



**Patricia Grace - Professor
College of Public Service
Kaplan University**

Time to Move Over

- The Baby Boom Generation is known for being born between the years of 1946 and 1964
- This is the largest population of births our country has known Smith, J.W., and Clurman, A ., (2009
- Baby boomers are associated with a rejection or redefinition of traditional values according to Smith and Clurman in their 2009 research.

Concepts

- This generation is known for cultural and social change.
- Baby Boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1955, those who came of age during the Vietnam War era.
- This era accounts for one half of the population. Smith, J.W., and Clurman, A., (2009)
- The second born between 1956 – 1964 is known as Late Boomers and makes up the second part of the population.

Timeline

Social Change

- This generation grew up during a time of radical social change.

Viet Nam War

The Beatles

Change in religious views

Woodstock

Civil Rights Movement

Sexual Freedom

Viet Nam War



Major Social Change

- Through the years surveys have been conducted with the Baby Boom Generation. The results and their answers to growing older are interesting.
- Many people who work in the field of Human Services still are uncomfortable working with the senior population.
- Many of our universities are just finally realizing that there is going to be a boom in the field of gerontology.



Schools

When conducting a survey of students about working in the field of Gerontology here is what students said”

1. I do not like old people
2. They have good stories but repeat themselves
3. They are not fun to work with at all
4. They have wrinkles
5. They are not any fun
6. They are sick all the time
7. I am a baby boomer

<http://www.babyboomer-magazine.com/news/165/ARTICLE/1402/2012-03-27.html>

Students

- Baby Boomers thought that old was starting when you are 85.
- 50 and 65 year olds did not see themselves as senior citizens.
- The only good thing about this title is you can get a few discount perks if you admit you are a senior.
- See their parents as much older at 50 and 65 than they see themselves today.
- See themselves as more active and healthier than parents.

Age

The greatest priorities for the boomers today:

- Family
- Spouse
- Saving for retirement
- Staying health
- Enjoying life; Having fun



Priorities Today

Perceptions between students and Baby Boomers is remarkably different.

We know that the old nursing home culture is not going to work for this population.

The baby boomers want control over their life even when it comes to a change in living environment.

They want their independence to do what they want when they want.

Perceptions

- Meaning in life is of primary importance to this generation.
- They want to live in a home like setting which means there needs to be a major cultural shift in places like nursing homes.
- They prefer to stay in their own homes until the end.
- They want to be surrounded by their own personal items and have a person providing their care that knows what they prefer.



Wants

- The Baby Boomer wants to work through their retirement years with a flexible schedule.
- This means less stress, less responsibility but still making money.
- The Baby Boomer still wants to make an impact in life. The family is raised and it is time to move back to social change in society.



Impact on Life

Baby Boomers have a strong need for connection through:

- Intellectual stimulation
- Friendships
- Working for the common good

Retirement does not work for them.

- Boomers want to work to match their skills and strengths with their passions.
- As parents they have sacrificed, worked long hours and missed school events to provide for the family. Now they want to use their passion for a cause and sacrifice time to make a change.



Passion

- Since life expectancy keeps increasing, the Baby Boomer will volunteer while still working to keep ahead of inflation.
- They want to be active in social networking, computers, emails, and any new technology for remember it was developed during their college years.
- Remember too that this generation has the most college graduates of any generation in the past or the present.
- The Boomers buying power will continue to affect consumers along with healthcare



Technology

- They are not like past generations that will just accept Medicare for what it is today. They will use their buying skills to find solutions to what is best for them when it comes to healthcare.
- They know that aging is in their control.
- They no longer follow the patterns of past generations of just accepting what is offered.
- The Boomers are changing the perception of what it means to age while being healthy and active.



Perception

So what is the problem today that many young adults do not want to work in the field of Gerontology?

