

The 2024 Election Cycle's Impact On Mental Health & Relationships

OCTOBER 2024

Introduction

As the intensity of the 2024 U.S. presidential election heightens in an increasingly polarized nation, the current political climate has become a source of stress and anxiety. This survey delves into the impact of the upcoming election on Americans' mental health and relationships, revealing key generational differences.

Differing political views are straining relationships among friends and family, and even influencing dating choices. To cope with election anxiety, people are adjusting their social media habits — including blocking friends and family. *This escalating tension underscores the importance of mental healthcare, with therapy as an essential tool for managing anxiety and fostering resilience during turbulent times.*

Report Findings

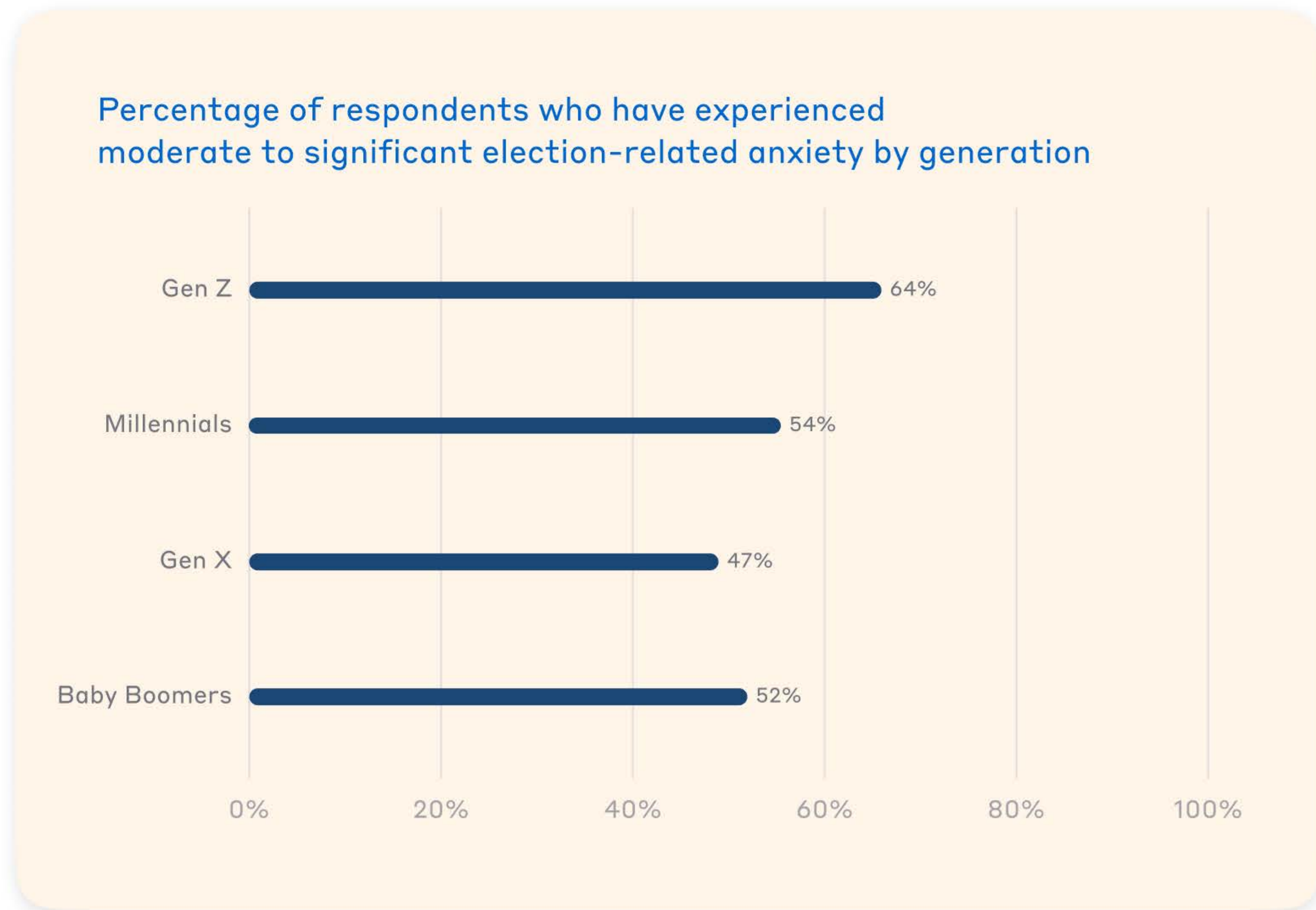
The U.S. presidential election is a significant source of stress and anxiety for Americans, especially among younger generations.

