



DeepSeek moved me to tears': How young Chinese find therapy in AI



Before she goes to bed each night, Holly Wang logs on to DeepSeek for "therapy sessions".

Ever since January, when the breakout Chinese AI app launched, the 28-year-old has brought her dilemmas and sorrows, including the recent death of her grandmother, to the chatbot. Its responses have resonated so deeply they have at times brought her to tears.

"DeepSeek has been such an amazing counsellor. It has helped me look at things from different perspectives and does a better job than the paid counselling services I have tried," says Holly, who asked for her real name to be withheld to protect her privacy. From writing reports and Excel formulas to planning trips, workouts and learning new skills, AI apps have found their way into many people's lives across the world. In China, though, young people like Holly have been looking to AI for something not typically expected of computing and algorithms - emotional support.

While the success of DeepSeek has inspired national pride, it also appears to have become a source of comfort for young Chinese like Holly, some of whom are increasingly disillusioned about their future. Experts say the sluggish economy, high unemployment and Covid lockdowns have all played a role in this sentiment, while the Communist Party's tightening grip has also shrunk outlets for people to vent their frustrations.