

How to Understand and Lead All 5 Generations in the Workforce



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Introduction

For one of the first times in modern history, individuals from five generations can be found in the workforce. The question is, how can health care professionals effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations? This course will answer that very question, while providing insight into generation-related recommendations.

Section 1: The Five Generations

A health care professional working in a health care facility observes peers and colleagues working to care for patients in need. The health care professional observes older individuals, individual of a similar age, and younger individuals. The health care professional quickly realizes that the workforce is made up of individuals from five different generations. The health care professional then poses the following question: how can health care professionals effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations? The health care professional's question is not necessarily unique or odd. It is actually a common question currently being asked across the various fields of health care. Fortunately, there is a simple and straightforward answer to the aforementioned question. Health care professionals can effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations by following the four key steps to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations. With that in mind, the first key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into the five generations. This section of the course will provide insight into the five generations. The information found within this section was derived from materials provided by Purdue University (Purdue University Global, 2021).

What are the five generations that can be found in the workforce?

- The five generations that can be found in the workforce include: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

Who are the Traditionalists?

- The term Traditionalists may refer to a group of individuals born between 1925 - 1945.
- Traditionalists represent the oldest population, and perhaps the smallest population, that may be found among the five generations in the workforce.

Who are the Baby Boomers?

- The term Baby Boomers may refer to a group of individuals born between 1946 - 1964.
- Baby Boomers represent the second oldest population in the workforce.

Who are the individuals from Generation X?

- The term Generation X may refer to a group of individuals born between 1965 - 1980.
- Individuals from Generation X represent one of the largest populations in the workforce.

Who are the Millennials?

- The term Millennials, also referred to as Generation Y, may refer to a group of individuals born between 1981 - 2000.
- Millennials represent one of the largest populations in the workforce.

Who are the individuals from Generation Z?

- The term Generation Z may refer to a group of individuals born between 2001 - 2020.
- Individuals from Generation Z represent an emerging population in the workforce.

What are the major influences of each generation?

Each of the aforementioned generations were influenced and shaped by major world events that impacted the very nature of each group. Understanding the influences of each generation is essential to understanding the individuals from each generation. The major influences of each group may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - the major influences for the Traditionalists include: The Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, and the Cold War.
 - **The Great Depression** - The Great Depression may refer to the worldwide economic depression that was sparked by the 1929 U.S. stock market crash. The Great Depression led to mass unemployment, mass hunger,

mass poverty, suffering, and fundamental changes in economic institutions and theory. The Great Depression impacted an entire generation's view of money, international currency, banks, and governmental stability.

- **World War II** - World War II may refer to the global conflict that occurred from 1939 to 1945. World War II led to the deaths of millions of individuals, the rise of the U.S. military and international exports, as well as the restructuring of Europe and other parts of the world. World war II impacted an entire generation's view of war, government, and international relations.
- **The Korean War** - the Korean War may refer to the conflict between North and South Korea that occurred from 1950 to 1953. The Korean War led to the deaths of millions of individuals and heightened the developing Cold War. The Korean War impacted an entire generation's view of capitalism, communism, and the Cold War.
- **The Cold War** - the Cold War may refer to a period of high political tension between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Cold War led to the rise of the nuclear age and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The Cold War also led to worldwide crises such as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Cold War impacted an entire generation's view of the potential destruction and danger of nuclear weapons, as well as the need for international cooperation and unity.
- **Baby Boomers** - the major influences for the Baby Boomers include: the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the American civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, Apollo 11, and Watergate.
 - **The assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy** - the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy may refer to the assassination of the 35th president of the United States. The assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy led to public outrage, perception changes centered around the U.S. government, conspiracies related to the U.S. government, and changes to the U.S. political landscape (e.g., the presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson). The assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy impacted an entire generation's view of the U.S. government.

- **The American civil rights movement** - the American civil rights movement may refer to the 1950s and 1960s protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the U.S. The American civil rights movement led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The American civil rights movement impacted an entire generation's view of racial segregation, discrimination, and the need for equality.
- **The Vietnam War** - the Vietnam War may refer to the conflict that took place in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from the 1950s to the mid 1970s. The Vietnam War led to the death of millions of individuals, public unrest, anti-war protests, political upheaval, social reform, and the War Powers Act, which restricts the U.S. president's ability to send American forces into combat. The Vietnam War impacted an entire generation's view of American global superiority.
- **Apollo 11** - Apollo 11 may refer to the 1969 NASA space mission, which was responsible for landing human beings on the moon. Apollo 11 led to the first man (Neil Armstrong) to walk on the moon. Apollo 11 impacted an entire generation's view of technological advancements, and the near limitless potential of technology.
- **Watergate** - Watergate may refer to the 1970s U.S. political scandal involving President Richard Milhous Nixon. Watergate led to the resignation of President Richard Milhous Nixon, marking the only U.S. presidential resignation in U.S. history. Watergate impacted an entire generation's view of politics and the presidency.
- **Generation X** - the major influences of Generation X include: the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War, and the dot-com boom.
 - **HIV/AIDS epidemic** - the HIV/AIDS epidemic may refer to the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which began to gain public awareness in the U.S. in the early 1980s. The HIV/AIDS epidemic led to public concern, sexually transmitted infection (STI) awareness (note: the term STI may refer to an infection transmitted through sexual contact that may be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites), STI prevention awareness, social reform, and health care reform. The HIV/AIDS epidemic impacted an entire generation's view of public health awareness, STI awareness, and the need for STI prevention.

- **The fall of the Berlin Wall** - the fall of the Berlin Wall may refer to the pivotal event which marked the beginning of the fall of communism in the Soviet Union. The fall of the Berlin Wall led to the reunification of Germany and the end of the political boundary referred to as the Iron Curtain. The fall of the Berlin Wall impacted an entire generation's view of global politics and world unity.
- **The Gulf War** - the Gulf War may refer to the conflict, which occurred from August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991, between a coalition of forces from 35 nations led by the United States and Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The Gulf War led to the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. The Gulf War impacted an entire generation's view of modern warfare, world oil reserves, and the United Nations.
- **The dot-com boom** - the dot-com boom may refer to the period of massive growth in the use and adoption of the Internet, which occurred in the mid to late 1990s. The dot-com boom led to widespread Internet use and development. The dot-com boom impacted an entire generation's view of the Internet and the potential of the Internet.
- **Millennials** - the major influences for Millennials include: 9/11, the Iraq War, and social media.
 - **9/11** - 9/11 may refer to the series of coordinated terrorist attacks by the terrorist group referred to as Al-Qaeda against the U.S. on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. 9/11 led to public outrage and the Iraq War. 9/11 impacted an entire generation's view of terrorism, U.S. home security, and American patriotism.
 - **The Iraq War** - the Iraq War may refer to the conflict that began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by a United States-led coalition, which overthrew the government of Saddam Hussein. The Iraq War led to the end of Saddam Hussein's government, the capture and execution of Saddam Hussein, and changes in domestic and foreign policies. The Iraq War impacted an entire generation's view of the Middle East, foreign relations, weapons of mass destruction, and the U.S. government.
 - **Social media** - social media may refer to any electronically driven application that enables individuals to create and share content for the purposes of virtual communication. The rise and integration of social

media into the U.S. culture lead to a revolution in communication. Social media impacted an entire generation's view of communication and the potential of virtual communication.

- **Generation Z** - the major influences for Generation Z include: the Great Recession, the integration of personal electronic devices, and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
 - **The Great Recession** - the Great Recession, also referred to as the 2008 Recession, may refer to a period of general economic decline that occurred from late 2007 to late 2009. The Great Recession led to mass unemployment, the mortgage crisis, and economic reform. The Great Recession impacted an entire generation's view of home loans, government "bailouts," investments, and global economics.
 - **The integration of personal electronic devices** - the integration of personal electronic devices may refer to the incorporation of personal electronic devices (e.g., smartphones) into daily life. The integration of personal electronic devices lead to the development of "apps," social dependence on personal electronic devices, and changes to the way individuals view communication and interpersonal interactions (note: the term interpersonal interaction may refer to any interaction that involves two or more individuals). The integration of personal electronic devices impacted an entire generation's view of how to relate to the world around them and to other individuals.
 - **Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic** - the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may refer to the ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19, which is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (note: COVID-19 may refer to a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic led to mass global infection, related deaths, global, government lead "shut downs," economic turmoil, mass unemployment, the use of masks, the need for social distancing, (note: the term social distancing, otherwise referred to as physical distancing, may refer to the act of keeping at least six feet apart from an individual when interacting or engaging with an individual) and changes to work patterns, education, travel, and personal interactions. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is impacting an entire generation's view of public

health, public health initiatives, health care, government support, government agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), social interaction, and social communication.

What are the characteristics of each generation?

Due to the varied influences on each generation, individuals from each generation, typically, have different characteristics. The specific characteristics of each generation may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - the Traditionalists are often practical, loyal, dedicated, and hard working. Traditionalists also tend to respect authority. Health care professionals should note that the characteristics of the Traditionalists were developed during global crises such as the Great Depression and World War II.
- **Baby Boomers** - the Baby Boomers are often optimistic, focused, disciplined, and goal-oriented. Baby Boomers tend to also be team-players. Health care professionals should note that the characteristics of the Baby Boomers were developed in the U.S. post World War II era, which was marked by growth and prosperity.
- **Generation X** - the individuals from Generation X are often realistic and independent. Individuals from Generation X often thrive when they have a work-life balance. Health care professionals should note that the characteristics of individuals from Generation X developed during a time period of great technological innovation, which came in the form of personal computers and the Internet.
- **Millennials** - Millennials are often hopeful and tend to be joy-seekers. Millennials also often possess the ability to adapt well to rapidly changing environments. Health care professionals should note that the characteristics of the Millennials developed against the backdrop of the Iraq War and in a time period which became dominated by the rise and integration of social media into the U.S. culture.
- **Generation Z** - the individuals from Generation Z are often extremely tech-savvy and dependent. The individuals from Generation Z also tend to excel when multi-tasking. Health care professionals should note that the characteristics of individuals from Generation Z developed during the age of the smartphone.