- This U.S. presidential election is taking up significant headspace for U.S. adults, with more than half (57%) of respondents reporting they think about the election daily, including nearly one-third (31%) who said they think about it multiple times per day.
- Respondents from older generations report thinking about the election the most: 69% of baby boomers think about it daily, compared to 61% of Generation X, 51% of millennials and 48% of Generation Z.

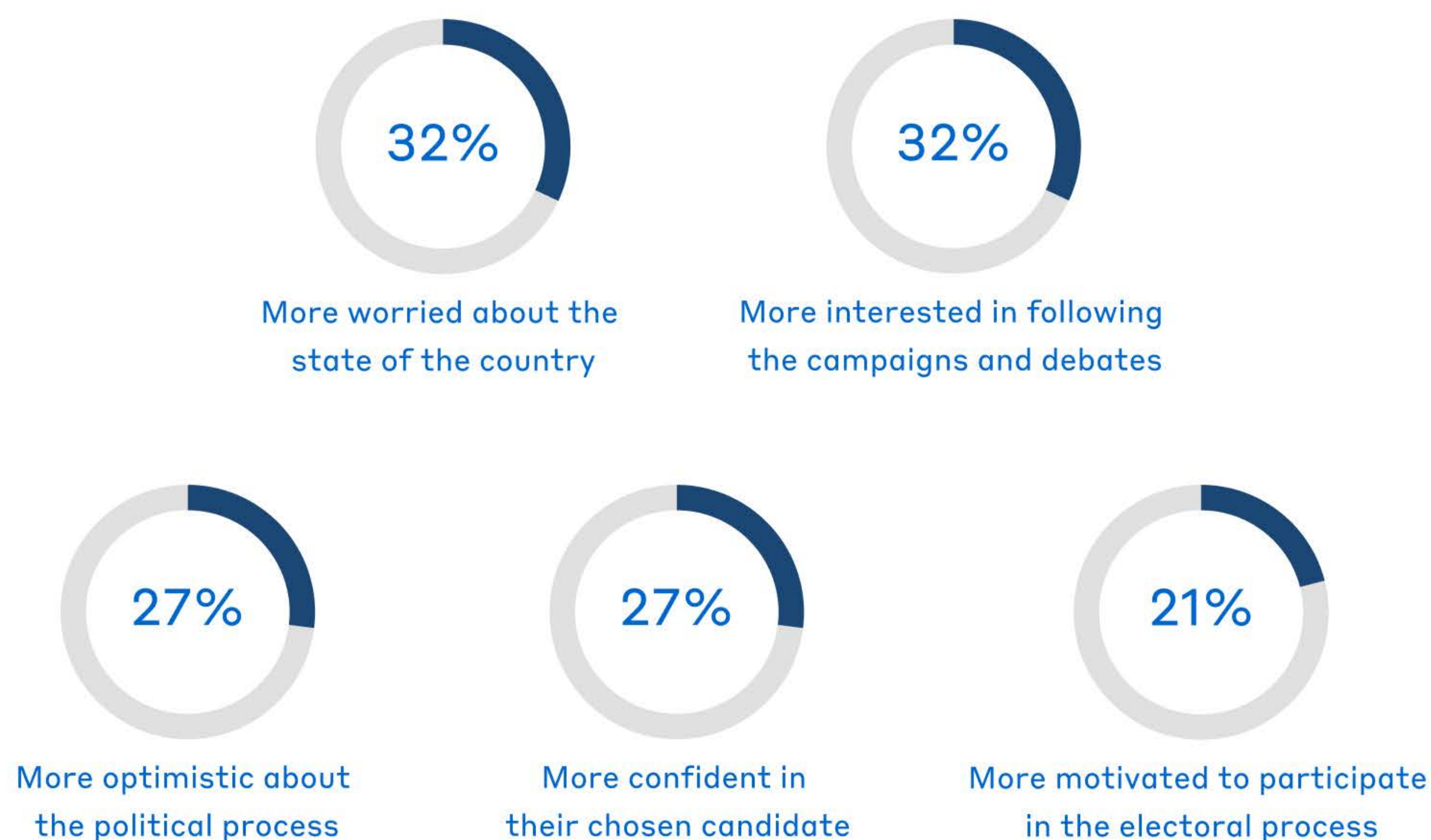


Nearly 4 out of 5 (79%) respondents said the upcoming presidential election has caused them anxiety this year, with 21% saying it has caused them significant anxiety.

