

# Generations in Sync:



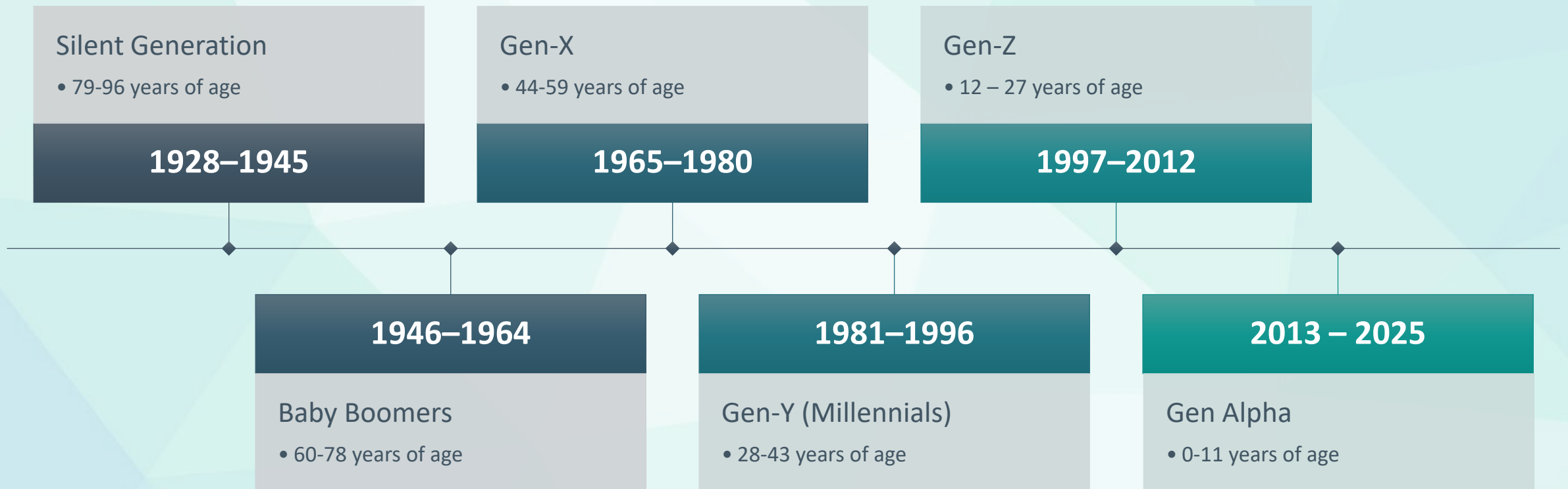
Strengthening Leadership &  
Reducing Workplace Tension

# Introduction



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  - Certified Health Coach, ACE
  - Certified Nutrition Coach, PNLvl1
  - Certified Corporate Wellness Specialist, Global Health
  - Certified Positive Psychology Practitioner, Flourishing Center
  - Certified Stress Management, Sleep and Recovery Coach

# Quick Overview of Each Generation





The background of the slide is a photograph of numerous icebergs floating in a body of water. The icebergs are of various sizes and shapes, with some showing a light blue or white color, while others are darker, suggesting they are older or have been in the water longer. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is a vast, cold landscape.

# Ice Breaker

Divide into generations and give answers for the following: What was most popular among your group – No more than 3 answers for each category

- **Music:**
- **Movies:**
- **Technology:**
- **Notable Events:**
- **Fashion:**
- **Slang:**

