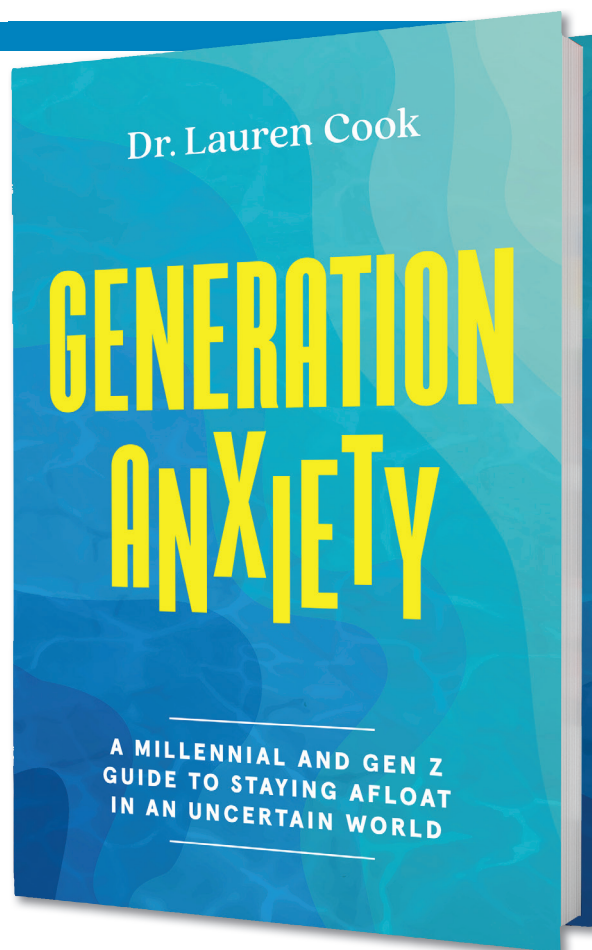


INTRODUCTION

Millennials and Gen Z-ers are considered two of the most anxious generations in history, and with many intense generation-specific stressors facing them in recent years—from climate change to political polarization, systemic racism, gun violence, financial instability, and so much more—it's easy to see why people are being diagnosed with anxiety at alarming rates.

Dr. Lauren Cook, a therapist who specializes in treating Millennials and Gen Z clients, and is a Millennial who also lives with anxiety, understands the many nuanced reasons why these two groups are struggling in different ways than their predecessors. Taking a feminist and intersectional lens, Dr. Cook shares her own struggles with anxiety and provides easy, actionable steps to help readers ride the waves of anxiety rather than constantly swimming against them. This relatable, honest, and information-packed book incorporates thorough, evidence-backed psychological research and diverse client experiences to illustrate a broad range of presentations of anxiety and help readers gain insight into their own stressors and effectively work through anxiety.



LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

I'm thrilled that you've gotten yourself a copy of *Generation Anxiety*. While the path that brought you to pick up this book may not have been easy, I believe this book can be a true antidote for the mental suffering that you or a loved one may be enduring. I know how rough the waters around us can be, and this book is meant to be the buoy that not only keeps you floating but learning how to swim with strength in the waters that you find yourself in.

I hope you get to build a community around this book like I have. Whether it's with your book club, your classmates, or your team at work, *Generation Anxiety* offers helpful and actionable tools that you can implement right now. As you'll see, this book meets you where you're at while giving you the tools you need to start feeling better today.

I've created a guide for you to help facilitate the conversation around anxiety and everything it brings up for each of us. As you're planning a gathering, don't hesitate to reach out, as I'd love to be a source of support. Whether it's spending time with your group or working with you individually, know that I am here with you and for you.

Warmly,

Dr. Lauren Cook

GENERATION ANXIETY A Millennial and Gen Z Guide to Staying Afloat in an Uncertain World By DR. LAUREN COOK