What are the motivations of each generation?

Due to the varied influences on each generation and the array of different characteristics, individuals from each generation, typically, have different professional motivations or driving forces. The specific professional motivations of each generation may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - the Traditionalists are often motivated by respect, recognition, and appreciation. Essentially, Traditionalists want to know they are valued, contributing members of an organization.
- **Baby Boomers** - the Baby Boomers are often motivated by loyalty, duty, and teamwork. Essentially, Baby Boomers want to be recognized for quality and effective team work with valued colleagues and peers.
- **Generation X** - individuals from Generation X are often motivated by work-life balance. Essentially, individuals from Generation X want to feel like their career is part of their life versus the center of their life.
- **Millennials** - the Millennials are often motivated by responsibility, the quality of their manager/management team, and diverse work experiences. Essentially, Millennials want to feel like they are led by ethical driven individuals dedicated to making an impact or change.
- **Generation Z** - the individuals from Generation Z are often motivated by creativity and individuality. Essentially, individuals from Generation Z want to feel like they are part of an independently driven, innovative organization.

What are the potential benefits of each generation?

Due to the varied influences, different characteristics, and motivations of each generation, individuals from each generation, typically, possess distinct professional benefits that can be valuable to an organization. The specific potential benefits of each generation may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - the Traditionalists can typically bring a strong work ethic and a commitment to an organization. The Traditionalists can also bring effective interpersonal communications skills to an organization (note: interpersonal communications skills may refer to a skill set centered around the adequate and effective exchange of information and messages between two or more individuals or parties). Health care professionals should note the following: Traditionalists'

interpersonal communications skills are often effective because they were cultivated over several decades.

- **Baby Boomers** - the Baby Boomers can typically bring an effective and efficient collaborative, team-work approach to organizations. The Baby Boomers can also bring decades of experience to an organization. Health care professionals should note that the Baby Boomers were influenced by the American civil rights movement, and thus, are more apt to engage in diverse teams when compared to other generations.
- **Generation X** - individuals from Generation X typically bring the ability to quickly develop new skill sets and the willingness to take on new challenges. Health care professionals should note that individuals from Generation X developed during the age of computer innovation and, thus, typically embrace change and growth.
- **Millennials** - the Millennials often bring a tech-savvy, educated, goal oriented approach to an organization. Health care professionals should note that Millennials tend to be highly educated.
- **Generation Z** - the individuals from Generation Z typically bring a motivated, creative approach to an organization. The individuals from Generation Z also often bring the ability to adapt to different technologies. Health care professionals should note that individuals from Generation Z may be the most technology proficient when compared to other generations.

What are the potential limitations of each generation?

Along with benefits, individuals from each generation may potentially possess distinct professional limitations. The specific potential limitations of each generation may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - the Traditionalists tend to be stereotyped as "old-fashioned" and unwilling to change. Traditionalists also tend to be the least tech-savvy of all the generations. Health care professionals should note that Traditionalists may be slow to adapt, change, or embrace innovative solutions that rely on rapid progression.
- **Baby Boomers** - the Baby Boomers tend to be stereotyped as self-involved, professional climbers. Baby Boomers may also not be as tech-savvy when

compared to other generations. Health care professionals should note that the Baby Boomers may "overwork" employees when in a management position.

- **Generation X** - individuals from Generation X may put personal life goals over professional life goals (i.e., individuals from Generation X may focus on personal life over professional life). Health care professionals should note that individuals from Generation X are often referred to as "slackers" by older generations.
- **Millennials** - the Millennials tend to be very dependent on technology and often appear more demanding than individuals from other generations. Health care professionals should note that Millennials may seem "disrespectful" when compared to older generations.
- **Generation Z** - the individuals from Generation Z may expect or demand others to conform to their particular needs and desires. Health care professionals should note that individuals from Generation Z often expect to be "rewarded" for their work.

How can health care organizations maximize the professional impact of each generation?

Health care professionals and health care organizations can maximize the professional impact of individuals from each generation by adequately harnessing the generation driven inclinations, tendencies, and preferences of each individual. Health care professionals should note that effective leaders work to maximize the impact of those being led. Specific information regarding strategies to maximize the professional impact of each generation may be found below.

- **Traditionalists** - health care professionals and health care organizations should provide Traditionalists with an opportunity to contribute, while recognizing Traditionalists for their contributions. Additionally, health care professionals and health care organizations should focus attention to the stability of a Traditionalists' position and organization.
- **Baby Boomers** - health care professionals and health care organizations should provide Baby Boomers with the opportunity to work alongside their colleagues and peers in a team environment. Additionally, health care professionals and health care organizations should consider placing Baby Boomers in mentor roles.

- **Generation X** - health care professionals and health care organizations should provide individuals from Generation X with opportunities for flexible work environments and opportunities for work-life balance. Additionally, health care professionals and health care organizations should provide individuals from Generation X with opportunities for personal development.
- **Millennials** - health care professionals and health care organizations should provide Millennials with personal attention and opportunities to work on potentially impactful projects. Additionally, health care professionals and health care organizations should provide Millennials with immediate feedback.
- **Generation Z** - health care professionals and health care organizations should provide individuals from Generation Z with opportunities to work independently on multiple projects at the same time. Additionally, health care professionals and health care organizations should provide individuals from Generation Z with opportunities to work with new and emerging technologies.

Section 1: Summary

The first key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into each generation. The five generations that can be found in the workforce include: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Typically, individuals from each generation possess different influences, characteristics, motivations, benefits, and limitations. Health care professionals and health care organizations can maximize the professional impact of individuals from each generation by adequately harnessing the generation driven inclinations, tendencies, and preferences of each individual.

Section 1: Key Concepts

- The first key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into each generation.
- Typically, individuals from each generation possess different influences, characteristics, motivations, benefits, and limitations.
- Health care professionals and health care organizations can maximize the professional impact of individuals from each generation by adequately harnessing the generation driven inclinations, tendencies, and preferences of each individual.

Section 1: Key Terms

Traditionalists - a group of individuals born between 1925 - 1945

Baby Boomers - a group of individuals born between 1946 - 1964

Generation X - a group of individuals born between 1965 - 1980

Millennials (also referred to as Generation Y) - a group of individuals born between 1981 - 2000

Generation Z - a group of individuals born between 2001 - 2020

The Great Depression - the worldwide economic depression that was sparked by the 1929 U.S. stock market crash

World War II - the global conflict that occurred from 1939 - 1945

Korean War - the conflict between North and South Korea that occurred from 1950 - 1953

Cold War - a period of high political tension between the Soviet Union and the United States

The assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy - the assassination of the 35th president of the U.S

American civil rights movement - the 1950s and 1960s protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the U.S.

Vietnam War - the conflict that took place in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from the 1950s to the mid 1970s

Apollo 11 - the 1969 NASA space mission, which was responsible for landing human beings on the moon

Watergate - the 1970s U.S. political scandal involving President Richard Milhous Nixon

HIV/AIDS epidemic - the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which began to gain public awareness in the U.S. in the early 1980s

Sexually transmitted infection (STI) - an infection transmitted through sexual contact that may be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites

The fall of the Berlin Wall - the pivotal event which marked the beginning of the fall of communism in the Soviet Union

Gulf War - the conflict, which occurred from August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991, between a coalition of forces from 35 nations led by the United States and Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait

The dot-com boom - the period of massive growth in the use and adoption of the Internet, which occurred in the mid to late 1990s

9/11 - the series of coordinated terrorist attacks by the terrorist group referred to as Al-Qaeda against the U.S. on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001

Iraq War - the conflict that began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by a United States-led coalition, which overthrew the government of Saddam Hussein

Social media - any electronically driven application that enables individuals to create and share content for the purposes of virtual communication

The Great Recession (also referred to as the 2008 Recession) - a period of general economic decline that occurred from late 2007 to late 2009

The integration of personal electronic devices - the incorporation of personal electronic devices (e.g., smartphones) into daily life

Interpersonal interaction - any interaction that involves two or more individuals

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic - the ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19, which is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) - a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person

Social distancing (otherwise referred to as physical distancing) - the act of keeping at least six feet apart from an individual when interacting or engaging with an individual

Interpersonal communications skills - a skill set centered around the adequate and effective exchange of information and messages between two or more individuals or parties

Section 1: Personal Reflection Question

How can insight into the generations help health care professionals understand and lead individuals from all five generations?

Section 2: Effective Communication

The second key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to establish effective communication. With that in mind, this section of the course will highlight concepts central to effective communication. The information found within this section was derived from materials provided by the Harvard Public Health Review, unless, otherwise, specified (Ratna, 2019).

What is communication?

- Communication may refer to the process of transmitting information and messages from one individual or party to another individual or party in order to obtain meaning and a common understanding.
- Effective communication occurs when information and messages are adequately transmitted, received, and understood.
- Health care professionals should note that communication may be verbal or nonverbal. Verbal communication may refer to the use of sounds and/or words to transmit information/messages (e.g., one individual says "hello" to another individual; one individual says "yes" or "no" to another individual). Nonverbal communication may refer to the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, posture, and/or other means that do not involve sounds and/or words to transmit information/messages (e.g., one individual gives another individual the "thumbs up" to indicate satisfaction and/or approval). Health care professionals should also note that exchanges between individuals or parties may include both verbal and nonverbal communication.

What is the communication process?

- The communication process may refer to the exchange of information and messages from a sender, through a selected channel, to a receiver.

What are the key elements of the communication process?

As previously alluded to, the key elements of the communication process include the following: sender, channel, and receiver. Additional elements of the communication process include: encoding, decoding, and feedback. Specific information regarding the aforementioned key elements of the communication process may be found below.