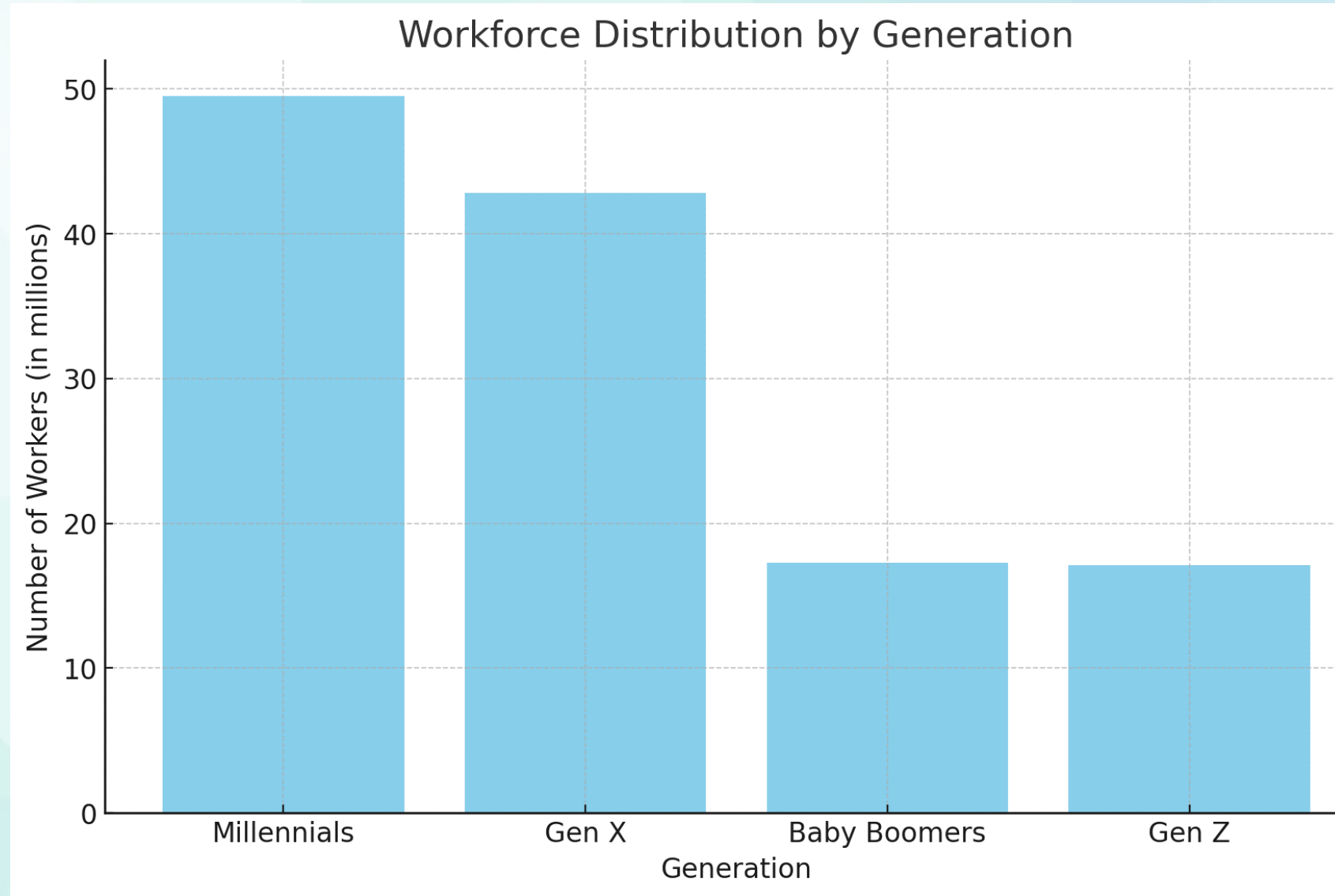




# The Isles of generations



# Workforce Landscape

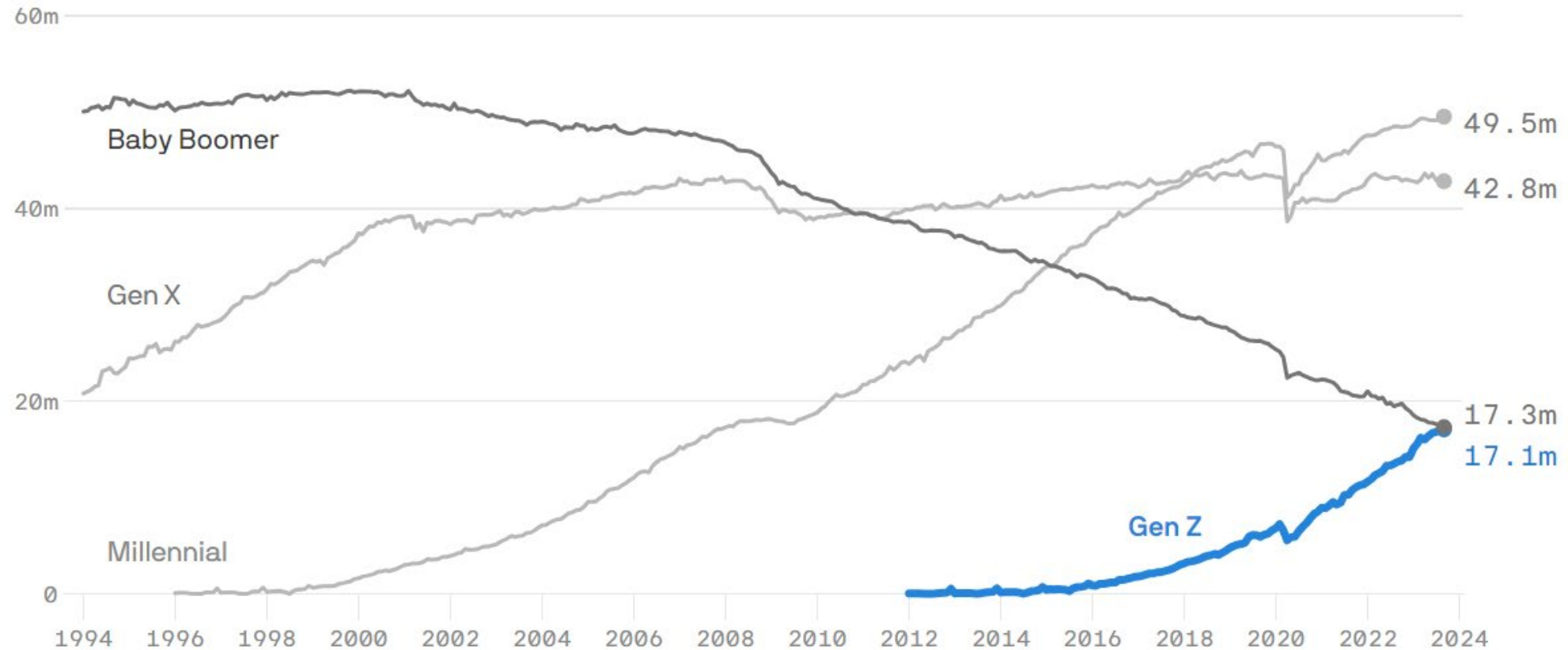




# Zoomers Overtake Boomers

## U.S. full-time workforce, by generation

Seasonally adjusted; Monthly, January 1994 to September 2023



Gen Zers are expected to overtake  
Baby Boomers by early 2024



# What does this mean?

- Younger people – Millennials – Are taking more leadership roles
  - Many times, without -
    - Experience
    - Proper Training
    - Mentorship
    - Support
  - Which leads to –
    - Poor collaboration
    - Confusion
    - Lack of communication
    - Burn out

