

Webinar Follow Up

# Mental Wellness:

## When Generational Gaps Become Barriers

Leadership Council-Exclusive Resource



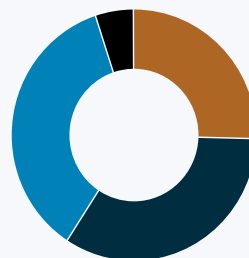
Mental health is one of the most significant issues facing employers today. Acknowledging that the contemporary workforce is multi-generational and that each generation is shaped by varying behavioral differences, communications styles, and

expectations is critical. Understanding and adapting to these distinctions fosters psychological safety, encourages cross-generational collaboration, and enhances individual satisfaction. At present, four generations make up the workforce. Breakdown is as follows:

### Four Generations in Today's Workforce

\*Generation size as of 2020

- Baby Boomers (1946–1964): 19%
- Generation X (1965–1980): 36%
- Millennials (1981–1996): 39%
- Generation Z (1997–2012): 6%



### <sup>1</sup>Generational: A Generalized Perspective in a Nutshell

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Behavior	Challenges rules	Changes rules	Creates rules	Highly independent
Training	Too much and they'll leave	It is required to keep them	Continuous and expected	Learning environment
Learning Style	Facilitated	Independent	Networked	Multi-media
Communication	Guarded	Hub and spoke	Direct and open	Consensus-driver dialogue
Problem Solving	Horizontal	Independent	Collaborative	Highly analytical
Decision Making	Team informed	Team included	Team decided	Collaborative
Leadership Style	Get out of the way	Coach	Partner	Democratize
Feedback	Once a year	Periodic	On demand	Short and compact

1. Multiple sources via [How to Attract, Motivate, and Retain Employees of All Ages](#), 7-20-2022

Employees bring varying expectations to the workplace, shaped by generation as well as by life events, career stage, and tenure. Use this table to facilitate conversations across generations. Acknowledging and adapting to generations' communication styles bolsters psychological safety among employees.

> **Psychological safety** in the workplace exists when an employee believes they will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. By creating an environment where individuals feel safe to express themselves, creativity, innovation, and high performance will increase.

## How can you encourage multi-generational dialogue?

### Check in.

Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with employees to give them space to address concerns and receive support. Acknowledge employees' concerns and feedback. Where appropriate, brainstorm solutions or next steps together to address any issues.

### Prioritize diversity.

Make it clear that varying perspectives & experiences are not only welcomed but celebrated. Experiences--whether differences of age, gender, socioeconomic status, culture or any other identity--are welcomed and celebrated. State this in your policies, training sessions, and resources.

### Lead by example.

Managers who share their own challenges and mistakes, ask questions, and encourage conversation make it easier for their employees to do the same.

A sense of **psychological safety** will encourage cross-generational collaboration, resulting in sharing knowledge and perspectives.

## How can you encourage psychological safety?

### Training Sessions

Pair employees from different generations together, allowing for the transfer of knowledge and skills between one another.

### Team Building + Networking

Informal conversations where employees can get to know their colleagues more conversationally are important in contributing to relationship building. These are especially valuable for those who work remotely or face barriers precluding in-person interaction.

By implementing these tactics, companies can create a more inclusive and collaborative environment where employees of all ages and abilities feel empowered to use their unique perspectives and skills to contribute to the workplace. When employers

ensure that employees feel valued and heard, they signal that employee mental health is a priority, ultimately creating a more productive workforce and a more compassionate and sustainable work culture.

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Thank you to our partner, Mental Health America, and to our generous sponsor, Charter Communications.

