Generational Differences in Medical Education

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Disclosures

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Acknowledgements

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(Baby Boomer)

Tracy Bumsted, MD, MPH
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education
(Generation X)
Objectives

- Describe generational differences and conflicting values
- Understand the impact of generational differences on education
- Create a generationally friendly educational environment
- Optimize collaboration amongst faculty and learners to improve education, mentoring, and teamwork
Using a generational lens can help you gain insight into others.
Insight is the beginning to finding solutions to our workplace conflicts.
What Defines a Generation?
“The development of a person occurs through exposure to the attitudes and habits of social groups to which they belong.”

Kurt Lewin

*Field Theory in Social Science*, 1951
The Factors that Define a Generation

- Common life experiences and events
- Popular culture
  - Fashion, music, art
- Parenting behavior
- Politics and the Economy
- Science and Technology
Defining a Generation

Shared life experiences create similar values
Why are Generational Differences an Issue?

• 4 generations are in the workforce
• People are working in teams
• Values are in conflict
Values

Definition:
Principles, standards, or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable by the person who holds them
Values: Not Easily Compromised

“…from my cold dead hands”
Values in Conflict

- Respect for authority
- Leadership
- Work ethic
- Life-Work balance
- Use of technology
- Professionalism
- Communication
- Use of social media
Older generations are frustrated

“I think I’ve acquired some wisdom over the years, but there doesn’t seem to be much demand for it.”

New Yorker, 2001
Younger generations are frustrated

“You don’t have to be defined by the job you do. I’m not working 365 days a year. I don’t need to do that to be a better doctor.”

Heard at the water cooler...

- They’re just a bunch of slackers.
- If you are looking for loyalty, buy a dog.
- A hiring bonus!? At his age I was just grateful I had a job.
- I have a life, I don’t attend meetings after 5.
- If I hear, ‘We tried that in ’87.’, one more time I’ll hurl.

...at Academic Health Centers...

• I see more cleavage on my students then I do in a night club.
• I am tired of people texting while I am teaching.
• By the way, I am leaving early Friday afternoon to attend a wedding.
• Too much reliance on technology, and not using their noggin’.
• Did you see that resident’s posting on Facebook?
...and in books.
“Today’s residents are brilliant and articulate. They have lives. They love [caring for patients], and they're high-quality individuals. But they have different values.”
The Generations:
An Overview of Generational Characteristics and Values
4 Generations in the Workplace

- Silents ~1922-1945
- Boomers ~1946-1960
- Generation X ~1961-1979
- Millennials ~1980-?????
Silents 1922-1945

- Live to work
- Respect for authority
- Hierarchical
- Like their experience acknowledged
Silent Generation Core Values

• Patriotism
• Loyalty, honor, respect
• Discipline
• Sacrifice & hard work
• Delayed rewards
• Adherence to rules
Boomers 1946-1960

- Hippies to Yuppies
  - Didn’t trust anyone over 30
- “Workaholics”
- Team players
- Uncomfortable with conflict
- Not budget oriented
Boomer Core Values

- Personal growth and power
- Health, wellness, longevity
- Being liked by others
- Optimism
- Their “Team”
- Reaching consensus
Generation X 1961-1979

- “Latchkey Kids”
- Work to live
- Pessimistic/skeptical
- Like informality
- Direct communication style
- Dislike bureaucracy
Generation X Core Values

• Life-work balance
• Self-reliance
• Pragmatism
• Developing new skills
• Having fun at work
• Respect that is earned
Millennials 1980-????

- Cheerful
- Crave feedback
- Committed to Advocacy
- “Technologically savvy”
- Environmentally conscious
- Parents are cool
Helicopter Parents of the “Boomerangs”

- Job interviews with parent in tow
- Parents involved in decision making
- Parents continue as advocates for their “child”

Is Your Residency Program Ready for Generation Y?
J of Surgical Education. 2010;67:108-111
Millennial Core Values

• Life-work balance
• Social Network
• Respect for their contributions
• Collaboration
• Environment
• Global community
Millennials & Advocacy

Choosing schools, residencies, and employment where they can continue to volunteer
Career Coach Stephen Rosen, PhD advises doctors who want to leave clinical medicine to start with a short break: “You can take a vacation for a week or two. If that doesn’t work and you feel the same way, that might be a clue. People who really love their work don’t seem to want to take vacations.”

