

# Generations

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M.E.E.T. for Respect in the Workplace

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Participant Materials

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## Pre- and Post-Assessment

*Generations: M.E.E.T. for Respect in the Workplace* is designed to teach you about generational differences in real-world situations. First, review the statements below to assess your current level of knowledge and skills. For each statement, circle the number in the Pre-Assessment column that reflects your comfort level. At the conclusion of the workshop, you will complete the Post-Assessment column and compare your ratings.

	Pre-Assessment				Post-Assessment			
	Absolutely/ Yes	I think so/Yes	Not sure	No	Absolutely/ Yes	I think so/Yes	Not Sure	No
I understand how generational differences impact relationships in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I can identify the defining characteristics of the four generations in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am able to recognize how issues and situations may be influenced by generational differences.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am aware of how commonly-held stereotypes about age and generation can impact relationships and create misunderstandings.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am able to effectively respond to situations involving conflict caused by generational differences.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am able to apply practical tips/strategies for working across generational lines in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am able to apply the four steps in the M.E.E.T. model to respond to issues and problems involving generational differences.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I am able to describe how a multigenerational workplace can contribute to organizational effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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## Introduction

Every organization in the United States is experiencing a new set of workplace dynamics based upon the phenomenon of four generations working together—either in its own workplace or in its client, customer and supplier base.

This program encourages you to look at what you are doing as an individual contributor in your organization to make the workplace one where people of all generations can do their best work.

- The first step is to recognize the importance of understanding generational issues in the workplace.
- The second step is to identify those situations where generational issues frequently occur.
- The third step is to determine how these issues are affecting important relationships.

These steps will allow you to minimize the negative impact of generational differences and maximize opportunities for individual, team and organizational success.

## Learning Objectives

During the program, you will learn to resolve difficult workplace situations that are influenced by generational differences. At the conclusion of the program, you will be better able to:

- Identify defining characteristics of the four generations in the workforce
- Recognize issues and situations that may be influenced by generational differences
- Apply practical tips for working successfully in a multigenerational workplace
- Use the M.E.E.T. model to communicate effectively and maintain a respect-filled workplace

### The Four-Step M.E.E.T. Model

**M** – Make time to discuss

**E** – Explore differences

**E** – Encourage respect

**T** – Take responsibility

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## Generational Perceptions Worksheet

**Introduction:** For the first time, four generations exist in the workforce in significant numbers. Although there is variation in the way groups are described and the time frames they span, generally they are as follows:

**Traditionalists** – born between 1925 and 1942

**Baby Boomers** – born between 1943 and 1960

**Generation X** – born between 1961 and 1981

**Generation Y** – born between 1982 and 2002

**Instructions:** In your assigned groups, discuss the questions below. Choose someone in your group to be a recorder. The recorder should label your flipchart with the generation you were assigned and write the questions below. Then record your group's answers. Be sure to choose a representative to be a spokesperson.

1. What other names have you heard for this group?
2. What words or phrases or thoughts come to mind when you hear the name of this group mentioned?
3. Once you have a list of words and phrases, sort them into three groups: positive, negative or neutral.

## Creating a Respectful Work Environment

Many organizations measure success by their productivity, working relationships and customer satisfaction. Organizations that excel in these areas have three things in common:

1. Communicate in ways that are respectful
2. Use common/shared approaches to resolving workplace conflict
3. Use common/shared approaches to solving problems

The M.E.E.T. model provides a practical approach for communicating, resolving conflicts and solving problems across generational lines. By using M.E.E.T., you can make a tangible contribution to teamwork, productivity and customer satisfaction in your multigenerational workplace.

### The Four-Step M.E.E.T. Model

- M – Make time to discuss
- E – Explore differences
- E – Encourage respect
- T – Take responsibility

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## Video Observation Form: Vignette #1: Out with the old, in with the new . . .

### Characters:



Alex – Baby Boomer



Justin – Generation Y

### Directions:

As you watch the video, make note of any questions or thoughts you have concerning the following discussion questions.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What generational characteristics did you notice in this vignette?

2. How did Alex and Justin use M.E.E.T.?

**M** – Make time to discuss

**E** – Explore differences

**E** – Encourage respect

**T** – Take responsibility

3. What could Alex or Justin do next to improve communications?

**Key Points:**

- ✓ Everyone has a need to feel valued and to make a contribution.
- ✓ Technology influences our way of working and interacting.
- ✓ Work styles can be a frequent and unintended catalyst for conflict and miscommunication.
- ✓ An informal and fun approach to work does not mean work is not important.