- Respondents from younger generations are the most likely to have experienced moderate to significant election-related anxiety, including 64% of Gen Z and 54% of millennials, as compared with 52% of baby boomers and 47% of Gen X.



- Thirty-one percent of respondents said the idea of discussing politics has deterred them from attending a social event they otherwise would have looked forward to — most pronounced amongst millennials (40%) and Gen Z (40%), compared to 23% of Gen X and 18% of baby boomers.
- Forty-four percent of Gen Z respondents have even postponed major life events such as moving, going to college, getting married or having children due to the political climate creating anxiety about the future — compared to 27% of millennials, 22% of Gen X and 7% of baby boomers.
- Compared to how they felt about the election cycle at the start of the summer, respondents are now:



- Forty-one percent of respondents say they feel more hopeful heading into the election cycle than they did at the start of the summer — 35% feel equally as hopeful and 24% feel less hopeful.



Nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents who are in therapy say they discuss politics or the election with their mental health clinician during sessions.

This is highest amongst millennials (67%) and Gen Z (59%), compared to 51% of Gen X and 36% of baby boomers.

Political disagreements are meaningfully impacting relationships, causing conflict among friends and family and even ending friendships, all of which can significantly impact one's mental health.

Nearly half (44%) of respondents said political or election-related discussions have led to conflicts in their personal lives.

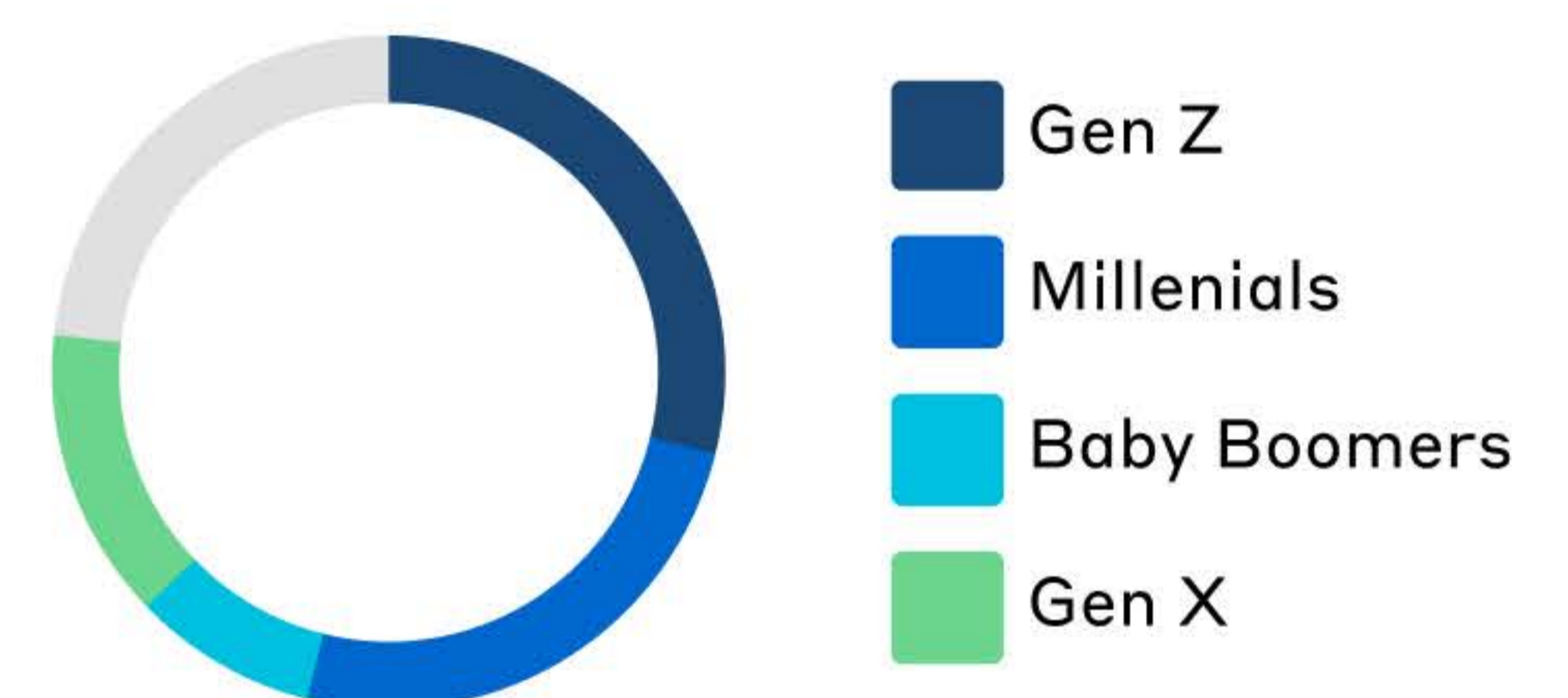
- This is especially true of respondents from younger generations: 29% percent of Gen Z and 25% of millennials say these discussions “always” or “often” lead to conflicts, compared to 14% of Gen X and 9% of baby boomers.