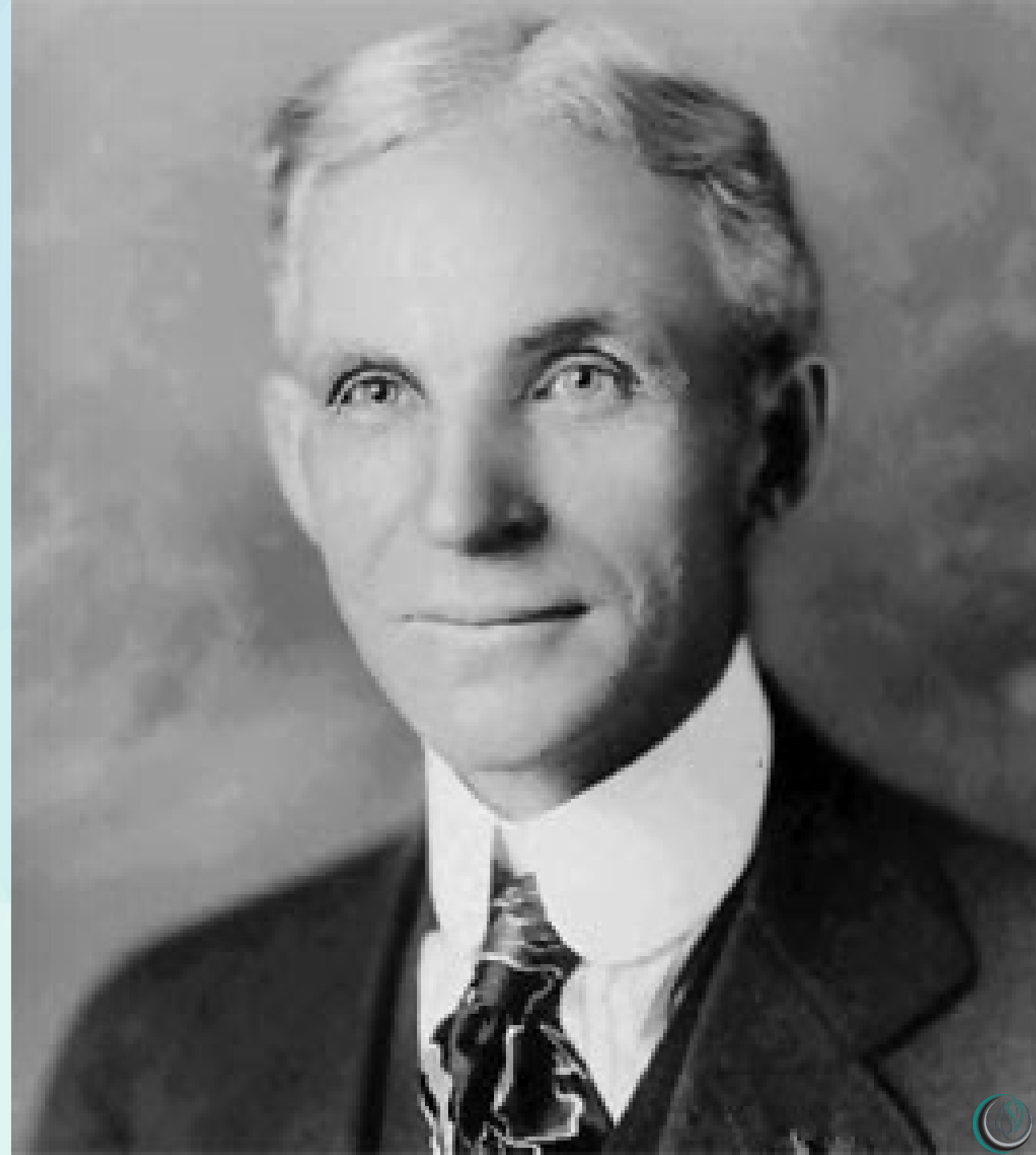




# Training is Needed

*“The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.”*

*— Henry Ford, Founder, Ford Motor Company*



A diverse group of nine people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, are smiling and posing together. They are dressed in business casual attire. The group is arranged in two rows, with some people standing slightly behind others. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A large, dark blue, semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# Understanding the Generations





# How do they view work

## Boomers

- Work is an adventure, You work then retire, A career

## Gen X

- Work is a challenge, a contract, just a job, a means to an end

## Millennials

- Work is where I find fulfillment, Just one piece of my life

## Gen Z

- Work is diverse, where I can make a difference



# Baby Boomers

- **Want to hear that their ideas matter**
  - Raised by people who believed children were to be seen but not heard
- **Their careers define them, and work is very important**
  - They were the first disrupters – changed the work landscape
- **Their view of authority – impressed and respectful**
  - Money is a status symbol – authority is impressive
- **First, parents to really talk openly to their children**
  - They built real relationships with their kids – diplomatic and direct in their communication style.





# Generation X

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- **Latch Key Kids – Extremely independent, the generational middle child**
  - Care more about work-life balance than their careers
- **Mistrust, cynical, dislikes authority**
  - Unimpressed by authority – use to working alone
- **Blunt and immediate straight talk, hates buzzwords**
  - How does this affect me
- **Adaptable – Saw the biggest changes in technology**
  - Burned by the “.com” bubble



# Millennials

## 2-types of Millennials

- Elder is like Gen X, go by “Xennial,” knew a time before the internet and smartphones
- Younger – never knew a time without the internet.

