GENERATIONAL NURSES
Veterans, Boomers, Gen X & Y
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OBJECTIVES
• Describe characteristics of the four generations
• Identify differing viewpoints of the four generations
• Develop strategies for collaboration and practice built upon each generation’s strength

“Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.”
George Orwell

THE POWER OF FOUR
• First time in American history we have four different generations working side-by-side in the workplace

• Generational Stereotyping

CHALLENGE
• In today’s world, how do we build successful “Gen-Mix” teams to do the work that health care must do for positive patient outcomes and develop new health care leaders?

• Past practice—generations aligned based on seniority and years of experience-oldest to youngest

WORKPLACE CHANGES
• More demanding on employees
• Employer-employee relations less hierarchical, more transactional
• Employees moving away from long-term employment relationship
• Employees less confidence in long-term rewards and expect short-term rewards
• Most important person—immediate manager
• Managing teams require more time and skill
• What does it take to create successful Gen Mix teams?
  – Understanding of intrinsic differences
  – Focus on the work
  – Coaching and motivating
  – Communication
  – Customize

VALUES
• All generations have similar values, they just express them differently
• Top ten
  – Family - 72%
  – Integrity - 65%
  – Achievement - 48%
  – Love - 48%
  – Competence - 47%
  – Happiness - 48%
  – Self-respect - 43%
  – Wisdom - 45%
  – Balance - 39%
  – Responsibility - 38%

  Research Center of Creative Leadership 2007

REWARDS
• Five most sought after non-financial incentives
  – Training in marketable skills
  – Control over schedules
  – Control over assignments
  – Control over location
  – Choice of coworkers

  Martin & Tulgan 2006

VETERANS LOYAL OR SILENT GENERATION
• Born before 1945
• About 10% of the workforce
• Born 1944 = 66 years

VETERANS
• Strengths
  – Loyal
  – Stable
  – Detail-oriented
  – Hard working

MOTIVATING VETERANS
• “Personal touch” communication
• Ask permission to coach and coach tactfully
• Learn their background
• Ask about concerns in nonthreatening way
• Use as mentors
VETERANS BLOCKERS TO SUCCESS

- Failure to train to the new technologies and then SUPPORT
- Don’t like change
- Failure to define organizational structure
- Failure to learn about their experiences

BABY BOOMERS
THE LOVE GENERATION

- Born between 1946 – 1964
- About 45% of the workforce
- Born 1946 = 64 years
- Born 1964 = 46 years

BOOMERS

- Strengths
  - Driven to success
  - Politically correct
  - Team players
  - Desire to please

MOTIVATING BOOMERS

- Public recognition
- Promote opportunities for change
- Name recognition
- Building consensus
- Invite into participative management

BOOMERS BLOCKERS TO SUCCESS

- Failure to promote change
- Failure to demonstrate promotional pathways
- Failure to recognized achievements
- Failure to provide management training

Older Worker
VETERANS & BOOMERS

- Engaged, less likely to leave
- Increased knowledge & experience offsets any cognitive decline (starts at age 40)
- ’07 Hatcher study older nurse ambulatory settings or home care
- Older nurse wants helpful & friendly staff
- Retire when health/wealth equation permits
**GENERATION X**
**THE LOST GENERATION**
- Born between 1965 and 1980
- About 30% of the workforce
- Baby Boomers’ children
- Born 1965 = 45 years
- Born 1980 = 30 years
- Entered workforce hospital restructuring & large scale layoffs

**GEN X**
- Strengths
  - Adaptable
  - Techno-savvy
  - Independent
  - Creative

**WHAT MOTIVATES GEN X**
- Manager who earns-not demands-their respect
- Freedom to challenge authority
- Being part of a motivated and committed team of people
- Opportunities for advancement based upon work performance
- Personal satisfaction with the job
- Plenty of opportunities to learn new things

