

October 2023

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace. EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance.



UPCOMING WEBINAR

EAS EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

About the Webinar:

We invite you to learn more about the new services provided to you and your family through EAS by attending our bi-monthly webinar orientations. Register below for the next employee session.

2023 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM Generational Diversity in the Workplace: Conversations on Mental Wellness

Date: October 17, 2023 Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

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P: 1-866-327-9133 |E: EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov | W: https://nj.gov/csc/employees/programs/advisory/eas.html

Employee Advisory Service Support - Empowerment - Growth

2023 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM Generational Diversity in the Workplace: Conversations on Mental Wellness

Date: Thursday, October 26, 2023 Time: 12pm to 2pm





A Virtual Event

Lunch

Scan QR code now to reserve your seat!

Join us!

Lunch &

Learn

GENERATIONS

Alpha Born 2013-2025 Gen Z Born 1997-2012

Millennials (Gen Y) Born 1981-1996

Gen X Born 1965-1980

Boomers Born 1946-1964

Silent Born 1928-1945

Employees who grew up in different time periods can have different values, different priorities, and different communication styles. This important symposium will explore those differences and suggest strategies for effectively communicating with employees from each generation.

Welcome - Civil Service Commission / Employee Advisory Service Presentation - Generational Diversity in the Workplace - Greg Brannan Presentation - The NJ Mental Health Players of the New Jersey Health Association Roundtable Discussion - Our Speakers, Representatives from various State Agencies and You.

GENERATIONS AT WORK

The workplace brings together a mix of people—people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, races, genders, sexual orientations, and ages. The success of any organization depends on its ability to motivate a diverse workforce to perform collaboratively toward common goals. In the same way, your success as an employee or manager depends on your ability to work with, learn from, and bring out the best in people who are different from you.

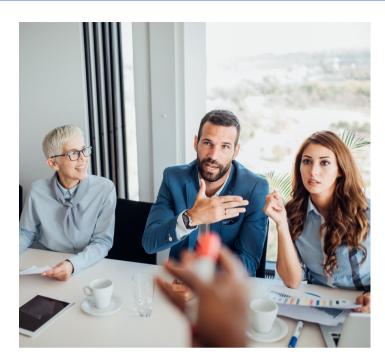
Age differences are an element in this workplace diversity, and generational groupings can be a helpful way to understand and work more effectively with people of different ages—as long as generalizations aren't used to stereotype colleagues.

The Theory of Generational Differences

Researchers who study generational differences point to formative experiences as defining the unique character of each generation. These include national and world events that have affected the lives of large numbers of people; economic booms and busts as observed by children and experienced by workers, especially early in their careers; and technology changes that have affected how people communicate and obtain information. The theory of generational differences is that these shared experiences become part of a generation's makeup and affect how people in different age groups think, act, and relate to work.

Studies of large numbers of people of various ages, over time, can reveal tendencies in the different generations, and these tendencies are the basis of claims made for the unique character of each generation.





The Risk of Generational and Age-Based Stereotypes

These generational tendencies can be interesting, and sometimes useful, but they must be approached with caution. They can't be assumed to give insight into the character, communication style, work habits, motivations, or technical skills of any individual. When applied to individuals as stereotypes, they can blind you to the unique strengths and abilities of your coworkers or the people you manage.

Other peoples' stereotypes of you based on your age or generation can also be damaging. Your concern about negative stereotypes can undermine your confidence. It can also push you to act in ways that aren't authentic or comfortable.

It's important, too, to separate what might seem like generational characteristics from attitudes and priorities that are simply factors of age or stage in life. It's natural for younger workers to be impatient to advance in their careers, for example, or for workers with children to want more flexibility in their schedules.

The Generations at Work

There are five generations in the workplace today, if the dwindling numbers of people born before 1945 are included. Here's how the generations are most commonly defined, with some of the characteristics attributed to them and other information for context:

Silent Generation (or Traditionalists)

- Born: between 1925 and 1945
- Formative experiences: The Great Depression, World War II, radio and movies, post-war economic boom
- Attributed characteristics: Loyal, disciplined, hard-working, tactful, respects authority
- Age-related priorities: Respect from others for experience, transferring knowledge, mentoring, quality of life in later years, leaving a legacy through meaningful work and quality relationships, family, ongoing learning
- Percent of labor force in the 2020s: dropping from 1 percent to very low numbers