## Wants to be challenged and respected but needs structure and supervision

- Hates menial work, being talked down too

## They have a relaxed view of authority

- Most people in authority are like their parents (boomers/Gen X), who communicate with them

## Work should be fun and energizing – wants to be part of a team

- Wants a positive work environment





# Gen Z

- **Want an impactful mission and develop more innovative solutions**
  - The world seems so small to them
- **Prefers honest face-to-face feedback with constructive criticism**
  - High preference for instant gratification and the willingness to learn
- **Views authority as mentors – wants to learn from others and develop skills**
  - More likely to seek coaching and be entrepreneurs.
- **Values privacy – does not overshare and lives frugally**
  - FIRE – Financial Independence Retire Early
- **Wants Diversity – wants to make a big impact**
  - Likes to network, connect with others



# Where the friction lies

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## Boomers

- Expects others to be “workaholics” like them, doesn’t like change, peer loyal

## Gen X

- Cynical/skeptical, dislikes authority, mistrusts institutions, no long-term outlook

## Millennials

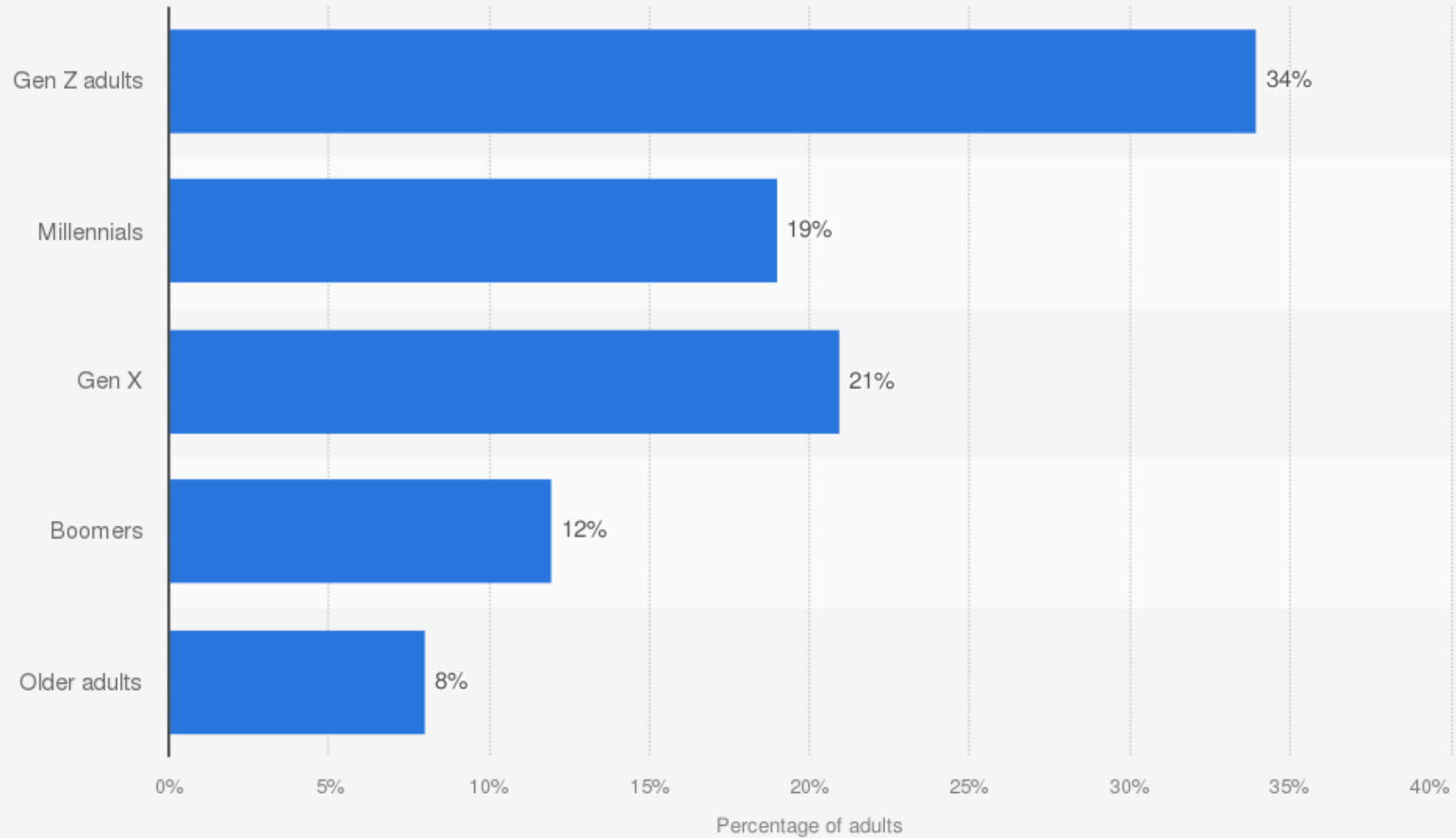
- Dislikes menial work, needs structure and supervision, lacks skills for dealing with difficult people

## Gen Z

- Wants to be technologically up-to-date, wants to work for self, wants to try different jobs, wants global impact



## Percentage of adults in the United States who stated their mental health was worse in 2020 compared to a year ago, by generation



### Sources

APA; Harris Poll (Stress in America Survey)  
© Statista 2024

### Additional Information:

United States; Harris Poll (Stress in America Survey); From August 4 to 26, 2020; 3,409 respondents; 18 years and older;





# Building Trust

You can not change the culture without trust from your teams

The diagram illustrates the components of trustworthiness. It features a large blue left-pointing arrow on the left and a large blue right-pointing arrow on the right. A horizontal blue line separates the top row of components from the bottom row. The top row contains the text "( CREDIBILITY ) + ( RELIABILITY ) + ( INTIMACY )" in a grey, all-caps font. The bottom row contains the text "( SELF-ORIENTATION )" in the same font, followed by the large blue right-pointing arrow. Below the bottom row, the text "= TRUSTWORTHINESS" is displayed in the same grey, all-caps font.

$$\begin{array}{l} \leftarrow ( \text{CREDIBILITY} ) + ( \text{RELIABILITY} ) + ( \text{INTIMACY} ) \\ \hline ( \text{SELF-ORIENTATION} ) \rightarrow \\ \hline = \text{TRUSTWORTHINESS} \end{array}$$





Questions?



