



Communicating Across Generations: A Discussion on the Multigenerational Workplace, Conflict, and Communication

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Michelle Fernández Gabilondo
Associate Director of Workforce Development

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$550,000 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov)

Access to Care & Clinician Support

Recruitment & Retention

National
Health
Service Corps

Resources

Training

Networking

- National Cooperative Agreement awarded in 2014
- Funded by the Bureau of Primary Healthcare
- One of 21 National Training and Technical Assistance Partners (NTTAPs)
- Produces **FREE** Resources, Training, and Technical Assistance

www.chcworkforce.org

Contact us: info@chcworkforce.org

STAR² CENTER TEAM



SUZANNE SPEER

(she/her)

**Senior Director, Workforce
Development**

sspeer@clinicians.org



**DR. MICHELLE FERNÁNDEZ
GABILONDO**

DSW, MSW

(she/her/ella)

**Associate Director of Workforce
Development**

mfernandez@clinicians.org



MARIAH BLAKE

(she/her)

Program Manager

mblake@clinicians.org



HELEN RHEA VERNIER

MSC

(she/her)

Training Specialist

hvernier@clinicians.org



ALEX ROHLWING

MA, EMT-P

(he/him/they)

Training Specialist

arholwing@clinicians.org

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- Recognize the values, perspectives, and communication styles of an intergenerational workforce that go beyond stereotyping and generational divides.
- Apply effective communication skills to manage an intergenerational workforce.
- Identify the societal factors impacting the recruitment and retention of an intergeneration workforce.
- Recognize the importance of managing based on individuals' needs and preferences and the commonalities of a workforce of any age group.



WORKFORCE IS THE FUEL



A health center with a **full tank** identifies workforce as an essential organizational issue, invests in appropriate operational and staffing resources, and has some key features...