Gen Z (28%) and millennial respondents (22%) were the most likely to have had heated arguments and confrontations with friends and family over political disagreements, compared to 12% of Gen X and 9% of baby boomers.

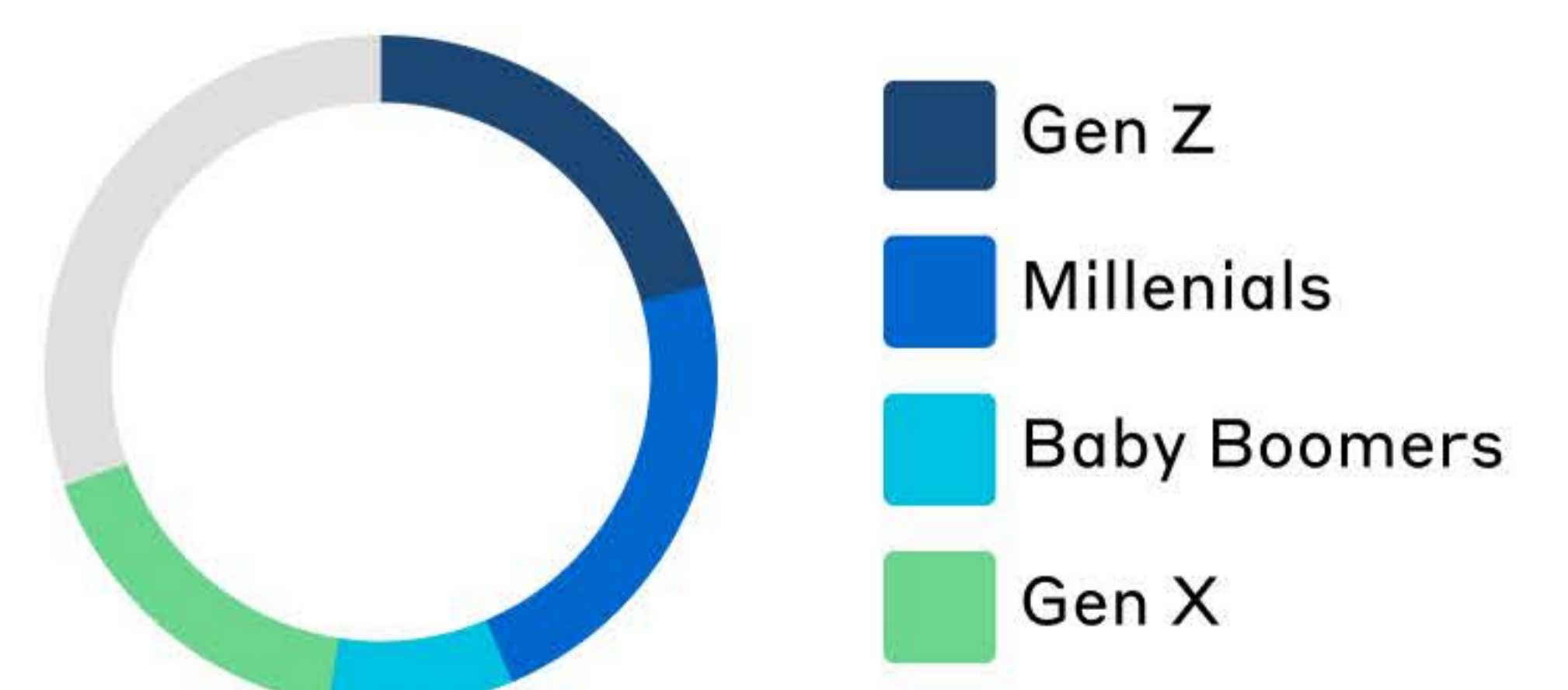
About a quarter (24%) of millennial respondents said they have grown apart from or avoid discussing politics altogether with friends or family, compared to 19% of baby boomers, 18% of Gen X and 18% of Gen Z.