# Understanding Stress

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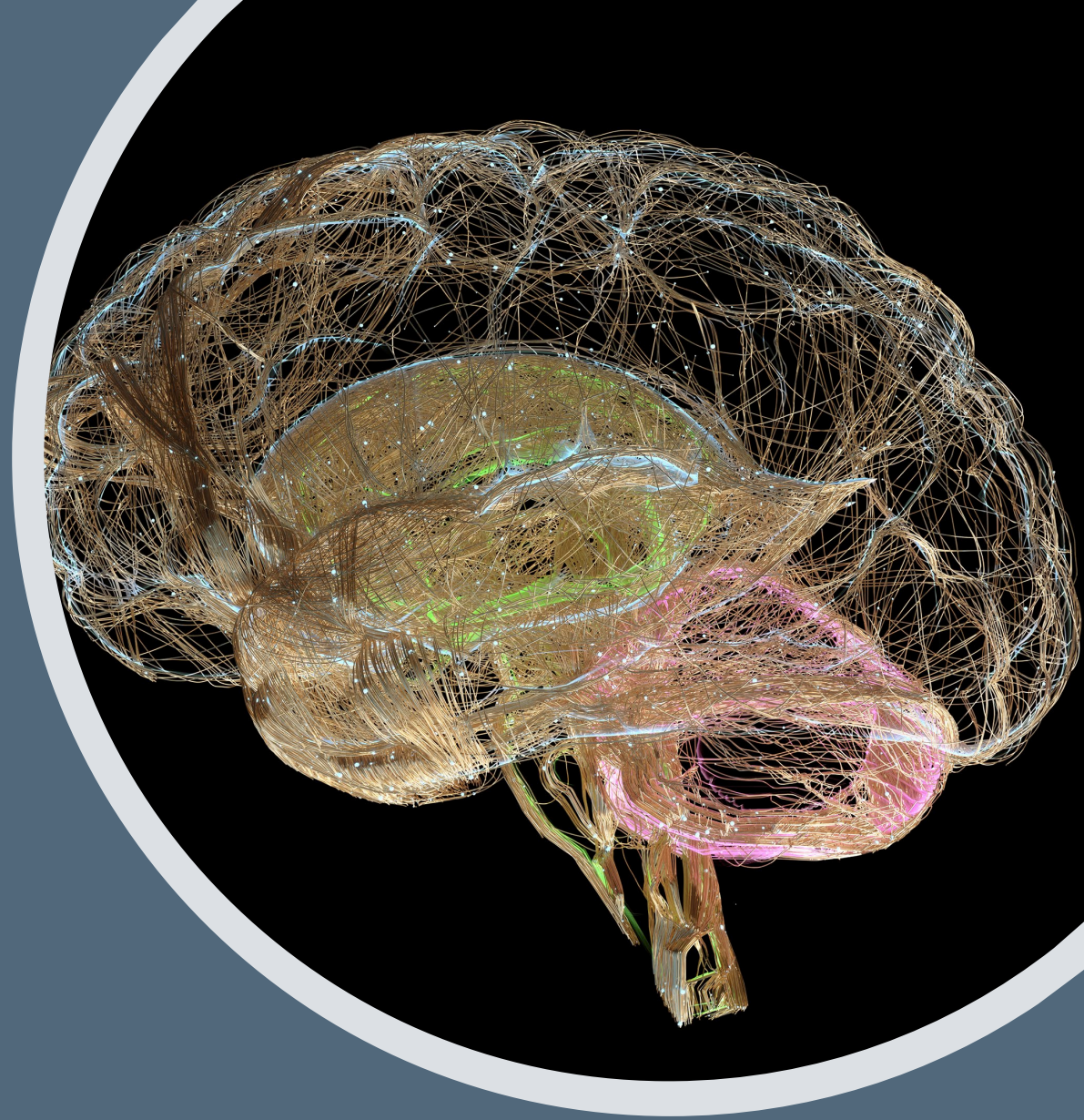
- What Happens –
  - When you feel threatened, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, which rouse the body for emergency action. **Your heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens, and your senses become sharper.**
- Remember Fight or Flight Response?
  - It is a high-stress response
  - Physical and Social Stress Response
- Makes sense when wandering about a desert
  - Today not so much





# Understanding the Brain

- **Triune Brain Model**
  - Reptilian/Primal Brain
    - Basal Ganglia
  - Paleomammalian/Emotional Brain
    - Limbic System
  - Neomammalian/Rational Brain
    - Neocortex





# 2009 – Liberman & Eisenberger

- Social Pain = Real Pain according to the Brain
  - fMRI Brain Scans – Ball Toss Game
- Social Threats/Rewards = Physical Threats/Rewards
- Social Pain is distracting leading to decreased productivity and engagement
- Side Note: Pain relievers will ease “social pain”



