

THIS CRISIS. YOUR GENERATION. A KJ CONSULTING SURVEY

OVERVIEW

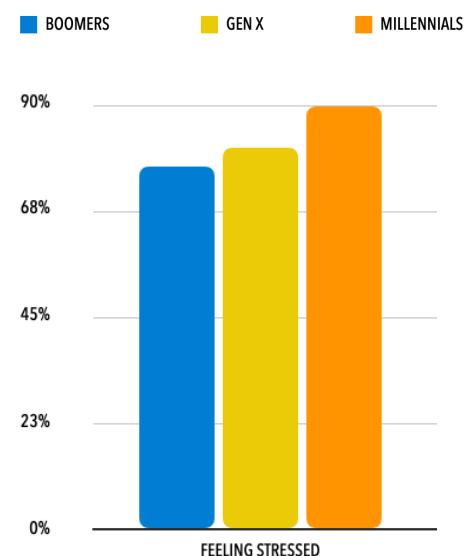
This survey offers a look at how Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials are navigating the Covid-19 crisis. 260 people responded to the survey taken during the first 2 week period when non-essential businesses and restaurants were required to close and working from home became the new normal. The results offer unique insight into areas that leaders need to keep in mind as they are working to build a positive and healthy remote work team culture. It is a great reminder that everyone has a different scenario and we are all doing the best we can to cope with the current state of the world.

FEELING STRESS

In the area of stress as a result of the global pandemic, levels varied across generations with Boomers experiencing the least amount of stress and Millennials feeling the most. Overall, it is clear that no matter what generation we belong to, most of us are feeling some kind of additional stress. A helpful reframe to remember: We are not working from home, we are at home during a crisis, trying to work.

LEADERS: How aware are you of the different stress levels and its impact on each of your team members?

THE RESULTS
Boomers: 77%
Gen X: 81%
Millennials: 90%



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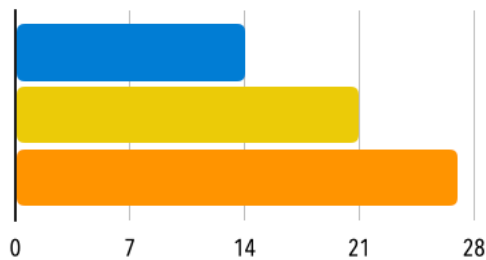
HOW MUCH DO I CHOOSE TO SHARE?

(A look at survey word count)

Millennials used about twice as many words to describe how they were coping than Boomers. 25% more than Gen X. This could be due to the fact that Millennials are used to posting on social media about how they feel. Also, in times of crisis, while Boomers might just keep working hard to reach their goals and Gen Xers might push through to get it done (and think about how it all went down after the fact), Millennials will be more likely to express their way through something. Boomers prefer face to face dialogue. For a Millennial, sharing their thoughts online is commonplace. Gen X, being adaptable, finds itself in the middle. While they were not as verbose as Millennials, they shared more than Boomers.

LEADERS: In what ways are you using different platforms to get the best response possible from your team members? How are you leveraging their preference for communication in order to best understand how they are coping and what they need from you?

■ BOOMERS ■ GEN X ■ MILLENNIALS



THE RESULTS (average word count)

Boomers: 14

Gen X: 21

Millennials: 27

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WHAT IS EACH GENERATION PRIORITIZING?

MENTAL HEALTH & SELF-CARE

Millennials are over 3x as likely to prioritize mental health & self-care than Boomers and 2x more likely than Gen X. It is important for them to manage stress well and take time for the things that matter to them and help them maintain a positive frame of mind.

PHYSICAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Boomers are over 3x as likely as Millennials to prioritize physical health & safety and over 2.5x as likely as Gen X. This makes sense with Boomers being warned that they are more vulnerable to Covid-19 than other generations. Boomers are working hard to keep themselves healthy and many are reporting that they are following the safety rules to maintain their health. As things open back up, this will certainly be something to keep in mind as leaders consider their team's response to coming back to work.

LEADERS: Your team members across the generations are focusing on different priorities during this time. Are you asking questions about the things that really matter to them?