Baby Boomers

- Born: between 1946 and 1964
- Formative experiences: Vietnam War, civil rights movement, Watergate, post-war economic boom, 1970s oil crisis, late 1960s and early 1970s inflation, greater opportunities for women in the labor force
- Attributed characteristics: Competitive, hard-working (to the point of workaholism), optimistic, team-oriented, self-centered, questioning authority
- Age-related priorities: Respect from others for experience, transferring knowledge, mentoring, financial security in retirement, leaving a legacy through meaningful work and quality relationships, family, ongoing learning
- Percent of labor force in the 2020s: projected to drop from 19 percent at the start of the decade to less than 10 percent by its end

Generation X

- Born: between 1965 and 1980
- Formative experiences: AIDS epidemic, fall of the Berlin Wall, rise of the internet, dot-com boom, increase in the numbers of women (this generation's mothers) in the labor force
- Attributed characteristics: Independent, task-oriented, selfreliant, flexible, skeptical, values work-life balance
- Age-related priorities: More responsibility and a greater voice at work; work-life balance for personal interests, social connections, and family; ongoing learning
- Percent of labor force in the 2020s: projected to drop from 32 percent at the start of the decade to 27 percent at its end

Generation Y (or Millennials)

- Born: between 1981 and 1994 (or to the mid-1990s)
- Formative experiences: Expansion of the internet, Columbine school shootings, 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, global competition, recession of 2008-2009, increasing cost of higher education
- Attributed characteristics: self-directed, realistic, goal-focused, competitive, flexible, entrepreneurial, community-oriented, values knowledge sharing and work-life balance, welcomes diversity
- Age-related priorities: More responsibility and a greater voice at work; work-life balance for personal interests, social connections, and family; learning new skills; repaying student loans
- Percent of labor force in the 2020s: projected to remain stable at just over 30 percent

Generation Z (or Centennials)

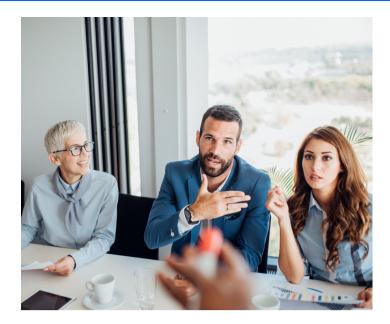
- Born: between 1995 and 2015 (or from the mid-1990s to a yet-to-be-determined cutoff)
- Formative experiences: Ready access to the internet and smartphones from an early age, post-9/11 security, recession of 2008–2009 (experienced as children), increasing cost of higher education
- Attributed characteristics: self-reliant, values authenticity and personal freedom, flexible, global outlook, entrepreneurial, values knowledge sharing and work-life balance, welcomes diversity
- Age-related priorities: More responsibility and a greater voice at work; work-life balance for personal interests, social connections, and family; learning new skills; repaying student loans
- Percent of labor force in the 2020s: projected to grow from 17 percent at the start of the decade to 33 percent at its end

How to Create Synergy and Reduce Conflict in Cross-Generational Work

- Recognize what people of all generations have in common. People of all ages:
 - $\circ\,$ Want to be valued and treated with respect at work
 - Place a priority on family and their lives outside of work
 - Value ongoing learning
 - Appreciate constructive feedback to help them do better
- Ask, don't assume. To understand what motivates another person, how they prefer to communicate, and what special strengths they bring to the team, ask them. Don't fall into the trap of assuming younger workers want more flexibility and older workers don't, or that younger workers are technology whizzes and older workers can't learn new technical skills. That's stereotyping, and it hurts everyone.
- Make time to get to know your coworkers of all ages at a personal level. Talk about your lives outside of work, your lived experiences, what motivates you, and your hopes for the future. Find common ground. Appreciate how your differences can give you a broader perspective when you collaborate.
- Establish norms for working together. Discuss and decide on the best ways to communicate different kinds of information, from urgent alerts and quick questions to complex problems that may require extended discussion. That might mean adapting to other people's preferences as you work together.
- Be attentive to who gets which work assignments. Managers should take care not to show favoritism for people near their own age or assign work based on agerelated stereotypes. They should make a point of giving assignments that stretch people's abilities in different directions, paying attention to individual goals and aspirations.
- Acknowledge and respect priorities related to life stages. Team members with young children have an obvious priority outside of work. So do employees who are caring for an older or infirm family member, employees who are single and dating, and employees with a personal passion to pursue in their time away from work—no matter what their age or generation.

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Source: Morgan, H. (2021, June 25; Reviewed 2023). Generations at work (Z. Meeker & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.