# Chronic Stress and Social Pain: How it Affects the Brain

- Goes Offline
- No higher functioning
- Complex problem solving
- Unable to make decisions
- Lose Focus
- Lose Creativity





# Symptoms of chronic stress include

Aches and pains

Insomnia or  
sleepiness

A change in  
social behavior,  
such as staying  
in often

Low energy

Unfocused or  
cloudy thinking

Poor memory

Change in  
appetite

Increased  
alcohol or drug  
use

Change in  
emotional  
responses to  
others

Emotional  
withdrawal

Digestive Issues

Increased  
inflammation



# Perceived Stress Assessment

Take 5 Mins to fill out and review

## Perceived Stress Scale

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender (Circle): **M** **F** Other \_\_\_\_\_

**0 = Never    1 = Almost Never    2 = Sometimes    3 = Fairly Often    4 = Very Often**

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	0	1	2	3	4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

The PSS Scale is reprinted with permission of the American Sociological Association, from Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., and Mermelstein, R. (1983).  
A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 386-396.

Cohen, S. and Williamson, G. Perceived Stress in a Probability Sample of the United States. Spacapan, S. and Oskamp, S. (Eds.)  
*The Social Psychology of Health*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988.

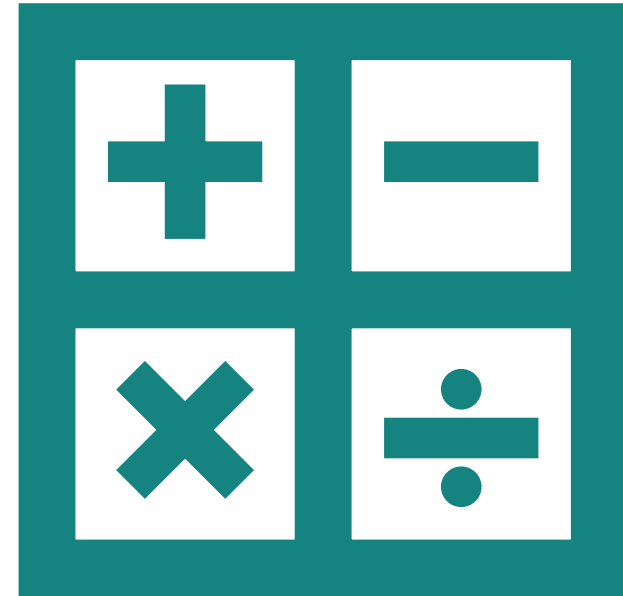
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# Determining Your Score

- First, reverse your scores for questions 4,5,7 and 8. On these four questions, change the scores like this
  - 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0
- Now add up your scores for each item to get a total
  - Total is \_\_\_\_\_







# Your Stress Level

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Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.

- 0-13 – Low Stress
- 14-26 – Moderate Stress
- 27-40 – High Stress





# Mindset is Everything

- Emotions
- Relationships
- Health
- Creativity
- Productivity
- Environment



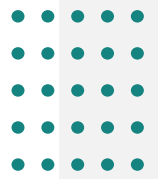
# The Three Rational Questions (Pucci, 2010)

Identifying when to reframe your thoughts- Ask

1. Is my thinking based on fact?
2. Does my thinking help me achieve my goals?
3. Does my thinking help me feel the way I want to feel?

If you answer “NO” to any ONE, you need to reframe





# Reframing Beliefs for Mental Resiliency

- Correlation between Growth mindset and mental resiliency
  - Mental Resiliency and Growth mindset promote optimism
- The ABCDE Model of Mental Resiliency Cognitive Behavior Therapy
  - A – Adversity or Activating Event
  - B – Belief
  - C – Consequence
  - D – Disputation with Evidence
  - E – Evaluation





# A, B, C, Example

## Person 1 (Fixed Mindset)

- A – I don't get a promotion
- B – Maybe I am not cut out for it
- C – Devastated and unable to focus at work

## Person 2 (Growth Mindset)

- A – I don't get a promotion
- B – I need to improve my skills and abilities
- C – Feels a little sad, but overall okay



# D and E – Investigator and Attorney



## Disputation

Ask why we hold that belief.  
Give examples of why it is true and untrue.

