

## Highlights of Building Bridges

### Mental Health Consumers in Intergenerational Dialogue (SAMHSA)

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA09-4372/SMA09-4372.pdf>

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An overview of the general themes that emerged in the dialogue illustrate the range of perspectives: the power of language and labels; “wellness” and public health; recovery and resilience; education and work; recording and archiving the history of the consumer movement; treatment choice; treatment issues; cultural competence; voices and choices; trauma and trauma-informed care; peer support specialists and youth coordinators; co-optation of the peer support role; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues; suicide and suicide prevention; and poverty.

- “Across the generations, they uniformly and emphatically discouraged use of the term “mental illness”.
- “A focus on mental wellness... encourages a holistic approach”.
- “Participants universally identified the critical need for access to, and accommodations for, education, employment, and meaningful activity”.
- “Training and supports that permit self-employment typically are unavailable to mental health consumers”.
- “...The need for providers who understand the role that trauma may play in triggering and sustaining mental health problems. They also highlighted the need to use treatment techniques that address the roots of the problem and avoid retraumatization.
- “The Federal Child Mental Health Initiative has supported development of a cadre of youth peer support facilitators, called youth coordinators... They help establish youth-run groups to create social change, to “raise awareness [in the community] of the importance of valuing youth voice and incorporating the youth voice into policy development and service delivery” (Matarese et al., 2005, viii, pp. 5, 15, 25).
- “Until 1973, homosexuality was considered a mental illness. Only after a successful advocacy campaign by gay and lesbian psychiatrists and leaders did the medical designation change”.

#### Quotes:

... People who are diagnosed in youth are told that they don't have insight into their condition. That's how they validate forced treatment.—Young adult participant

... We're pro-choice to choose psychiatric drugs or not.—Young adult participant

When you're forcibly given a chemical that shrinks the brain, it's an emergency. There's an emergency of human rights violations against youth in the mental health system. —Adult participant

... We have a right to culturally competent services—a wide array of services, including spiritual components.—Young adult participant

... None of my trauma was ever dealt with, just meds and talk therapy that didn't deal with the trauma. And I was made to feel like it was my fault. —Young adult participant

... Peer support is a natural function of the human condition. That is how we have been helping each other for generations, without anyone getting paid for it.—Young adult participant

#### Recommendations for the Youth and Adult Consumer Movements

1. Work together, while maintaining the values of each movement. Learn from each others' experiences, and collaborate on common issues and goals.
2. Create a history of the adult and young adult movements that chronicles multiple aspects of the saga, including attention to injustices, civil disobedience, and the unique experiences of people of color.
3. Organize to create a permanent archive for documentation and artifacts of mental health consumer movements.
4. Work together to foster access to alternative, as well as traditional, services and supports.

5. Ensure the availability of educational and employment supports for youth and adults.
6. Develop leadership within the movement(s) to facilitate promotion of mental health recovery.
7. Offer cross-movement mentoring services to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the issues, as well as skills for advocacy.

There were other recommendations in the report that are not mentioned here.

Table 1. Differences Across Generations

5 Table 1. Differences Across Generations Categories	Generations			
	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y:Millenials
<b>Birth date</b>	Before 1946	1946–1965	1965–1981	1981–2000
<b>Numbers in the population</b>	35+ million	80+ million	45–80 million	60–80 million
<b>Family constellation and environment</b>	Close family Mother at home One marriage	Working mothers Dispersed family Divorced/ remarried	Single mothers Working mothers Latchkey kids High divorce rate	Single mothers/ single fathers Looser family unit Children increasingly protected and supervised by family
<b>Formative experiences</b>	Great Depression New Deal World Wars I and II	Civil rights Sexual revolution Cold War Space travel	Fall of Berlin Wall Watergate Women’s liberation Desert Storm	September 11 School shootings Oklahoma City bombing Technology Iraq War
<b>Communication</b>	Rationing Radio Mimeograph Rotary phones Slide rule	TV Photograph Touch-tone phones Calculators	Video games Computers Beepers Cell phones Laptop computers	Internet, DVD, PDA, iPod, MySpace, YouTube, Instant messages Text messages
<b>Traditional-ists Work style</b>	Work hard Team player Commitment to work Loyal	<b>Baby Boomers</b> Hard work and loyalty equals career success Seek status Sacrifice family for advancement	<b>Generation X</b> Work hard/be well paid Do not defer rewards—cash and salary now Willing to change jobs Use technology Balance work and life	<b>Generation Y: Millenials</b> Expect pay for what they do, not time given Boss is mentor/coach Willing to job hop
<b>Characteristics/ values</b>	Dedication and sacrifice Respect for rules Duty before pleasure Honor Financially conservative Faithful to institutions	Idealistic Optimistic Team oriented Personal gratification Personal growth Believe one can be and do anything Hard work and loyalty equals career success Rights focused	Prove it to me Self-centered Skeptical of the integrity of institutions Accept diversity Fun and informality Self reliant Pragmatic Fend for oneself Adaptable Loyalty to team	“Go do it” “Can do” Diplomatic Collaborative Respect diversity Conformist Confident Achievement oriented Instant gratification Respect their ideas Spirit of volunteer-ism Balance between material goods and spiritual happiness

(Sources: Duke University, n.d.; Wheeler, n.d.; Dittman, 2005; Gaylor, 2002; Thielfoldt & Scheef, 2004; Mayo Clinic, n.d.)