

*Teap.*

Everyone deserves a little couch-time.



Monthly Wellness Seminar

**Generations in the Workplace**  
**Bridging the Generational Divide**

Presented by  
Rosalinda Rodriguez LPC – Associate

Supervised by Dr. Neely, Ph.D., LPC-S

# ABOUT THE PRESENTER

**Rosalinda Rodriguez, LCPA-A**

Supervised By: Dr. Kirleen Neely, Ph.D., LPC-S



- **Six years working in the Mental & Emotional Health field.**
- **Experienced in treating Anxiety, Depression, Mood Disorders, Life Changes, and more.**
- **Studied abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico**

# Why This Matters

- Five generations. One workplace.
- Generational differences can cause workplace conflict, stress, and miscommunication.
- Growing need to:
  - Recognize what shapes generational behavior
  - Spot friction points before they escalate
  - Communicate across styles with confidence
  - Turn difference into a team strength

"We need to remember across generations that there is as much to learn as there is to teach." ~ Gloria Steinem



# Why We Are Here

- Overview of Generations
- Where Stress Comes From
- Communication Tools
- Friction Points
- Case Study
- Key Takeaways





# Meet the Five Generations

- **Traditionalists (1928 – 1945) – Age 81 – 98**
  - *Retired*
- **Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964) – Age 62 – 80**
  - *Nearing Retirement/Retired*
- **Generation X (1965 – 1980) – Age 46 – 61**
  - *Mid-Career/Nearing Retirement*
- **Millennials (1981 – 1996) – 30 – 45**
  - *Largest Share*
- **Gen Z (1997 – 2012) – 14 – 29**
  - *Entering Workforce*

# What Shaped Each Generation

| Generations     | Defining Events                              | Core Workplace Traits                     |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Traditionalists | Great Depression, WWII                       | Loyal, disciplined, respect hierarchy     |
| Boomers         | Civil rights, Vietnam, Moon Landing          | Optimistic, competitive, work-centric     |
| Gen X           | Latchkey Kids, End of Cold War, Dot-com      | Independent, skeptical, self-reliant      |
| Millennials     | 9/11, 2008 recession, Rise of social media   | Collaborative, purpose-driven, tech-savvy |
| Gen Z           | Always-on internet, COVID-19, Climate crisis | Pragmatic, diverse, digital-native        |

# Motivators and Expectations

## TRADITIONALISTS

1. Respect
2. Recognition
3. Providing long-term value to the company

## GEN XERS

1. Autonomy-focused management
2. Performance-based rewards
3. Professional development programs
4. Financial wellness support



## GEN Z

1. Performance bonuses
2. Transparent growth opportunities
3. Mental health and wellness initiatives
4. Diverse and inclusive work environment

## BOOMERS

1. Career milestone recognition
2. Phased retirement programs
3. Comprehensive wellness programs
4. Mentorship opportunities

## MILLENNIALS

1. Instant recognition and rewards
2. Flexible working options
3. Tuition reimbursement
4. Corporate social responsibility programs

# Poll #1

Which generation do you identify with?

1. Traditionalist

2. Boomer

3. Gen X

4. Millennial

5. Gen Z

6. Mix



# How Each Generation Prefers to Communicate

## Communication Catalogue



### PHONE CALL | VIDEO CALL

ENJOYED BY: SILENT GEN

**Traditionalist:**  
Avoids messaging, so communication should be formal, direct, and focused on personal contact.



### EMAIL | BLAST

ENJOYED BY: BOOMERS & GEN X

**Boomers:**  
Tend to avoid texting and chat tools, so a detailed, structured, and professional approach works best.



### MESSAGING | CHAT | DM

ENJOYED BY: MILLENNIALS & GEN Z

**Gen X:**  
Often avoids over-communication, so keep interactions efficient, independent, and results-focused.

**Millennials:**  
Avoids long meetings, so use a friendly tone with frequent, shorter check-ins.



### IN PERSON | FACE-TO-FACE

ENJOYED BY: SILENT GEN & BOOMERS

**Gen Z:**  
Typically avoids long emails, so communication should be concise, visual, and authentic.

# Four Major Friction Points

*Generational conflict comes from different lived experiences.*

## Work-Life Balance

Boomers built careers around long hours. Gen Z expects flexibility and firm boundaries. What one calls 'commitment,' another calls 'burnout.'



