COMING NEXT ISSUE
New Fall 2014: Master’s in Nursing Concentration
Population-Based Care Coordination

Coming in the next issue: Watch for a feature on our new concentration within the Master of Science in Nursing program, Population-Based Care Coordination. This concept is already in demand within the health care community, and graduates who choose this concentration might work as case managers or nurse navigators in hospitals, community coordinators in health departments, or community liaison nurses in insurance companies. Learn more in the fall issue of Journeys, or check the website now at <stevenson.edu/academics> and click on the “Graduate” tab.

You’re also invited to attend a Virtual Information Session about Population-Based Care Coordination on Tuesday, Aug. 12 at noon. To RSVP, call Amanda Courter at 443-352-4243 or go to <stevenson.edu>.

STEVENSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

A Multigenerational Workforce: Looking at the Opportunities and Challenges

Did you know that this is the first time in our history there have been four generations in the workforce—so far? This, says Lisa Gotschall, Ph.D., RN, Associate Professor, School of Graduate and Professional Studies Nursing, poses both challenges and opportunities. “This has the potential to create some intergenerational tension yet provides an opportunity for organizations to utilize the talents and strength of each generation to achieve great outcomes.”

To further explore the impact this can have on the nursing workforce, Gotschall explained her research on this topic in a Q&A with Journeys.

Journeys (J): How are these generations defined?
Gotschall (G): Generations are defined by common values and shared experiences. Generational cohorts are groups of individuals who share birth years, political, and historical experiences. The generational cohorts are:

- Traditionalists or Veterans (workers born before 1946)
- Baby Boomers (1946 – 1965)
- Generation NeXters or Z (born after 2000)

It is important to remember that each generation influences the next generation and looking for similarities and utilizing personal talents and strengths can go a long way toward avoiding workplace tension and conflicts. If we become familiar with generational differences and preferences, we have the potential to improve our work environment by improving communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

J: Why is this topic important?
G: For several reasons. For one thing, we spend more than 30 percent of our life at work. In healthcare we continue to see high nurse turnover rates and job dissatisfaction. This has an economic impact and we lose talent and needed experience each time an employee leaves the organization. The expected retirement of the largest cohort of nurses will push the RN workforce below the projected need by 2020. Retaining older, experienced nurses is essential to meet the U.S. healthcare population needs and assure quality health-care provider numbers. Lack of teamwork can negatively affect patient outcomes. Human capital is the element that an employer can shape and develop to meet the needs of the organization.

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If you no longer wish to receive Journeys, please contact the Maryland Board of Nursing at 410-585-1900 or temporary or permanent loss of licensure. Retaining older, experienced nurses is essential to meet the U.S. healthcare population needs and assure adequate health-care provider numbers. Lack of teamwork can negatively affect patient outcomes. Human capital is the element that an employer can shape and develop to meet the needs of the organization.

A Multigenerational Workforce: Looking at the Opportunities and Challenges (continued)

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A Multigenerational Workforce: Looking at the Opportunities and Challenges Continued

J: What are the implications of a multigenerational workforce?

- There is no doubt that working in the multigenerational workforce can create challenges. Think about the people you work with. Everyone has different perspectives on the meaning of employment, how things should be done, and what the workplace should be like, all of which can lead to potential conflict. Some expectations and employee differences can be seen in generational cohorts. Potential workplace conflicts can originate from work ethic, leadership style, and preferred communication to name a few key areas.

J: Events experienced during a generation influence how people will behave in the workforce—can you give a few examples?

- Yes. Life events and experiences help to shape our world view. The Veteran, or Traditional, generation grew up during the Great Depression and experienced World War II, the Korean War, and getting the news via radio and print. Because of these experiences, they are patriotic, have a strong work ethic, respect organizational hierarchy, and value organizational loyalty. Due to these experiences, they may see younger workers who change jobs frequently, want to be rewarded with fast-track promotions, and desire more flexible work hours and working conditions as impatient, disrespectful, and lazy.