- **Sender** - the sender, in the context of the communication process, may refer to the individual or party who initiates communication by using sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact, body language, posture, and/or other means to transmit a message (i.e., the source that originates a message).
- **Channel** - the channel, in the context of the communication process, may refer to the medium which is used to carry communication (e.g., verbal messages; nonverbal cues; written words, numbers, and symbols).
- **Receiver** - the receiver, in the context of the communication process, may refer to the individual or party to whom a message is sent (i.e., the audience).
- **Encode** - the process of selecting sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact methods, body language, postures, and/or other means to generate a message.
- **Decode** - the process of receiving, interpreting, and attempting to understand an encoded message in order to obtain meaningful information.
- **Feedback** - a receiver's response to a sender's message (i.e., a receiver sends a message to a sender).

What are the essential steps involved in the communication process?

The essential steps involved in the communication process include the following:

1. A sender has a desire to convey an idea or concept via a message
2. A sender encodes an idea or concept into a message
3. A sender transmits a message via a channel
4. A receiver takes in the message sent by the sender
5. The receiver decodes the message

6. The receiver provides feedback to the sender

Health care professionals should note that noise may interfere with the previously highlighted steps and, ultimately, with the communication process. Noise, in the context of communication, may refer to anything that distorts or disrupts a message and/or the communication process. Health care professionals should also note that noise can act as a barrier to effective communication. Specific types of noise include the following: physical noise, physiological noise, psychological noise, and semantic noise. Specific information regarding the aforementioned types of noise may be found below.

- **Physical noise** - physical noise may refer to external or environmental stimulus that acts as a distraction (e.g., excessive talking, screaming, and loud music).
- **Physiological noise** - physiological noise may refer to a distraction related to physiological function(s) (e.g., hunger, thirst, and fatigue).
- **Psychological noise** - psychological noise may refer to preconceived notions (e.g., reputations, biases, and assumptions) that interfere with the encoding and decoding process.
- **Semantic noise** - semantic noise may refer to a disturbance that occurs in the transmission of a message that interferes with the interpretation of a message due to the ambiguity of chosen sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact methods, body language, postures, and/or other means of communication.

What is interpersonal communication?

- Interpersonal communication may refer to an exchange of information and messages between two or more individuals or parties.
- Health care professionals should note that interpersonal communication may occur in both personal and professional settings.

How may communication flow during interpersonal communication?

During interpersonal communication, communication typically flows in one direction or in two directions. Specific information regarding the possible directions of communication may be found below.

- **One-way communication** - one-way communication occurs when information/a message is sent in only one direction, from sender to receiver. Health care

professionals should note that, typically, one-way communication is used to inform, persuade, or command.

- **Two-way communication** - two-way communication occurs when information is transmitted and flows freely among individuals and parties (i.e., information is sent in a back and forth manner between individuals or parties). Health care professionals should note that two-way communication is essential to establishing a shared understanding among individuals or parties.

What is organizational communication?

- Organizational communication, in the context of this course, may refer to the process of sending and receiving information/messages among interrelated individuals within a given organization, such as a health care facility.
- Examples of organizational communication within a health care facility may include the following: a health care professional manager gives instructions to a health care professional; two health care professionals discuss a patient's medications; a health care professional provides education to a group of health care professionals; a health care professional writes another health care professional a note regarding a patient; health care professionals exchange emails regarding specific interventions.

How does communication typically move or flow within an organization?

Communication typically moves or flows, within an organization, in a vertical and/or a horizontal manner.

- **Vertical communication** - vertical communication, within the context of organizational communication, may refer to the flow of communication between individuals associated with the same organization who are on different levels of the organization's hierarchy. Health care professionals should note that vertical communication may flow in a downwards or upwards manner. Downward communication occurs when organizational leaders or managers share information with lower-level employees (e.g., a nurse manager gives a nurse instructions). Upward communication occurs when lower-level employees share information with organizational leaders or managers (e.g., a health care professional informs a manager of a safety hazard). Health care professionals should also note that vertical communication is essential to creating and

maintaining a shared understanding between organizational leaders, managers, and employees across all five generations.

- **Horizontal communication** - horizontal communication, within the context of organizational communication, may refer to the flow of communication between individuals and/or departments that are on the same level of a given organization (e.g., a health care manager provides information to another health care manager; an intensive care nurse provides another intensive care nurse with relevant patient information). Health care professionals should note that horizontal communication may be an essential element to effective team work within a given health care facility.

Health care professionals should note that communication may also flow into and out of an organization. For example, during a health care emergency, such as an infectious disease pandemic, (note: the term infectious disease may refer to an illnesses caused by bacteria, viruses, and/or fungi, which enters the human body, multiplies, and leads to infection; term pandemic may refer to a global or worldwide outbreak of disease; outbreak of disease over a large area) information may flow into a health care facility from government officials, while information about health care may flow out of a health care facility to specific government officials.

Why is effective communication important to organizations such as health care facilities?

Effective communication is important to organizations, such as health care facilities, for a variety of different reasons including the following: promotes safe and effective health care; promotes and fosters medical error prevention; creates the potential to optimize patient care; promotes effective team work; and promotes and fosters employee grievance resolution. Specific information on the aforementioned reasons why effective communication is important to organizations, such as health care facilities, may be found below. The information found below was derived from materials provided by the Joint Commission (Joint Commission, 2021).

- **Promotes safe and effective health care** - first and foremost, effective communication can help health care professionals administer safe and effective health care. Essentially, effective communication can help health care professionals transmit and receive vital patient information essential to health care such as the following: patient vital signs, patient lab results, patient medication information, patient symptoms, and patient disease states.

- **Medical error prevention** - the term medical error may refer to a preventable adverse effect of care that may or may not be evident or causes harm to a patient. In an ideal health care climate, medical errors would not occur - however, the simple truth of the matter is that they often do occur. That being the case, health care professionals should note that effective communication can help prevent medical errors from occurring. For example, proper medication labeling, adequate alarm systems, and patient education can be methods to communicate key information that can help prevent medical errors from occurring.
- **Creates the potential to optimize patient care** - by helping to promote safe and effective health care and by reducing medical errors from occurring, effective communication can, ultimately, create the potential to optimize patient care.
- **Promotes effective teamwork** - communication is an essential element of effective team work. Within the team setting, communication can be used to allow individuals to understand their roles, set goals, transmit and receive points of interest, provide status reports, share knowledge, make adjustments, and, ultimately, achieve desired results. In essence, in a health care setting, effective communication can help health care professionals work as a cohesive unit to ensure patients receive the care they need.
- **Employee grievance resolution** - a grievance, as it pertains to a professional setting, may refer to a matter of concern regarding a potential violation of work-related rights, which is formally submitted, without fear of retaliation, and requires a formal response. In a health care setting an employee, from any generation, may file a grievance for a variety of different reasons including the following: work-related rights violation, patient safety issue, and/or work hazard. That being said, independent of the reason behind a formal employee grievance and the employee's generation, communication is paramount to the employee grievance resolution process. To highlight the importance of communication in the employee grievance resolution process, a model for resolving employee grievances is presented below. Health care professionals should note that a form of communication is involved in every step of the presented model.

Model for Resolving Grievances

- **Step 1:** Encourage employees to share concerns and to seek grievance resolution - health care administrators should ensure that all health care facility staff and management encourage employees to share their concerns

and to seek grievance resolution (note: the first step towards resolving employee grievances begins well before a formal employee grievance is even submitted). In essence, the first step to resolving employee grievances is to make sure existing employee grievance policies and procedures help establish a professional culture where the voicing of employee concerns and grievances is welcomed by the health care organization and resolved quickly to avoid grievance escalation.

- **Step 2:** Designate an employee(s) to head or manage the grievance resolution process - every health care organization should have a designated employee(s) to head/manage the process of resolving formal employee grievances. Typically, the designated employee heads/manages the grievance resolution process from beginning to end (i.e., the designated employee handles the grievance resolution process from the time a formal employee grievance is submitted until the time the formal employee grievance is officially resolved). The designated employee may also serve as a contact individual for the employee who submitted the formal employee grievance. Establishing a contact individual for employees during the grievance resolution process can help foster effective communication, which is often essential to the grievance resolution process.
- **Step 3:** Acknowledge the receipt of a formal employee grievance - if a formal employee grievance is submitted, the health care organization should acknowledge, in some fashion, that the formal employee grievance was received. Doing so can inform the employee, who submitted the formal employee grievance, that the formal employee grievance resolution process has been initiated. Additionally, it can indirectly or directly inform the employee that his or her formal employee grievance, in some way, has been heard. The simple truth of the matter is, that when individuals have a concern or grievance, they want to be heard by those in a position to resolve or elevate the concern or grievance. By letting the employee know his or her formal employee grievance was received, it can let the employee know he or she is being heard by those who can work to resolve the grievance. Furthermore, acknowledging the receipt of a formal employee grievance can potentially help avoid or prevent grievance escalation. Often, when individuals feel like their concerns or grievances are not listened to or heard, they escalate the process of voicing their concerns or grievances until they are heard. When individuals escalate the process of voicing their concerns or

grievances until they are heard, negative results can occur such as: additional grievances, disruptions, disturbances, and intense arguments, all of which should be avoided in the health care setting due to their potential to negatively impact patient care. Thus, by acknowledging the receipt of a formal employee grievance, health care organizations can let their employees know they are being heard and potentially avoid grievance escalation.

- **Step 4:** Gather information - once the receipt of a formal employee grievance is acknowledged, those responsible for managing the employee grievance resolution process should begin gathering relevant information. Information regarding a grievance may come from many different sources including: the employees involved in the grievance, other employees not directly involved in the grievance, additional witnesses, organizations' policies, as well as state and federal laws. With that said, health care professionals should note that objectivity is necessary when gathering information.
- **Step 5:** Document the process of employee grievance resolution - the employee grievance resolution process should be documented (i.e., the formal grievance, any employee statements, any information relating to grievance resolution or the grievance decision/the health care organization's formal decision regarding a submitted grievance should be officially documented). Documentation can provide information to employees regarding the grievance resolution process and the health care organization's formal decision. Documentation can also prove to be valuable if any state, federal, or attorney intervention, regarding a grievance, occurs.
- **Step 6:** Formulate a decision - once all relevant information has been gathered and documented, a formal decision regarding an employee grievance must, eventually, be made. Health care professionals should note that formal decisions regarding an employee grievance must be made within the designated time line specified in their organization's employee grievance policies and procedures (e.g., if an organization's employee grievance policies and procedures specify that an official decision regarding an employee grievance must be reached 15 - 30 days after the formal submission of the employee grievance then the decision should be reached within the aforementioned time period).
- **Step 7:** Follow up with the employee(s) involved in a grievance - once an organization reaches an official decision regarding a grievance, the

organization should formally follow up with the employee who submitted the grievance and any employees involved in the grievance (i.e., an organization should provide the employee(s) involved in a grievance with documentation).

