

# Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z, and Boomers, Oh My! When Collective Trauma is in the Workplace



October 2, 2025

MemberAccess



Employer ID: DORM



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS**

Behavioral Healthcare Programs for Business & Industry Since 1989



# State Employee Assistance Program

---

This presentation is part of the services provided by the State Employee Assistance Program through Behavioral Health Systems, Inc. The State EAP is administered and managed by the State Department of Finance's Division of Risk Management (DORM). If you have questions regarding the policy, procedures or services provided by this program, please contact the Program Coordinator, Kwatasian Hunt, at [kwatasian.hunt@finance.alabama.gov](mailto:kwatasian.hunt@finance.alabama.gov). You can also find more information about the State Employee Assistance Program on the Division of Risk Management's website at [www.riskmgt.alabama.gov](http://www.riskmgt.alabama.gov).

# BHS / DORM Partnership

A partner to State of Alabama employees and their families since 2006



Network of 100,000+ national providers, including MDs, PhDs, counselors and hospital/facilities



Ease of administration (Dedicated Care Coordinator, centralized billing and reporting)



Specialized resources specific to your location and needs



BHS customizes services to meet the needs of State of Alabama's team

# Discussion Topics

---

- ▶ Identify the Different Generations in the Workplace
- ▶ Look at the Values and the Potential Outcomes of Generational Interaction
- ▶ Develop Intergenerational Communication Skills
- ▶ Offer Strategies for Effective Cross Generational Communication and Conflict Management
- ▶ Review EAP Benefits Available to Employees and Family Members

# Disclaimer


---

There are exceptions to every rule. Today, we will generalize characteristics shared by groups of individuals. It is important to remember not to make assumptions based on generalizations about a group.

# Why Learn About Generational Differences?

---

- ▶ The workforce continues to represent many different ages, spanning from people in their 20s to people in their 80s
- ▶ Managers and supervisors are challenged to manage the different sets of work values and styles that are represented in each generational bracket
- ▶ Employees and managers need to find new ways of working together to accomplish common goals



## Different Generations in the Workplace

---

# Traditionalists

## Born: 1925-1945

---

- ▶ Also known as the Silent Generation
- ▶ The oldest working generation in today's workforce
- ▶ This group not only survived the Great Depression but was instrumental in shaping the United States as an economic and military power
- ▶ They are responsible for developing today's space program, creating vaccines for polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and laying the foundation for today's technological environment

# Baby Boomers

## Born: 1946-1964

---

- ▶ Considered the wealthiest and most influential generation in the world
- ▶ Often portrayed as the generation of optimism, exploration and achievement
- ▶ Compared with previous generations, more young adults pursued higher education or relocated away from family to pursue career and educational interests
- ▶ This generation came of age in a period when the country was torn by differing views on politics, war and social justice

# Generation X

## Born: 1965-1980

---

- ▶ Sometimes referred to as the “middle child” or “in-betweenener” generation
- ▶ Grew up in an era of emerging technology and political and institutional incompetence
- ▶ This generation learned independence early in life by being pushed towards adulthood at an age earlier than any other recent generation

# Millennials

## Born: 1981-1996

---

- ▶ Referred to as Generation Y prior to being coined Millennials, range in age from 25 to 40
- ▶ The most populated group in modern history
- ▶ Collectively a more diverse and socially liberal group than prior generations
- ▶ First generation to truly witness the advent of technology like the internet, virtual reality and artificial intelligence

# Generation Z

## Born: 1997-2012

---

- ▶ Born and raised as digital natives, they are typically greatly dependent on smartphones and other modern devices
- ▶ Focused on people and their personalities, rather than demographics
- ▶ Currently on track to be the best-educated generation yet



# Generational Values and Views on Work

---

# Traditionalist Values

---

- ▶ Believe in Conformity, Authority and Rules
- ▶ Believe in Logic
- ▶ Very Defined Sense of Right and Wrong
- ▶ Loyalty and Respect for Authority
- ▶ Disciplined
- ▶ Dislike Conflict
- ▶ Detail Oriented
- ▶ Duty Before Pleasure
- ▶ Tend to Respond Well to Directive Leadership

# Traditionalists at Work

---

- ▶ Though aware of modern technology, most are not comfortable using it
- ▶ To create a positive work environment for a member of this group, you should try to provide offline options for completing tasks and project management
- ▶ Personal interaction is appreciated as they are likely to thrive on face-on-face communication
- ▶ Will be dropping to less than 2% of the workforce by 2025