Core Components

Data-Informed
Workforce Plan

Equitable &
Effective
Compensation
Structure

Positive Culture
Focused on
Engagement

Tested
Recruitment &
Retention
Strategies

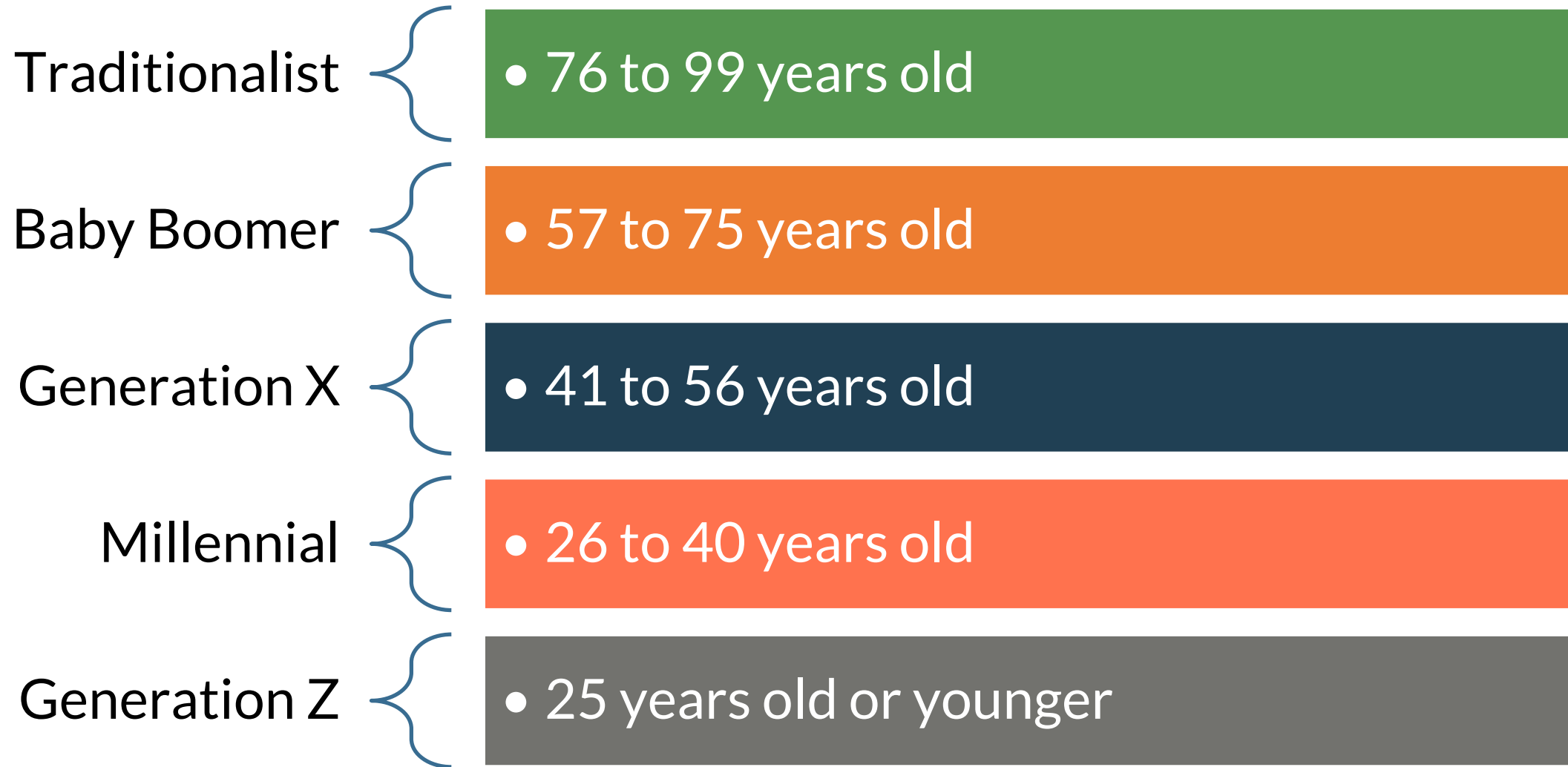
Health
Professions
Training Program

Chief Workforce
Officer

High-Functioning
Managers

Policies that
Support Diversity
& Cultural
Respect

GENERATIONS IN THE WORKFORCE



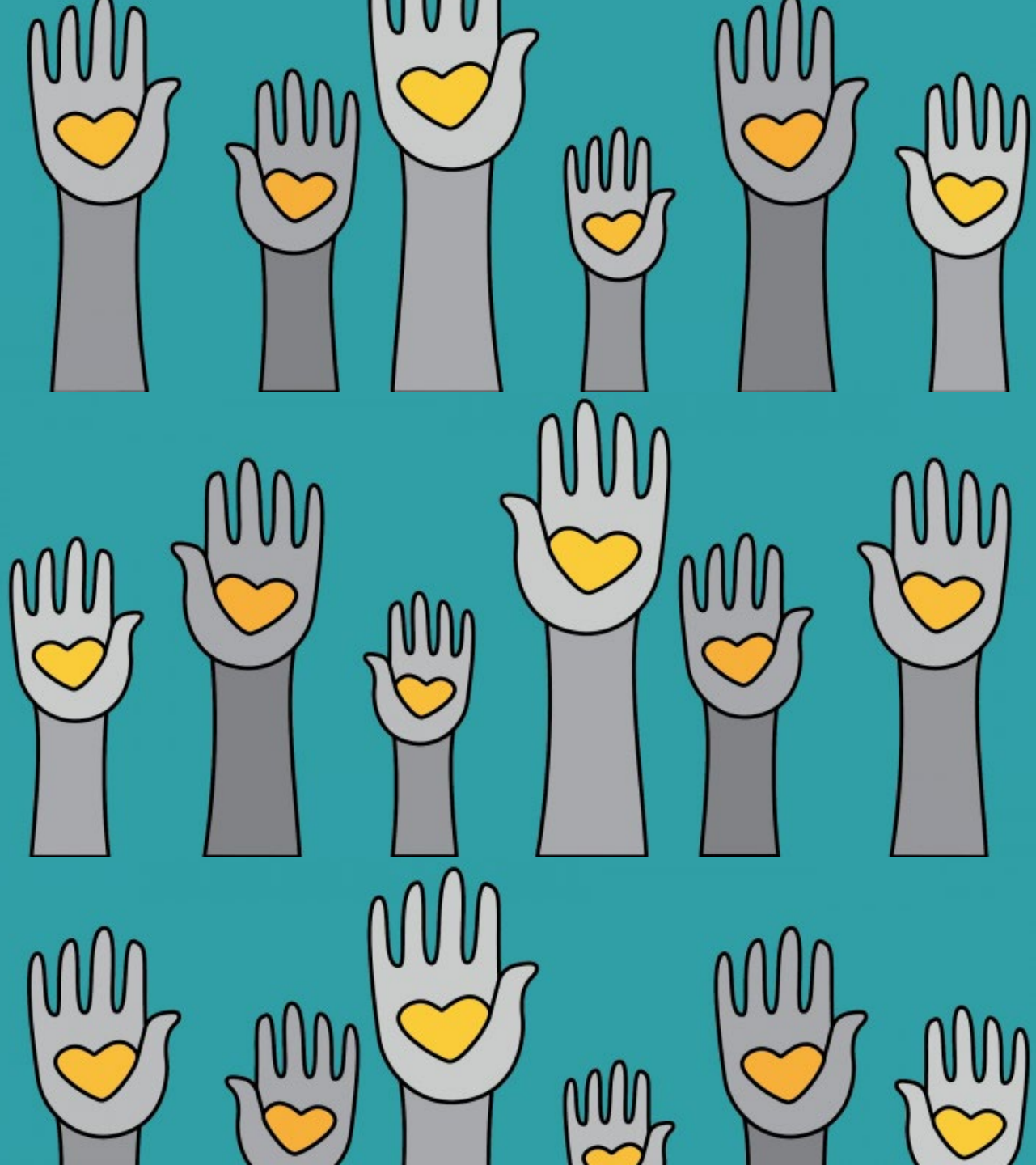
What are some stereotypes you have heard about your generation?