- **Proper allocation of resources** - effective communication can also help health care professionals adequately allocate health care resources to patients. In times of emergency or crisis, health care resources may be in short supply. When health care resources are in short supply, effective communication can help health care professionals transmit and receive information regarding resources to help prevent waste and to help ensure all patients have equal access to the resources that are available.
- **Health care professional and patient satisfaction** - lastly, effective communication between fellow health care professionals and among health care professionals and patients can lead to the formation of personal and professional relationships that possesses the potential to bring both health care professionals and patients satisfaction regarding their health care settings.

Section 2: Summary

The second key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to establish effective communication. Communication may refer to the process of transmitting information and messages from one individual or party to another individual or party in order to obtain meaning and a common understanding. Effective communication occurs when information and messages are adequately transmitted, received, and understood. Health care professionals and health care organizations should work to establish effective communication across all five generations within their health care facility.

Section 2: Key Concepts

- The second key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to establish effective communication.
- Effective communication occurs when information and messages are adequately transmitted, received, and understood.
- Communication may be verbal and/or nonverbal.
- The key elements of the communication process include: sender, channel, receiver, encoding, decoding, and feedback.

- The essential steps of the communication process include the following: a sender has a desire to convey an idea or concept via a message; a sender encodes an idea or concept into a message; a sender transmits a message via a channel; a receiver takes in the message sent by the sender; the receiver decodes the message; the receiver provides feedback to the sender.
- Noise may interfere with the communication process.
- One-way communication occurs when information is sent in only one direction, from sender to receiver.
- Two-way communication occurs when information is transmitted and flows freely among individuals and parties.
- Communication typically moves or flows, within an organization, in a vertical and/or a horizontal manner; communication may also flow into and out of an organization.
- Effective communication is important to organizations, such as health care facilities, for a variety of different reasons including the following: promotes safe and effective health care; promotes and fosters medical error prevention; creates the potential to optimize patient care; promotes effective team work; promotes and fosters employee grievance resolution; can help ensure the proper allocation of resources; and impacts health care professional and patient satisfaction.

Section 2: Key Terms

Communication - the process of transmitting information and messages from one individual or party to another individual or party in order to obtain meaning and a common understanding

Verbal communication - the use of sounds and/or words to transmit information/messages

Nonverbal communication - the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, posture, and/or other means that do not involve sounds and/or words to transmit information/messages

Communication process - the exchange of information and messages from a sender, through a selected channel, to a receiver

Sender (within the context of the communication process) - the individual or party who initiates communication by using sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact, body language, posture, or other means to transmit a message; the source that originates a message

Channel (within the context of the communication process) - the medium which is used to carry communication

Receiver (within the context of the communication process) - the individual or party to whom a message is sent; the audience

Encode - the process of selecting sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact methods, body language, postures, and/or other means to generate a message

Decode - the process of receiving, interpreting, and attempting to understand an encoded message in order to obtain meaningful information

Feedback - a receiver's response to a sender's message

Noise (within the context of communication) - anything that distorts or disrupts a message and/or the communication process

Physical noise - external or environmental stimulus that acts as a distraction

Physiological noise - a distraction related to physiological function(s)

Psychological noise - preconceived notions

Semantic noise - a disturbance that occurs in the transmission of a message that interferes with the interpretation of a message due to the ambiguity of chosen sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact methods, body language, postures, and/or other means of communication

Interpersonal communication - an exchange of information and messages between two or more individuals or parties

Organizational communication (within the context of this course) - the process of sending and receiving information/messages among interrelated individuals within a given organization such as a health care facility

Vertical communication (within the context of organizational communication) - the flow of communication between individuals associated with the same organization who are on different levels of the organization's hierarchy

Horizontal communication (within the context of organizational communication) - the flow of communication between individuals and/or departments that are on the same level of a given organization

Infectious disease - an illnesses caused by bacteria, viruses, and/or fungi, which enters the human body, multiplies, and leads to infection

Pandemic - a global or worldwide outbreak of disease; outbreak of disease over a large area

Medical error prevention - a preventable adverse effect of care that may or may not be evident or causes harm to a patient

Grievance (as it pertains to a professional setting) - a matter of concern regarding a potential violation of work-related rights, which is formally submitted, without fear of retaliation, and requires a formal response

Section 3: Personal Reflection Question

How can effective communication help health care professionals understand and lead individuals from all five generations?

Section 3: Cultural Trends Impacting Today's Health Care System

The third key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system (note: possessing insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system can help health care professionals relate to each other, which in turn can help build commonality, common bonds, and cultural bridges across the generations, which, subsequently, can help health care professionals effectively understanding and lead individuals from all five generations). This section of the course will highlight and review some of the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system. The information found within this section was derived from materials provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) unless, otherwise, specified (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021).

Social Media

- One of the biggest cultural trends impacting today's health care system is the use of social media. As previously mentioned, the term social media may refer to any electronically driven application that enables individuals to create and share content for the purposes of virtual communication. Since its initial inception, social media has impacted the greater cultural constructs it has been a part of, and, in more recent years, the use of social media has impacted the health care system. That being the case, it is essential that all five generations possess insight into the use of social media in the context of the health care system. Specific information regarding the use of social media in the context of the health care system can be found below. The information found below was derived from materials provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021).
- The regulations and laws included in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) apply and relate to the use of social media - the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) may refer to the specific federal regulations or laws which provide provisions for safeguarding medical information. HIPAA regulations/laws relate to the use of social media under one very straightforward umbrella concept, which is as follows: under no circumstance should health care professionals use or disclose protected health information (PHI) on any form of social media (i.e., health care professionals should never share any health-related information, that may be used to identify a patient, on any form of social media). Health care professionals should note the following: protected health information (PHI) may refer to any information about health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that is created or collected by a covered entity. Health care professionals should also note the following: health care professionals should avoid using any individually identifiable health information, that may link an individual to the health care system in any way, on social media; individually identifiable health information is information, including demographic data, that relates to the following - an individual's past, present or future physical or mental health or condition, the provision of health care to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe it can be used to identify the individual; individually identifiable health information is information that may be used to identify an individual and their relationship to

the health care system; examples of individually identifiable health information may include: patients' names, birth dates, home addresses, and Social Security Numbers.

- When in doubt do not use health-related information on social media forms - if a health care professional has any doubt whether he or she should use specific health-related information on social media, then the health care professional should not use the specific health-related information on social media. Health care professionals should note that the aforementioned concept may be referred to as the "When in Doubt Rule."
- Health care professionals should not use patient pictures on social media - as previously indicated, health care professionals should not use any information that may link an individual to the health care system on social media, which includes pictures of patients. Health care professionals should note the following: individuals may be identified in pictures and then eventually linked to the health care system, thus, health care professionals should avoid using patient pictures on social media.
- Health care professionals should not use health-related information about rare diseases or rare injuries on social media - health-related information about rare diseases or injuries could link a specific individual to the health care system, even if the health-related details do not include any individually identifiable health information (e.g., a third party could observe health-related information about a rare disease or injury on social media, and then through the process of elimination or through the process of correlating information from other sources, the third party could use said information to identify a patient). Health care professionals should note that the When in Doubt Rule applies to information about rare diseases or rare injuries on social media.
- Health care professionals should consider that information deleted on some social media channels may be saved in some capacity - essentially, just because information is deleted on some social media channels, it does not mean it is not saved in some capacity - meaning that once information is posted on some social media channels it may perpetually exist in some format even if it is "removed" or "deleted" from the social media channel. Health care professionals should note the following: health care professionals should consider the previous concept before they use health-related information on social media.

- Health care professionals should consider the repercussions for violating HIPAA regulations before they use health-related information on social media - violations of HIPAA regulations could result in disciplinary actions for health care professionals. Disciplinary actions for HIPAA violations could range from formal reprimands, termination, fines, and even jail time. Health care professionals should consider the aforementioned possibilities before they use health-related information on social media - doing so, could help prevent a health care professional from violating HIPAA regulations, and experiencing the negative repercussions that may follow such a violation. In essence, health care professionals should ask themselves the following question before using any form of social media: is the use of health-related information on social media worth jeopardizing my career? If the answer is no to the previous question, then maybe health care professionals should not proceed to use such information on social media. Health care professionals should note that health care organizations may monitor health care professionals use of social media, especially if the social media channels being used by a health care professional relate to a specific health care organization.
- Health care organizations should develop policies regarding the use of social media - health care organizations should have policies, regarding the use of social media, in place to help guide health care professionals. Health care professionals should be aware of such policies. Health care professionals should note the following: if no such policies exist within a health care organization, health care professionals should consider developing such policies.
- Health care organizations should ensure health care professionals understand internal policies related to social media - it is not enough for a health care organization to have social media policies. Health care organizations should ensure health care professionals are aware of social media policies and understand them. Health care professionals should note the following: health care professionals should seek out health care organizations' policies regarding social media.
- Health care organizations should educate health care professionals regarding the use of social media - education seminars, courses, and/or lectures may be used to educate health care professionals regarding the use of social media. Health care professionals are encouraged to participate in any educational offerings to further their knowledge and understanding of social media. Health care professionals

should note the following: health care organizations should note the preferred learning styles of each generation, and include such learning styles in related education seminars, courses, and/or lectures (e.g., Traditionalists may prefer to learn through peer interaction; Baby Boomers may prefer to learn in group setting; individuals from Generation X may prefer to learn in a flexible environment; Millennials and individuals from Generation Z may prefer to learn from individuals that provide feedback).

