Generations and Implications
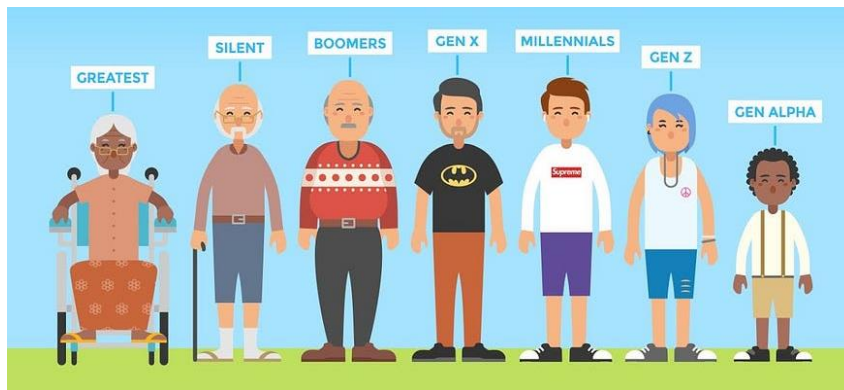
How age influences drug use and strategies to address it

Participant Workbook

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Learning Objectives:

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

- **Recognize generational characteristics and differences.**

- **Examine drug seeking behavior by generation; and**

- **Discuss prevention strategies appropriate to each generation.**

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What generation do you identify with?
What are some historical events that affected your generation? (e.g., wars, economics, diseases)
What are some toys of your generation? (e.g., yo-yos, game boy, Atari, Barbie)
What are some media of your generation? (e.g., newspapers, magazines, music, iPhone, TV shows)
What are some drugs that are popular for your generation?
What are some prevention messages/strategies for your generation? (DARE, life skills curriculum, etc.)

CHOOSE A SPOKESPERSON TO REPORT OUT WHEN YOUR GROUP IS CALLED ON.

The Lost Generation: 1883-1900

The term "Lost Generation" refers to the generation of people who reached adulthood during or immediately following World War I. In using the term "lost," psychologists were referring to the "disoriented, wandering, directionless" feelings that haunted many survivors of what had been one of the most horrific wars in modern history.

In a deeper sense, the lost generation was "lost" because it found the conservative moral and social values of their parents to be irrelevant in a post-war world. In the United States, President Warren G. Harding's "back to normalcy" policy calling for a return to the way of life before World War I, left the members of the lost generation feeling spiritually alienated from facing what they believed would be hopelessly provincial, materialistic, and emotionally barren lives.

Key Takeaways: The Lost Generation

- The "Lost Generation" reached adulthood during or shortly after World War I.
- Disillusioned by the horrors of war, they rejected the traditions of the older generation.
- Their struggles were characterized in the works of a group of famous American authors and poets including Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot.
- Common traits of the "Lost Generation" included decadence, distorted visions of the "American Dream," and gender confusion.

Longley, Robert. (2022, March 2). The Lost Generation and the Writers Who Described Their World. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/the-lost-generation-4159302

Greatest Generation: 1900-1924 (age 123-100)

GREATEST GENERATION
CAR, TOY, AND MUSIC DEVICE

OLDSMOBILE CURVED DASH · YO-YO · PIANO ROLL

The Greatest Generation is a term used to describe those Americans who grew up during the Great Depression and fought in World War II, or whose labor helped win it. The term "the Greatest Generation" is thought to have been coined by former NBC Nightly News anchor and author Tom Brokaw in his book by the same name.

The Greatest Generation is also known as the "G.I. Generation" or the "WWII Generation."

Understanding the Greatest Generation

There are no precise dates that define when members of the Greatest Generation were born, though many give a range of the early 1900s to the mid-1920s. The common characteristic of Greatest Generation members is that they lived through and experienced the hardships of the Great Depression and later either fought in World War II or worked in the industries that contributed to winning the war.

Newsman Tom Brokaw is often credited with popularizing the term through his book "The Greatest Generation," which profiled people who came of age during World War II and was inspired by Brokaw's attendance at the 40th-anniversary commemoration of the D-Day invasion of mainland Europe.1 Brokaw's profiles focused on the soldiers who fought the war, as well as the workers whose labor provided the essential material and services in support of them.