Berry, E. American Medical News. Nov 21, 2011
...and the Gen X Perspective

Overworking is one of the most negative behaviors that companies promote. Hard work alone is not the recipe for success. You need to be able to see problems before they materialize and anticipate challenges that are on the horizon. To do all of this, you need to have clarity of thought and perspective, which only comes with being well rested...Do yourself and your company a favor and plan a vacation.

Generational Values are creating conflict

“As seen on TV…”
Getting from Here to There

- Values are unlikely to change
- Respecting values is part of professionalism
- Understanding how we “tick” can help us find solutions to our conflicts
- This will assist us in accomplishing our objectives
Common Ground: Values We Can All Agree On

• **Fairness**: We all want to be informed and respected

• **Learning**: Everyone enjoys learning new skills

• **Community**: We all desire a sense of purpose and the chance to contribute to something bigger than ourselves

Heffernan (2009) Managing Generational Differences in the Workplace
“Joe, the real problem is someone needs to write a book about how to work with your Boomer boss.”

Tammy Wagner, MD
Generation X
Pediatric Hospitalist, OHSU

IT’S OKAY TO MANAGE YOUR BOSS
THE STEP-BY-STEP PROGRAM FOR MAKING THE BEST OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP AT WORK
BRUCE TULGAN
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF IT’S OKAY TO BE THE BOSS & MANAGING GENERATION X
How They Work: Silents

• Won’t ever “retire”…their work is their life
• Hang around…even in retirement
• Make decisions…without input from others
• Pay your dues (loyalty) and follow the rules…eventually you’ll be rewarded
• Resistant to change
• Distrust new technology
• Great resource (experience)
How They Work: Boomers

- Consensus builders…nothing gets changed
- Seek power…and need money
- Workaholics…but now looking for balance
- Want to be liked as a leader
- Challenged with giving feedback
- Hide from conflict
- Think of the team as “their team”
How They Work: Gen X

- Work to live
- Work is a social environment (fun)
- Little appreciation of history
- Prefer small teams
- Work fast, efficient, on a flexible schedule
- They stay in a job to build their skills
- Technology is their ally
How They Work: Millennials

• Want a flexible schedule
• Want you to be the leader
• Team-oriented and collaborative
• Personal responsibility (independence) is a challenge
• Multitaskers (unfocused?)
• Want to be respected (entitlement?)
How They Work: Millennials

Challenged by face-to-face communication?
What Xers and Millennials have experienced in education

- Use of education technology
- Interactive teaching methods
- Learning in small groups
- Self-directed learning
- Learning portfolios
...and then they reach the academic health center

- Mandatory class attendance
- Graded on participation in small groups
- May have their first experience with "failure"
- Competition for post graduate positions
...and then their clinical experiences

- A different learning paradigm
- Inflexible schedules
- Limited feedback
- Confusion about when teaching/learning is occurring
- Hierarchical teams
- Marginalization of their role
- Sink or swim environment
“If you take a sink or swim approach with Gen Y they are likely to sink; or go to the shallow end and play; or swim off in their own direction; or get out of the pool.”
Solutions

- Resident orientation
- Feedback
- Professionalism
- Mentoring
- Working in Teams
Practice in “Loco Parentis Management”

- Substitute for over parenting by being a strong leader
- Provide boundaries and structure
- Teach professionalism: communication, use of technology, dress, personal scheduling
- Mentoring is essential
- Hold them (and yourself) accountable
- Give frequent feedback
Create a Learning Environment

- Orientation is critical
- Review team objectives and review skills to be achieved
- Make it relevant
- Define expected behaviors
- Maintain accountability through feedback and evaluation
The Generational History of Feedback

- **Silents**
  - “No news is good news.”

- ** Boomers**
  - “If you weren’t getting yelled at, you felt like that was praise.”

- **Xers**
  - “Tell me what I did right and what I did wrong.”