Substance Use Disorders

Another cultural trend impacting today's health care system is the increasing prevalence of substance use disorders (note: a substance use disorder may refer to a medical condition characterized by a cluster of symptoms that do not allow an individual to stop using legal or illegal substances such as: alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and/or opioids). Specific information related to substance use disorders may be found below. The information found below was derived from materials provided by the CDC and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (CDC, 2021; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2021).

- **Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2** - due to the increased prevalence of substance use disorders, U.S. laws, regarding patients' rights, were modified and updated to facilitate substance abuse treatment. One such law is Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2, otherwise referred to as 42 CFR Part 2. Specific information regarding 42 CFR Part 2 and substance abuse disorders may be found below.
 - The goal of the recent modifications/updates to 42 CFR Part 2 was to encourage individuals to seek substance abuse treatment by removing the potential fear of privacy violations and the subsequent legal and social ramifications that could follow a privacy violation.
 - 42 CFR Part 2 heightens the restrictions, even beyond those of HIPAA, on an individual's protected health information related to addiction treatment.
 - 42 CFR Part 2 protects the confidentiality of records containing the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of any patient maintained in connection with the performance of any federally assisted program or activity relating to substance use disorder education, prevention, training, treatment, rehabilitation, or research.

- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: health care professionals may not disclose information that identifies individuals as having, having had, or referred for a substance use disorder without the patient's consent unless a 42 CFR Part 2 exception applies.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: health care professionals may not acknowledge that a person is a patient in a substance use program.
- Health care professionals should note that 42 CFR Part 2 permits the disclosure of health-related information under certain circumstances without consent such as a medical emergency.
- Health care professionals should note that when a disclosure is made in connection with a medical emergency, the 42 CFR Part 2 program must document in the patient's record the name and affiliation of the recipient of the information, the name of the individual making the disclosure, the date and time of the disclosure, and the nature of the emergency.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates that individuals may not use 42 CFR Part 2 program information to initiate or substantiate criminal charges against a patient.
- Health care professionals should note that they must limit the disclosure of substance use disorder/ substance use disorder treatment-related information to the minimum amount of information necessary for the permitted purpose of the disclosure.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: if a minor patient acting alone has the legal capacity under the applicable state law to apply for and obtain substance use disorder treatment, any written consent for disclosure may be given only by the minor patient.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: no person may require any patient to carry in their immediate possession while away from the part 2 program premises any card or other object which would identify the patient as having a substance use disorder.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: if a part 2 program discontinues operations or is taken over or acquired by another program, it must remove patient identifying information from its records or destroy its

records, including sanitizing any associated hard copy or electronic media, to render the patient identifying information non-retrievable.

- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: 42 CFR Part 2 regulations do not prohibit a part 2 program from giving a patient access to their own records, including the opportunity to inspect and copy any records that the part 2 program maintains about the patient.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: if a patient consents to a disclosure of their records, a part 2 program may disclose those records in accordance with that consent to any person or category of persons identified or generally designated in the consent, except that disclosures to central registries and in connection with criminal justice referrals.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: patient identifying information may be disclosed to medical personnel to the extent necessary to meet a bona fide medical emergency in which the patient's prior informed consent cannot be obtained.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: patient identifying information may be disclosed to medical personnel of the FDA who assert a reason to believe that the health of any individual may be threatened by an error in the manufacture, labeling, or sale of a product under FDA jurisdiction, and that the information will be used for the exclusive purpose of notifying patients or their physicians of potential dangers.
- 42 CFR Part 2 indicates the following: an order authorizing the disclosure of patient records for purposes other than criminal investigation or prosecution may be applied for by any person having a legally recognized interest in the disclosure which is sought.
- **Opioids** - individuals suffering from substance use disorders may misuse/abuse opioids. Health care professionals should note that individuals suffering from substance use disorders may misuse/abuse prescription opioids such as pharmaceutical Fentanyl or illegal opioids such as heroin (note: prescription opioids may refer to opioids prescribed by a health care professional to treat pain; pharmaceutical Fentanyl may refer to a synthetic opioid, approved for treating severe pain; Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine; heroin may refer to an illegal, highly addictive opioid drug processed from morphine and extracted from certain poppy plants).

- **Opioid overdose deaths** - an individual suffering from a substance use disorder involving opioids may be at risk for an opioid overdose, and related death. Health care professionals should be aware of the following signs of an opioid overdose: constricted pupils, loss of consciousness, slow, shallow breathing, choking sounds, limp body, and pale, blue cold skin. Health care professionals should also note the following: the medication naloxone, an opioid antagonist, may be used for the emergency treatment of a known or suspected opioid overdose; naloxone may be used to reverse the life-threatening respiratory depression associated with an opioid overdose; a variety of naloxone products (e.g., nasal spray, injection, auto-injection) are available to respond to a potential opioid overdose; health care professionals may be called upon to administer naloxone in cases of a known or suspected opioid overdose.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the use and need for masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) is a cultural trend impacting today's health care system (note: PPE may refer to equipment designed to protect, shield, and minimize exposure to hazards that may cause serious injury, illness, and/or disease). Specific information regarding masks and PPE may be found below.

- COVID-19 spreads primarily from person to person through respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets travel into the air when individuals cough, sneeze, and/or talk. Respiratory droplets can land in the mouths or noses of other individuals leading to potential COVID-19 virus transmission. Masks are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from reaching individuals' mouths or noses. Ultimately, masks, if worn correctly, can help prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- Health care professionals should wear medical procedure masks, otherwise referred to as surgical masks or disposable face masks, when treating or caring for patients (note: medical procedure masks may refer to single-use masks that are not made of cloth and are not designed to be washed or laundered).
- To effectively don a medical procedure mask, health care professionals should engage in hand hygiene before touching a mask; health care professionals should ensure the mask completely covers his or her mouth and nose (note: hand hygiene may refer to the process of cleaning hands in order to prevent contamination and/or infections). A health care professional should also ensure a

mask fits snugly to the face and below the chin. Health care professionals should note that, often, masks can be secured to the head and neck via separate ties.

- To effectively remove a medical procedure mask, health care professionals should untie the bottom ties, if applicable, followed by the upper ties. The mask should then be pulled off and discarded in the appropriate waste container. A health care professional should not touch a contaminated mask. Health care professionals should wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after removing a mask or other types of PPE.
- Health care professionals should note that a mask is not, necessarily, a substitute for social distancing; masks should still be worn in addition to staying at least six feet apart, especially when indoors (note: the term social distancing, otherwise referred to as physical distancing, may refer to the act of keeping at least six feet apart from an individual when interacting or engaging with an individual).
- Health care professionals should note the following: masks should be worn any time individuals are traveling on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transportation; masks should be worn when traveling into, U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations; individuals age two and older should wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in their household.
- The CDC does not recommend using masks with exhalation valves or vents. The hole in the material may allow respiratory droplets to escape and reach others.
- The CDC does not recommend using face shields or goggles as substitutes for masks.
- Health care professionals should note the following: face shields and goggles are primarily used to protect the eyes of the person wearing them; goggles do not cover the nose and mouth; typically, face shields have large gaps below and alongside the face, where respiratory droplets may escape or enter; face shields may not be as effective as masks.
- Health care professionals should avoid placing a mask around the neck or up on the forehead.
- Health care professionals should note that some children over the age of two and some individuals with disabilities may not be able to wear a mask (note: a child under two years of age should not wear a mask).

- Health care professionals should note that some individuals with underlying medical conditions (e.g., asthma) may not be able to wear a mask.
- Health care professionals should note that wearing a mask does not raise the carbon dioxide (CO₂) level in the air individuals breathe.
- Health care professionals should take steps to ensure that everyone adheres to source control measures while in a health care facility (e.g., post signs at the entrance and in strategic places) (note: source control may refer to the use of well-fitting cloth masks, facemasks, or respirators to cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent the spread of respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing).
- Health care professionals should wear a facemask, also referred to as a surgical mask or a procedure mask, at all times while they are in their health care facility of employment, including in break rooms or other spaces where they might encounter co-workers.
- Health care professionals should note the following: the potential for exposure to the COVID-19 virus is not limited to direct patient care interactions; transmission can occur through unprotected exposures to asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic co-workers in break rooms or co-workers or visitors in other common areas.
- Health care professionals should note the following: facemasks are preferred over cloth face masks for health care professionals as facemasks offer both source control and protection for the wearer against exposure to splashes and sprays of infectious material from others.
- Health care professionals should note the following: cloth masks are not considered to be PPE and should not be worn for the care of patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or other situations where the use of a respirator or a facemask is recommended.
- Cloth masks should not be worn instead of a respirator or facemask if more than source control is required.
- To reduce the number of times health care professionals touch their face and put themselves at potential risk for self-contamination, health care professionals should consider continuing to wear the same respirator or facemask throughout their entire work shift, instead of intermittently switching back to their cloth mask.

- Health care professionals should wear eye protection in addition to their facemasks to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during patient care encounters, when applicable.
- Health care professionals should ensure that eye protection is compatible with a respirator, when applicable, so there is not interference with proper positioning of the eye protection or with the fit or seal of the respirator.
- Health care professionals should wear an N95 or equivalent or higher-level respirator, instead of a facemask, for aerosol generating procedures and/or surgical procedures that might pose higher risk for transmission if the patient has COVID-19 (note: a N95 respirator may refer to a particulate-filtering, face piece respirator that filters at least 95% of airborne particles; a N95 respirator should fit firmly against the face in a manner that does not leave any open gaps between the skin and the N95 respirator seal).
- Health care professionals should perform a user seal check when utilizing a respirator (note: a user seal check may refer to a procedure conducted by the respirator wearer to determine if the respirator is being properly worn).
- Health care professionals should note the following: during a positive pressure user seal check, the respirator user should exhale gently while blocking the paths for air to exit the facepiece; a successful check is when the facepiece is slightly pressurized before increased pressure causes outward leakage.
- Health care professionals should note the following: during a negative pressure user seal check, the respirator user inhales sharply while blocking the paths for air to enter the facepiece; a successful check is when the facepiece collapses slightly under the negative pressure that is created with this procedure.
- Health care professionals should note the following: not every respirator can be checked using both positive and negative pressure; health care professionals should refer to the manufacturer's instructions for conducting user seal checks on any specific respirator.
- Health care professionals who enter the room of a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should adhere to Standard Precautions and use a NIOSH-approved N95 or equivalent or higher-level respirator (or facemask if a respirator is not available), gown, gloves, and eye protection, when applicable.