Nearly a quarter (22%) of respondents said they have considered ending a friendship due to opposing political views, and 18% said they have done so before.

- Millennial (23%) and Gen Z respondents (21%) were the most likely to have ended a friendship for this reason, compared to 17% of Gen X and 9% of baby boomers.



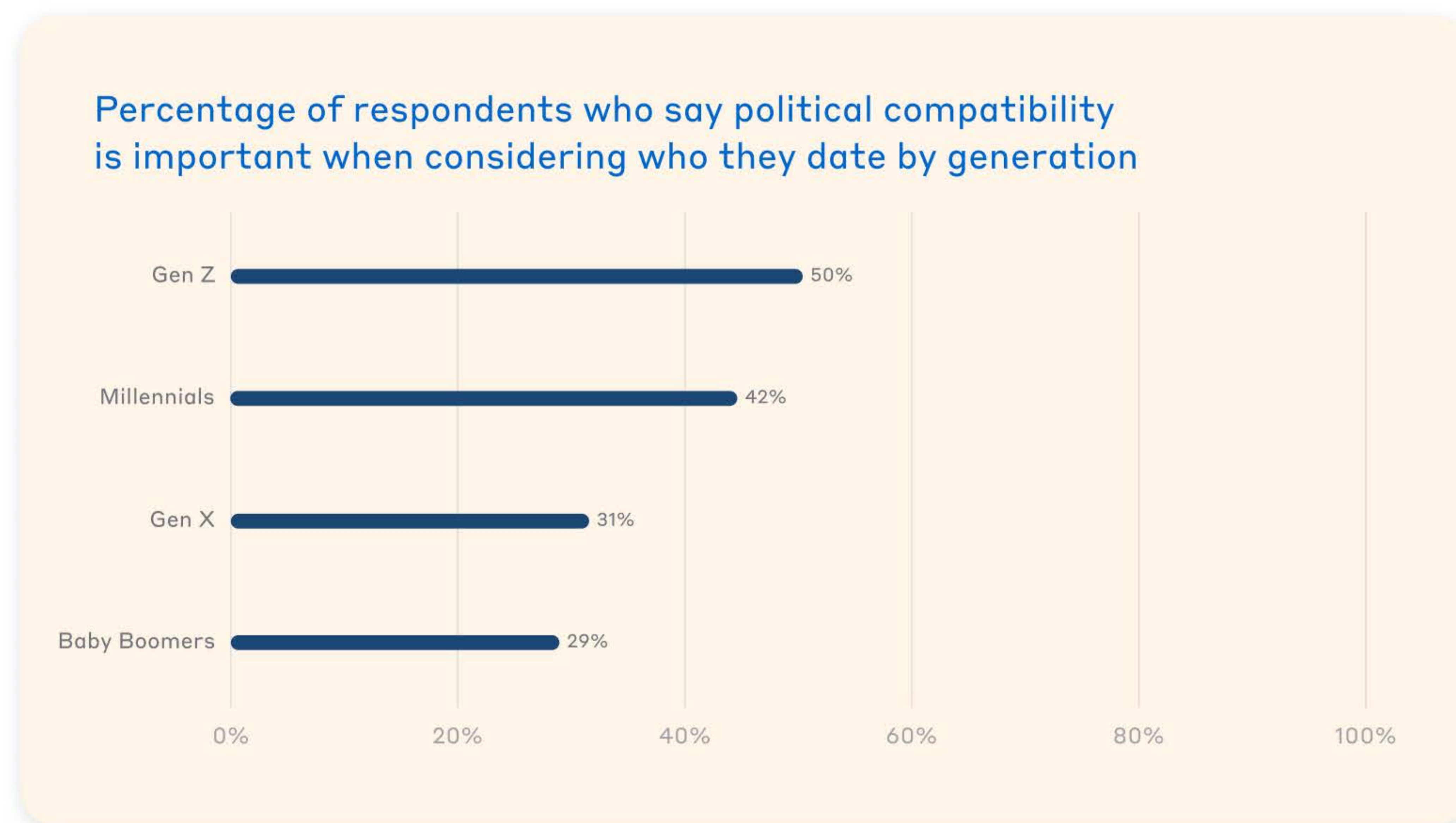
Generational differences among respondents who say political or election-related discussions "always" or "often" lead to conflicts