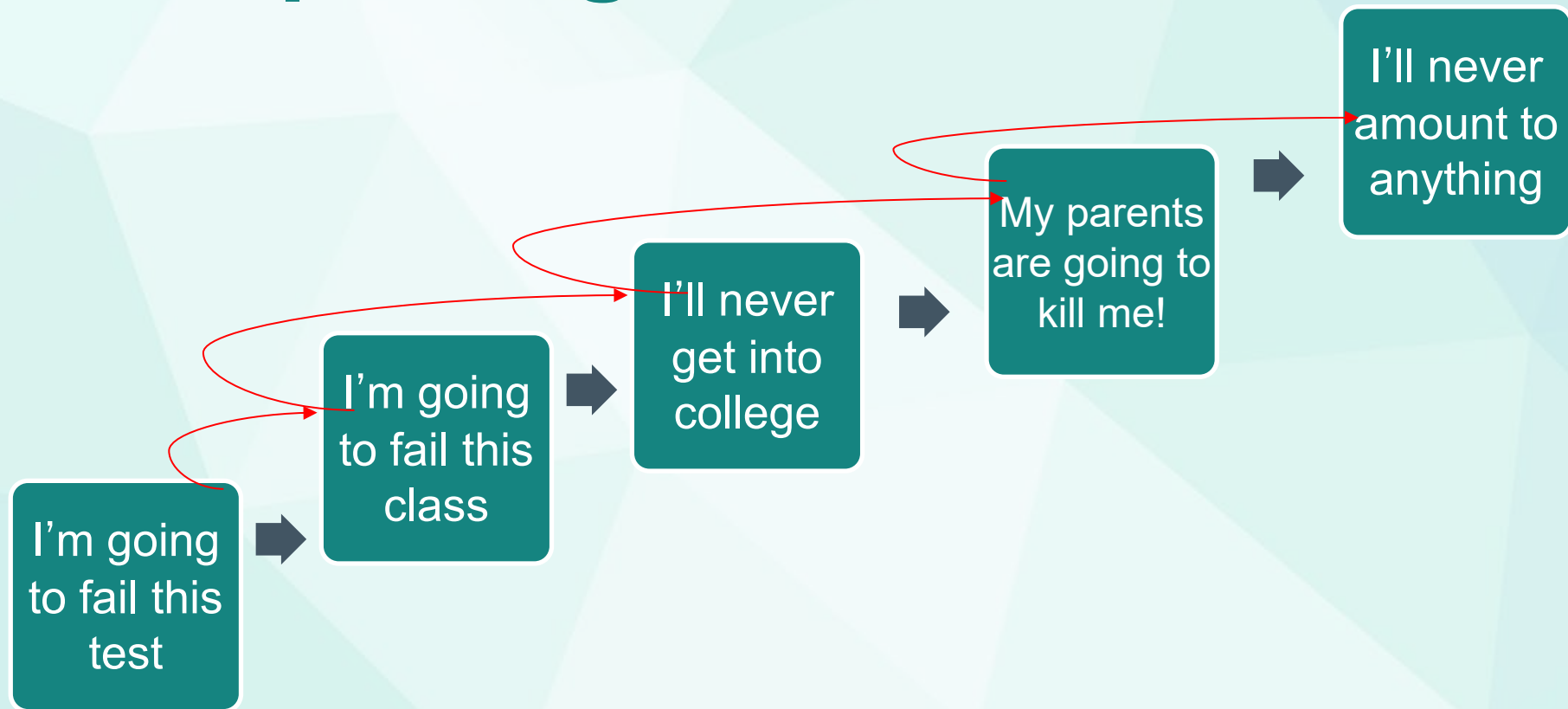


## Evaluate

Look at the real facts.  
Develop a new belief.



# Catastrophizing



# WC - BC - ML

**Adversity/Trigger:** After multiple verbal warnings, you must take disciplinary action and formally document a write-up for an employee.

<b>Worst Case Thoughts</b>					
<b>The employee will get mad/upset – Hostile</b>	<b>10%</b>				
<b>Files complain about unfair treatment</b>	<b>5%</b>				
<b>Affects team morale</b>	<b>10%</b>				
<b>Employees quit – production losses</b>	<b>15%</b>				
<b>Question leadership skills</b>	<b>15%</b>				
<b>Legal issues</b>	<b>5%</b>				
<b>Increased Turnover</b>	<b>5%</b>				





# WC - BC - ML

**Adversity/Trigger:** After multiple verbal warnings, you must take disciplinary action and formally document a write-up for an employee.

Worst Case Thoughts				Best Case Thoughts	
The employee will get mad/upset – Hostile	10%			Employee understands – learns from meeting	40%
Files complain about unfair treatment	5%			Employee improves performance	30%
Affects team morale	10%			Improved production and customer service	30%
Employees quit – production losses	15%			Seeks additional development	25%
Question leadership skills	15%			Helps others to improve performance	20%
Legal issues	5%			Lifetime retention	5%
Increased Turnover	5%			Retires at an old age from this organization	1%



# WC - BC - ML

**Adversity/Trigger:** After multiple verbal warnings, you must take disciplinary action and formally document a write-up for an employee.

Worst Case Thoughts		Most Likely Thoughts		Best Case Thoughts	
The employee will get mad/upset – Hostile	10%	Employee upset but understanding	60%	Employee understands – learns from meeting	40%
Files complain about unfair treatment	5%	Defensive at first – but calms over time	50%	Employee improves performance	30%
Affects team morale	10%	Write- up documents clear expectations for both	55%	Improved production and customer service	30%
Employees quit – production losses	15%	Employee improves performance with follow-ups	50%	Seeks additional development	25%
Question leadership skills	15%	The situation resolves with minimal long-term effects	50%	Helps others to improve performance	20%
Legal issues	5%	You gain confidence in your ability to handle any future issues	100%	Lifetime retention	5%
Increased Turnover	5%			Retires at an old age from this organization	1%



# Put it into practice

- Review your worksheet about stressful situations you have been in
- Can you identify what kind of mindset you had during this situation?
- Fill out your best case, worst case and most likely case
- Take 10 mins to practice it.



# SCARF Model

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Threats and rewards that speak to the social world

- S – Status
- C – Certainty
- A – Autonomy
- R – Relatedness
- F – Fairness

Move away from a threat

Move toward an award





A series of short, light gray dashes arranged in a curved path on the left side of the slide.

# Let's Review Each Area

See definitions and examples for future  
labeling and assessments



# Status

## Our Relative importance to others

- Someone's title or position in the organization
- Companies are set up in a hierarchy



# Status and IQ

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- If someone perceives their status to be less, then those around them IQ drops
  - “Wow, that person made me feel so dumb.”
  - Decrease in pre-frontal cortex region (Problem-solving part of the brain)
  - Think of when you talked to your crush! Or a boss calls on you in a meeting
- If someone perceives their status to be more, they engage in Approach Behavior
  - They continue to act in a successful manner
  - Social media influencers



## Examples of Status Threats

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One employee was promoted over another.