## Technology Gaps

Gen X and Boomers prefer established tools; Millennials and Gen Z reach for apps first. Different digital comfort levels create friction and exclusion.

## Authority & Hierarchy

Older generations often respect seniority and chain-of-command. Younger workers question hierarchy and expect flat, merit-based structures.

## Feedback Styles

Boomers value annual reviews; Millennials and Gen Z want continuous, real-time feedback. Silence from a manager reads very differently across generations.

# The Assumption Trap

What you might think...

...what they're actually experiencing.

*"Why don't they just pick up the phone?"*

*"Calling without scheduling is intrusive and disrespectful of my time."*

*"They need constant hand-holding and praise."*

*"I'm not getting any signal on whether my work is on track."*

*"They have no loyalty, job-hopping every year or so."*

*"I need growth. If this role isn't investing in me, I need to find one that will."*

*"They're stuck in their ways and won't adapt."*

*"That tool solved this problem reliably for 10 years. Why change?"*

*We tend to judge others through our own generational lens and assume our defaults are universal.*

# Poll #2

Which communication style do you prefer?

1. Email

2. Text/Chat

3. Face-to-Face

4. Video Call



# Psychoeducation

## Stress

- Miscommunication triggers our stress response.
- Fuels defensive reactions
  - Anxiety
  - Frustration
  - Fight/flight/freeze
- The brain's response
  - Perceived danger (anger from miscommunication)
  - Triggers our amygdala (fear center)
  - Activates hypothalamus to trigger our fight/flight/freeze response
  - Releases stress hormone (cortisol) that increases your heart rate, sharpens focus, tenses your muscles, etc.



## So, what do we do?

- Grounding, mindfulness, educate



# Practical Communication Tools

## 1. The Communication Handshake

At the start of a project, explicitly agree on preferred channels, response times, and meeting frequency. Don't assume—ask.

## 3. Flex, Don't Force

Meet people where they are. A Boomer may need a phone call; a Gen Z employee may do better with async video. Adapting is a leadership skill.

## 2. Channel Matching

Match the medium to the message. Urgent? Call. Detailed feedback? Email. Quick question? Chat. Teach this framework to your team.

## 4. Bridge Builders

Identify multilingual communicators on your team — people who can translate styles. Empower them to bridge gaps intentionally.



# Poll #3

Which communication tool would most help you moving forward?

- 1.The Communication Handshake
- 2.Channel Matching
- 3.Flex
- 4.Bridge Builders
- 5.Other (Enter in the chat)



# Case Study: Meet The Team

SAME DEPARTMENT. SAME GOAL. COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORKING.

*BOOMER · Age 58*

*MILLENNIAL · Age 32*



**Linda Morris**  
*Senior Account Manager*



*Prefers: Weekly 1:1s, detailed email updates*  
*Style: Formal, thorough, relationship-first*

**Jake Patel**  
*Account Manager*



*Prefers: Teams messages, quick async updates*  
*Style: Casual, fast-moving, task-focused*

# Case Study: What Happened

Linda and Jake are co-managing a key client account. Linda sends long, detailed emails every Monday morning summarizing the week's plan. Jake rarely responds; he updates the shared Slack channel instead. After a month, Linda goes to their manager and says Jake is "unresponsive and unprofessional." Jake is blindsided, he had no idea there was a problem.

## LINDA'S VIEW

"I send a full update every week and he never acknowledges it. He just posts cryptic Slack messages with no context. I don't know if he's even read my emails. It feels disrespectful."

## JAKE'S VIEW

"I keep Slack updated in real time and everyone on the team can see exactly what's happening. Writing a formal email reply to every update feels like busywork. I had no idea she expected that."