# Baby Boomer Values

---

- ▶ Optimistic
- ▶ Driven
- ▶ Team Oriented
- ▶ Personal Gratification
- ▶ Health and Wellness
- ▶ Will go the Extra Mile
- ▶ Service Oriented
- ▶ Uncomfortable with Conflict
- ▶ Can be Judgmental of Those Who See Things Differently

# Baby Boomers at Work

---

- ▶ Job security is a top priority
- ▶ Like the silent generation, this group thrives on formal and structured work settings
- ▶ They tend to be loyal to the team, adding value by going the extra mile
- ▶ See career as translating into self-worth
- ▶ Nearly 70 million workers from the Baby Boom generation are estimated to retire by 2025, moving them to under 25% of the workforce by 2025

# Generation X Values

---

- ▶ Independent
- ▶ Flexible
- ▶ Informal
- ▶ Skeptical
- ▶ Multitaskers
- ▶ Direct Communicators
- ▶ Outcome Oriented
- ▶ Output Focused
- ▶ Welcome Feedback
- ▶ Focused on Work-Life Balance

# Generation X at Work

---

- ▶ The majority prefer a work environment that puts emphasis on individuality
- ▶ Many believe they were the ones to coin the phrase work-life balance
- ▶ Generation X often are loyal to their manager and may exceed expectations and deliver results but perceive career as just one part of who they are
- ▶ Second largest group in the labor force, holding steady at 33% through the 2020s

# Millennial Values

---

- ▶ Ambitious
- ▶ Competitive
- ▶ Civic-minded
- ▶ Open-minded
- ▶ Tenacious
- ▶ Tech Savvy
- ▶ Optimistic
- ▶ Confident
- ▶ Have Difficulty Dealing with Difficult People

# Millennials at Work

---

- ▶ For most Millennials, understanding their company's vision and doing a job that helps make the world a better place is the dream work setting
- ▶ Expect equitable treatment and see their careers as an opportunity to add value and contribute
- ▶ They are the first generation to fully embrace remote and hybrid work
- ▶ Millennials will represent 75% of the global workforce by 2025

# Generation Z Values

---

- ▶ Social
- ▶ Multi-Taskers
- ▶ Educated
- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ Multicultural
- ▶ Interactive
- ▶ Entrepreneurial
- ▶ Independent
- ▶ Project Oriented
- ▶ Transparent in Working Relationships

# Generation Z at Work

---

- ▶ They are focused on “working to live” versus “living to work” and look for employers that support this
- ▶ When looking for a job, they mostly focus on stable and long-term opportunities – they will stay with the same company for a few years before moving on
- ▶ The ideal workplace would be flexible, allowing them to complete tasks as they see fit and includes them in process improvements
- ▶ Percent of labor force will be over 27% by 2025

# Generational Interaction

---

- ▶ Traditionalists and Boomers may have a tendency NOT to question or challenge authority or the status quo. This may cause confusion among the X, Millennial and Z generations who have been taught to speak up
- ▶ X, Millennial and Z members who have had different experiences and communicate with people differently, may fail to actively listen to Traditionalists and Boomers, thereby missing valuable information and guidance



# Collective Trauma in the Workplace

---

# What is Collective Trauma?

---

- ▶ Collective trauma refers to the psychological impact of a shared traumatic event that affects a group, community, or society
- ▶ Unlike individual trauma, it is experienced simultaneously and has cultural, generational, and systemic effects
- ▶ In the workplace, this trauma can shape how teams function, how individuals interact, and how safety and trust are perceived

# What is Collective Trauma?

---

- ▶ Examples of Collective Trauma:
  - Pandemics (e.g., COVID-19)
  - Economic collapses
  - Mass violence or war
  - Racial injustice and systemic oppression
  - Climate-related disasters

# Generational Layers of Collective Trauma

Generation	Defining Collective Traumas	Impact in the Workplace
Boomers	Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Cold War	Distrust of institutions, resilience, structured loyalty
Gen X	Economic uncertainty, AIDS crisis, 9/11	Independence, skepticism of authority
Millennials	9/11, 2008 recession, climate crisis	Anxiety, values-based work, desire for purpose
Gen Z	COVID-19, school shootings, racial reckoning	Mental health focus, demand for justice and equity

- ▶ These traumas influence generational communication styles, emotional resilience, and expectations of safety and leadership

# How Collective Trauma Shows Up in the Workplace

---

- ▶ Signs & Symptoms:
  - High turnover or "quiet quitting"
  - Hypervigilance or low morale
  - Conflict avoidance or increased tension
  - Lack of trust in leadership
  - Difficulty with change or uncertainty
  - Generational misunderstandings or resentment
- ▶ Example: After COVID-19, employees across generations reported burnout, a loss of identity, and a deep questioning of work-life balance.