**Is conflict a
generational trait?**
(i.e., Is it inevitable
between generations?)



Is conflict an age-related trait?
(i.e., Are certain aged people inherently more conflict prone?)



**Is good (or bad)
communication a
generational trait?
(i.e., Do people
communicate better or
worse depending on
their generation?)**



GENERATIONS IN THE WORKFORCE

Differences vs. Stereotypes



Differences

- Nuanced
- Acknowledges and respects identity, beliefs, culture, etc.
- Driven by more objective thinking

Stereotypes

- Biased
- Harmful
- Stigmatizing
- Used to marginalize and promote inequity
- All or nothing thinking

GENERATIONS IN THE WORKFORCE

Conflict & Communication



- Conflict can arise from disagreement or competition
- May be caused by bad communication, but often just exacerbated by it
- Is conflict a generational trait? Is it an age-related trait?
- Is good (or bad) communication a generational trait? (i.e., Do people from different generations communicate better or worse based on their generation?)



IS THERE A GENERATIONAL DIVIDE?



Generational divides are more manufactured than real



SOME INFO ON GENERATIONS



“**Companies invest millions of dollars** in training and development because of their beliefs about generational differences,’ said Jennifer C. Deal, a senior research scientist at the Center for Creative Leadership ... ‘They do it **because they believe it's true, even though the evidence doesn't support those beliefs.**”

Quoted in: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/how-to-manage-intergenerational-conflict-in-the-workplace.aspx>

SOME INFO ON GENERATIONS



“We need to be careful about **generational research** because it **puts people in a box**,’ said Val Grubb, author of *Clash of the Generations: Managing the New Workplace Reality* (Wiley, 2016) and CEO of Val Grubb and Associates in New Orleans. ‘The **key to understanding someone's behavior is to look at the individual**, and the best way to find out how to motivate and engage is to ask them what matters to them.’”

Quoted in: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/how-to-manage-intergenerational-conflict-in-the-workplace.aspx>

SOME INFO ON GENERATIONS



What is really going on in this scenario?
Is it solely generational?

https://www.tiktok.com/@champagnecruze/video/7278715199211769130?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7266171175444170283

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Words and Actions of Leadership Matter



- What you say and what you do matters
- How you say it and the actions you take matter
- Practice bi-directional communication
 - Create a dialogue
 - Don't be dismissive
 - Be open – listen, learn, adapt
- Take a strengths-based perspective
- Appreciation goes a long way!



GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY



This is a matter of **JEDI** (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)



JEDI DEFINITIONS

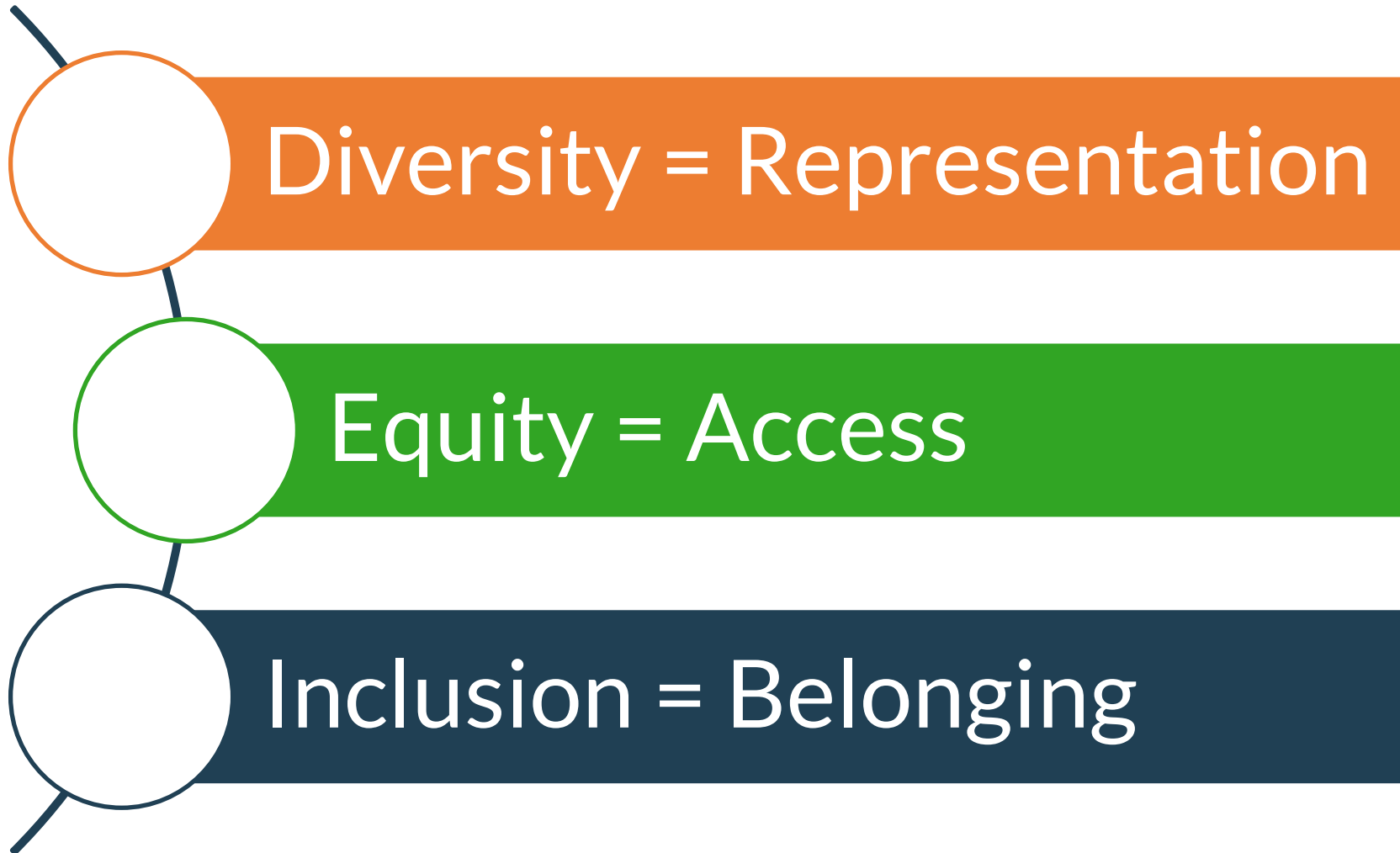


(Social) Justice: An analysis of how power, privilege, and oppression impact the experience of our social identities. It reflects a society, community, and institution mutually shaped to meet the needs of all groups through full and equal participation and creates physically and psychologically safe and secure spaces for all.

