

# Generational Diversity Among Registered Nurses in the Workplace: A Quality Improvement Project for Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

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## Purpose Statement

- Examine the generational diversity of RNs and recommend strategies for improving communication and collaboration in the workplace.

**P** - Staff RNs

**I** - intergenerational stereotypes, affect, inclusiveness, and interactions

**C** - (no comparison group)

**O** - communication and collaboration in the acute care environment

## Literature Review

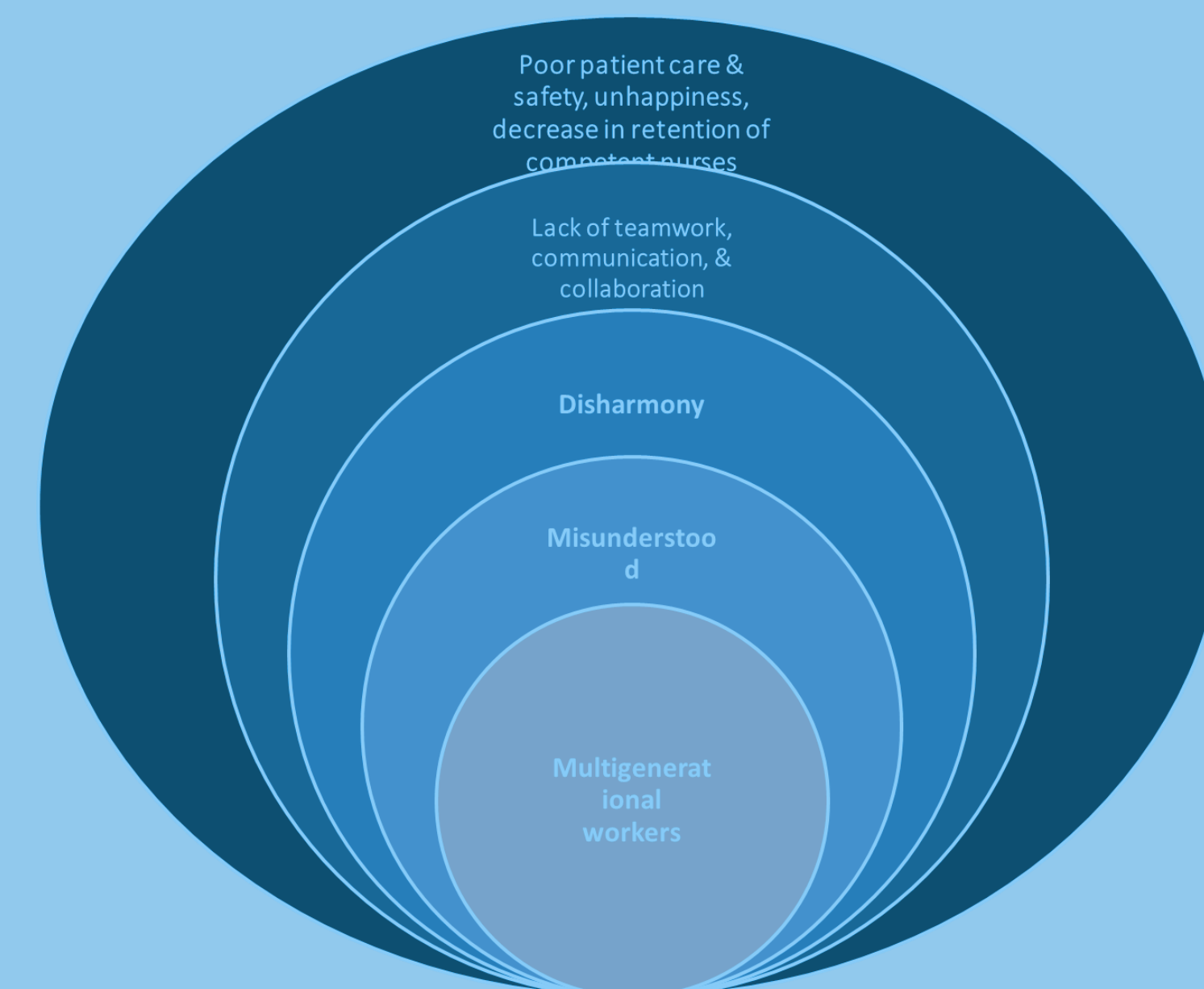
Generational Differences	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1997)
Strengths	Value engagement, respects authority, wants to be respected and appreciated	Self-sufficient, desire a work-life balance, loyal to profession and career	Enthusiastic, prefer recognition for achievements, multitaskers who appreciate diversity
Communication	Prefer informal methods of communication and face to face interactions	Prefer direct and succinct communication, use of technology	Appreciate quick feedback, read less, prefer group discussions
Collaboration	Values positive interactions and group processing	Independent, places less value on teamwork	Difficulty working with those who are not socially conscious or acquainted with technology

- Generational gaps between managers and staff RNs can present challenges in the acute care work environment
- Generational diversity of the RN workforce impacts “occupational well-being, performance, productivity, and patient safety” (Stevanin et al., 2018, p. 1260).