The Bottom Line

The Greatest Generation refers to those Americans born between 1900 and 1925, many of whom fought during World War II. These individuals grew up during WWI and lived through the Great Depression and are often the parents of the Baby Boomer generation. All of this has led these people to be characterized by a great deal of patriotism, commitment to work and family, frugal lifestyles, and motivation to work hard to succeed. The term itself was popularized by a book by newsman Tom Brokaw, entitled "The Greatest Generation," which was first published in 1998.6

Kagan, Julia (2022). The greatest generation: Definition and characteristics. Investopedia. Retrieved from: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/the_greatest_generation.asp#:~:text=The%20Greatest%20Generation%20refers%20to,fought%20during%20World%20War%20II.

The Silent Generation: 1925 – 1945 (age 100 – 80)

Their Slice of History
Korean War

The soldiers sent to Korea during the Korean War were primarily from the Silent Generation. While this conflict is sometimes referred to as the "Forgotten War," it has not been forgotten by this generation. The conflict defined a significant part of their lives and deepened the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Many brave soldiers lost their lives.

McCarthyism and the Red Scare

The McCarthy era was one of fear and enforced conformity. It got its name from United States Senator Joseph McCarthy but was a widespread phenomenon. During this time, many people in the United States feared communist spies or communist sympathizers. Because of this fear, some government officials began screenings and trials to determine loyalty. Many citizens were accused and lost their careers, and some were imprisoned. Joseph McCarthy is most remembered for his investigations, which are often compared to witch hunts. Due to this social turmoil in their early adulthood, those of the Silent Generation would try keep their heads down.

Civil Rights Movement

While the generation may be called silent, many of the most influential voices in the civil rights movement were a part of this generation. These civil rights activists were anything but silent, advocating for change and equality. Nearly all the great leaders of the civil rights movement were a part of the Silent Generation. Martin Luther King Jr., born in 1929, was one of the most influential leaders at that time. The Little Rock Nine Students, born during the years 1940–1942, were among the first to integrate schools. These members of the Silent Generation, along with other members of the Silent Generation who were involved in this historic movement, were incredibly influential and inspiring.

Smith, R. (2020). *The silent generation: characteristics and history.* Family Search. Retrieved from: https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/silent-generation-characteristics.

Boomers: 1946 – 1964 (age 79-60)

BABY BOOMERS
CAR, TOY, AND MUSIC DEVICE

FORD MUSTANG · FRISBEE · RECORD PLAYER

Their Slice of History
The Korean War and the Vietnam War

During their childhood, baby boomers witnessed the Korean War as well as rising tension in Vietnam. They witnessed the effects of those conflicts early in life. When they reached adulthood, many served their country in the Vietnam War. During this time, some baby boomers also participated in the antiwar movement. They were certainly no strangers to national conflict.

Civil Rights Movement

Baby boomers grew up during the height of the civil rights movement. Many young men and women of this generation were influenced by great civil rights activists. The movement promoted legal equality and led to greater tolerance during the adulthood of the baby boomers.

Sputnik, Space, and Education

In 1957, Sputnik was launched into orbit, and the world marveled at the accomplishment. The Sputnik could be seen whizzing across the night sky. This achievement induced a radical change in the education system in the United States. Many felt that the education system had fallen behind, and a new emphasis was put on science and mathematics.

The government began investing huge amounts of resources into research and developing new technologies. This investment opened new opportunities for baby boomers to innovate and change the world of technology. Over a decade later, they witnessed the moon landing.

The Berlin Wall

During their lives, many baby boomers saw almost the entirety of the Cold War. They were born during a period of high tension between the United States and Russia. Many were children when the Berlin Wall was constructed in August 1961 and would have heard the famous line "Ich bin ein Berliner" proclaimed by President Kennedy. Many would also later witness the destruction of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

Technological Advancement

Baby boomers were born into a world of black and white television and now live in the age of Wi-Fi, smartphones, and machine learning. Many of the earliest computer-age innovators are baby boomers, such as Steve Jobs and Bill Gates.

Smith, R (2020). *Baby Boomer Generation: Birth Year and Characteristics*. Family Search. Retrieved from https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/baby-boomer-generation-characteristics

Baby Boomers' Drugs of Choice

Alcohol

Prescription Drugs

Opioid Pain Medicines

Marijuana

Medical Marijuana

Nicotine

Generation X: 1965 – 1979 (age 59-45)

Generation X Characteristics

Independent: This generation is sometimes referred to as latchkey kids or the latchkey generation. These terms were used because a number of them, due to dual-earning parents or other circumstances, came home alone after school. It's possible that this upbringing fostered the independence in Generation X that we see today.