**HOW TO MOTIVATE GEN X**
- Work incentive competition can’t offer
- Know what incentives they value
- Provide interesting training opportunities
- Have stamina and energy
- Don’t give the impression that you are out of step

**Gen X Blockers**
- Failure to answer the “why” whenever possible
- Unnecessary rigidity during informal communications
- Failure to help then develop more experience
- Failure to develop people skills
  - Techno-savvy

**GENERATION Y**
**MILLENNIALS, NET, LINKED GENERATION**
- Born between 1980 and 2006
- About 15% of the workforce
- Born 1980 = 30 years
GEN Y

• Strengths
  – Optimism
  – Confidence
  – Ambitious
  – Highly technoliterate

WHAT MOTIVATES GEN Y

• Individualized praise and recognition
• More responsibility as a reward
• Flexible schedule
• Meaningful work
• Being treated as adults
• Respect from supervisors and peers
• Constructive criticism

GEN Y BLOCKERS

• Lack of mentoring
• Failure to plan for more orientation
• Failure to provide education in how to handle difficult people issues
  – Highly technoliterate

HOW TO MOTIVATE GEN Y

• Get to know them
• Define expectations
• Mentor
• Get them working in teams
• Capitalized on their zest for learning
• Communicate at every opportunity
• Satisfy their need for change, more responsibility
• Don’t disregard their opinions

AGING POPULATION
Between 2008 and 2018

• Age group 65-74 will grow by 44%
• Age group 55-64 will grow by 40%
• Age group 45-54 will decrease by 8%
• Age group 35-44 will decrease by 4%
• 2025 SHORTFALL OF 260,000 NURSES

NATURE OF THE WORK HAS SHIFTED

• Then
  – Traditional, bureaucratic structures, interactions between people from different generations followed the hierarchical lines
  – Most senior members offered more reliable info and knowledge and were respected for “wisdom”
  – Age was “at the top” in leadership positions
INDUSTRIAL AGE –INFORMATION AGE

• Now
  – Advent of total quality management and continuous quality improvement—more team-based approach
  – Shared leadership & governance facilitated decision making among various generations
  – Heightened interaction from 4 different generations
  – Computerization has broken the dependence of younger generations on more senior for info
  – Unheard of precedence of having the youngest be the most expert at a critical skill

THE CLASH!

• Differing generational expectations & experiences, yet members of each generation still operate as if their values & expectations are universal
• Unquestioned assumptions often result in misinterpretations between generations
• Misinterpretations leads to miscommunication, gossip, incivility, and a hostile work environment
• Workplace conflict one of the leading causes of nursing dissatisfaction

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place”

George Bernard Shaw

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

• Two major sources of conflict
  – Perceived differences in work ethics
  – Use of technology
• Unresolved conflict
  – Loss of productive time
  – Errors
  – Staff turnover
  – Decreased patient satisfaction

COMMUNICATION STYLES

• Different work and communications styles create tension in a workplace culture
• Gen X and Y nurses prefer technology (i.e. texting)
• The Boomer and the Veteran prefer face to face interaction, communication by paper

YOURSELF

• Be aware of who YOU are and what work ethics you employ for yourself
• Understand that what you ‘gravitate to’ (your first inclination) is likely a reflection of YOUR generational work ethic
• Find a balance—most generations appreciate some humor and social connection in the workplace acceptable
GEN X OR Y IN CHARGE

• Ask for their advice
• Involve them in decision-making

WHAT IS YOUR GENERATIONAL IQ?

V B X Y

1. Has the largest population
2. Strong sense of duty and work ethic
3.Latchkey child
4. Spoiled, protected and chauffeured
5. Sandwich generation
6. Entrenched in technology
7. Dad worked, Mom stayed home
8. Immediate gratification is important

GENERATIONAL “CATCH WORDS”

V B X Y

1. Diss
2. Hi-fi
3. Flower child
4. Daddy-O
5. Keep on truckin’
6. Chillin’
7. Homey
8. Lay it on me
9. Right on

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