Understanding Generational Differences to Improve the Medical Teaching Environment

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April 2, 2014
Disclosures

In the past 12 months, I have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturer of any commercial product or provider of commercial services discussed in this CME activity. I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in my presentation.
Acknowledgements

Jennifer A. Gilhooly, RN, MS, PNP
(Baby Boomer)

Tracy Bumsted, MD, MPH
(Generation X)

Bob Mendelson, MD
(Silent Generation)
Objectives

• Describe generational differences and conflicting values
• Understand the impact of generational differences on education
• Create a generationally friendly hospital and educational environment
• Optimize collaboration amongst faculty and learners to improve education, mentoring, and teamwork
“The development of a person does not happen in isolation; it 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
• Generalizations, not stereotypes
• We are not ignoring individuality
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 in Conflict

• Respect for authority
• Leadership
• Diversity
• Work ethic
• Life-Work balance
• Use of technology
• Professionalism, i.e. dress
• Communication and relationships
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. Being a parent is good; being able to balance is good. 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.
- 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’.
...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.”

Claire Raines, *Connecting Generations*, 2003
4 Generations in the Workplace

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

- Live to Work
- Patriotism
- Loyalty
- Respect for authority
- Sacrifice & hard work
- Delayed rewards
- Adherence to rules
Boomer Core Values
1946-1960

- Personal growth and power
- Personal health and wellness
- Being liked by others
- Optimism
- Their “Team”
- Reaching consensus
- Possessions (money)
- Office with the window
Generation X Core Values
1961-1979

• Work to Live (Life-work balance)
• Self-reliance: “Latchkey Kids”
• Pragmatism
• Personal skills
• Having fun at work
• Diversity
• Respect that is earned
• Informality
Burnout…
A Silent’s Perspective

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.

Millennial Core Values
1980-????

• Life-work balance
• Social Network
• Collaboration
• Achievement
• Respect for their contributions
• Environment
• Global community
Helicopter Parents of the “Boomerangs”

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

Alsop, R. Trophy Kids Grow Up 2008
Millennials & Advocacy

Choosing schools, residencies, and employment where they can continue to volunteer
“Developing generational appropriate techniques can help you identify with another person’s values and present information in a manner that will encourage the other person to be receptive. A generationally sensitive approach will promote communication that will benefit the…educator.”
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
How They Work: Silents

• They are in charge…from off campus and in meetings
• Make decisions with little input from others
• Won’t retire…their work is their life
• Pay your dues, follow the rules, and you’ll be rewarded for your loyalty
• Resistant to change…but have the power to create change
• Distrust new technology
• Great resource…they have experience
How They Work: Boomers

• Consensus builders…to the point where nothing gets changed
• Seek the power to make change
• Workaholics…but now looking for balance…but can’t afford to cut their hours
• Want to be liked as a leader
• Challenged with giving and receiving feedback
• Hide from conflict
• Think of the team as “their team”
How They Work: Gen X

- Work is a social environment
- Little appreciation of history
- Work best on small teams with leadership based on skill set...not seniority
- Work fast, efficient, on a flexible schedule
- Stay in a job to build their skills and assets...then move on
- Don’t like to “jump through hoops”
- Technology is their ally
How They Work: Millennials

• Want a flexible schedule
• Want you to be the leader (parents are cool)
• Team-oriented and collaborative…little personal responsibility or independent decision making
• Minimal experience with failure
• Multi-taskers…and sometimes unfocused
• Want to be respected…to the point of entitlement
• “Plug & Play Generation”
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.”
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*
A View From the Giver

“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 (fits with their direct communication style)
Residents “get” the Milestones?

Where I am and where I need to be.

Millennials and Feedback: Are they looking for praise or feedback?
The Value of Formative Feedback

• Help the learner gain insight
• Direct learning
• Improve their skills
• Reinforce specific behaviors
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
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 about considering the mentee’s values as strengths, and building on these strengths to adjust and achieve their career goals.
It’s not about "value judgment", it’s about respecting values
Common Program Requirements and Teams
ACGME July 1, 2011

• Teamwork
  – Residents must care for patients in an environment that maximizes effective communication. This must include the opportunity to work as a member of effective interprofessional teams that are appropriate to the delivery of care in the specialty.
Interprofessional?

• Interprofessional Teams
  – Team members work together and communicate freely
  – Oriented toward solving a set of problems rather than organized around a single physician
  – Each member contributes their knowledge and skills to augment and support the goals of the team
What Makes an Effective Interprofessional Team?

• Effective communication
• Adjusts and responds to change
• There is a common purpose
• Mutual accountability
• Performance Monitoring
“Generationally Friendly” Teams

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

- Teams
- Resident orientation
- Life-work balance
- Dress
- Feedback
- Communication
- Change
- Technology
- Learner education
- Mentoring

*Trigger Tapes to generate discussion*
Understanding Generational Differences

1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits TM

Being aware of and responsive to diversity in the workplace is a pre-requisite to creating a productive education 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

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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

http://facultydevelopment4me.osu.edu/modules/45
Top 10 List for Educators

1. Be a role model and mentor
2. Respect your team members and their values
3. Show you care about the learner & learning
4. Set expectations and keep them accountable
5. Entrust your learners, don’t marginalize or micromanage
6. Observe them in action
7. Teach: Share your knowledge & experience
8. Be practical and relevant, embrace technology
9. Give feedback
10. Be flexible and make learning fun