Generational Inspirations: Aging, Strength & Diversity

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Objectives

- Differentiate generational values and how these may impact how one cares for or communicates with older persons

- Identify strategies that decrease generational differences to enhance interactions with older persons
Gerontology

- Study of aging process and individuals as they grow from midlife through later life

  - The study of physical, mental and social changes
  - The investigation of the changes in society resulting from our aging population
  - The application of this knowledge to policies and programs
Geriatrics

- The study of **health** and **disease** in later life

- The **comprehensive health care** of older persons

- The **well-being** of their informal **caregivers**
So what *IS* a *Generation*, anyway??

- A group of people who can be:
  - Demographically identified by biological trends; and
  - Have shared experiences…
Only Kidding...
Generational Identity

- Events and Conditions we experience during our formative years defines what influences
  - *Who We Are*
  - *How We View the World*

**Point to Remember**

- The generation we grow up in is just one of the influences on adult behavior.
Four Generations At Work

- Lost Generation (born 1883-1900)
- G.I. Generation (born 1901-1924)
- Silent Generation (born 1925-1942)
- Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960)
- Generation X (born 1961-1981)
- Generation Y/Millenials (born 1982-2001)
- Futuristic Generation (born 2002 - )
Silent Generation

Born 1925 - 1942

Aka - Traditionalists
Silent Generation

- 50 million born as Silents
- “Generation without a cause“
- Desired job security
- Early marrying ages: Male avg 23/Female avg 20
- Started divorce epidemic
- Cold war generation
- Conformity encouraged: "children should be seen and not heard"
- Brought the US civil rights and unparalleled economic and artistic wealth
Silent Generation

- Marching orders: Do as you're asked. Show up on time. Never question authority.
  - Their mothers taught them well.
- Silents are panicking as they hit their 60’s and 70’s. They wonder, "Have we really lived?"
  - They didn't save the world like the previous generation. Their war was Korea. *Who's heard of that?*
- They didn't squeeze life for all its satisfactions the way Boomers have.
Silent Generation

Today, many Silents retire early (95% so far), choosing to divorce their former selves, finally following their bliss.

They have been waiting. Deferring what they really want to do, postponing the person they really want to be.

"It's as if we were working, getting along, conforming and doing that which was expected, and BAM! Like lightening, the realization hit us that we only go around once and it's time to start living it on our own terms."
Baby Boomers

Born 1943-1960
Boomer Generation

- 76 million Boomers
- “Boom” in birthrates after WWII
- Had stay-at-home mom’s
- TV became popular
- The 1960’s defined the Boomers
- Developed personalities that mixed high self-esteem with self indulgence
Boomer’s Sayings

- Groovy... Hot... Funky, Neat or Super Neat
- They were "beatniks, hooligans, no counts, hoods, whippersnappers, cry-babies, spoiled-rottens, The Kids Who Did Not Walk Three Miles To Schoolers."

- “Each generation looks older, slower and dopier to the next one, until that generation ages enough to realize they aren't the center of the universe, either. Gee.”
Generation X

Born 1961-1981

Aka – Thirteeners (13th Generation); Slackers
Gen X

- 60 million of them
- Described as tough to motivate, too expectant, lazy, skeptics, and loners
- Grew up with highest divorce rates ever, computers, and AIDS "latch-key kids"
- Roe v. Wade (1981) legalized abortion
- Dotcom jobs leaving many without job security
- Cold war ends/Challenger explodes
- Strong individualism
GENERATION X

- Drawn to opportunities that offer them opportunities to learn, enjoy, and be recognized
- Describe *themselves* as caring, committed and seeking opportunities for learning and leadership
- Value frequent feedback on their performance, recognition, increased responsibility and exposure to decision-makers
- Attracting and retaining them in the workplace will depend upon an organization’s ability to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to their needs.
Generation Y