- Health care professionals should perform hand hygiene before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and after removing PPE, including gloves (note: hand hygiene after removing PPE is particularly important to remove any pathogens that might have been transferred to bare hands during the removal process).
- Health care professionals should remove their respirator or facemask, perform hand hygiene, and put on their cloth mask when leaving the health care facility at the end of their shift, when applicable.

Telehealth

Lastly, to help prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, the incorporation of telehealth into patient care and services is rapidly increasing and becoming a major cultural trend impacting today's health care system. Specific information regarding telehealth may be found below. The information found below was derived from materials provided by the CDC (CDC, 2020).

- Telehealth may refer to the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.
- A term that is often associated with telehealth is telemedicine. Telemedicine may refer to the practice of medicine using electronic communication, information technology, or other means between a physician in one location, and a patient in another location, with or without an intervening health care professional. Health care professionals should note that telemedicine is a subset of telehealth, which specifically involves a clinician providing medical services via telehealth technology.
- Another term that is often associated with telehealth is eHealth. The term eHealth may refer to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health and health care. Health care professionals should note that eHealth is also a subset of telehealth.
- A range of technologies may be used to support the delivery of telehealth including the following: text messaging, smartphone apps for mobile phones, websites and computers, standard and wireless telephones, live and asynchronous video, virtual reality, and/or artificial intelligence (AI).

- The different categories or types of telehealth include the following:
 - **Live video** - live video, in the context of telehealth services, may refer to a live stream, two-way interaction between a patient and a health care professional(s) where both parties are communicating from different locations. Health care professionals should note that live video telehealth services, typically, occur in real time (real time may refer to the actual time during which a meeting, interaction, process, or event occurs; live).
 - **Store-and-forward** - store-and-forward may refer to a type of telehealth which involves the transmission of recorded health information (e.g., an x-ray or prerecorded video) through electronic communication systems to a health care professional who evaluates the information and provides a health care-related service to a patient(s). Health care professionals should note that store-and-forward telehealth services do not, typically, occur in real time.
 - **Remote patient monitoring** - remote patient monitoring may refer to the use of telehealth-related technologies to collect individuals' health care-related data in one location and electronically transmit it to health care professionals in a different location for assessment and recommendations.
 - **Mobile health** - mobile health may refer to the use of mobile communication devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets) to support health care, public health, and education. Health care professionals should note that mobile health applications can help individuals manage chronic conditions, track sleep patterns or fitness, schedule health care appointments, and/or send public health alerts via text message.
- The potential benefits of telehealth include the following:
 - **Telehealth has the potential to reach more individuals compared to the traditional in-person programs** - telehealth is less restricted by distance, geography, and time barriers - potentially creating greater accessibility to individuals seeking health care.
 - **Patient convenience** - as previously alluded to, telehealth may be more convenient for patients. Essentially, telehealth can help patients avoid traveling to health care facilities, transportation costs associated with traditional in-person health care, any anxiety typically associated with

traditional in-person health care, and long wait times. Additionally, telehealth offers patients the option to receive access to health care in locations where they are most comfortable.

- **May be used to help prevent patient exposure to infectious diseases** - telehealth possesses the potential to help prevent patient exposure to infectious diseases. In essence, telehealth-related technologies can be a means to provide health care services to patients while keeping them separated, quarantined, and/or simply away from situations which may expose them to infectious agents. Health care professionals should note the following: the application of telehealth may be beneficial in times of infectious disease outbreaks and/or pandemics; in the context of infectious disease prevention, the application of telehealth may be beneficial to specific patient populations such as older adults and individuals with compromised immune systems (note: the term older adult may refer to an individual 65 years or older).
- **Timely access to locally unavailable health care services** - telehealth can potentially offer individuals timely access to vital health care services that may not be, otherwise, available in their local vicinity or area of residence. In other words, telehealth can potentially provide patients with increased access to health care specialists, health care services, and health care programs which may not be available and/or offered to them in the traditional in-person health care capacity.
- **Increased communication** - telehealth-related technologies, such as specific mobile health applications, can allow patients and health care professionals the option to communicate health care information in a timely, effortless manner not offered in the traditional in-person health care capacity.
- **Allows for real-time interactions between patients and health care professionals** - live video telehealth services can provide patients and health care professionals the opportunity to communicate in real time in order to simulate and achieve the goals of traditional in-person health care interactions as well as share vital health care information. Health care professionals should note that live video telehealth technologies may be used by health care professionals to provide health care services to patients that may not have accessible access to health care due to their

geographic location. Health care professionals should also note that live video telehealth technologies may be used by health care professionals to provide health care services to patients that may not be able to obtain health care in traditional in-person settings due to a physical disability or other health-related reason.

- **Allows for the transmission of recorded health information (e.g., an x-ray or prerecorded video)** - store-and-forward telehealth technologies can transmit recorded health care information (e.g., an x-ray or prerecorded video) through electronic communication systems to health care professionals who may use such information to evaluate and provide health care services to patients in need. Health care professionals should note that store-and-forward telehealth technologies may be used by health care professionals to provide health care services to patients that may not have accessible access to health care due to their geographic location. Health care professionals should also note that store-and-forward telehealth technologies may be used by health care professionals to provide health care services to patients that may not be able to obtain health care in traditional in-person settings due to a physical disability or other health-related reason.
- **Remote patient monitoring** - telehealth can allow for remote patient monitoring. As previously highlighted, remote patient monitoring may refer to the use of telehealth-related technologies to collect individuals' health care-related data in one location and electronically transmit it to health care professionals in a different location for assessment and recommendations. Health care professionals should note the following: remote patient monitoring programs can collect a wide range of health care data from the point of care, such as: vital signs, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, blood oxygen levels, heart rate, and electrocardiograms; remote patient monitoring may be beneficial in times of infectious disease outbreaks and/or pandemics; in the context of infectious disease prevention, the application of remote patient monitoring may be beneficial to specific patient populations such as older adults and individuals with compromised immune systems; remote patient monitoring may also be beneficial to disabled individuals. Health care professionals should also note the following: remote patient monitoring

may be used by health care professionals as a means to help reduce hospital admissions and hospital readmissions.

- **Allows access to mobile health** - as previously highlighted, mobile health may refer to the use of mobile communication devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets) to support health care, public health, and education. Mobile health applications may be used to help individuals manage chronic conditions, track sleep patterns or fitness, schedule health care appointments, and/or send public health alerts via text message.
- **Patient prescriptions may be ordered via telehealth technologies** - patient prescriptions may be ordered via telehealth technologies based on information obtained by telehealth platforms and data collected via remote patient monitoring.
- **Potential reductions in health care costs** - evidence suggests that telehealth possesses the potential to reduce health care costs by increasing the efficiency of health care delivery, decreasing the costs associated with patient transportation and by reducing hospital admissions and hospital readmissions.
- **Improved patient outcomes** - telehealth can potentially increase individuals' access to health care, allow for remote patient monitoring, and be used as a means to reduce hospital admissions and hospital readmissions as well as the transmission of infectious diseases - all of which can lead to improved patient outcomes.
- **Improved patient satisfaction** - finally, as previously alluded to, telehealth possesses the potential to make health care more convenient, flexible, and accessible - all of which can work to improve patient satisfaction.
- Specific laws regarding telehealth may vary by state. Therefore, a health care professional should be familiar with his or her particular state(s) of licensure's relevant telehealth-related laws.
- Health care professionals should note the following general information regarding telehealth-related state laws/regulations: forty-nine state boards, plus the medical boards of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, require that physicians engaging in telemedicine are licensed in the state in which the patient is located; twelve state boards issue a special purpose license,

telemedicine license or certificate, or license to practice medicine across state lines to allow for the practice of telemedicine; six state boards require physicians to register if they wish to practice across state lines; all states and the District of Columbia provide reimbursement for some form of live video in Medicaid fee-for-service; fourteen states reimburse for store-and-forward; twenty-two states reimburse for remote patient monitoring; eight states reimburse for all three, with certain limitations; forty states and the District of Columbia govern private payer telehealth reimbursement policies; six states have private payer parity laws.

Section 3: Summary

The third key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system. Health care professionals should note that possessing insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system can help health care professionals relate to each other, which in turn can help build commonality, common bonds, and cultural bridges across the generations, which, subsequently, can help health care professionals effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations. Some of the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system include the following: the use of social media; the increasing prevalence of substance use disorders; the use and need for masks and PPE; and the incorporation of telehealth into patient care and services. Finally, health care professional should work to pursue opportunities to remain up to date on relevant cultural trends to increase awareness and optimize patient care.

Section 3: Key Concepts

- The third key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to obtain insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system.
- Possessing insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system can help health care professionals relate to each other, which in turn can help build commonality, common bonds, and cultural bridges across the generations, which, subsequently, can help health care professionals effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations.
- Some of the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system include the following: the use of social media; the increasing prevalence of

substance use disorders; the use and need for masks and PPE; and the incorporation of telehealth into patient care and services.