Generational differences among respondents who have ended a friendship due to opposing political views

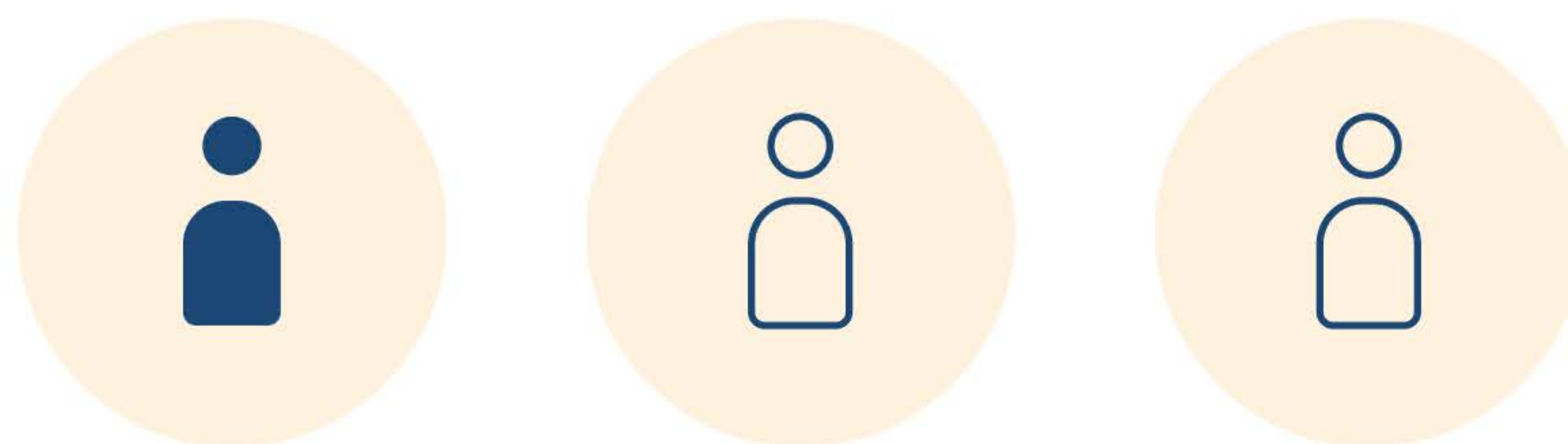
Differing political views are creating tension in romantic relationships and impacting who people choose to date.

Half (50%) of Gen Z respondents say “political compatibility” is an important factor when considering who they date, compared to 42% of millennials, 31% of Gen X and 29% of baby boomers.



- More than a quarter (28%) of respondents would consider it a “deal breaker” if they found out someone they were currently dating had opposing political views — a sentiment most pronounced amongst Gen Z (35%), compared to 31% of millennials, 23% of baby boomers and 22% of Gen X.

