Description

Introduction to understanding generational differences. Topics include age-based cohorts and cross generational comparisons.

Objectives (Performance)

By the end of this class participants will be able to:

1. Categorize a list of values into the appropriate generational group
2. Communicate the differences between generations

Assessment (Criteria)

Participants will:

1. Play the “Generational Comparison Game”
2. Draw a picture representing symbols from different generations

Materials

Required

☐ “Generational Comparison Game” (copies for every 3-10 people)
☐ Blank paper (copies for each participant)

Optional

☐ “Generational Comparison Game” powerpoint (optional)

Activities

Introduction

1. Introduce the concept of value systems and age based cohorts (1 minute)
Many social groups experience generational conflict. Older leaders have a hard time understanding, and therefore trusting, younger ones who are anxious to find their role in leadership. The latter often can't understand why older leaders believe and do what they do, and their questioning may lead to conflict. Most of this tension results from generational differences that exist because of contrasting values. We make choices and decisions based on our value system, and differing values often lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation. This, in turn, hampers our relationships and lessens the effectiveness of our relationships together.

Generations can be defined as periods of time characterized by events or pop culture unique to that period of time. A generation might be defined by music, fads, inventions, and wars experienced by those born during the generation. Generational cohorts experience the same events within the same time interval.

Content

2. Explain the different generational cohorts (1 minute)

People over the past half century can be classified into one of three groups on the basis of their age:

- **Silent Generation**: Currently ages 62-82, this generation was shaped by the events of World War II as children, and the Korean War as adults.
- **Baby Boomers**: Currently ages 43-61, this generation was shaped by the events of the Civil Rights movement, the Women’s Liberation movement, the Vietnam War, landing on the moon, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
- **Generation X**: Currently ages 26-46, this generation was shaped by the events of the oil crisis of 1973, the end of the Cold War and the HIV-AIDS epidemic.
- **Generation Y**: Currently ages 4-30, this generation was shaped by the events of the fall of the Soviet Union, the first Gulf War, the rise of the Information Age and wide-spread use of the Internet.

In this class you will compare and contrast the value systems for the last three generations mentioned.

Guided Practice

3. Facilitate the “Generational Comparison Game” activity (5 minutes)

Break people into pairs or groups (3-10 people). Distribute the Generational Comparison Game [board and puzzle pieces]. Direct the groups to place each
piece into the appropriate column, according to the generation that owns that value. Review answers to the game once everyone is completed.

4. Facilitate the “Draw a picture” activity (2 minutes)

Ask the participants to take a minute and draw symbols from one, or more, generations (i.e., picture of a cell phone representing the way that Generation Y people communicate). When complete, have each person pass their pictures to the person on their right, who will guess which generation that each symbol represents.

Closure

5. Conclude with a statement about the importance of recognizing value differences (1 minute)

Relationships will be more harmonious when we strive to understand each other's frame of reference and values. When we recognize that many issues are matters of preference, not morals, we'll avoid critical attitudes. By being open to trying new things, or doing them differently, we may discover more effective ways to interact. We need to accept each other as human beings, and learn to agree to disagree on non-crucial issues. Each generation has strengths to offer, building on them and being quick to forgive their weaknesses will help to make a happy healthy environment.

6. Request that participants reflect on the topics of values, generations, and age by briefly discussing the following questions (10 minutes)

- Why would Baby Boomers be angry with Generation Ys in the workplace?
- How do you bridge the value differences?
- What will you stop doing after learning this information? Start doing? Continue doing?