Equity: The notion of being fair and impartial as an individual engages with an organization or system. It reflects processes and practices that both acknowledge that we live in a world where everyone has not been afforded the same resources and treatment while also working to remedy this fact.

Diversity: Having a variety of social identities (sex, race, gender, class, religion, ability, health, ethnicity, migration history and many others) that spend time in shared spaces, communities, institutions or society.

Inclusion: The notion that an organization or system is welcoming to new populations and/or identities. This new presence is not merely welcomed but expected to contribute meaningfully into the system in a positive, mutually beneficial way.



Diversity is essential, but not the goal.

While it's important to diversify the health center workforce, we must remember that diversity alone is just math. A fully representative workforce is essential, but does not necessarily mean staff of marginalized identities feel safe, heard, and respected; that your clients benefit from that diversity; or that your policies and procedures are just. Moreover, integrating and retaining staff of color, for example, means you must resist institutional racism. Perceive this toolkit, then, as a guide to get started, but we urge you to go deeper in equity and inclusion with our additional recommended resources.

Click [here](#) to access the Building an Inclusive Organization Toolkit

A NOTE ON EQUITY

Equality



Equity




© 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
May be reproduced with attribution.

Source: [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Visualizing Health Equity: One Size Does Not Fit All Infographic](#)

Leadership needs to
reflect the
organization's values in
its day-to-day actions

Alignment of a health
center's mission with
the beliefs and values
of its workforce is
critical



THE CHANGING WORKFORCE LANDSCAPE

Meeting the Need



- **Hybrid Workspaces** – no longer an option, but an expectation
 - Think about policies, legal requirements, stipends
- **Multi-generational staff** – Millennials and Gen Z (understand their needs)
 - Succession planning
 - Baby boomers retiring/others leaving healthcare
- **Compensation Equity** – not just a living wage, BUT a thriving wage
 - Think about regular pay audits, not using salary histories, posting salary ranges
- **Inclusive Benefits** – be creative and use a JEDI lens
 - Think about transgender care, family paid leave, continuing education, flexible policies
- **Work/Life Balance** – the pandemic further highlighted this necessity
 - Essential for the next generation of mission-driven staff

And, so much more...

GENERATION OR CONTEXT?



GENERATION OR CONTEXT?

- Loyalty to a company
- Flexibility with change
- Perception of pay/benefits
- Comfort with technology



GENERATION OR CONTEXT?

“The reality is that everyone wants pretty much the same thing, which is for their organizations to cultivate a culture of respect – they just don’t define it in the same way. Some would argue this is really the secret to teamwork and leading across generations.”

Source: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/the-secret-to-leading-across-generations/>





SO WHY DO WE THINK GENERATIONAL CONFLICT IS A THING?

SO WHY DO WE THINK GENERATIONAL CONFLICT IS A THING?



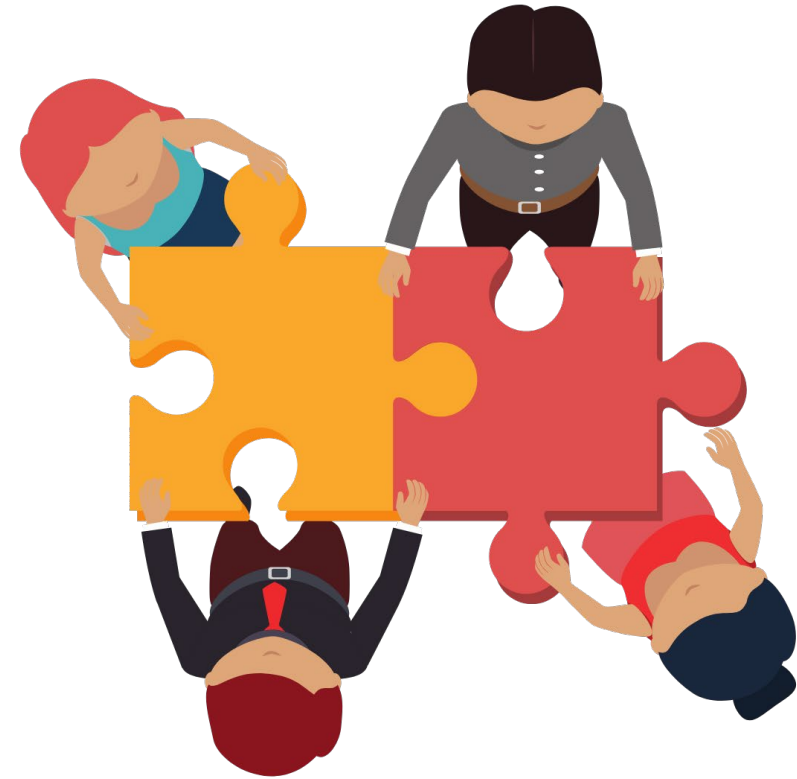
There are some generalizations
we see as workplaces evolve

