Trauma Work with Generation Z
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Instructions
1. Open up a web browser (Safari, Chrome, etc...)
2. In the search bar type and enter: pollev.com
3. Under "Join a presentation," type: eprusator624
4. Click "Join."
5. A picture of a map should appear.

How do you interact with Generation Z?
- Mental health
- Child welfare
- Law enforcement
- Other

Defining Generation Z
- Snapshot in Time
- Characteristics
- Subgroups
- Stress and Mental Health Needs
- Help-Seeking Trends
**Snapshot in Time**

- Born 1997-2012
- Currently aged 7-22
- Oldest of Generation Z were:
  - 11 years old when Barack Obama was elected
  - 10 years old when the iPhone launched
  - 8 years old when YouTube was created
  - 4 years old during the September 11 terrorist attacks
  - 2 years old during Columbine High School shooting
- Generation Z has never known a world without the Internet, the Violence Against Women Act, and U.S.-involved conflict

Source: Dimock, 2019; Bradt et al., 2016

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**Characteristics of Generation Z**

- Competitive
- Skeptical
- Financially focused
- Entrepreneurial
- Globally connected
- Independent
- Diverse
- Embracing of change
- Seeking a voice
- Highly educated

Sources: Fry & Parker, 2018; Miller, 2018

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**Subgroups of Generation Z**

- LGBTQ+ youth
  - In the UK, a third of youth do not identify as exclusively heterosexual
- Youth of color
  - 48% of Gen Z are non-white (39% for Millennials)
- Immigrant or refugee youth
  - Fewer members of Gen Z (12%) are foreign-born than Millennials (24%)
  - More members of Gen Z (52%) are US-born children of immigrants than Millennials (43%)
- Rural youth
  - 13% of Gen Z live in rural areas

Sources: Duffy et al., 2018; Fry & Parker, 2018

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**Enter 1-3 words that you would use to describe Gen Z:**

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**Rank these brands from most to least "cool" according to Gen Z:**

- Hollister
- Supreme
- YouTube
- Quicksilver
- Red Bull
- Facebook
- Nike

Source: Google, 2018

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**Which generation is most likely to believe that climate change is due to human activity?**

- Gen Z (ages 7-22)
- Millennials (ages 22-37)
- Gen X (ages 37-53)
- Boomers (ages 53-72)

Sources: Parker, Graf, & Ijelnik, 2019
Sources of Stress for Generation Z

- Mass shootings: 75% Z, 62% All other adults
- Suicide rates: 62% Z, 41% All other adults
- Climate change: 58% Z, 56% All other adults
- Work: 57% Z, 64% All other adults
- Money: 55% Z, 64% All other adults
- Health: 75% Z, 60% All other adults

Source: APA, 2018

Mental Health Needs of Generation Z

- 91% of Gen Z adults report experiencing at least one physical or emotional symptom of stress in the last year, including:
  - 58% feeling depressed or sad
  - 55% experiencing a lack of interest or motivation
  - 54% feeling anxious or nervous
  - 68% having trouble with sleep
  - 58% engaging in unhealthy eating habits
- 75% of all other adults report experiencing the same symptoms of stress

Source: APA, 2018

Help-Seeking among Generation Z

- % reporting seeking help from a mental health professional:
  - Older adults: 15%
  - Baby Boomers: 22%
  - Gen X: 26%
  - Millennials: 35%
  - Gen Z: 37%

Source: APA, 2018

Core Concepts for Trauma Work

1. Traumatic experiences are inherently complex.
2. Trauma occurs in a broad context.
3. Traumatic events generate secondary adversities.
4. Children exhibit a wide range of reactions to trauma.
5. Safety is a core concern for traumatized children.
6. Traumatic experiences affect the whole family.
7. Protective factors can reduce adverse impacts of trauma.
8. Trauma can strongly influence development.
10. Culture is intertwined with trauma response and recovery.
11. Legal and ethical issues impact trauma response and recovery.
12. Providers working with trauma can experience distress.