Focus on mental health & self-care

THE RESULTS

Boomers 11%

Gen X: 19%

Millennials: 38%

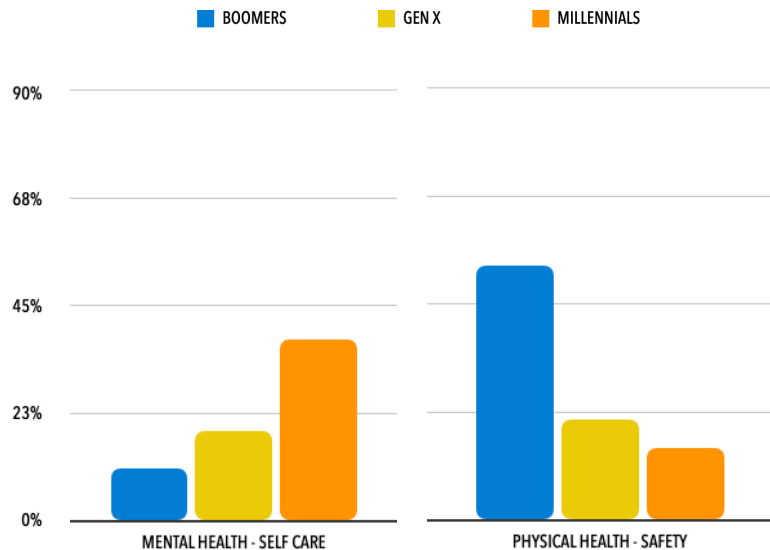
Focus on physical health & safety

THE RESULTS

Boomers 53%

Gen X: 21%

Millennials: 15%



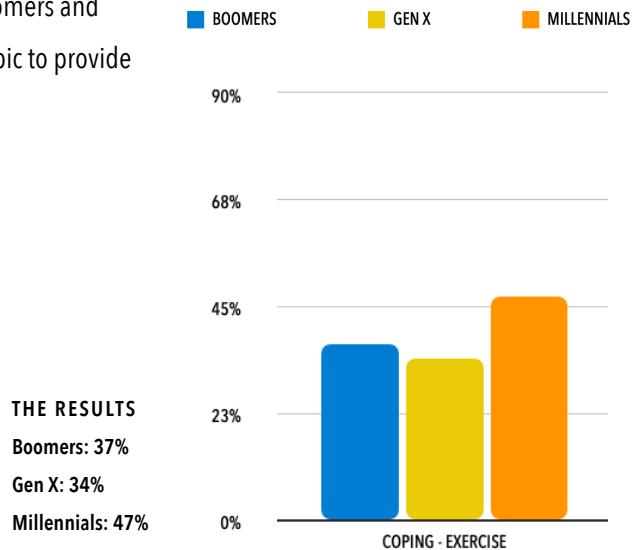
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HOW IS EACH GENERATION COPING?

COPING WITH EXERCISE

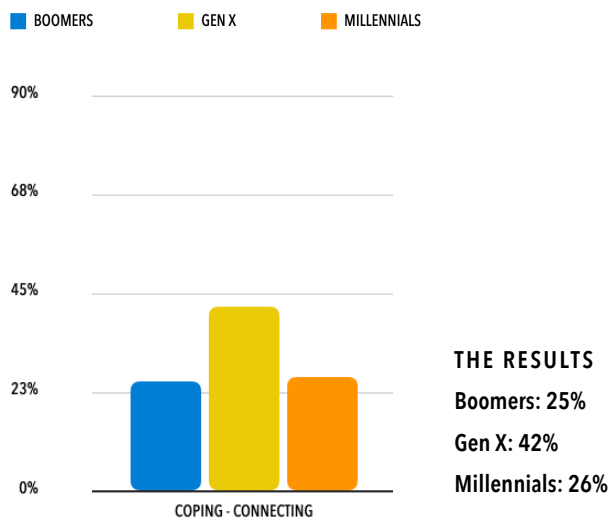
Every generation is turning to exercise with almost 50% of Millennials choosing to cope by staying active. More than 30% of both Boomers and Xers are also turning to exercise to cope making it an easy topic to provide connection among team members.

LEADERS: How are you leveraging the value your employees are placing on exercise? Have you thought about having competitions for your teams or hosting challenges? Have you encouraged your employees to take a walk while they are on calls as a change of routine to combat virtual meeting fatigue and breathe new life into what is ever increasingly feeling like Groundhog's Day?



COPING BY CONNECTING

Gen Xers look at the world through a filter of relationship. It is not surprising that they are coping by tapping into those relationships and keeping them strong. They were also the most likely to prioritize family at 36% (B: 18%, Y: 32%).



The life stage of many Gen Xers has them navigating this crisis with kids at home. Many are taking advantage of the time at home to build strong bonds with the family under their roof as well as reaching out to friends and loved ones.