SO WHY DO WE THINK GENERATIONAL CONFLICT IS A THING?



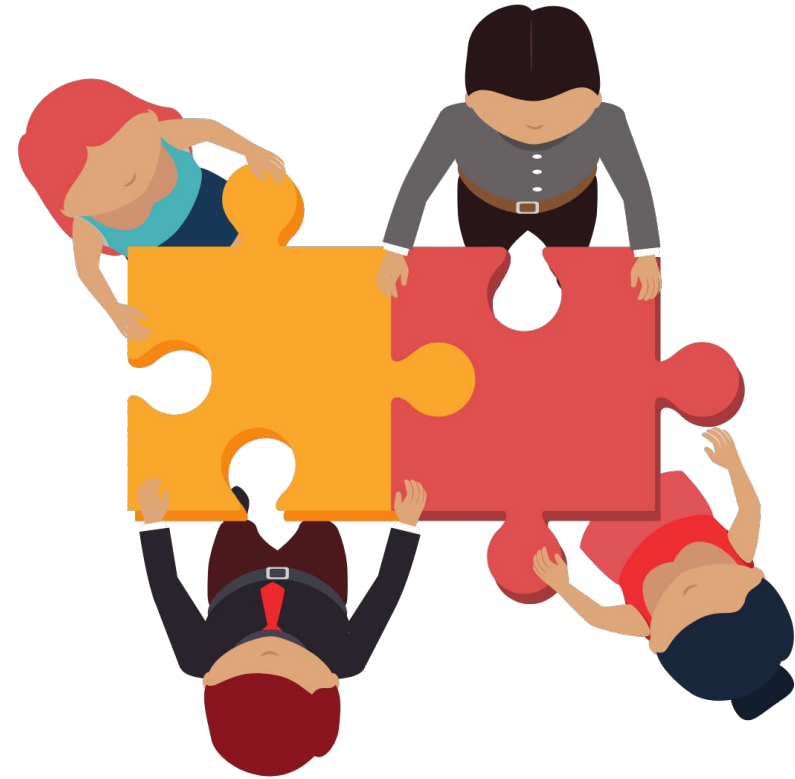
“In-Group” vs “Out-Group”

SO WHAT DO WE DO?