# Creating a Trauma-Informed, Intergenerational Workplace

---

- ▶ Strategies for Healing and Connection:
  - Acknowledge collective trauma openly — avoid gaslighting or minimizing
  - Build psychological safety — prioritize transparency, support, and choice
  - Train managers on trauma-informed leadership
  - Encourage intergenerational dialogue — bridge values and experiences
  - Normalize mental health care — remind employees of their EAP benefits
- ▶ Healing happens in connection. When organizations honor past wounds and foster empathy across generations, the workplace becomes a site of resilience.

# Generational Responses to Trauma in the Workplace

## Coping Styles, Communication, and Resilience Patterns

Generation	Common Trauma Responses	Workplace Impact
<b>Boomers (1946–1964)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Push through it" mentality</li><li>• Compartmentalization</li><li>• Stoicism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seen as emotionally detached</li><li>• May resist change or mental health discourse</li><li>• Strong loyalty and work ethic as coping mechanism</li></ul>
<b>Gen X (1965-1980)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-reliance</li><li>• Cynicism or withdrawal</li><li>• Humor as a defense</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoids seeking support</li><li>• May be skeptical of organizational efforts</li><li>• Strong boundary-setting</li></ul>
<b>Millennials (1981–1996)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocal about struggles</li><li>• Seeks purpose and meaning</li><li>• Uses digital communities for support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open to therapy and vulnerability</li><li>• May appear emotionally "needy" to older generations</li><li>• Advocates for change and equity</li></ul>
<b>Gen Z (1997–2012)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High emotional literacy</li><li>• Normalize anxiety and depression</li><li>• Expect mental health support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demand transparent leadership</li><li>• Push for systemic change</li><li>• May disengage quickly if unsupported</li></ul>



# BHS EAP Benefits for State of Alabama

---

# State of Alabama: BHS Benefits

Employees and dependents may receive up to three (3) visits/consults at no charge each plan year.



## In-Person

With a doctor,  
counselor or advisor



## Telehealth

Available via phone  
or web-based



## Digital

Access to  
virtual solutions



## Work/Life

Consultation for  
Financial

- Ψ Stress & Anxiety
- Ψ Marital / Family
- Ψ Depression
- Ψ Work-Related Problems
- Ψ Substance Abuse
- Ψ Grief & Loss
- Ψ Childhood Disorders including ADHD
- Ψ Life Transitions

# Accessing the BHS Benefits

Begins with a call to BHS:  
800-245-1150 or

[www.behavioralhealthsystems.com](http://www.behavioralhealthsystems.com)



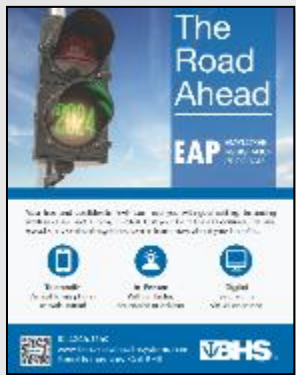
- ▶ Designated BHS Care Coordinator is available Monday-Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CT
- ▶ After-hour, weekend and holiday calls answered by mental health professionals – never an automated response system
- ▶ Digital offerings also available via the BHS MemberAccess app and portal
  - To log in, use your Employer ID: **DORM**



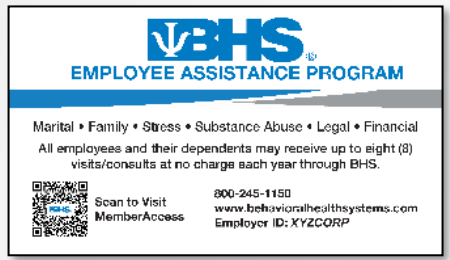
**Designated  
BHS Care Coordinator**  
Jasmine Burns, DBH, ALC,  
CRC

# Benefits Communications

Posters



EAP Wallet Card



EAP Newsletters



BHS MemberAccess App



Fact Sheets



Info Graphics



BHS Supervisory Toolkit



# In Summary: Key Takeaways



BHS is the EAP for State of Alabama employees and their families



Members should call Jasmine Burns, BHS Care Coordinator, for behavioral health needs including scheduling



Both virtual and in-person care options are available within the BHS network of providers, and the BHS MemberAccess App is available



To make an appointment, call BHS at 800-245-1150 or visit [www.behavioralhealthsystems.com](http://www.behavioralhealthsystems.com)



# A Personalized Approach To Behavioral Health



Behavioral Health



EAP & Work/Life



Drug Testing



Telehealth & Digital