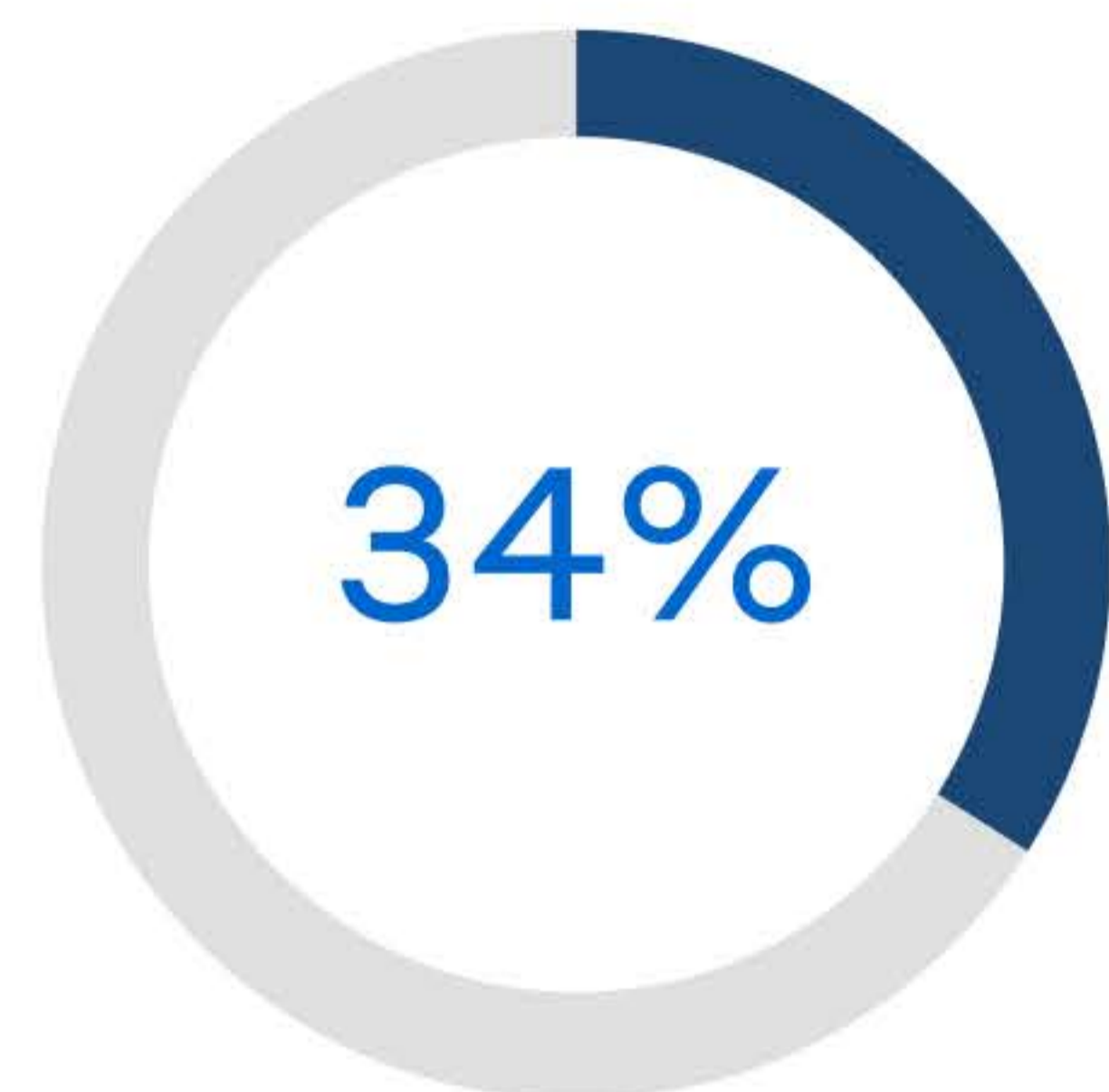
One of three (33%) respondents said they would not date someone with opposing political views, accounting for 37% of baby boomers, 33% of Gen X, 27% of millennials and 27% of Gen Z.