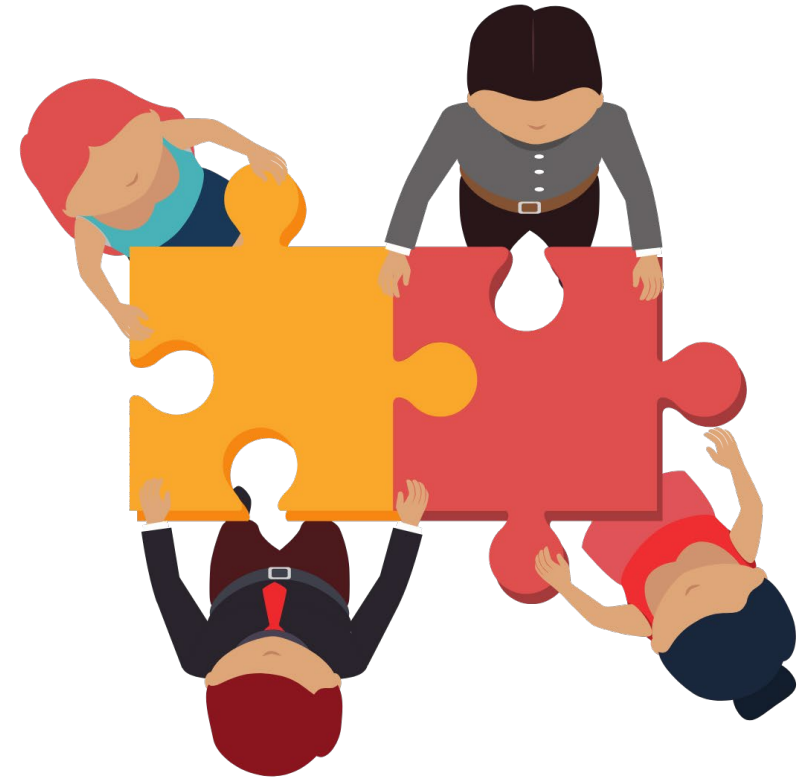
SO WHAT DO WE DO?

Generational Conflict? More like just conflict.



SO WHAT DO WE DO?

Communication
Transparency
Respect
Understanding
Learning
Growth



COMMUNICATION TIPS



COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Clear
- Concise
- Polite & Respectful
- Appropriate Form/Format
- Note & Respect Preferences



COMMUNICATION TIPS

- ❑ Recognize Stress-Induced Changes in Learning
- ❑ Avoid Blindly Ascribing Intent
- ❑ Feedback: **Situation—Behavior—Impact (SBI)**
- ❑ Seek Critique (**Sustain, Improve, Add, Remove**)



CORRECTIVE TOOL: SBI(C)



- ❖ **Situation**
- ❖ **Behavior**
- ❖ **Impact™**
- ❖ **(Create Solutions)**



Situation:

- Address the issue as soon as possible.
- Describe precisely when the issue occurred and what was going on.

Behavior:

- Describe the actions that caused the issue in only factual terms—no words that indicate judgement or criticism; simply say what happened.
- Ask if you missed any details.

Impact:

- Describe how the actions in that situation impacted you, the team, anyone else involved, or the organization.
- Take care to not dive into problem-solving yet or assigning blame.
- Use “I feel” or other statements to describe personal impact.

Create Solutions:

- Work with the other person to come up with a solution.
 - Not forcing them to solve the problem.
 - Empowering them to help build a way forward.

OTHER TIPS



OTHER TIPS

- Team Building...Is a Continuous Process
- Promote Interaction Between Teams/Departments/Groups
- Show Respect for Different Opinions & Values
- Build a Common Language & Workplace Culture (Ongoing)



OTHER TIPS

- ❑ Build Good Leaders & Foster Strong Teams
- ❑ Promote Transparency (Pay, Career Pathways, Leadership Decisions, Conflict Management Tools)
- ❑ Foster Learning, Upskilling, Cross-Skilling, & Mutual Understanding
- ❑ Make Change & New Tasks as Predictable As Possible



OTHER TIPS

- ❑ Solicit Input...
And Do Something About It...
And Show You're Doing It...
And Learn & Improve...



RESOURCE ARTICLES



- [It's You, Not Them: Why Emerging Leaders Need Your Support to Succeed](#)
- [How to Attract and Retain Millennial Employees](#)
- [Tactics for Leading Across Generations](#)
- [How to Manage Intergenerational Conflict in the Workplace](#)
- [3 Steps to Better Communication](#)
- [It's Time to Reimagine Employee Retention](#)
- [Successful Remote Teams Communicate in Bursts](#)
- [Generational Mindsets Affect the Workforce](#)
- [Generation Wars: Why Age Cohort's Don't See Eye-to-Eye](#)
- [Generational Conflict](#)
- [The Psychology Behind Generational Conflict](#)