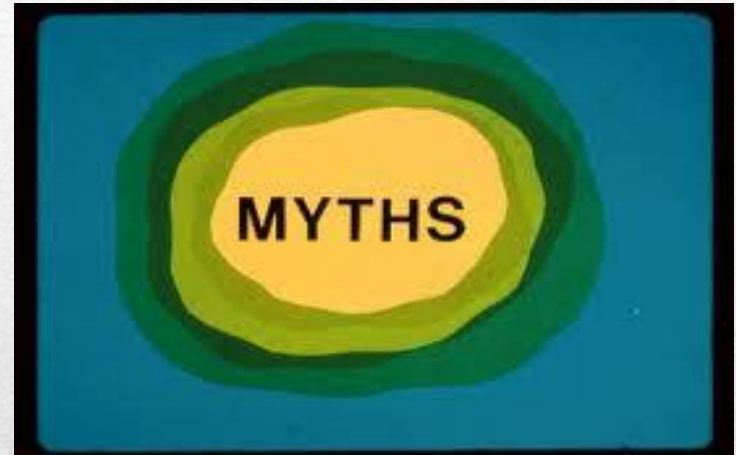
Gerontology

1. Stereotypes – these people do not want to learn new things, they are waiting to die.
2. They are senile, rigid in their thoughts and skills.
3. They are poor
4. They are eccentric
5. They are just different.



Stereotypes

- So what does this mean when the younger generation sees ageism happening in their own family – Myths, Stereotypes, fear.
- They have adopted the old myths and use it as a way to justify not being around older adults.
- They fall into the media's portrayal of the senior adult who is waiting to die. (The Bucket List, The Notebook, or Grumpy old Men)



Myths

- Seniors are trying to make up for what they did not do in middle age.
- The media tend to portray the senior as in poor health and very narrow thinking.
- Seniors are facing their own mortality.
- The themes are the same in the news and television shows – they are just old.



Are you Kidding?

- Our cultural perspective in this country is on individualism rather than collectivism.
- In other cultures, the needs of the family are met before the needs of the individual.
- Do you ever wonder why other countries are not facing the same type of problems working with seniors as the US?

Culture

- Even though we are seeing changes in the senior population today, the old myths still play a big role in people working in gerontology.
- People are taking for granted the fact that grandparents today are raising grandchildren.
- They are actively involved in the developmental and emotional lives of children



Parents raising Grandchildren

So again why are so many people in the field of Human Services still not wanting to work in gerontology?

Gerontology

- We are seeing the first generation of healthy, active, working seniors who are still making changes in social problems.
- The Baby Boom Generation is hard to distinguish from middle adulthood.
- Education and learning are happening more than in any other generation of seniors.



Education



Fear

- Young adults today fear working in gerontology for they fear their own mortality.
- Until we help the professionals face their own fears, the field of gerontology will not have the professionals needed to serve the growing population.
- We need to help the new professionals see the real senior citizen of today. – One who is still in love, love life, and lives it to the fullest!



Love

- The myths and stereotypes must be broken by those of us in the field and teaching the upcoming professionals.
- Professionals today must help the younger professional to see the rich community of seniors we work with today!



How Lucky we are!

It will not matter how many times we tell them that the field of Gerontology is one of the fastest growing jobs in the nation . . .

We must show them that the Baby Boomers are affecting social change in how seniors are living today, the help they need, and breaking each myth and stereotype as they encounter it.



Break

- The days of past generations are gone.
- The days of just accepting what is told is gone for the baby boomers.
- And as once sang by Justin Haywood of the The Moody Blues “I never thought I'd live to be a hundred”, I guess it is Time too
- Move Over for a new generation of seniors today.



Move Over

References

Baby Boomer Generation (n.d.) Retrieved from
<http://http://www.boomersweb.net>

Baby Boomer Magazine (n.d.) Retrieved from [http:// http://www.babyboomer-magazine.com/news/165/ARTICLE/1402/2012-03-27.html](http://http://www.babyboomer-magazine.com/news/165/ARTICLE/1402/2012-03-27.html)

Evans, A. (2009) What do Baby Boomers Want? Retrieved from <http://www.snapforseniors.com>

Smith, J.W., and Clurman, A ., (2009) Generation Ageless: How Baby Boomers Are Changing the Way We Live Today...And They're Just Getting Started Harper Collins Publishers, Canada
