Bridging the Gap: the Generational Divide

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Conflict of Interest

• Jennifer Arnoldi, Pharm.D. has no conflicts of interest to declare
• Carrie Vogler, Pharm.D. has no conflicts of interest to declare

Objectives

• Explain how generational differences influence communication and interpersonal dynamics
• Recognize intergenerational perceptions and their impact on professionalism
• Describe generational differences when setting expectations for obtaining and providing high quality feedback

Show Us Your Cards!

• Do you know what a “Millennial” is?
  A: Yes
  B: No
• How well do you feel you understand the characteristic traits of each generation?
  A. Very well
  B. Somewhat well
  C. Not well
  D. What is a generation?

What is a Generation?

• “A group of individuals born and living contemporaneously”
  – Generations share a place in history in time
  – Have events, images and experiences in common
  – Develop their own unique personalities
• Regardless of birth country, a generation is a group of people who are “programmed at the same time in history”
• Generations can overlap at their endpoints

Current Generations

• Veterans 1922-1945
Current Generations

• Veterans 1922-1945
• Baby Boomers 1945-1960

Baby Boomers
• 73.2 million people born during WWII
• Raised in the era of extreme optimism, opportunity, and progress

What Other Generations Say About Baby Boomers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They talk about things they ought to keep private</td>
<td>• Self-righteous</td>
<td>• They’re cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are self-absorbed</td>
<td>• Workaholics</td>
<td>• They are up to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They talk the talk but don’t walk the walk</td>
<td>• Too political</td>
<td>• They work too much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Generations

• Veterans 1922-1945
• Baby Boomers 1945-1960
• Generation X 1960-1980
• Millennials 1980-2000

Veterans
• 52 million people born prior to WWII
• AKA: Traditionalists, WWII Generation, The Silent Generation, Seniors

What Other Generations Say About Veterans:

<table>
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<th>Baby Boomers</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dictatorial</td>
<td>• Set in their ways</td>
<td>• Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rigid, inflexible</td>
<td>• “Learn to email!”</td>
<td>• Brave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can’t adapt to change</td>
<td>• They too shall pass</td>
<td>• Good leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inhibited</td>
<td>• They’ve got all the money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology dinosaurs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Narrow</td>
<td></td>
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Generation X
• 70.1 million born after the blush of baby
• AKA Xers, 20-somethings, Baby busters, Post-boomers

What Other Generations Say About Generation X:

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<tr>
<td>• Uneducated</td>
<td>• Slackers</td>
<td>• Cheer up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t respect experience</td>
<td>• Rude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t follow procedure</td>
<td>• Lack social skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t know what hard work is</td>
<td>• They do things their own way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They spend too much time on the internet</td>
<td></td>
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**Leadership**

- **View**
  - Hopeful
  - Skeptical
  - Optimistic
  - Practical

- **Work Ethic**
  - Ambitious
  - Balanced
  - Driven
  - Dedicated

- **Outlook**
  - Relaxed, Polite
  - Unimpressed
  - Love/Hate
  - Respectful

- **Leadership**
  - Achievement
  - Competence
  - Consensus
  - Hierarchy

- **Relationships**
  - Loyal, inclusive
  - Reluctant to commit
  - Personal gratification
  - Self-sacrifice

- **Perspective**
  - Civic-minded
  - Self-reliant
  - Team-oriented
  - Civic-minded

- **Turn-Offs**
  - Promiscuity
  - Clitch, hype
  - Political incorrectness
  - Vulgarity

**Strengths**

- **Veterans**
  - Strong work ethic
  - Wealth of experience
  - Discipline
  - Loyalty
  - Emotional maturity
  - Belief in the "greater good"
  - Focus and perseverance
  - Stability
  - Work is a privilege

- **Baby Boomers**
  - Committed to customer service
  - Dedicated
  - Good team members
  - Optimistic
  - Future-oriented
  - Wealth of experience and knowledge

- **Generation X**
  - Adaptive
  - Technologically literate
  - Independent
  - Creative
  - Expect to contribute
  - Will buck the system

- **Millennials**
  - Optimistic
  - Able to multi-task
  - Technologically savvy
  - Goal-oriented
  - Work effectively in teams and independently
  - Comfortable with diversity

**Motivations**

- **Veterans**
  - Results
  - Respect and acknowledgement
  - Rewards for perseverance and work ethic

- **Baby Boomers**
  - Getting involved
  - Being shown how they can make a difference
  - Having their opinion valued
  - Recognition

- **Generation X**
  - Flexible schedules
  - Independence
  - Limited rules
  - Formality

- **Millennials**
  - Tasks match personal goals
  - Learning
  - An approachable boss
  - Adequate time and flexibility
  - Making a difference

**Challenges**

- **Veterans**
  - Reluctant to buck the system
  - Hesitate to speak up when they disagree
  - Uncomfortable with conflict

- **Baby Boomers**
  - Uncomfortable with conflict
  - Can put process ahead of results

- **Generation X**
  - Skeptical
  - Distrust authority
  - Less attracted to leadership positions

- **Millennials**
  - Need supervision and structure
  - Inexperienced
  - Desire fun work atmosphere
  - Communication skills

**Summary of Generational Traits**

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**Working with Boomers**

- Mentor
- Traditional work ethic
- “That’s the way we’ve always done it”
- Common ground
  - Optimism
  - Relationship building
  - Hardworking
Generation Jones?