Section 3: Key Terms

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) - the specific federal regulations or laws which provide provisions for safeguarding medical information

Protected health information (PHI) - any information regarding health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that is created or collected by a covered entity

Substance use disorder - a medical condition characterized by a cluster of symptoms that do not allow an individual to stop using legal or illegal substances such as: alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and/or opioids

Prescription opioids - opioids prescribed by a health care professional to treat pain

Pharmaceutical Fentanyl - a synthetic opioid, approved for treating severe pain

Heroin - an illegal, highly addictive opioid drug processed from morphine and extracted from certain poppy plants

Personal protective equipment (PPE) - equipment designed to protect, shield, and minimize exposure to hazards that may cause serious injury, illness, and/or disease

Medical procedure mask (otherwise referred to as a surgical mask or a disposable face mask) - a single-use mask that is not made of cloth and is not designed to be washed or laundered

Hand hygiene - the process of cleaning hands in order to prevent contamination and/or infections

Source control - the use of well-fitting cloth masks, facemasks, or respirators to cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent spread of respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing

N95 respirator - a particulate-filtering, face piece respirator that filters at least 95% of airborne particles

User seal check - a procedure conducted by the respirator wearer to determine if the respirator is being properly worn

Telehealth - the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration

Telemedicine - the practice of medicine using electronic communication, information technology, or other means between a physician in one location, and a patient in another location, with or without an intervening health care professional

EHealth - the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health and health care

Live video (in the context of telehealth services) - may refer to a live stream, two-way interaction between a patient and a health care professional(s) where both parties are communicating from different locations

Real time - the actual time during which a meeting, interaction, process, or event occurs; live

Store-and-forward - a type of telehealth which involves the transmission of recorded health information (e.g., an x-ray or prerecorded video) through electronic communication systems to a health care professional who evaluates the information and provides a health care-related service to a patient(s)

Remote patient monitoring - the use of telehealth-related technologies to collect individuals' health care-related data in one location and electronically transmit it to health care professionals in a different location for assessment and recommendations

Mobile health - the use of mobile communication devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets) to support health care, public health, and education

Older adult - an individual 65 years or older

Section 3: Personal Reflection Question

How can insight into relevant cultural trends impact the process of working to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations?

Section 4: Generation Recommendations

The fourth and final key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to follow related recommendations. This section of the course will

review generation recommendations. The information found within this section of the course was derived from materials provided by Purdue University unless, otherwise, specified (Purdue University Global, 2021).

Generation Recommendations

- **Treat people like individuals who may be driven by generation specific factors** - first and foremost, health care professionals should treat a person like he or she is an individual who may be driven by generation specific factors. Treating a person like he or she is an individual, who may be driven by generation specific factors, can help health care professionals identify specific generation driven influences, characteristics, motivations, benefits, and limitations, which in turn can help a health care professional effectively understand and lead individuals from each generation. Health care professionals should note that treating a person like he or she is an individual who may be driven by generation specific factors can help maximize the professional impact of individuals from each generation.
- **Embrace integrity** - integrity may refer to the consistent inclusion of honesty, morals, and values into daily actions and behavior. Integrity can be vital to the process of understanding and leading individuals from all five generations. Essentially, integrity can help build trust and respect, which in turn can help health care professionals effectively understand and lead individuals from each generation. Examples of how health care professionals can incorporate/display integrity in the workplace may be found below.
 - **Embrace honesty** - honesty is often the foundation of integrity. Thus, when one is attempting to act with integrity, one first has to be honest with him or herself and others.
 - **Embrace shared morals and values** - much like with honesty, when one is attempting to act with integrity, one has to embrace shared morals and values.
 - **Consistently showing up to work on time** - consistently showing up to work on time may not be an action that comes to mind when considering integrity. However, consistently showing up to work on time can be a very simple and straightforward way to incorporate/display integrity in the workplace. Essentially, consistently showing up to work on time sends the message that one respects other individuals' time, while consistently showing up late to work sends the message that one does not respect

other individuals' time. Sending the message that one does not respect other individuals' time can undermine a health care professional's ability to effectively understand and lead other individuals. Thus, health care professionals should make every effort to show up to work on time.

- **Do not waste other individuals' time** - to build on the previous recommendation, health care professionals should not waste other individuals' time. Much like with the previous integrity recommendation, wasting other individuals' time sends the message that one does not respect other individuals' time; sending the message that one does not respect other individuals' time can undermine a health care professional's ability to effectively understand and lead other individuals. Health care professionals should note the following examples of how one can waste other individuals' time: excessive talking about personal matters that may be irrelevant to health care, making personal calls, sending personal text messages, engaging in personal social media interactions, taking excessively long breaks (e.g., taking a break which exceeds the allotted time), causing distractions, causing disorganization, running disorganized meetings, deliberately moving in a slow manner, failing to engage in relevant training, and refusing to follow specific instructions.
- **Follow health care organization policies and procedures** - following related health care organization policies and procedures can show others that one is attempting to follow directions, pursue education, and create commonality among peers and colleagues. Attempting to follow directions, pursue education, and create commonality among peers and colleagues can help health care professionals effectively understand and lead other health care professionals.
- **Be professional** - lastly, acting in a professional manner can go a long way when attempting to incorporate/display integrity in the workplace. Examples of how a health care professional can act in a professional manner include the following: remain calm, especially in the face of a challenge or adversity; follow directions; listen to others; refrain from using excessive profanity and/or crude language; remain educated and up to date on relevant health care-related information; respect other individual's privacy; do not inject unnecessary personal information or "drama" into professional dynamics; refrain from injecting oneself into other individuals'

personal "drama" or personal social dynamics; do not engage in personal social media interactions that may lead to conflict in the workplace; work to effectively and efficiently resolve workplace grievances; follow health care-related laws and guidelines (e.g., HIPAA); follow related scopes of practice (note: the term scope of practice may refer to a description of services qualified health care professionals are deemed competent to perform and permitted to undertake under the terms of their professional license); adhere to relevant standards of practice (note: the term standards of practice may refer a statement of duties or specific guidelines for a health care professional). Health care professionals should note that acting in a professional manner can help health care professionals "lead by example."

- **Avoid age discrimination** - age discrimination may refer to the act of treating an applicant or employee less favorably because of his or her age (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021). Health care professionals should avoid age discrimination, especially when attempting to understand and lead individuals from all five generations. Specific information regarding age discrimination may be found below. The information found below was derived from materials provided by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021).
 - Age discrimination laws and regulations included in the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibit discrimination in any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.
 - It is unlawful to harass a person because of his or her age.
 - Harassment can include offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's age.
 - Harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (e.g., the victim is fired or demoted).
 - An employment policy or practice that applies to everyone, regardless of age, can be illegal if it has a negative impact on applicants or employees age 40 or older and is not based on a reasonable factor other than age

(note: the ADEA protects applicants and employees who are 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age).

- The ADEA stipulates the following: it shall be unlawful for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's age; it shall be unlawful for an employer to limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his or her status as an employee, because of such individual's age; it shall be unlawful for an employer to reduce the wage rate of any employee based on age.
- The ADEA stipulates the following: it shall be unlawful for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual because of such individual's age, or to classify or refer for employment to any individual on the basis of such individual's age.
- The ADEA stipulates the following: it shall be unlawful for a labor organization to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of his age; it shall be unlawful for a labor organization to limit, segregate, or classify its membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or would limit such employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee or as an applicant for employment, because of such individual's age; it shall be unlawful for a labor organization to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of related regulations/laws.
- The ADEA stipulates the following: it shall be unlawful for an employer, labor organization, or employment agency to print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such an employer or membership in or any classification or referral for employment by such a labor organization, or relating to any classification or referral for employment by such an employment agency,

indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination, based on age.

- The ADEA stipulates the following: it is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on age or for filing an age discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under the ADEA.
- The Older Workers Benefit Protection Act of 1990 (OWBPA) amended the ADEA to specifically prohibit employers from denying benefits to older employees.
- The ADEA sets specific requirements that permit waivers of claims or rights in certain circumstances. Waivers are common in settling discrimination claims or in connection with exit incentive or other employment termination programs. To be valid, the waiver must meet minimum standards to be considered knowing and voluntary. Among other requirements, a valid ADEA waiver must: be in writing and be understandable; specifically refer to ADEA rights or claims; not waive rights or claims that may arise in the future; be in exchange for valuable consideration in addition to anything of value to which the individual already is entitled; advise the individual in writing to consult an attorney before signing the waiver; and provide the individual with a certain amount of time to consider the agreement before signing.
- **Possess insight into the preferred management style of each generation** - when working to effectively understand and lead all five generations in the workforce it is important to possess insight into each generation's preferred management style. Specific information regarding each generation's preferred management style may be found below.
 - **Traditionalists** - the preferred management style for Traditionalists is one that recognizes and utilizes their loyalty, commitment, hard work, and experience.
 - **Baby Boomers** - the preferred management style for the Baby Boomers is one that incorporates team work and allows them to share their experience and expertise.

- **Generation X** - individuals from Generation X preferred management style is one that allows for flexibility, autonomy, and an opportunity for work-life balance.
 - **Millennials** - the preferred management style for Millennials is one that allows for transparency, honesty, feedback, and diverse work experiences.
 - **Generation Z** - individuals from Generation Z preferred management style is one that allows for collaborative management relationships, coaching, mentoring, and feedback.
- **Allow for mentoring programs** - a mentoring program may refer to any program that allows/encourages individuals with less work experience to work, interact, and engage with individuals with more work experience. Health care professionals should note the following: mentoring programs should create opportunities for individuals from one generation to work, interact, and engage with individuals from another generation (e.g., a mentoring program should allow/encourage a Millennial to work with a Baby Boomer). Health care professionals should also note the following: allowing/encouraging health care professionals to take part in mentoring programs can help health care professionals effectively communicate, relate to each other, and, ultimately, create opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations.
 - **Allow for flexible job options** - flexible job options (e.g., flexible schedules) can allow individuals from each generation to find a professional option that best suits their generational needs, which in turn can promote a positive, comfortable work environment, which in turn can increase morale, foster effective communication, and maximize productivity, which, subsequently, can lead to opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations. Health care professionals should note that job rigidity and a lack of flexible job options can have the opposite effect (e.g., decreased opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations).
 - **Make communication a priority** - health care professionals should make communication a priority when working to effectively understand and lead all five generations in the workforce . As previously alluded to, communication is an essential aspect of effectively understanding and leading all five generations. Thus, health care professionals should consistently work towards effective

communication when interacting and engaging with individuals from different generations. Health care professionals should note that effective communication occurs when information and messages are adequately transmitted, received, and understood.