Flexible: Gen Xers have lived through some of the most drastic social changes and developments in history. Of necessity, they grew to be flexible, ready for change when it comes, and prepared to work through it.

This flexibility (combined with critical thinking) also led to changes in communication, workplace environments, and culture as Gen Xers questioned cultural practices, such as why a suit was necessary for certain jobs or why some communication was so formal.

Critical Thinkers: While some have called Generation X cynical, a more apt description may be that they're critical thinkers. As with all generations, Gen X attained higher levels of education than the previous generation and grew up in a time where there was great division in society. Between the Watergate scandal and the divisive Vietnam War, Generation X had fair reason to think critically about the world around them.

Self-Reliant: Similar to their independence, Gen Xers learned to depend on themselves and make the best of their situation. Having grown up with the threat of nuclear war over their heads, they didn't often have the brightest outlook on the future, but they were driven to make a difference and to make their own way in the world.

Their Slice of History

The Fall of the Berlin Wall

While the fall of the Berlin Wall was a historic moment in the lives of all generations who witnessed it, it was especially poignant for Gen X. Generation X was born in a time marked by deep tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Birth of the Personal Computer

Similar to how Millennials grew up with smart phones but remember a time without them, Gen X grew up with the very first personal computers. Though computers were invented before the Gen X generation, the technology was mainly used by large companies or governments.

During their youth, Gen Xers witnessed the first use of personal home computers. Though personal computers are commonplace now, their use was revolutionary back then!

Post-Civil Rights Movement

Gen X was the first generation to grow up after the civil rights movement. Many people in this generation grew up with ideas of equality and diversity and don't remember a time before the civil rights movement.

The Growth of Education

Generation X received more education than previous generations. As with the experience of Baby Boomers, Generation X grew up with a greater emphasis on STEM education, a trend that has continued for Millennials and Generation Z.

Smith, R. (2021). Generation X: History and Characteristics. Family Search. Retrieved from https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/generation-x-characteristics-history

Generation X Drugs of Choice

Alcohol: The next generation followed in the footsteps of their parents when it comes to alcohol use. Over 80 percent of Generation X used alcohol at their peak. However, this peak didn't come until age 22.

Marijuana: Pot takes second place for this generation as well. Gen Xers also saw their peak use of marijuana at age 18-20. But use was significantly less than their predecessors, at about 30 percent.

Psychotherapeutics: Ranking third among Generation X use are psychotherapeutic drugs (medications used to treat mental disorders such as depression, schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorders). This use peaked around age 20, with about 10 percent of Gen Xers using these drugs.

Smith, R. (2021). Generation X: History and Characteristics. Family Search. Retrieved from https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/generation-x-characteristics-history

Millennials: 1980 – 1994 (age 44-30)

Millennial Characteristics

Millennials are good at accepting change. Millennials have witnessed a massive shift in technologies, the economy, and business throughout their lifetime. If life has taught them anything, it's that things don't stay the same for long.

Millennials are curious. If there is a faster, better way of doing something, millennials want to know. They'll take advantage of the tools available to them to be more effective. Researchers say that this quality makes them valuable employees.

Millennials value teamwork. This generation tends to enjoy collaborative work environments where they can seek out alternate viewpoints and input from others.

Millennials like feedback. Millennials recognize the importance of valuable, regular feedback, especially when it comes to the workplace. In additional to seeking out constructive criticism and mentorship, this generation also appreciates positive feedback and recognition for a job well-done.

Millennials visit public libraries more regularly than other age groups. The reason for this characteristic is a bit of a mystery. Maybe they get tired of tapping screens. Maybe they're nostalgic, and the feel of a book reminds them of their childhoods. Who knows for sure? If you're a millennial and like going to the library, maybe you can leave a comment at the bottom of this article and explain why!

History From A Millennial Point Of View

Most millennials remember the terrorist attacks of 9/11. This event is an important intersection with history that distinguishes them from the generation that came after.

Most millennials were teenagers or young adults when the first social media platforms became available, technologies that changed the way people communicate with each other and interact with the world around them. Millennials may be able to remember the world before social media. But they have a hard time imagining a future without it!

Millennials entered the economic recession of 2008 shortly after college or even during college. Many of them may have lost a job on account of this crisis or were compelled to change or study a different career.