• Learn from coworkers of different ages and generations. Show your respect and appreciation for everyone you work with: Make an effort to understand their strengths and special skills, and ask them to teach you. Older workers may have experience in driving organizational change, for example, or dealing with difficult personalities. Younger workers may have insights from their education or fresh perspectives that could open new opportunities. Mentorships have traditionally paired an older worker or executive as a mentor with a younger mentee. Mentorship can work in the other direction, too, with an older worker seeking insights and learning skills from a younger colleague.

For More Information

Deal, J., & Levinson, A. (2016). What millennials want from work: How to maximize engagement in today's workforce. New York City: McGraw Hill.

Hay Group. (2015). Managing a multi-generational workforce: The myths vs. the realities. Retrieved June 30, 2021, from https://info.haygroupupdate.com/GLOBAL-PDS-Leadership-NUR-2015-12-Multi-gen-paper-GLOBAL-MKT-LANG-EN-X3Y2_.html

Hirsch, A. (2020, February 5). *How to manage intergenerational conflict in the workplace*. Retrieved June 30, 2021, from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM):

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hrtopics/employee-relations/pages/how-to-manageintergenerational-conflict-in-the-workplace.aspx King, E., Finkelstein, L., Thomas, C., & Corrington, A. (2019, August 1). Generational differences at work are small. Thinking they're big affects our behavior. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved June 30, 2021, from https://hbr.org/2019/08/generational-differences-at-workare-small-thinking-theyre-big-affects-our-behavior

PAUSE. BREATHE. RESUME.

The next time you're feeling the signs of stress during a busy day or find yourself getting drawn into an unproductive conflict, try this simple exercise:

Pause. Breathe. Resume.

It's an easy and effective way to pull yourself back from a situation, calm yourself, clarify your thinking, then choose how to move forward. Here's how to do it!

Pause.

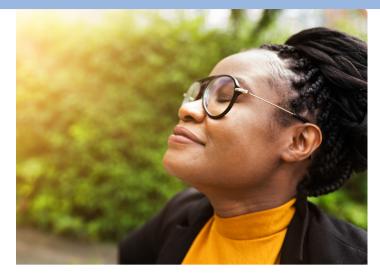
Stop what you're doing. Pause for a moment, and step back from the situation. If you're engaged in an activity that's making you tense or anxious, give yourself permission to take a quick break. If you're in a conversation that's becoming heated or going in circles, you might say, "Let's pause this here so I can give it some more thought. Can we get back to this later today or tomorrow?"

Taking a brief pause can help you calm yourself so you can think more clearly. It can help you avoid quick or emotional reactions that you might later regret.

Breathe.

Take a few deep breaths to relax and remove yourself emotionally from the situation. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, then let your breath out easily through pursed lips. It can help to place a hand on your abdomen to feel your breaths rising and falling. Repeat for a few slow, deep breaths, and feel the tension leaving your body and your mind.

As you become calmer with deep breathing, pay attention to your body. Notice how you feel and where you still sense tension. Notice your thoughts, too. As your mind clears, consider different ways of approaching the task you're working on or different ways of resolving a difficult conversation. What can you let go of so that you can focus on what's most important? What would help you move forward productively? That might be a longer break, a walk outside, more information, or guidance from someone with a different area of expertise.



Resume.

Once you're feeling calmer and thinking more clearly, and once you've had a chance to consider different ways of moving forward, you're ready to resume. That might not mean returning directly to your task or conversation. In your pause, you may have come up with new approaches you hadn't considered before. You may have realized that you need to break your task down into smaller steps. You may have decided that you need to do something else first before you go back to what you were doing. The key is to move forward in a way that doesn't draw you back into a cycle of increasing stress or conflict.

Make it a regular practice.

Once you've tried it, make a regular practice of pausing, breathing, and resuming. Use the technique whenever:

- You feel tension from stress building in your body.
- Your thinking narrows or freezes in response to anxiety or fear.
- A conversation becomes confrontational, overly emotional, or otherwise unproductive.

Pausing, breathing, and resuming can help you choose more thoughtful and effective responses to difficult situations. With practice, you'll find that when you resume, you're more productive, collaborative, and creative.

OCTOBER IS DEPRESSION AWARENESS MONTH

Helping Someone with Depression

Your support and encouragement can play an important role in your loved one's recovery. Here's how to make a difference.

How can I help someone with depression?

Depression is a serious but treatable disorder that affects millions of people, from young to old and from all walks of life. It gets in the way of everyday life, causing tremendous pain, hurting not just those suffering from it but also impacting everyone around them.