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Someone took credit for another's work.

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Not called on or ignored during a meeting.

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Talked over in conversation.

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Talked down to or in a condescending way.

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The customer wants to speak to someone higher up.



# Certainty



Predicting the future

Our brains look for patterns and try to predict the future



When someone/something doesn't act as planned, alarm bells go off

Think of the pandemic



We like patterns – Music, rhythms, routines



We like knowing rewards are in our future

Raises, bonuses, etc.





# Examples of Certainty

## Threats

- The Pandemic.
- Layoffs in a downed economy.
- Any organizational or other changes
  - New management, procedures, locations, “new normal”
- New interactions with different people
  - Don't want to offend anyone

## Rewards

- Raises
- Quarterly bonuses
- Holidays off
- Vacation days



# Autonomy

## A sense of control over events

- We like to do it “All by myself” (Think Toddler)
- We like the control of what we do and how we do it
- We like to know we can escape stress when needed
- We seek out choice



# ▼ Examples - Autonomy

- Micro-Management
  - Choices are removed
- Strict procedures and processes
  - No room for changes
- Mask and Vaccine Mandates
- Forcing someone to accept differing beliefs
  - Pronoun usage (Both Sides)
  - Religious families
  - Political views
- Schedule and flexibility
  - Remote/Hybrid/In Office Work Environments
  - Smoke, Lunch and other regulated breaks



# Relatedness

## Sense of safety with others

- Friend vs. Foe
- The people I am surrounded by







# Relatedness Examples

- Reduce workplace bullying
- Create a mentorship program
- Work buddy programs
- Welcome new employees and members
  - Strangers are a threat
    - De-escalate by learning names, pronouns etc.
    - Providing minimal social links increases performance
    - Builds Trust in an organization
      - Remember our trust equation?





# Relatedness Cont'd

## In Group Preference

- We have a bias towards people who are like us
  - Looks
  - Similar Likes
  - Beliefs

## Out Group Bias

- Feel less empathy for those that are not similar to us
  - Racial
  - Gender
  - Ethnic

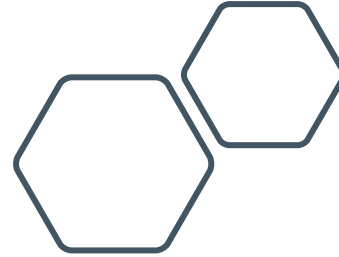


# Create Collaboration

- Artificially create groups to limit bias
  - Mix groups for projects or events
  - When they start to work together, the bias dissipates
- Brain Science – Mixed groups working on a project together activate positive networks in the brain.



# Fairness



- The perception of fair exchanges
- Everyone is treated the same





# Fairness Examples

- Family in business
- Playing favorites with workers
- Equal pay
- Discrimination



# Fairness

- Be up to date with policies that pertain to DEI and Discrimination
- Make sure all policies are communicated frequently, clearly and you understand them
  - Ask questions when needed
- Give clear guidelines and offer assistance to all in need





# How to De-escalate

What do you do when you are triggered?



# Labeling

## When you are not feeling right

- Can you identify why?
- Which of the 5 areas did you feel threatened
- Label It

## Labeling can calm the brain

## Evaluate and locate the trigger

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- How



# Example – Labeling Helps

- After devoting time and resources to a new employee, they decided not to show up for work. And you get questioned for not hiring better people.
  - Someone says – “*Where did you find this rockstar?*”
- You are stewing over it!
  - Why is this bothering me?
  - Why am I letting them get under my skin?
  - Why can't I shake this off?
  - What is wrong with me?
- *Side Note – Important to teach this to young children!*



# Reappraising

- Look at the situation that triggers your threat response again
  - Did someone trigger it?
  - What were they going through?
  - Could something else explain the behavior or event?



# Working Example

- Someone says something
  - *“Where did you find this rockstar?”*
- Who said this?
  - Identify the who - *John*
- Which area of SCARF did this affect?
  - Status – *Not respecting you as a leader and questioning your judgment.*
  - Autonomy – *You hire the way that works best for you and the organization.*
- What could they be going through
  - Certainty – *They were expecting to have more help, but the new guy didn’t show up.*
  - Fairness – *Maybe he feels undervalued because he shows up and works hard.*
  - Relatedness – *Would like to be a part of the hiring process as this affects them.*





# Put it all together



Label it – Calm the brain and yourself



Confront the evidence you have - Reappraise



Worst case, Best case, Most likely case



Respond appropriately

Seek additional support when needed



**Questions?**



# Behavior vs Habit

## Behavior

- Requires effort, work, and to be mindful of the action

## Habit

- Is subconscious, no effort, acts without thinking

# Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change

Precontemplation Stage

1

Contemplation Stage

2

Preparation and Planning Stage

3

Action Stage

4

Maintenance Stage

5

**What it is:**

A theory of behavior change that examines one's readiness to change. Also called stages of change model

**Bonus stage:**

Relapse/Termination



# Behavior Change Timeframe

Precontemplation Stage –  
“I WON’T”

- No action for the next 6 months

Contemplation Stage –  
“I MIGHT”

- Might take action within 6 months

Preparation/Planning Stage –  
“I WILL”

- Will take action within 30 days

Action Stage –  
“I AM NOW”

- Been in action for less than 6 months

Maintenance Stage –  
“I AM”

- Been taking action for over 6 months





# Making Change Takes Time

It can take over a year for people to break old habits and create new ones

21-days is a myth!

Give people the time to change and adjust



**Questions?**



# Thank you

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