Nielsen, D. (2021). The Millennial Generation—Birth Years, Characteristics, and History. Family Search. Retrieved from https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/millennial-generation

Generation Z: 1995 – 2012 (age 29-12)

Generation Z Characteristics

Some researchers claim that members of Generation Z have all the same characteristics as millennials, only that the characteristics are more extreme. Of course, this claim isn't entirely true. Every generation has unique tendencies and perspectives. A typical description of zoomers includes the following characteristics:

- Members of Gen Z are digital natives. When it comes to apps and devices, they don't need instructions, and they don't ask for them.
- Members of Gen Z are highly educated. According to Pew Research Center, zoomers are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to enroll in college than previous generations. This characteristic could be because zoomers are also more likely to have parents who attended college.
- Generation Z make good entrepreneurs. In today's world, all it takes to start a business is a phone, an internet connection, and a good idea. Maybe just a funny idea. Zoomers aren't afraid to try.

- When COVID-19 first struck, some members of Generation Z were in elementary school. Some were in high school, and some were just starting jobs or trying to navigate their way through college. Month by month, the virus turned the world of Generation Z upside down. If young people had never heard the word "quarantine" before, now they were using it on a daily basis.

- The full impact of COVID-19 on zoomers won't be known for years, maybe even decades. But doctors trying to measure the effects of the pandemic on children and adolescents have unfortunately noted higher rates of anxiety and depression.

Nielsen, D. (2021). Generation Z—Birth Years and Characteristics. Family Search. Retrieved from https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/generation-z-birth-years-characteristics

Generational Impact on Culture and Society

The influence of each generation extends beyond individual characteristics, playing a pivotal role in shaping culture, politics, and societal norms. Examining this impact provides valuable insights into the forces that have molded the world we know today.

- **Culture:** Influenced by social media platforms, driving cultural trends and activism.
- **Politics:** Advocates for environmental sustainability, diversity, and human rights.
- **Society:** Challenging traditional education and workplace structures, emphasizing individual expression.

Geeks for Geeks (n/d). List of Generation Names Year Wise: Gen Z, Millennials, Baby Boomers, Alpha Generation. Retrieved from https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/list-of-generation-names/

Generation Alphas: Born after 2013 (age 11 -)

Generation Alpha (2013 – Present):

Born into a world defined by advanced technology, the Alpha Generation is shaping the future with unprecedented connectivity. Growing up with smartphones, artificial intelligence, and instant access to information, this generation is poised to influence and adapt to an ever-evolving technological landscape.

- **Culture:** Early signs point to a generation heavily influenced by technology and digital platforms.
- **Politics:** Yet to fully emerge, but likely to engage in digital activism and global awareness.
- **Society:** Early indicators suggest a continuation of a tech-driven, globally connected society.

Geeks for Geeks (n/d). List of Generation Names Year Wise: Gen Z, Millennials, Baby Boomers, Alpha Generation. Retrieved from https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/list-of-generation-names/

Gen Alpha traits

Generation Alpha has grown up in a world where technology and the internet have always been a part of their daily lives. As a result, they have certain traits that set them apart from previous generations. Some of the traits that are commonly associated with Generation Alpha include:

- **High tech-savviness**: Gen Alpha kids are highly proficient with technology, video games, and the internet, as they have grown up with it. They are often more comfortable using digital devices and navigating the internet than previous generations.
- **Diverse and globally-minded**: Members of Gen Alpha have grown up in a more connected world, and they are more diverse and globally-minded than previous generations. They are exposed to different cultures, languages, and ideas from a young age.
- **Adaptable and resilient**: Gen Alpha kids have had to navigate a rapidly changing world, and they have developed the ability to adapt and be resilient in the face of change even more so than their older siblings.

- **Short attention span**: As they have grown up with constant access to the internet and social media, Gen Alpha kids may have shorter attention spans than previous generations and be focused more on instant gratification.
- **Independent:** As they have grown up in a world where they have easy access to information and resources, Gen Alpha children tend to be independent learners and thinkers, who are able to find information and solutions on their own.
- **Environmentally conscious**: Gen Alpha is known for being environmentally aware, they are more likely to be interested in environmental issues and sustainability, and more likely to support actions that benefit the environment. Generation Alpha is even more environmentally aware than Generation Z, they have grown up in a time where environmental issues are more pressing and more in the public consciousness. They are more understanding of climate change and the effect it is having on our world, so much so that many of them are actively taking steps to reduce their own carbon footprint and advocate for policies to address environmental issues.

Student-Centered World (2022). Generation Alpha: 8 of the best traits of a brighter tomorrow. Retrieved from https://www.studentcenteredworld.com/generation-alpha/