If someone you love is depressed, you may be experiencing any number of difficult emotions, including helplessness, frustration, anger, fear, guilt, and sadness. These feelings are all normal. It's not easy dealing with a friend or family member's depression. Also, if you neglect your own health, it can become overwhelming.

That said, your companionship and support can be crucial to your loved one's recovery. You can help them to cope with depression symptoms; overcome negative thoughts; and regain their energy, optimism, and enjoyment of life. Start by learning all you can about depression and how to best talk about it with your friend or family member. But as you reach out, don't forget to look after your own emotional health—you'll need it to provide the full support your loved one needs.





Understanding Depression in a Friend or Family Member

- Depression is a serious condition. Don't underestimate the seriousness of depression. Depression drains a person's energy, optimism, and motivation. Your depressed loved one can't just "snap out of it" by sheer force of will.
- The symptoms of depression aren't personal. Depression makes it difficult for a person to connect on a deep emotional level with anyone, even the people they love the most. It's also common for depressed people to say hurtful things and lash out in anger. Remember that this is the depression talking, not your loved one, so try not to take it personally.
- Hiding the problem won't make it go away. It doesn't help anyone involved if you try making excuses, covering up the problem, or lying for a friend or family member who is depressed. In fact, this may keep the depressed person from seeking treatment.

- Your loved one isn't lazy or unmotivated. When you're suffering from depression, just thinking about doing the things that may help you to feel better can seem exhausting or impossible to put into action. Have patience as you encourage your loved one to take the first small steps to recovery.
- You can't "fix" someone else's depression. As much as you may want to, you can't rescue someone from depression nor fix the problem for them. You're not to blame for your loved one's depression or responsible for their happiness (or lack thereof). While you can offer love and support, ultimately recovery is in the hands of the depressed person.

Recognizing Depression Symptoms in a Loved One

Family and friends are often the first line of defense in the fight against depression. That's why it's important to understand the signs and symptoms of depression. You may notice the problem in a depressed loved one before they do, and your influence and concern can motivate them to seek help.

Be concerned if your loved one:

- Doesn't seem to care about anything anymore; has lost interest in work, sex, hobbies, and other pleasurable activities; has withdrawn from friends, family, and other social activities.
- Expresses a bleak or negative outlook on life; is uncharacteristically sad, irritable, short-tempered, critical, or moody; talks about feeling helpless or hopeless.
- Frequently complains of aches and pains such as headaches, stomach problems, and back pain, or complains of feeling tired and drained all the time.
- Sleeps less than usual or oversleeps; has become indecisive, forgetful, disorganized, and "out of it".
- Eats more or less than usual, and has recently gained or lost weight.
- Drinks more or abuses drugs, including prescription sleeping pills and painkillers, as a way to selfmedicate how they're feeling.



How to Talk to Someone About Depression

Sometimes it is hard to know what to say when speaking to someone about depression. You might fear that if you bring up your worries the person will get angry, feel insulted, or ignore your concerns. You may be unsure what questions to ask or how to be supportive.

If you don't know where to start, the following suggestions may help. But remember that being a compassionate listener is much more important than giving advice. You don't have to try to "fix" your friend or family member; you just have to be a good listener. Often, the simple act of talking face to face can be an enormous help to someone suffering from depression. Encourage the depressed person to talk about their feelings, and be willing to listen without judgment.

Don't expect a single conversation to be the end of it. Depressed people tend to withdraw from others and isolate themselves. You may need to express your concern and willingness to listen over and over again. Be gentle, yet persistent.

Starting the Conversation

Finding a way to start a conversation about depression with your loved one is always the hardest part. You could try saying the following:

- "I have been feeling concerned about you lately."
- "Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing."
- "I wanted to check in with you because you have seemed pretty down lately."

Once you're talking, you can ask questions such as these:

- "When did you begin feeling like this?"
- "Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?"
- "How can I best support you right now?"
- "Have you thought about getting help?"

Remember, being supportive involves offering encouragement and hope. Very often, this is a matter of talking to the person in language that they will understand and can respond to while in a depressed state of mind.

Tips for Talking About Depression

Here's what you can say that helps:

- "You're not alone. I'm here for you during this tough time."
- "It may be hard to believe right now, but the way you're feeling will change."
- "Please tell me what I can do now to help you."
- "Even if I'm not able to understand exactly how you feel, I care about you and want to help."
- "You're important to me. Your life is important to me."
- "When you want to give up, tell yourself you will hold on for just one more day, hour, or minute—whatever you can manage."