## Theoretical Framework

- “Dynamic Social Ecological Model of Generational Identity” (Lyons et al., 2019).

- Composed of four layers that identify factors contributed to the generational differences that create potential conflicts



## Methods

### Project Design & Setting

- Presented project via PowerPoint with permission to survey specific units with support of Managers
- Six acute care units at medical center in Midwest
- 291 sample size with age range 23-74

### Project Procedure

- The Workplace Intergenerational Climate Scale (WICS) Survey
  - designed to measure intraorganizational generational dynamics among workers from variety of generational cohorts
- Invitation to participate sent through email to RN's with WICS survey link attached and presented at staff meetings in person with paper survey
- By December 11, 2020, Registered nurses on selected areas will:

- Evaluate perspective on Generational Diversity through the WICS survey.
- Effectively communicate and collaborate with generations other than their own for improved teamwork and patient outcomes.

### Data Collection

- Email sent for permission to use data acknowledging survey was completely voluntary and anonymous.
- Collected results through Google Forms or paper survey at in-person staff meetings. Paper surveys were placed in lock box and picked up after 1 week.

### Data Analysis

- Data managed on excel spreadsheet and imported into SPSS software
- One-way ANOVA analysis
- No statistically significant difference when analyzing the generational cohort's mean subscale scores.

### Ethical Considerations

- No bias assessment toward specific generation; data is accurate and not falsified
- Submitted to the IRB for review

## Results

Question (Significance)	Findings/Recommendations
Q1: Co-workers outside my generation tend to work differently than co-workers my age do. (Collaboration)	48.9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 51.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Provide education on generational competence and sensitivity.
Q2: I feel comfortable when co-workers outside my generation try to make conversation with me. (Communication)	64.9% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Increase the comfort levels of RNs when communicating with RNs from other generations.
Q6: I enjoy interacting with co-workers of different generations. (Collaboration)	62.2% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. Activities which promote intergenerational relationships and team building.
Q8: People work best when they work with others their same age. (Collaboration)	There was an almost even divide among respondents in answering this question. 47.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 52.2% agreed or strongly agreed. Promote the benefits of working with a generationally diverse RN workforce.
Q11: I am able to communicate effectively with workers of different generations. (Communication)	61.1% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Tailor communication styles based on generational preferences and utilize a variety of communication methods.
Q12: Working with co-workers of different ages enhances the quality of my work life. (Collaboration)	60% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Emphasize generational strengths of each cohort within the workplace and develop opportunities for RNs to utilize those strengths.
Q17: How often do you have conversations about work-related matters with co-workers outside your generation? (Communication)	72% of respondents answered often or very often, indicating RNs do communicate with RNs from other generations in the work setting. Provide education on generational preferences for communicating which promotes positive conversations.

## Project Outcomes

Generations working side by side...let's connect! <small>The Workplace Intergenerational Climate Scale (WICS) 2019 Quality Improvement results per Project Setting (6 different units)</small>		
Recommendations	Covid-related	Post-Covid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Show appreciation</li><li>Learn communication preferences most widely used by that generation, but personalize each approach</li><li>Stop using the generational labels</li><li>Embrace the diversity within each generation</li><li>Tailor awards &amp; recognition</li><li>Be willing to teach and be taught</li><li>Set expectations regarding culture &amp; behavior</li><li>Benefit from one another's experiences and knowledge; be humble</li><li>Pair preceptors with different generations</li><li>Use different types of communication</li><li>Discover similarities of interest</li><li>Intergenerational training programs; conduct units' evaluation</li></ul>	<p>Write a note to co-worker outside of your generation (ex. Thank you, kind compliment, inspirational quote)</p> <p>Virtual Game night (utilize apps: example "HouseParty")</p> <p>Post picture &amp; important life events on locker for co-workers to learn more about you</p> <p>Christmas party exchange; white elephant</p> <p>Pair interest: fitness groups running, biking, art/crafts</p> <p>Start Recipe Club</p> <p>Book Clubs (popular themes)</p> <p>Self-Care Sundays</p> <p>Send "Voice message" at end of shift with a positive message</p>	<p>Arrange outside of work activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Podlucks</li><li>Zoo gatherings with families</li><li>Game nights</li><li>The Curly Canvas</li><li>Movie Night</li><li>Pool Day</li></ul> <p>Podlucks at hospital</p> <p>Annual Trip tradition: ex. groups to Nashville, TX, Vegas, renting cabins</p>

## Discussion

### Project Evaluation

- Project outcome supported PICO through development of strategies for effective communication and collaboration
- RN's workplace identity determined by their generational cohort aligns with framework, disconnect in communication and collaboration between generations
- SMART objectives unable to assess at this time

## Conclusion

- Essential for employers, nurse leaders, and nurse managers to further examine generational differences among RNs which impact patient care, as well as the success of healthcare team and organizations.