- **Encourage communication** - this recommendation may seem obvious, but the simple truth of the matter is that, often, individuals do not encourage communication. With that said, health care professionals can encourage communication by remaining professional, poised, calm, collected, level headed, respectful, receptive, approachable, engaging, objective, and by limiting bias and judgment. Health care professionals should note that effective communication often begins with encouragement and receptiveness.
- **Avoid negative body language when communicating** - negative body language may refer to any body language that expresses an emotion or feeling associated with negative connotations such as anger, disdain, irritation, nervousness, and/or boredom. Examples of negative body language include: crossed arms, limited to now eye contact, body shifting from left to right, hand tapping, foot tapping, and neck rolling. Essentially, negative body language can send the "wrong message" to an individual or party and/or simply prevent effective communication. Health care professionals should note the following: health care professionals should make an extra effort to avoid negative body language when working to understand and lead individuals; negative body language can put individuals on edge as well as increase their agitation and/or anxiety levels, which in turn could impact effective communication.
- **Avoid redirection when communicating** - redirection, in the context of communication, may refer to the process or action of changing/altering the intended purpose of a communication exchange between individuals or parties. Redirection, typically, occurs when an individual or party changes the topic of communication. Health care professionals should note that redirection can prevent effective communication from taking place as well as limit opportunities to obtain meaning and a common understanding among fellow health care professionals.
- **Engage in active listening** - active listening may refer to the process of gathering information with the intent to obtain meaning and achieve a common understanding. That being said, there are several steps health care professionals

can take to ensure they are effectively engaging in active listening when engaging in communication with individuals from multiple generations.

The first step health care professionals can take towards active listening is to give individuals or parties their full attention when communicating. Often when individuals engage in conversation, one individual speaks while the other individual simply waits for his or her turn to talk. Words are being heard, however individuals are not focused on what is being said. Instead, they are often thinking about what they want to say next. The previous style of listening can be referred to as passive listening. Often when passive listening is employed, two people are engaged in conversation, however neither one of them is focused on what the other person is saying. There is little to no intent to obtain meaning when two individuals are engaged in passive listening. Therefore, the first step towards active listening should always be to focus and concentrate on what the other individual is saying. Making a concerted effort to focus on what another individual is saying, when engaged in a conversation, can increase the ability for both parties to reach a common understanding. It can also help both individuals improve their recall of the conversation. If an individual is focused on what another individual is saying, he or she is more likely to remember what is said. Health care professionals should always make an effort to avoid passive listening when engaged in communication.

The next step towards active listening is to make eye contact. Eye contact can let individuals know they are being listened to. Eye contact can also foster trust and encourage individuals to open up and fully articulate what they want to say.

The third step to active listening is to provide individuals with the opportunity to say what they would like to express. Limiting interruptions when fellow health care professionals or other individuals are speaking and allowing for periods of silence can further open up the conversation to allow for a greater expression of ideas.

The fourth step to active listening is to respond to what is being said. From time to time during a communication exchange, health care professionals should respond to what other individuals are saying. Repeating what another individual says or paraphrasing individuals' words can reinforce that they are truly being heard and listened to, which can make them more likely to further engage in communication. After all, everyone likes to know they are being heard.

The fifth step to active listening is making an effort to understand the emotions behind another individual's words. For example, talking about one's health and overall well-being can be an emotional experience. It can open up the stress and horrors of past trauma and can leave individuals feeling vulnerable. Being empathetic towards the difficult emotions behind the words can make individuals feel at ease and allow them to continue to discuss their health-related needs and concerns.

The next steps to active listening include asking open-ended questions and clarifying messages. At times, health care professionals will need to ask individuals questions. Keeping questions open, as opposed to closed, can allow information to flow freely. Therefore, at times, it may be advantageous to avoid yes and no questions and focus on how, what, where, and why questions. Yes and no questions can limit the expression of ideas, while open ended questions can expand the expression of ideas, which can be very helpful to health care professionals when they are trying to get individuals to open up about their health and/or health care (an example of an open-ended question is as follows: what type of symptoms are you experiencing?). In addition, health care professionals should not be afraid to clarify what is said during a health care-related conversation. Slowing down the conversation to clarify what is said can benefit both parties in the long run.

Lastly, to fully achieve active listening, health care professionals can provide words of encouragement. For example, talking about health care can be difficult for an individual. Using words of encouragement such as "you are being very brave" or "you have been courageous during this difficult situation" can go a long way to motivate individuals to express themselves in regards to their individual health and/or health care.

- **Work to avoid or limit noise when communicating** - as previously mentioned, noise, in the context of communication, may refer to anything that distorts or disrupts a message and/or the process of communication. Specific types of noise include the following: physical noise, physiological noise, psychological noise, and semantic noise. Health care professionals should take steps to avoid and limit noise, when applicable (e.g., find a quiet place to engage in communication with another individual; limit or avoid bias and/or assumptions; limit ambiguous sounds, words, gestures, facial expressions, tones of voice, eye contact methods, body language, postures, and/or other means of communication when engaging

in communication). Health care professionals should note that a failure to avoid or limit noise could lead to miscommunication and/or a breakdown in communication (note: miscommunication may refer to the inadequate transmission of information or messages between two or more individuals or parties).

- **Work to avoid miscommunication when transmitting relevant information** - when miscommunication occurs between individuals, intended meaning may be lost. Thus, health care professionals should work to prevent miscommunication whenever possible. Health care professionals may prevent miscommunication by: removing physical barriers when communicating with other individuals, maintaining eye contact, remaining professional, allowing for a free flow of information between individuals, engaging in active listening, clarifying points of confusion, asking questions, maintaining emotional stability, allowing others to speak, and by limiting interruptions and distractions. Health care professionals should note that miscommunication can negatively impact effective communication.
- **Follow up with individuals or parties** - at times it may be necessary for health care professionals to follow up communication exchanges to ensure meaning and a common understanding was obtained. When following up with fellow health care professionals or other individuals, health care professionals should work to ensure effective communication was achieved. To ensure effective communication was achieved, health care professionals should ask questions, answer questions, and/or simply reiterate important points of interest. Health care professionals should note that communication follow-ups may help prevent miscommunication and allow for opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from each generation.
- **Utilize multiple means of communication** - when attempting to communicate vital information across generations, health care professionals should consider utilizing multiple means of communication (e.g., print; electronic; in-person/face-to-face). Health care professionals should note that utilizing multiple means of communication can foster effective communication.
- **Uphold the ethic principles of health care** - health care professionals should ensure that they uphold the four major ethic principles of health care, which include: patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. Working within the ethic parameters of health care can help health care professionals

effectively communicate, relate to each other, and, ultimately, create opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations. Health care professionals should note the following: patient autonomy may refer to a patient's right to make decisions regarding his or her own personal health care, without the direct influence of a health care professional; beneficence, as it relates to health care, may refer to the obligation of the health care professional to act in the best interest of the patient; nonmaleficence, as it relates to health care, may refer to the obligation of the health care professional to act in a manner that does not cause harm to the individual patient; do no harm; justice, as it relates to health care, may refer to the fair and equitable distribution of health care resources to patients.

- **Pursue opportunities to further health care education and remain up to date on relevant information, such as cultural trends impacting today's health care system** - finally, health care information is always being updated. Thus, health care professionals should pursue opportunities to further their education. Remaining up to date on relevant information, such as cultural trends impacting today's health care system, can help health care professionals effectively communicate, relate to each other, and, ultimately, create opportunities to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations. Health care professionals should note the following: due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care professionals should focus special attention on any relevant and developing information regarding COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., emerging information on currently available vaccines; information on any new vaccines).

Section 4: Summary

The fourth and final key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to follow generation recommendations. Generation recommendations include the following: treat people like individuals who may be driven by generation specific factors; embrace integrity; avoid age discrimination; possess insight into the preferred management style of each generation; allow for mentoring programs; allow for flexible job options; make communication a priority; encourage communication; avoid negative body language when communicating; avoid redirection when communicating; engage in active listening; work to avoid or limit noise when communicating; work to avoid miscommunication when transmitting relevant information; follow up with individuals or parties; utilize multiple means of

communication; uphold the ethic principles of health care; pursue opportunities to further health care education and remain up to date on relevant information such as cultural trends impacting today's health care system.

Section 4: Key Concepts

- The fourth key step to effectively understanding and leading individuals from all five generations is to follow generation recommendations.

Section 4: Key Terms

Integrity - the consistent inclusion of honesty, morals, and values into daily actions and behavior

Scope of practice - a description of services qualified health care professionals are deemed competent to perform and permitted to undertake under the terms of their professional license

Standards of practice - a statement of duties or specific guidelines for a health care professional

Age discrimination - the act of treating an applicant or employee less favorably because of his or her age (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021)

Mentoring program - any program that allows/encourages individuals with less work experience to work, interact, and engage with individuals with more work experience

Negative body language - any body language that expresses an emotion or feeling associated with negative connotations such as anger, disdain, irritation, nervousness, and/or boredom

Redirection (within the context of communication) - the process or action of changing/altering the intended purpose of a communication exchange between individuals or parties

Active listening - the process of gathering information with the intent to obtain meaning and achieve a common understanding

Miscommunication - the inadequate transmission of information or messages between two or more individuals or parties

Patient autonomy - a patient's right to make decisions regarding his or her own personal health care, without the direct influence of a health care professional

Beneficence (as it relates to health care) - the obligation of the health care professional to act in the best interest of the patient

Nonmaleficence (as it relates to health care) - the obligation of the health care professional to act in a manner that does not cause harm to the individual patient; do no harm

Justice (as it relates to health care) - the fair and equitable distribution of health care resources to patients

Section 4: Personal Reflection Question

How can health care professionals use the above recommendations to effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations?

Conclusion

For one of the first times in modern history, individuals from five generations can be found in the workforce. Health care professionals can effectively understand and lead individuals from all five generations by taking the following four key steps: obtain insight into each generation; establish effective communication; obtain insight into the most relevant cultural trends impacting today's health care system; and follow generation recommendations.

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