Here's what you should avoid saying:

- "This is all in your head."
- "Everyone goes through tough times."
- "Try to look on the bright side."
- "Why do you want to die when you have so much to live for?"
- "I can't do anything about your situation."
- "Just snap out of it."
- "You should be feeling better by now."

Encouraging the Person to Get Help

While you can't control someone else's recovery from depression, you can start by encouraging the depressed person to seek help. Getting a depressed person into treatment can be difficult. Depression saps energy and motivation, so even the act of making an appointment or finding a doctor can seem daunting to your loved one. Depression also involves negative ways of thinking. The depressed person may believe that the situation is hopeless and treatment pointless.

Because of these obstacles, getting your loved one to admit to the problem—and helping them see that it can be solved —is an essential step in depression recovery.



Here are some ideas if your friend or family member resists getting help:

- Suggest a general check-up with a physician. Your loved one may be less anxious about seeing a family doctor than a mental health professional. A regular doctor's visit is actually a great option, since the doctor can rule out medical causes of depression. If the doctor diagnoses depression, they can refer your loved one to a psychiatrist or psychologist. Sometimes, this professional opinion makes all the difference.
- Offer to help the depressed person find a doctor or therapist, and go with them on the first visit. Finding the right treatment provider can be difficult, and it is often a trial-and-error process. For a depressed person already low on energy, it is a huge help to have assistance making calls and looking into the options.
- Encourage your loved one to make a thorough list of symptoms and ailments to discuss with the doctor. You can even bring up things that you have noticed as an outside observer, such as, "You seem to feel much worse in the mornings," or "You always get stomach pains before work."

10 TIPS FOR BECOMING MORE ACTIVE AS A FAMILY

Physical activity is important for children and adults of all ages. Being active as a family can benefit everyone. Adults need two and a half hours a week of physical activity, and children need 60 minutes a day. Follow these tips to add more activity to your family's busy schedule:

- Set specific activity times. Determine time slots throughout the week when the whole family is available. Devote a few of these times to physical activity. Try doing something active after dinner or begin the weekend with a Saturday morning walk.
- Plan ahead and track your progress. Write your activity plans on a family calendar. Let the kids help in planning the activities. Allow them to check it off after completing each activity.
- Include work around the house. Involve the kids in yard work and other active chores around the house. Have them help you with raking, weeding, planting, or vacuuming.
- Use what is available. Plan activities that require little or no equipment or facilities. Examples include walking, jogging, jumping rope, playing tag, and dancing. Find out what programs your community recreation center offers for free or a minimal charge.
- Build new skills. Enroll the kids in classes they might enjoy such as gymnastics, dance, or tennis. Help them practice. This will keep things fun and interesting, and introduce new skills!
- Plan for all weather conditions. Choose some activities that do not depend on the weather conditions. Try mall walking, indoor swimming, or active video games. Enjoy outdoor activities as a bonus whenever the weather is nice.
- Turn off the TV. Set a rule that no one can spend longer than 2 hours per day playing video games, watching TV, and using the computer (except for school work). Instead of a TV show, play an active family game, dance to favorite music, or go for a walk.



- Start small. Begin by introducing one new family activity and add more when you feel everyone is ready. Take the dog for a longer walk, play another ball game, or go to an additional exercise class.
- Include other families. Invite others to join your family activities. This is a great way for you and your kids to spend time with friends while being physically active. Plan parties with active games such as bowling or an obstacle course, sign up for family programs at the YMCA, or join a recreational club.
- Treat the family with fun physical activity. When it is time to celebrate as a family, do something active as a reward. Plan a trip to the zoo, park, or lake to treat the family.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (Revised 2017, July 18). 10 tips: Be an active family (DG Tip Sheet No. 29). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from https://naldc.nal.usda.gov

DID YOU KNOW?



EAS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Employee Advisory Service provides free and confidential services to statewide employees, local agencies and household members of their families. Services help to restore the health and productivity of the employees and their workplace as a whole.

Our goal is to visit local agencies and statewide departments to inform employees about the supportive resources offered by EAS. During this information session, participants will learn about the free benefits and how they can request services.

We encourage you to take advantage of our information session, as we highlight the resources of our program.

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Contact you HR department and ask them to schedule an information session. We will come to you.

Employee Advisory Service Support - Empowerment - Growth

How Can We Help You?

NUMBER: 1-866-327-9133

EMAIL: EAS_HELP@CSC.NJ.GOV

24 HOURS A DAY 7 DAYS A WEEK (EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES)



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