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ABRAMS IMAGE • READER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Anxiety is the most common mental health concern plaguing folks these days— in fact, over 40 million Americans experience anxiety. How do you notice anxiety manifest in your own life or the lives of those around you?
2. We are increasingly seeing higher rates in prevalence and severity for not just anxiety, but many other mental health diagnoses. Why do you think this is? What do you think can be helpful to ensure that people get support sooner if they are struggling?
3. Dr. Cook cites the Generational Power Index, noting how significant historical events and movements have impacted the experience of anxiety for many people. What would you say have been poignant generational moments and/or cultural shifts that have impacted your life, whether in a helpful or harmful way?
4. “Your anxiety is making you selfish.” This is a bold claim! Perhaps different feelings sprung up for you when you read it. What do you make of this assertion? Do you agree or disagree?
5. Sometimes we can feel so alone in our experience of anxiety. What is one way you can connect more with the people around you to build more of a community?
6. “We need to choose values induction over pain reduction.” What were the key values that came up for you?
7. “Empowered acceptance” is a concept highlighted throughout *Generation Anxiety*. What is something in your life that you want to practice accepting while still taking meaningful action moving forward?
8. If you were to create your own anxiety hierarchy like the client Luís did, what is a fear that you’d like to work on?
9. Colleen’s story delves into the generational impacts of trauma, and Dr. Cook also cites some studies that highlight how epigenetics can change our experience of anxiety on a molecular level. What do you think about the idea that anxiety can be passed down generationally?
10. The Five Daily Gratuities are included as an exercise that can help us expand our perspective, especially after we’ve experienced trauma. What is something you’re grateful for, just in the last 24 hours?
11. Dr. Cook identifies the different types of “sharks” that infest our waters, including our minds, certain people, and society at large. Which sharks are the most difficult to deal with in your life?
12. Research from John and Linda Friel describes the three different kinds of boundaries: diffuse, rigid, and flexible. What would you say your boundary setting style is and what is one way you’d like to improve on this?
13. “We are *Generation Anxiety* because we are Generation Appearance.” How do you see cultural expectations of appearance, including with social media, impacting our experience of anxiety?



ABRAMS IMAGE • READER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

14. Breaking down the difference between enabled support and empowered support, Dr. Cook shares how we can show up more effectively for our loved ones when they're struggling with their mental health. How do you show up for the people you're concerned about? Do you feel like you can take a different approach that may be more effective?
15. There's no one size-fits-all approach to our healing. Dr. Cook offers many different ways to improve our mental health that go beyond therapy and medication (though both are great interventions). What were some ideas listed that you want to try or have worked well for you in the past?
16. As you've learned about how vitamins and nutrition impact the gut microbiome, and our subsequent experience of anxiety, are there any changes or steps you'd like to take in terms of the foods and supplements you're putting in your body?
17. Contrary to the popular trope of the preschooler holding on to their parent's pant leg, many adults experience intense separation anxiety. Is this something you've experienced? Do you find yourself feeling afraid of the future, particularly when it comes the idea of losing loved ones or experiencing death someday?
18. Our anxiety makes us want to avoid and procrastinate. What's something you want to take a meaningful step toward in your future? Is there an ultimatum that you need to set for yourself or someone else?
19. Dr. Cook shares openly about her experience with emetophobia and how this impacted her decision about whether or not to get pregnant. What came up for you as you read through her journey?
20. Various client experiences are explored throughout *Generation Anxiety*. Which client resonated the most with you? Were there any clients that brought up different reactions for you?
21. What is your hope for future generations as we work through our anxiety collectively?

RESOURCES

Dr. Lauren Cook's favorite resources to support your mental health:

Psychology Today: psychologytoday.com/us

The Jed Foundation: jedfoundation.org

The Calm Meditation App: calm.com

Notes From the Universe: tut.com/notes-from-the-universe

BetterHelp: betterhelp.com/

American Psychological Association: apa.org

The Five Minute Journal: intelligentchange.com/products/the-five-minute-journal

TherapyDen: therapyden.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness: nami.org/home

TED: ted.com





AUTHOR BIO

Dr. Lauren Cook is a therapist, consultant, speaker, and author. She travels around the country while also offering virtual and hybrid options to support teams with their retention, morale, and engagement through the lens of mental wellness.

Dr. Cook is passionate about bringing mental health to people of all ages and identities, particularly in the workplace (including when that's from home!). Dr. Lauren integrates empirically supported research and neuroscience to inform her evidence-based teachings.

Dr. Cook is the founder of Heartship Psychological Services which serves clients residing in California. Specializing in anxiety, Dr. Cook helps individuals and couples work through generalized anxiety, phobias, social anxiety, OCD, and more. She takes a multiculturally informed, systems lens that looks at the intersectional identities of a person in the context of

their environment. She specifically applies third-wave tenets (CBT, ACT, and DBT) to help teams apply mindfulness, cognitive flexibility, and values-identification for intentional living.

For more information on Dr. Lauren Cook, please visit her website here: drlaurencook.com

For speaking engagements: drlaurencook.com/speaking-information

You can also follow her on Instagram at [@dr.laurencook](https://www.instagram.com/dr.laurencook); on TikTok at [@dr.laurencook](https://www.tiktok.com/@dr.laurencook); or on LinkedIn at [@drlaurencook](https://www.linkedin.com/company/drlaurencook).