- **Millennials**
  - “I expect consistent, frequent feedback.”
A View from the Receiver

“You get almost no positive feedback, ever, but you always hear about it when you screw up.”

Physician in first-year internship

Managing Generation X, Tulgan, 2000
“When residents make mistakes, sometimes they get yelled at. Some residents complain about this…and to this I say: Suck it up.”

Nicholas Fogelson, OB-GYN (Generation X)
Baby Boomers and Feedback

• Want to be liked
• Avoid conflict
• We’re groovy…baby!

Created:
  – “Feedback Sandwich”
  – “Feedback Fridays”
Generation X and Feedback

• They need to build their skills and assets
• Feedback helps them improve
• Don’t “sugar-coat” their feedback
• Just tell me what I did right and what I did wrong
Residents “get” the Milestones?

Where I am and where I need to be.

Millennials and Feedback

- The Trophy Kids Grow Up by Ron Alsop
- Not Everyone Gets a Trophy by Bruce Tulgan
Give Feedback

• Stop thinking about it as a sandwich given only on Fridays
• It should be integrated into each encounter
• Incorporate it into conversations between teachers and learners
If they can give feedback on Dancing with the Stars...
The Value of Life-Work Balance:

Is this an erosion of professionalism?
Is professionalism defined by self-sacrifice and hours worked (as a proxy for dedication to your patients) or is it establishing life-work balance to prevent the burnout that degrades professionalism?
“The challenge that healthcare providers face, regardless of generation, is to flexibly and respectfully redefine professionalism. Established providers need to stop defining professionalism as being ‘just like ourselves’…”

One of the qualities of being a good mentor is appreciating individual differences

It’s not about “value judgment”, it’s about respecting values.
Consider the mentee’s **values** as strengths, and build on these strengths to adjust and achieve their career goals.
Interprofessional Teams

• Team members work together and communicate freely
• Patient (goal) focused rather than organized around a single physician
• Each member contributes their knowledge and skills to augment and support the goals of the team
“Generationally Friendly” Teams

- Mutual entrustment of team members
- Expectations are clear
- Members are kept accountable (monitoring)
- “Active” learning occurs
- Learner focused teaching
- Micromanagement is avoided
- Flexibility is valued (change)
“PCMdoctor”

Trigger tapes for discussion
- Teams
- Resident orientation
- Life-work balance
- Dress
- Feedback
- Communication
- Change
- Technology
- Learner education
- Mentoring

https://www.youtube.com/user/PCMdoctor
Understanding Generational Differences

1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits ™

Being aware of and responsive to diversity in the workplace is a prerequisite to creating a productive educational and work environment. One aspect of this diversity is the presence of four distinct generations (Silent’s or Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials) that comprise today’s workforce. This module will review generational characteristics and values, and present practical solutions that address generational preferences, along with a framework for addressing the issues surrounding generational differences.

Author

Jennifer Gilhooly, CPNP

Jennifer Gilhooly is a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (CPNP) who recently retired from the Division of Adolescent Health, Department of Pediatrics, at the Oregon Health & Science University to focus on writing and speaking on the topic of Generational Differences. She has been involved with education through the OHSU School of Nursing since 1981 and the School of Medicine since 1994. From 1998 through July 2010 Jenny co-directed the education of Pediatric and Internal Medicine Residents at Outside In, a community clinic which serves homeless youth. Additionally, Jenny directed an advocacy and community health experience for first-year pediatric residents for 15 years and co-directed the Adolescent Health block rotation from 1996 to 2010. Jenny was also involved with medical student education, precepting 4th year students at Outside In and served as the co-faculty advisor for Club Peds, a pediatric interest group for medical students. She has received multiple awards for her teaching, including OHSU Department of Medicine Career Teaching Achievement Award. Jenny received the 2010 Community Volunteer award from Self Enhancement Inc., an agency which serves African American youth. She shares with her husband, Joseph Gilhooly, MD, an interest in generational differences and their impact on the academic and clinical medical practice environment.

Joseph Gilhooly, M.D., FAAP

https://fd4me.osu.edu/modules/45
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