

Leading Multigenerational Teams in Medicine

Empowering Women to
Lead Across Difference

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Why This Matters Now

- Medicine now includes **up to four generations** working side-by-side.
- Women physicians are often expected to “smooth things over” *without authority or training*.
- Poor generational leadership \neq inconvenience \rightarrow impacts **burnout, retention, and patient safety**.

The Multi-Generational Reality of Medicine

Generation

Common Strengths

Common Frictions

Baby Boomers

- Experience, institutional memory

- Resistance to rapid change

Gen X

- Independence, efficiency

- Skepticism of hierarchy

Millennial

- Collaboration, tech fluency

- Desire for feedback & flexibility

Gen Z

- Innovation, wellness focus

- Challenges with traditional culture

Medical Formation

Your education helps shape your sense of identity, self, and purpose

Baby Boomers

- Socialized into medicine as vocation, endurance, and hierarchy
- High tolerance for sacrifice; loyalty to institution

Gen X

- Trained amid managed care, rising burnout, skepticism
- Values autonomy, efficiency, work-life negotiation

Millennials

- Educated with competency-based models, collaboration, feedback
- Value transparency, purpose, inclusivity

Gen Z

- Digital-native learners; direct, mental health aware
- Expect responsiveness, flexibility, psychological safety

Myth Busting

Conflict often arises when unspoken norms collide.

Quick Reframes



“Younger clinicians don’t want to work hard.”



They define sustainability differently.



“Older clinicians resist change.”



They protect standards earned under different conditions.

Small Group Activity

In pairs or triads, discuss

One **recurring generational tension** you see on your team

One **strength** from a different generation you rely on



Inclusive Leadership Across Generations



Context Setting

Explain the why behind decisions



Voice Amplification

Ensuring all perspectives are heard



Expectation Clarity

Explicit norms beat assumed norms

Case Study #1

Scenario

- A senior attending physician criticizes a resident's approach as "entitled."
- The resident feels dismissed and disengages.
- You are the female leader supervising the team.

Small Group Discussion

- What is the real issue beneath the surface?
- Which leadership move would you try?
- What risk does a female leader face here?

Case Study #2

Scenario

- A senior physician feels bedside professionalism is slipping.
- Residents feel micromanaged and unheard.
- You are the female leader supervising the team.

Small Group Discussion

- What values are in tension?
- What assumptions are being made?
- What is the real issue beneath the surface?
- Which leadership move would you try?
- What risk does a female leader face here?

The “BRIDGE” Communication Model

A simple, usable framework

- **B**egin with shared purpose
- **R**eveal perspective, without judgement
- **I**nvoke their view
- **D**ecide together
- **G**round expectations
- **E**nd with support

3 Leadership Strategies for All Generations

Some strategies to consider that will resonate with all generations in the workplace

Name without Shame

Be explicit about expectations; separate values from preferences

“In this department, responsiveness matters because patient safety depends on it.”

Name the ‘How’ Not the ‘Why’

Hold outcomes steady; allow variation in methods when possible

“our goal is continuity of care; how we document and communicate can evolve.”

Lead with Meta-Communication

Teach teams *how* to talk about difference

“Lets pause. Are we reacting to the task, or to how it’s being done different than we expect?”



Paired Practice

Practice a generationally tense conversation using BRIDGE

Offer feedback to your partner

Switch roles

One Actionable Change

Name one specific behavior you will try in the next two weeks

Examples:

- Name expectations explicitly on rounds
- Hold team members accountable for specific job requirements
- Model what stepping outside of the comfort zone looks like in practice

Leadership change doesn't
require a new title; it requires
intentional choices.



Collective Wisdom

*This challenge is systemic,
not personal*

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