- Youngest Baby Boomers (1954-1965)
- Many senior executives
- Characteristics of Gen Xers and Boomers
  - Want to socialize but work alone
  - Workaholics
  - Quiet optimism

Working with Gen Xers

- Leave me alone so I can do what I do, how I want to do it
- Work-life balance
- Prefer direct communication

Talking ‘bout My Generation

- How well do you feel you fit into your generation’s characteristic traits?
  A. You have me pegged
  B. I can kind of see it
  C. I think I was born in the wrong year
  D. Wait, what am I again?

Everyone Agrees...

- Work is a vehicle for personal fulfillment and satisfaction, not just for a paycheck
- Workplace culture is important
- Trust is key for job satisfaction
- They need to feel valued by their employer
- They want flexibility in the workplace
- Success is finding a company they can stay with for a long time
- Career development is the most valued form of recognition

Benefits to a Multi-Generational Work Team

- More innovative
- Flexibility
- Attract and retain talented people of all ages
- Meet the needs of a diverse public
- Gain and keep greater market share
- Decisions are stronger because they are broad based

Caution: Generations at Work

- Millennials and Gen Xers
  - Sibling dynamic
  - Competition
- Desire for different leadership styles
  - Boomers respect hierarchy
  - Gen Xers can distrust authority
  - Millennials want to participate
Communication Strategies

- Assessment and continual improvement
- Be honest
- Don’t just recite facts: explain!
- Use emotion / storytelling
- 80 / 20 rule
- Active listening

Pharmacist Responsibilities

- Place the well-being of the patient at the center
- Maintain professional competence through lifelong learning and contemplation
- Serve not only their patients but also their profession
- Commit to improve health care institutions

Activity: Characteristics of a Professional

- Knowledge and skills of the profession
- Commitment to self-improvement of skills and knowledge
- Service orientation
- Pride in and service to the profession
- Covenantal relationship with the patient
- Creativity and innovation
- Conscience and trustworthiness
- Accountability for his or her work
- Ethically sound decision-making
- Leadership

Keep it Professional

- Profession: group of individuals pursuing an occupation or career
  - Individuals profess a common purpose
- Perception that changes in health care are eroding professional standards of HCPs
  - Managed care & cost containment
  - Demand for systems ensuring safety
  - Technology-driven changes

“Behavior is a mirror in which everyone displays his own image.” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Tips to Stay Professional

- Personal plan of professional development
  - Encourage colleagues to do the same and share the results
- CE as an opportunity vs obligation
- “Inconsistent socialization”
- Review policies
- Give constructive feedback when appropriate
What is feedback?

• An informed, non-evaluative, objective appraisal of performance
• Instructs student how to maintain or improve the performance
• Confused with encouragement, evaluation, constructive criticism, and self-reflection

Sharing Feedback

• How comfortable are you asking for feedback?
  A. All about it
  B. Depends on who I’m asking
  C. If I have to
• How often do you expect feedback (at school or work)?
  A. All feedback, all the time
  B. Once a day
  C. After I complete a task
  D. Only when I do something wrong

Asking for Feedback

• Who
  – Trusted people who observe you in action
  – Seek honest feedback
• When
• What
  – Targeted question
  – Discuss strengths, weaknesses, and goals
• How
  – Open ended questions

Receiving Feedback

• Know the expectations
• Listen thoroughly
• No excuses or blame
• Thank the person giving you feedback
• Be willing to do something about the feedback you receive

Quality Feedback

• Teacher and trainee have common goals
• Well timed and expected
• Regulated in quantity and based on behaviors that are remediable
• Based on specific performances not generalizations
• Deal with decisions and actions rather than assumed intentions or interpretations

In Summary...

• Generational differences influence communication and interpersonal dynamics
• Maintaining professionalism will help in forming intergenerational relationships
• Objective feedback can guide teachers and trainees towards meeting a common goal
What Questions Can We Answer for You?

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References
8. Medina MS. Providing feedback to assess pharmacy students’ performance. AMJ Health Syst Pharm 2007; 64; 2544-2545.
Post Test Questions:

1. Colleagues of different generations:
   a. Don’t require trust for job satisfaction
   b. Cannot work with other generations effectively
   c. Need to feel valued by their employer
   d. Think a paycheck is the most valued form of recognition

2. Which of the following is a benefit of a multi-generational work team?
   a. A rigid infrastructure
   b. Meets the needs of a diverse public
   c. Lose and decrease market share
   d. Changes are kept to a minimum

3. Which of the following will improve professionalism?
   a. Creating a personal plan for development
   b. “Borrowing” CE test answers from a coworker
   c. Blaming your mistakes on others
   d. Making decisions without thinking about the consequences

4. When receiving feedback, you should:
   a. Interrupt the person giving feedback to make excuses for your performance
   b. Take the feedback personally and let it affect your work
   c. Formulate your response in your mind during the feedback session
   d. Listen thoroughly and integrate the feedback into your work

5. Which of the following is most appropriate when asking for feedback?
   a. Ask your best friend at work who always says the nicest things
   b. Make sure ask to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and goals
   c. Ask yes or no questions so the answer will be clear
   d. Request feedback at a time most convenient for yourself