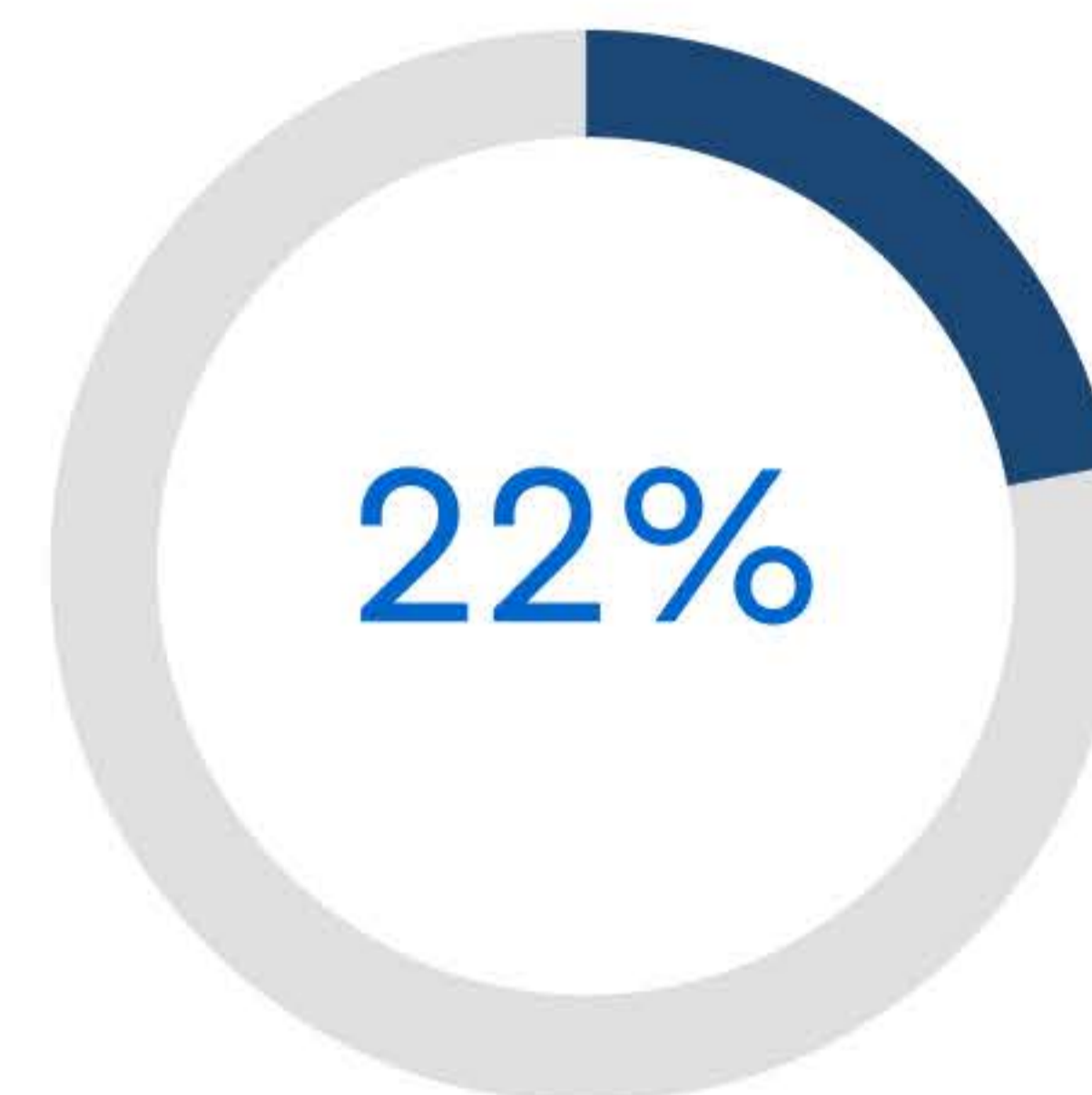
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents who are in a relationship said political disagreements with their partners regularly cause tension in the relationship.

To cope with election anxiety, people are adjusting their social media habits and even blocking friends and family members.

Over one-third (34%) of respondents said they have unfollowed or blocked a friend or family member on social media due to their political views — while 22% said they haven't but have considered it.



Percentage of respondents who have unfollowed or blocked a friend or family member due to their political views



Percentage of respondents who have considered unfollowing or blocking a friend or family member due to their political views

- Gen Z (36%) and millennial (33%) respondents were the most likely to have unfollowed or blocked a friend or family member, compared to 14% of baby boomers and 21% of Gen X.
- Over two-thirds (72%) of respondents said social media and news coverage contribute to their anxiety about the election, and more than half (54%) limit their exposure to help manage election-related stress.
- More than half of Gen Z (52%) and 44% of millennial respondents said social media and news coverage have moderately or significantly contributed to their anxiety about the election, compared to baby boomers (37%) and Gen X (35%).

Methodology

On behalf of LifeStance Health, Researchscape International conducted an online survey of 1,052 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The survey was fielded from Aug. 7 to 15, 2024. The credibility interval is plus or minus four percentage points for questions answered by all respondents. The data was weighted to the U.S. population by eight demographic questions.

About

Founded in 2017, [LifeStance](https://www.LifeStance.com) (NASDAQ: LFST) is reimagining mental health. We are one of the nation's largest providers of virtual and in-person outpatient mental healthcare for children, adolescents and adults experiencing a variety of mental health conditions. Our mission is to help people lead healthier, more fulfilling lives by improving access to trusted, affordable and personalized mental healthcare. LifeStance and its supported practices employ nearly 7,000 psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, psychologists and therapists and operates across 33 states and more than 550 centers. To learn more, please visit www.LifeStance.com.