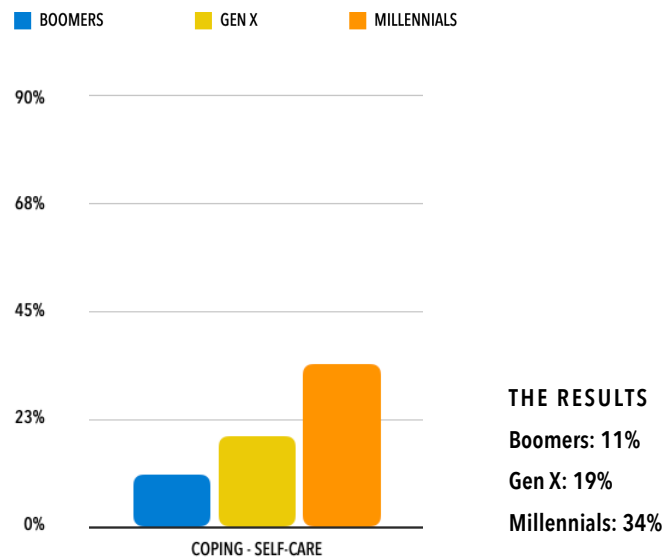
LEADERS: How are you encouraging connection while being careful not to burn your team out? Does your team have access to you? With virtual meeting calls bringing our home lives into the office, now is the time to acknowledge our humanity and embrace more of what each of us bring to the team.

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COPING WITH SELF-CARE

Millennials are 3x as likely to cope with self-care than Boomers are (and almost 2x as likely as Gen Xers).

LEADERS: How have you encouraged your team to stop and take note of how they are thriving (or not) during this time? Have you taken time to ask them what they need in order to be their best selves? Have you asked yourself the same question? Building a healthy culture during this time is key. Making time to show your employees that you care about their well-being can go a long way.



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INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

There is not one company that has been left untouched by this global pandemic. Some have shut their doors while others are rapidly innovating to stay relevant or to keep up with demand. Leaders and managers have had to quickly adapt to a new way of “being” with their employees. Some are just trying to learn the technology and how to lead remote workers well while others are coping by moving at a more rapid pace than what was considered “normal” before. Regardless, it is now more crucial than ever to remember that every employee is finding themselves in an altered reality with stressors that no one had time to predict. In a recent poll focused on the response to Covid-19, Gallup found that only 45% of employees believe their organization cares about their well-being.

While the survey reveals that fewer Boomers are stressed by this pandemic, many of them are taking extra precaution to stay safe and healthy. Some report being surprised at how productive they are while working from home while others lament over the transition to new technology. It is also difficult for some Boomers to transition their leadership style to a team that is working from home. Being equipped to hold people accountable in a new way, having ample tech support, and knowing that they will not have put themselves or their loved ones at risk can carry a lot of value for the Boomer generation during this time.

Gen Xers report that their number one priorities are family and work. Many are trying to keep all the plates spinning by being both a hardworking employee and a rockstar homeschooler. On average, this survey took 3 minutes to complete. One Gen Xer summed up much of what seems to be true about how Gen X shows up in the world: “Your survey definitely reminded me that I need to do MUCH better prioritizing my own health. I'm doing a pretty (bad) job at that right now, to be honest! I find myself spending the full day hammering away in my office, fairly stressed out...It was a reminder that I need to develop a schedule and stick to it... incorporate workouts and breaks.”

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INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

One of Gen X's greatest strengths is their huge sense of responsibility and ability to adapt to any situation that comes their way. This is also why Gen X needs to be aware that because they are so good at keeping all the plates spinning around them, they might need to step back and take some time to care for themselves. A little encouragement from their boss to do this could carry a lot of relational capital in the future with your Gen X employees.

Millennials are into living their best life now and becoming the best version of themselves. They are much more likely to focus on how they are showing up/feeling in the present moment and adjust accordingly. They learned by observing their Boomer parents that they do not want to sacrifice quality of life now for quality later. They are going to do their best to make sure they are bringing their best selves to every day and doing what they need to do to make that happen. Ensuring that Millennials have opportunity to take care of themselves and offering different opportunities to do so will send them the message that they are seen and valued.

This is an extraordinary time for leaders to build a culture that gives voice to employees and redefines how they feel valued in the workplace. With decentralized teams where skills are becoming more valuable than titles, leaders will be able to take a look at their own soft skills and work to enhance their team culture so that when this is all over, people will know they mattered. Now, more than ever, the words of Maya Angelou ring true, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Leaders should capitalize on this opportunity to care well for their teams and build a culture that will carry them into the future.

This was a study based on convenience sampling. Survey conducted by KJ Consulting, Chicago, a leader in helping businesses navigate the generational shift in today's challenging times. Visit katherinejeffery.com to learn more.