

Background

According to American Association of Colleges of Nursing 2017, the population of the United States is rapidly becoming more diverse, health needs are more complex, and significant health professions workforce shortages exist now and will become more acute into the next decade. Given these trends, diversity and inclusion are mission critical for nursing organizations as well as healthcare and higher education institutions. In recognizing diversity, while culture makes a significant impact, studies have also found generational differences influencing the healthcare teams and patient outcomes. There are four generations working within a given team (Millennials, Generation Y Baby Boomers, Veterans). As nurse leaders, we are challenged to find the similarities within the generations and bridge the gap. Their values, experience and approach to meeting healthcare needs varies significantly. Using the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Guiding Principles, collaboration between Academia and Practice setting can be essential in preparing next generation healthcare members and experienced professionals to optimize their generational differences.

Objectives

- To identify difference among generational cohorts.
- To understand generational differences to optimize healthcare delivery.
- To educate academic and healthcare nursing leaders on significant factors concerning communication, professionalism/engagement, and nursing code of ethics in the workplace.

Nursing Code of Ethics

While we recognize the difference between the generational cohorts, the one significant commonality that we all hold as nurses, is The Nursing Code of Ethics. There are many excerpts in the Nursing Code of Ethics, we believe the following two excerpts to encompass the foundation of the nursing profession.

- The nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and the recognition of human dignity and worth that is present in every individual.
- Relationships with colleagues and others. The principle of respect extends to all those with whom the nurse interacts.



Generational Cohorts

The Veteran Generation

- Consists of persons born in 1945 or earlier and is also known as Silent's, Traditionalists, Matures or Pre-Boomers (Deyoe & Fox, 2012). Members of this generational group are over 70 years old.

The Baby Boomers

- Comprise all individuals born between 1946 and 1964: The massive baby boomer generation, making up almost one-third of the population, began to turn age 65 in 2011. As they continue to get older, both supply and demand of nurses will be affected in a big way.

Generation X

- Were born between 1965-1975 or 1964-1984: This group is associated with a shift in culture and values becoming more focused on adults than children. They are often recognized as "latch key" kids and often compelled to become more independent than generations before them.

Generation Y/Millennial

- Comprises a group of individuals who share the birth range from 1984 to 2002 or 1981 to 1999 depending upon the source: This generation comprises about 80 million people and constitutes the largest generational cohort in the United.

Generational Styles				
	Veterans	Baby Boomers	Generation x	Generation Y
Communication	Face to Face Written	Face to face	Technology (email, text) Face to Face	Social Media Technology Unskilled in face to face outspoken
Nursing Professionalism	Committed Loyal	Reliable Goal Oriented	Work life balance Work to live Career advancement	Perceived as rude Easily frustrated when not valued Confident
Code of Ethics	Hard working	Work ethic driven by self worth	Appreciate being involved Relational	May appear unprofessional to others
Engagement	Valued for their wisdom	Be Empowered by leader Support their values	Direct and straight forward Change agents	Flexibility

Observations from Nurse Interviews

Generations	Themes within interviews
Veterans	No veteran member of the workforce identified to interview.
Baby Boomers	"I prefer face to face.....allows to see nonverbal." "I am Fully Committed to completion of the problem." "I Prefer to work collaboratively with other"
Generation X	"Nurses eat their young." "I can use different types of communications between generations since I am often in the middle of the team."
Generation Y	"I prefer texting and emails because it's faster." "It is challenging when other generations are not up on technology."

Recommendations

- Provide all generations with a clear organizational vision.
- Provide increased performance feedback to Generation Y employees.
- Use cross-generational team problem solving for all generations that promotes shared work values.
- Use social media and mobile devices to communicate with Generation X & Y.
- Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Veterans are more effective with projects requiring face-to-face tasks.
- Provide mentoring, including reverse mentoring, to all generations.
- Implement a knowledge-management (retention) system for all generations including the current Baby Boomer retirees.
- Utilized Generation X to bridge communication between the Baby Boomers and Generation Y.
- Accept generational differences and leverage the use of technology, communication, mentoring and motivation to bridge the gaps.

Next Step

- Complete video documentary.
- Develop education module for use in academia and healthcare.
- Additional research to evaluate the impact of generational differences on the workforce, healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

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