Communication preferences are another area that can create tension and potential conflicts between generational cohorts. Baby Boomers have had to learn to use new technology during their work careers versus Generation X and the Millennials, who are digital natives. A Baby Boomer often prefers weekly or monthly face-to-face meetings whereas younger employees may view these meetings as time-consuming and prefer frequent virtual meetings. These differences in preferred communication modes can create tension and conflict around work time and location. Utilizing multiple forms of communication (phone, text, conference calls, virtual meetings, email, Facebook groups, 1:1 meetings, face-to-face) can help bridge generational communication gaps.

J: How do the values of each group shape what they do/think? What are the values?

- Organizations want to recruit, hire, and retain the best talent of each generation. Looking at the work environment from the lens of workforce generational values helps to expand our awareness and understanding of generational needs. This is a good first step to breaking down age-related barriers and misunderstandings. What workers value directly affects their work outlook, attitude toward work, work ethic, and views of authority and leadership. The following chart identifies generational workforce values:

### Strategies for Working Effectively Across Generations

**Traditionals**
- Show them they are valued and respected.
- Tap into their knowledge of company history.
- Respect their knowledge and expertise.
- Engage them as coaches.

**Baby Boomers**
- Enable them to “reinvent” themselves.
- Recognize their need to make an impact.
- Understand their need for flexibility and balance.
- Appreciate that they are questioning where they have been and where they are going.
- Understand their need for career development opportunities.

**Generation X**
- Provide development opportunities.
- Keep them informed; communicate often and with tools they desire.
- Encourage experimentation.
- Provide opportunities to work in small groups.
- Focus on development/career path planning.
- Stretch/challenge them.

**Millennials**
- Give them independence.
- Empower them to make decisions.
- Provide job movement and learning opportunities.
- Understand their need for flexibility; ask each employee how he/she defines flexibility.

**Strategies for Working Effectively Across Generations**

- These important tips, Gotschall says, can help prevent workplace tension by acknowledging generational values and utilizing generational strengths.

### Stevenson’s Community College Partners

Stevenson has partnered with 11 community colleges throughout Maryland to help make transferring from community college to the University a much easier process for incoming students. The University has worked with these institutions to create an articulated course list, which can be found on the School of Graduate and Professional Studies section of our website at [stevenson.edu]. This will help RN to BS and MS students know which courses they have taken at their respective colleges will transfer to Stevenson.

Also, Stevenson has an additional partnership relationship in effect at many community colleges in the region. If you are a graduate of one of these institutions, you may be eligible to receive the Preferred Partnership Tuition rate, which is a 20 percent reduction in tuition when you continue your education at Stevenson in our RN to BS program. This additional partnership is already in effect at several community colleges and discussions are underway to create more of these partnerships. Visit our website for more information. Visit [stevenson.edu/academics], go to the “Graduate and Professional Studies” page, then “Admissions and Aid,” and click on “Partnership Information.”

J: How does this apply to the field of nursing?

G: One important factor that contributes to nursing quality is a nurse’s years of experience in the field. Traditional and Baby Boomer nurses have had experience with observing cues and recognizing patterns related to patient status whereas new graduates have far less experience and may miss subtle patient changes or cues. Older nurses are in key positions to teach and reinforce clinical assessment skills and build clinical confidence when working with younger nurses. Millennials and Generation X nurses can play an important role in being technology mentors or “champions” for older nurses. As digital natives, younger nurses can provide the 1:1 guidance and the repetition older nurses need when learning to use new technology. Leveraging cohort strengths is key to creating supportive and productive work environments.

In closing, tips and strategies to improve work environments and satisfaction are based on viewing employee differences as opportunities. Look past assumptions about a particular generation and remember that we are more alike than different. Research tells us that there is more innovation in a multigenerational workforce, so we need to use the strengths and talents of each team member when planning work to achieve unit and organizational goals. Finally, when your employees are both engaged and satisfied, you’ll have better retention.

For more information about these events, contact Kristin Lin at 443-352-4054 or at klilja@stevenson.edu. To register, visit [stevenson.edu/academics], go to the “Adult Undergraduate” or “Graduate” tab, and then click “Attend an Event.”