THE SANDWICH GENERATION:
STRATEGIES FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL CAREGIVING

PRESENTER

Debra Barker

Debra Barker is a premiere key note speaker who holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in crisis counseling and a master’s degree in business administration with a minor in accounting.

She started her career as a life skills counselor and has maintained those licenses since the early 1990’s. She is a solution focused financial counselor/coach as well as an adult educator. Additionally, Debra holds certifications as a personal fitness trainer and sports nutritionist and she works with clients on both emotional and physical fitness in all aspects of their professional and personal life goals.

Debra has been a keynote speaker for more than 20 years and has taught over 10,000 hours of solution focused developmental programs in psychology as well as finance.

MAIN TOPICS

• Discuss the needs of the generations for effective communication
• Identify signs that additional assistance is needed
• Develop coping strategies
• Describe the financial and emotional impact on both family and work
CAREGIVING POPULATION/COMPOSITION OF THE SANDWICH GENERATION

34 million adults, which equates to roughly 16% of the population, are caregivers to adults who are 50 years of age and older.

Approximately 52 million informal and family caregivers provide care to an adult who is 20 years of age or older and ill or disabled.

Roughly 57% of working caregivers report going into work late, getting off early, or taking time off in order to effectively provide care.

Working caregivers report having to:
- Take a leave of absence (17%)
- Transition from full-time to part-time (10%)
- Quit their jobs (6%)
- Lose job benefits (5%)
- Decline a promotion (4%)
- Choose early retirement (3%)

FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT

Financial/economic impact of caregiving

Emotional impact of caregiving

POLL

Family caregivers are much more likely to take time off of work, drop from full-time to part-time status, or quit their jobs altogether in order to provide care for their loved ones.

A. True
B. False
EFFECTS ON WORK AND FAMILY

Relationships
Caregiving and work

BEING IN THE MIDDLE

Common feelings/situations

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF EACH GENERATION

- Dilemmas of dependency
- Elder’s need for control
- Common reactions to offers of assistance
- Children/teens adjusting to the care of an elder
Dilemmas of dependency: issues facing the care receiver

- Being able to trust a stranger
- Giving up independence and responsibilities
- Having to wait
- Anger: "biting the hand that feeds you"
- Feeling ashamed for needing care
- Loss of self-esteem
- Loss of role in family and society
- Worried about how much care is costing
- Unable to help others; feeling no longer useful
- Being a burden to others
- Being perceived as old
- Loss of privacy and dignity

Elder's need for control

- Elder's point of view: difficulty coping with losing independence, abilities, freedoms, spouse, and close friends
- Need to know he or she has a say in decisions about his or her care and living arrangements
- Feeling shame, denial, and/or embarrassment when receiving help
- Resistance when offered help

Common reactions to offers of assistance

- Anger when confronted about physical and/or mental decline
- Avoiding asking for help
- Refusing help in an effort not to give in to demands of others
- Negative and critical toward others; defensive
- Difficulty accepting losses of aging
- Suspicion and paranoia
UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF EACH GENERATION

Children/teens adjusting to the care of an elder

Common reactions:

- Fear—most common response
- Sadness about changes in their lives
- Confusion about elder’s decline
- Feeling afraid of the elder’s behaviors
- Guilt for becoming angry
- Anger/frustration due to repeating the same activities or questions
- Jealousy/resentment because more focus is given to the elder
- Feeling ashamed when people come to visit
- Sense of loss in a once loving relationship
- Helplessness in losing a relationship

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF EACH GENERATION

Children/teens adjusting to the care of an elder

Common reactions:

- Withdrawal or isolation
- Short temper
- Complaints of headaches and stomachaches
- Poor performance in school
- Spending less time at home
- No longer extending invitations to friends to come visit
- No longer visiting elder/grandparent
- On a positive side, showing understanding and empathy

POLL

One of the signs of a great caregiver is that he or she is able to identify weaknesses or areas in which help is needed.

A. True
B. False
IDENTIFYING SIGNS

When you need additional help

- How can I effectively spend time with both my children/family and my older relative?
- How do I know when I am using too much of my time?
- How can I create time for my marriage?
- Is there any time for me?
- What can I do to maintain a level of peace between my kids and my elder loved one?
- Where can I find available resources for both myself and my loved one?
- In what ways can I overcome my personal feelings of isolation?
- How do I deal with the guilt for not having enough time to accomplish it all?

COPING STRATEGIES

Baby boomer generation

Children/teens

- Communicate/discuss your concerns openly
- Involve everyone
- Set aside time for yourself; care for yourself emotionally and physically
- Seek help from family, friends, and other supportive resources
- Hold family meetings
- Make your boundaries clear
- Take advantage of community services
- Maintain important relationships with family and friends
COPING STRATEGIES: CHILDREN/TEENS

• Talk to them and help them understand that the elder is sick
• Make sure they understand that what is occurring is not their fault
• Their feelings should be explored and brought up in conversation
• Assure them that their feelings are normal
• Provide very simple explanations
• Maintain a level of open communication
• Encourage questions, and provide honest answers
• Educate them on the specific illness
• Get them involved with the elder using easy, fun, and familiar activities

RESILIENCY

1. You have a choice in your response.
2. Your mind and your habits create either barriers or bridges.
3. Life's difficulties can lead to new strength and abilities.
4. You understand that 'seasons' change.
5. By developing resiliency, you will become more resilient in the future.

FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE
CONTACT YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)
THANK YOU

Questions?

WORKS CITED