**Discussion: Who is right? What should their manager do?**



# What's Really Going On — and How to Fix It

**Root cause:** *Neither person is wrong — they're just operating on different unspoken assumptions about what "good communication" looks like.*

## 1. Name it, don't blame it

The manager should frame this as a style difference, not a performance issue. "Linda, Jake isn't ignoring you — he's communicating in a different channel."

## 2. Set a shared agreement

Ask both of them: "What does staying informed look like for you?" Then write it down. A simple team norm — e.g., 'Slack for daily updates, email for weekly summaries' — prevents most of this.

## 3. Ask before assuming intent

Linda assumed silence = disrespect. Jake assumed visibility = acknowledgment. A two-minute conversation early on would have caught this entirely.



# Key Takeaways

1. Generations are a lens, not a label. Individuals vary, use generational insight to build empathy, not make assumptions.

2. Conflict often has generational roots. Before addressing behavior, ask: could this be a difference in expectations or values, not character?

3. Flexible communication is a skill. The best communicators adapt their style to their audience, not the other way around.

4. Inclusion requires intentional design. Defaulting to the newest tool or trend can systematically exclude older colleagues, and vice versa.

5. Diversity of experience is a competitive advantage. Teams that bridge generational differences outperform those that don't.



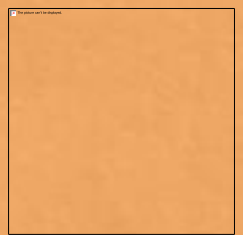
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# Thanks for joining...



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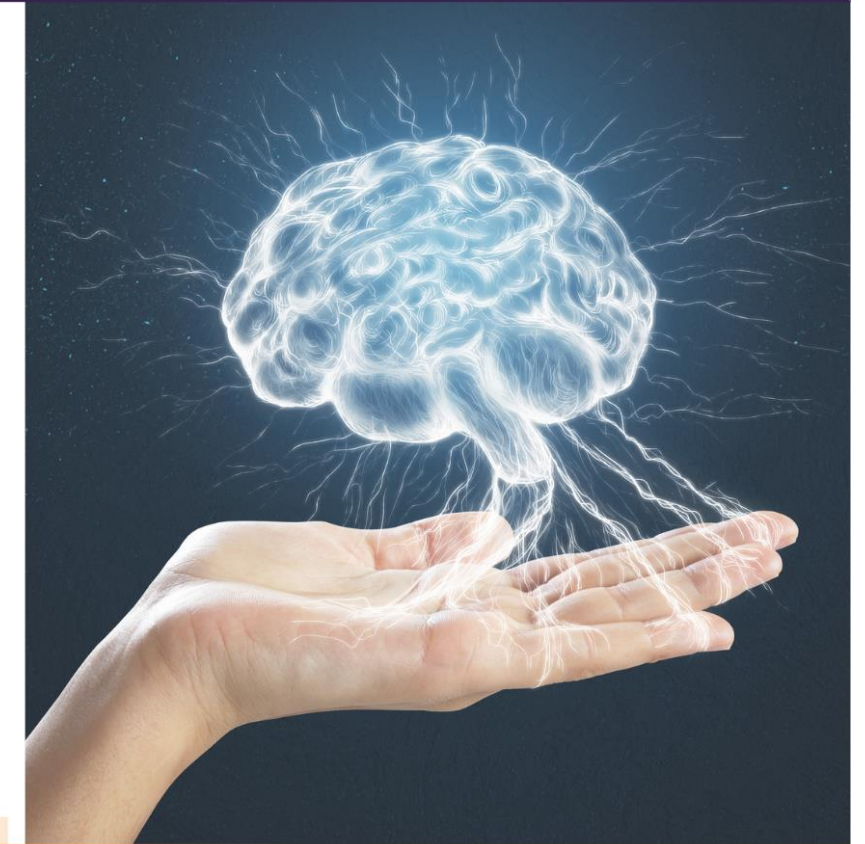
# EAP Benefit Spotlight

Resources For Total Wellbeing

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