Bridging Inter-Generational Gaps to Increase Collaboration and Retention: Implications for Nurse Leaders

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PURPOSE

This literature review was conducted as background for a research study about the multigenerational workplace. This multi-methods research will explore the attitudes and workplace values of Registered Nurses related to retention factors and perceptions about working with other generations.

This poster presents a synthesis of the academic and popular literature on multi and intergenerational attitudes toward work, and perceptions about intergenerational collaboration at work.

BACKGROUND

Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964)

Generation X (born 1965 – 1980)

Millennials (born 1981 – 2000)

Multiple generations bring a varied and rich skill set to the nursing workplace. Unfortunately, the presence of multiple generations can also present challenges. Varying attitudes and expectations about work and diverging communication patterns can often lead to resentment, decreased communication, and lack of teamwork, negatively impacting the nursing work environment. Today, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials comprise the vast majority of the nursing workforce, with Generation Z soon to join.

METHODS
Literature Review

A review of the current and extant academic and popular literature was conducted. Academic databases searched include: Academic Search Premier, Books at OVID CINAHL, Medline, PSYCInfo, and PsycArticles. A Google search was conducted to review popular publications including blogs, websites, and non-scholarly/trade publications.

Search terms included: generation*, Baby Boomer*, Generation X, Millennial*, nurs*, workplace, values, preference*, difference*, attitudes, and intergenerational in various combinations. After review, a total of 57 sources were retained for inclusion in this literature review.

RESULTS
Theories

Mannheim: The Problem of Generations (1923). Social stratifications in characteristics. Age/Biological placement stratifications. Multifactorial perspective of generational differences and similarities.

Strauss and Howe: Generations (1991). Cycles of four generational prototypes. Reciprocal and cyclical relationship between generations and major social events.

Generational Characteristics

Baby Boomers

Formal, focus on work, respect for hierarchy, loyalty to employer, paying one's dues, teamwork, meaningful work.

Generation Xers

Less-formal, technologically savvy, innovative, results-driven, independent, willing to change jobs, work-life balance meaningful work.

Millennials

Informal, advancement opportunity, technologically sophisticated, teamwork, willing to change jobs, regular feedback, work-life balance, meaningful work,

CONCLUSIONS and IMPLICATIONS

Overlap in workplace values are points of action for nurse leaders:
Respectful environment
Work-life balance
Meaningful Work

Bridging the Generational Gap: Facilitating Communication and Teamwork

Mentoring: Knowledge is transferred from experienced nurses to novices
Ensure that mentors are supportive and promote respect, growth, and development

Reverse Mentoring: Novice nurses can share knowledge and techniques from more contemporary education, ease with technology. Promotes contribution and meaning in work.

Address and resolve issues that undermine respectful work environment.

Respect and facilitate employees' work-life balance efforts.

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