emotion and mood state tracking.

Will the promise of improving mental health supersede the younger generations concerns over data privacy and autonomy? There is power in having undisputable data to improve our mental state... It also means our innermost emotions will be aggregated and analyzed by brands, governments, and institutions.

In a time of distrust in global institutions, will desire for privacy outweigh unlocking the mystery of our mental states?

¹emarketer, [Health and Wellness Smart Device Ownership Among US Adult, Nov 2021](#).

²GlobalWebIndex, US, 2022.

42%

Of US adults own a smart sleep tracker¹

1-in-4

US redditors use their wearable devices to track heartrate²

Mental Crossroads

Tension between improving mental health and data privacy concerns

1-in-3

Millennial redditors worry about their data security and loss of privacy²

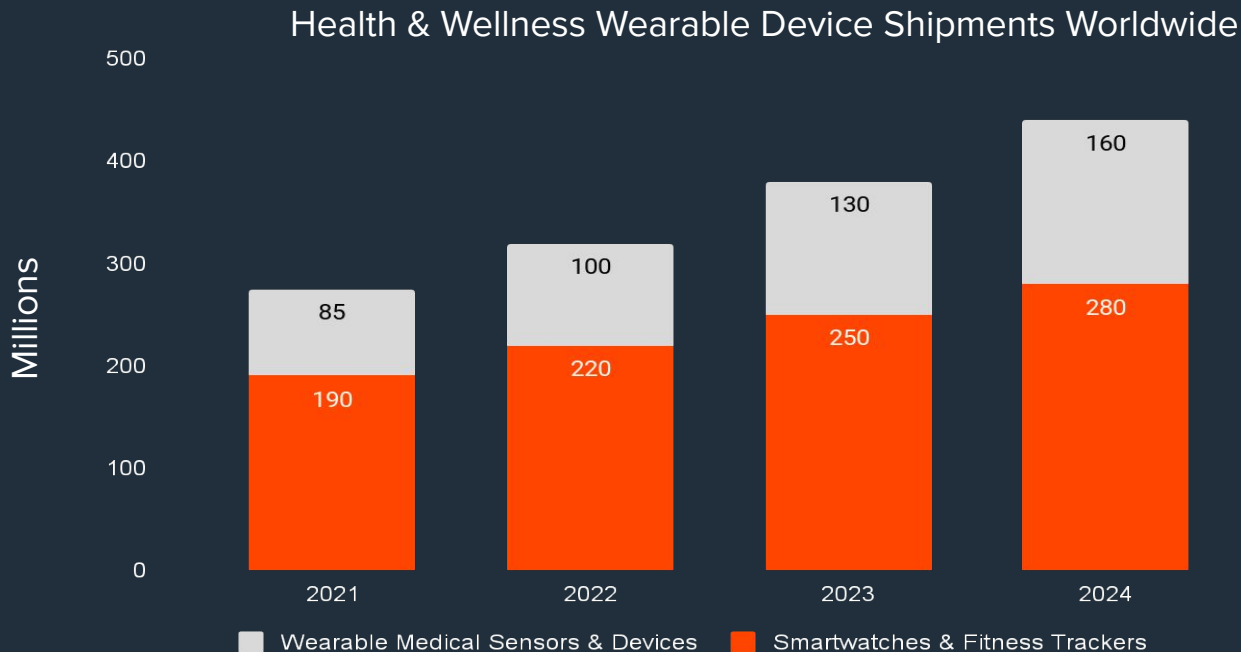
+191%

More Gen Z vs. Boomer redditors worry about their data security and loss of privacy²



Despite privacy concerns, wearables are on the rise

Despite privacy concerns, wearable health technology is on the rise worldwide, and is projected to grow.



Thanks!

Want to Learn More?
Rob.Gaige@Reddit.com