**Bottom Line:**

Our similarities and differences can support teamwork and collaborative solutions.

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# Manager's Module

## Video Observation Form:

### Vignette #1: My grandpa's name is Charlie . . .

#### Characters:



Amanda – Generation X (manager)



Charles – Traditionalist

#### Directions:

As you watch the video, make note of any questions or thoughts you have concerning the following discussion questions.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the leadership challenges created by having multiple generations in the workplace?

2. What does Amanda say or do to:

**M** – Make time to discuss

**E** – Explore differences

**E** – Encourage respect

**T** – Take responsibility

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**Key Points:**

- ✓ Younger managers supervising older workers is a fairly new phenomenon that reverses traditional norms regarding age, seniority and authority.
- ✓ Both younger managers and older workers may experience discomfort in what may be a new experience for both.
- ✓ Sometimes our management style or our comments and approaches to work can be unintentionally offensive.
- ✓ Feeling devalued or discounted due to age has implications for morale and productivity.

**Bottom Line:**

Pay attention to the impact we have on others.

## M.E.E.T. Tools: Skill Building Activity for Managers Make Time Activity

As you think about the experience you briefly described on page 19, it's important to be clear about what you want and why it is important. Remember, a problem is the gap between what you have and what you want.

Take a few minutes to address these questions:

1. What generational influences or dynamics may be present? Yours? The other person's?
2. What do you want the other person to start or stop doing that is different from what he/she is doing or not doing now?
3. Why is it important that he/she does what you want him/her to do? Specify:
  - Organizational policies or requirements?
  - Performance or conduct expectations?
  - Productivity, teamwork, customer satisfaction concerns?

## M.E.E.T. Tools: Skill Building Activity for Managers Explore Differences Activity

### Part One:

Have a 5-minute conversation with your partner (who will play the other party in this situation).

1. Using the real situation you discussed earlier, in 30 seconds or less, state:
  - The problem
  - The consequences you want to avoid
  - What you want
2. Provide a context. Describe the situation in a way that explains its importance to you. Invite a response and listen to the other person's perspective. If you are playing the employee or customer, respond in a way consistent with your experience and your understanding of the situation from your partner's description.
3. Restate what you want, this time incorporating the other person's perspective. Use "also/and."

### Part Two:

Discuss this activity. What did you learn about stating a problem or concern? About providing a context? What generational influences or dynamics may have been present? [5 minutes]

## M.E.E.T. Tools: Skill Building Activity for Managers Encourage Respect Activity

This activity will help you understand and use styles of communication that encourage respect. Read each of the following situations and the sample responses. Identify the disrespectful style and then modify the response to be more respectful. Use *Tips for Working with Every Generation* as a resource as you develop your new responses.

1. Pat indicates he is having trouble reformatting some of the data you need for a report. He is finally using the computer to do the calculations he used to do manually. You hear yourself say, *"I know this is the way everybody used to do it, but that changed a long time ago and you're still not on board. My middle school kids do this all the time."*
  - What communication style is present?
  - What generational characteristics appear to be present?
  - Develop a response that is more respectful of generational differences in the space below.

## M.E.E.T. Tools: Skill Building Activity for Managers Take Responsibility Activity

Using the situation you identified earlier, practice using M.E.E.T. Your partner will take the role of you, the manager, in your example; you will take the role of the other person in your example. Remember, be respectful of the other person's perspective.

Each person will have an opportunity to practice the M.E.E.T. steps, focusing on Step 4 (Take personal responsibility).

- State what you need in order to achieve the relationship or goal you want
  - Ask for agreement
  - End on a positive note
  - Plan to follow up
1. Use this worksheet to make notes as you prepare for your meeting. Each of you will conduct a meeting as the manager in your partner's situation.
  2. At the end of your practice, discuss key learnings and application.

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## Next Steps – Manager’s Module

There are times when, no matter what great intentions we have, we let things slide. One way to prevent this from happening is to review key learnings and commit to immediate next steps. In the spaces below, write your key learnings and two immediate action steps to use what you have learned today about managing employees of all generations.

- Key learnings regarding generational influences and dynamics:

- Immediate next steps to apply what I have learned:

#1

#2