Born 1982-2001

Aka – Millennium Generation; i.generation

Echo Boomers
Gen Y

- 57 million strong
- More racially diverse (1 out of 3 consider themselves non-Caucasian).
- 1 out of every 4 lives in a single-parent environment
- 3 in every 4 have working mothers.
- Largest consumer group in the history of the U.S.
- Most valued traits are individuality and uniqueness
- Have a global and diverse perspective that other generations did not have
GENERATION Y

- Can be cynical and driven by a need for instant gratification — spends $172 billion a year; saves $39 billion

- Their strengths are adaptability, innovativeness, efficiency, resiliency, tolerance and commitment
  - Challenge is motivating to them and can help in retaining them for a sustained period

- To engage this group, organizations need to tell the truth, explain the why, tune in to their frequency, make them a star, and look for rewarding opportunities
# Events and Experiences

## Silents:
- Great Depression
- New Deal 1933-38
- World War II
- Korean War

## Boomers:
- Civil Rights
- Sexual Revolution
- Cold War
- Space travel
- Assassinations

## Xers:
- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Watergate
- Women’s Liberation
- Desert Storm
- Energy Crisis

## Gen Y/Millenials:
- School shootings
- Oklahoma City
- Technology
- Child focused world
- Clinton / Lewinsky
Values

**Silents:**
- Hard work
- Dedication & sacrifice
- Respect for rules
- Duty before pleasure
- Honor

**Boomers:**
- Optimism
- Team orientation
- Personal gratification
- Involvement
- Personal growth

**Xers:**
- Diversity
- Techno literacy
- Fun and informality
- Self-reliance
- Pragmatism

**Millenials:**
- Optimistic
- Feel civic duty
- Confident
- Achievement oriented
- Respect for diversity
To sum it up...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each Generation Has Its Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silent Generation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriftiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Fast</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Center for Generational Studies
Generational Interaction: An Example

- Traditionalists and Boomers may have a tendency not to question or challenge authority or the status quo.

- This may cause confusion and resentment among the Xers and Millennials who have been taught to speak up.
Generational Interaction: An Example

Xers and Y’s who have had different life experiences and communicate with people differently, may fail to actively listen to Boomers and Silents thereby missing valuable information and guidance.
Generational Awareness...

Like the water the fish swim in...they don’t even know it’s there.
The KEY is to take time to get to know a person as an individual rather than applying stereotypes.
Generations-Back to Back
Back-to-Back Experience

- Pick a partner
- Set up so one person is facing the screen the other person is facing away from the screen
- The person facing away from the screen should have a piece of paper and pen/pencil
- A picture will be projected onto the screen, it will be a combination of geometric shapes (circles, squares, rectangles, triangles)
- **Part A** - the person with the paper can *only* ask yes and no questions and must try to recreate the image that is projected on the screen with the answers they receive from their partner - NO CONVERSATIONAL TALK
Communication

- 55% Body Language
- 38% Voice Tone
- 7% Words
Communication

Non-verbal communication

- Posture
- Appearance
- Body Movements
- Hair style
- Clothing
- Eye contact
- Standing position
- Facial expressions
- Type of touch
- "Air" of Confidence
- Body position while listening
- Breathing
- Voice tone
- Proximity to others

The face, eyes, body, clothing, gestures, and touch speak volumes to others about your beliefs, attitudes, and values. This is also true of communication from your patients. Listen, look and observe to determine what they are “saying.”
Student Living as an Elder: Nursing Home Resident Project

- College/Medical Students are admitted into NH to live the life of an elder resident
- Ethnographic Research
- Experience lasts a minimum of 2 weeks
Outcomes from NH Project

- Living as elder precipitated 4 frustrations:
  - Time Disorientation
  - Lack of Independence
  - Lack of Touch
  - Waiting for what felt like endless periods

- These frustrations created:
  - Depression
  - Decreased appetite
  - Loneliness
Discussion

Be sure to hug an older person or someone with gray hair...