Source: NCTSN, 2012

Relevancy of a Generational Lens

- Generational trends and experiences are a part of the context in which trauma occurs.
- Safety can look different dependent upon your generational experience of this concept.
- The experience of trauma within family can bring up generational differences.
- Neurobiology is impacted by generational events in the surrounding world during development.
- Children’s culture is influenced by the generational themes that shaped their lives.

Source: NCTSN, 2012

Theoretical Frameworks

- Relevancy of Generational Lens for Trauma Work
- Attachment Theory
- Developmental Perspective
- Systems Theory
- Trauma Perspective
- Cognitive Processing Theory
Components of Culture

- Age and developmental stage
- Gender identity
- Migration status
- Ethnic background
- Language
- Religion or spirituality
- Family composition
- Geographical environment
- Social class

Sources: Brahimi & Heuer, 2016; Brandt et al., 2016;
Sources: Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1970

Generation Lens and Attachment

Generation Lens and Development

Source: Piaget, 1956

Generation Lens and Systems

Source: Bronfenbrenner, 1994

Generation Lens and Trauma

Cognitive Processing Theory

- Trauma shatters individuals’ ability to experience or establish:
  - Safety
  - Trust
  - Power and Control
  - Self-Esteem
  - Intimacy
- Healing requires for these to be rebuilt in a way that is responsive to the individuals’ unique context and experiences – including generationally.

Source: Creamer et al., 1992
Understanding Generation Z

- Safety
- Trust
- Power and Control
- Self-Esteem
- Intimacy

Safety for Generation Z

This generation of young people grew up in the shadow of a recession, watching their parents or older siblings struggle to secure jobs and make ends meet financially. Youth of Gen Z are also far more exposed to global events at a more rapid pace than any other generation before. They seek validation and reassurance as a result of the anxieties that stem from these sources.

Sources: Lassander, 2019; Stout, 2019

Trust for Generation Z

Though many breathless headlines have expressed concern over this new “distrustful” generation, Gen Z is not significantly more distrusting of institutions than previous generations. In fact, 61% of Gen Z members aged 15-22 report trust in a random stranger to tell the truth. When Millennials were the same age, only 36% felt this way.

Source: Duffy et al., 2018
Power/Control for Generation Z

There are certainly powerful examples of youth-led social change movements in the areas of gun violence and climate change. Unfortunately, though, most members (68%) of Gen Z feel overwhelmed by the state of current affairs. Many feel powerless to make any change, with only 54% of eligible Gen Z voters reporting they were planning to vote in the 2018 midterms.

Source: APA, 2018

Self-Esteem for Generation Z

If you ask youth the reasons why they admire or look up to these personalities, there are more reasons beyond the material or surface-level. They understand the complicated nature of digital marketing and see these personalities as charismatic entrepreneurs. They often get significant motivation from these individuals around their future goals.

Source: APA, 2018

Intimacy for Generation Z

Gen Z usually report a desire to socialize in person, but the lack of access to transportation and their parents’ own anxiety about safety prohibits them from doing so to the extent they desire. Use of technology is a means of connection in these circumstances.

Source: Boyd, 2014
**Path to Connection**

- Safety
- Trust
- Power and Control
- Self-Esteem
- Intimacy

**Ethical Considerations**

- Client-driven practice
- Boundary issues

Source: Mishna et al., 2012

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**Case Study**

- Baby Boomer Generation
  - Grandmother: 58 years
- Millennial Generation
  - Mother: 33 years
  - Aunt: 26 years
- Generation Z
  - Sister: 11 years
  - Client: 9 years
  - Brother: 7 years

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**Further Learning**

- The Atlantic: “Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?”
- James Callahan: “Gen Z Dictionary”
- Child Mind Institute: “Talking to Tweens and Teens about their Online Lives.”
- Pacific Standard and Stanford University: “Understanding Gen Z”

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**If all else fails...**

Therapist: and how does that make you feel?

“I am not very good at describing my emotions, maybe you could just hold up a bunch of meme pictures until I see one that I would normally comment the word “mood” on?”
Works Cited


NCI/NC wheeler curriculum on childhood trauma course (2019). The 5 j’s course content: Concepts for understanding trauma in children and families. Child Trauma Academy (CTA). Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC. UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.