QUESTIONS





STAR² CENTER RESOURCES



- [Recruitment & Retention Self-Assessment Tool \(Newly updated!\)](#)
- [Health Center Comprehensive Workforce Plan Template \(formerly Health Center Provider Recruitment & Retention Plan - Newly updated!\)](#)
- [Pay Equity Checklist](#)
- [Pay Equity White Paper \(New Resource!\)](#)
- [Financial Assessment For Provider Turnover Tool \(Newly Updated!\)](#)
- [Building an Inclusive Organization Toolkit](#)
- [Onboarding Checklist \(A Brand New Tool!\)](#)
- [HP-ET Financial Impact Assessment Tool \(A Brand New Tool!\)](#)
- [Supporting Mental Health Through Compensation Equity Factsheet](#)

[You can find all of the STAR² Center's free resources here](#)

[Sign up for our newsletter here for new resources, trainings, and updates](#)

READY TO LEARN MORE?

Check out the
STAR² Center Self-Paced Courses

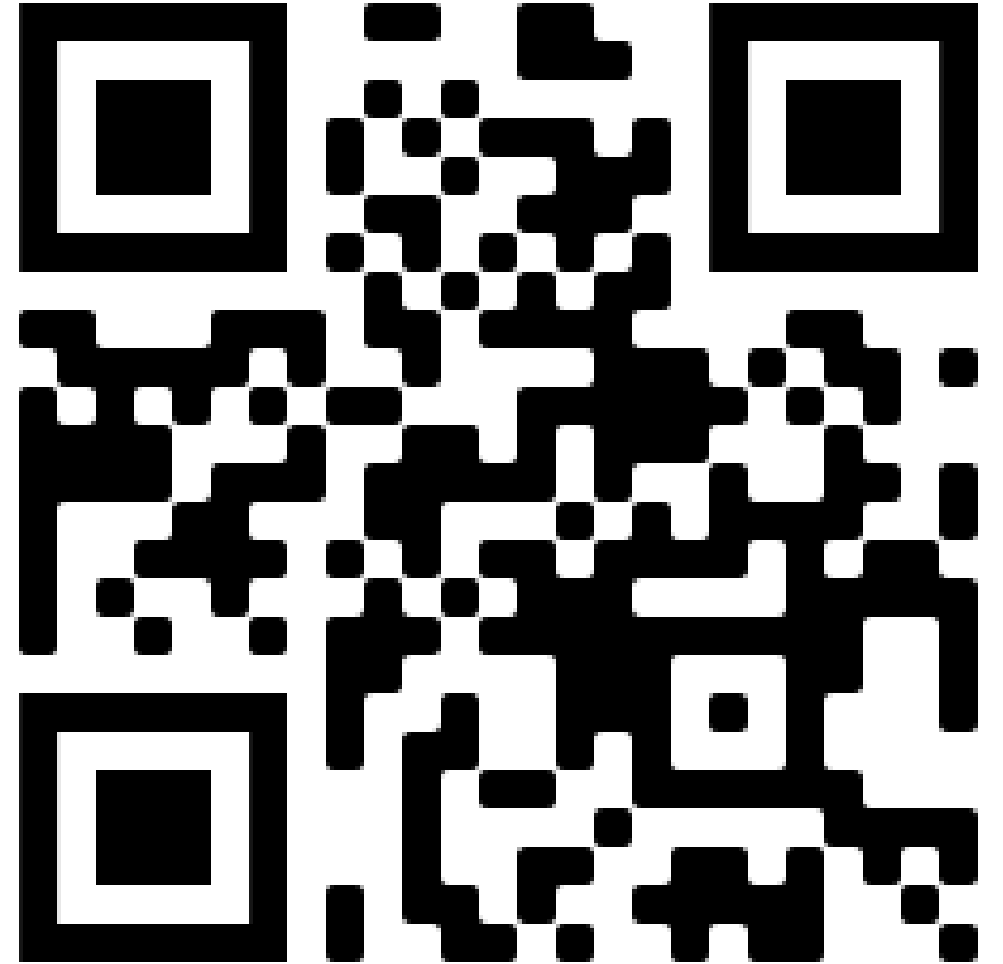
And the STAR² Center's
Podcast Series, **STAR² Center Talks**
Workforce Success



SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER!



tinyurl.com/3jttdtvv



STAY IN TOUCH!

Chcworkforce.org

info@chcworkforce.org

844-ACU-HIRE

