Coping Skills in a Multigenerational Workforce
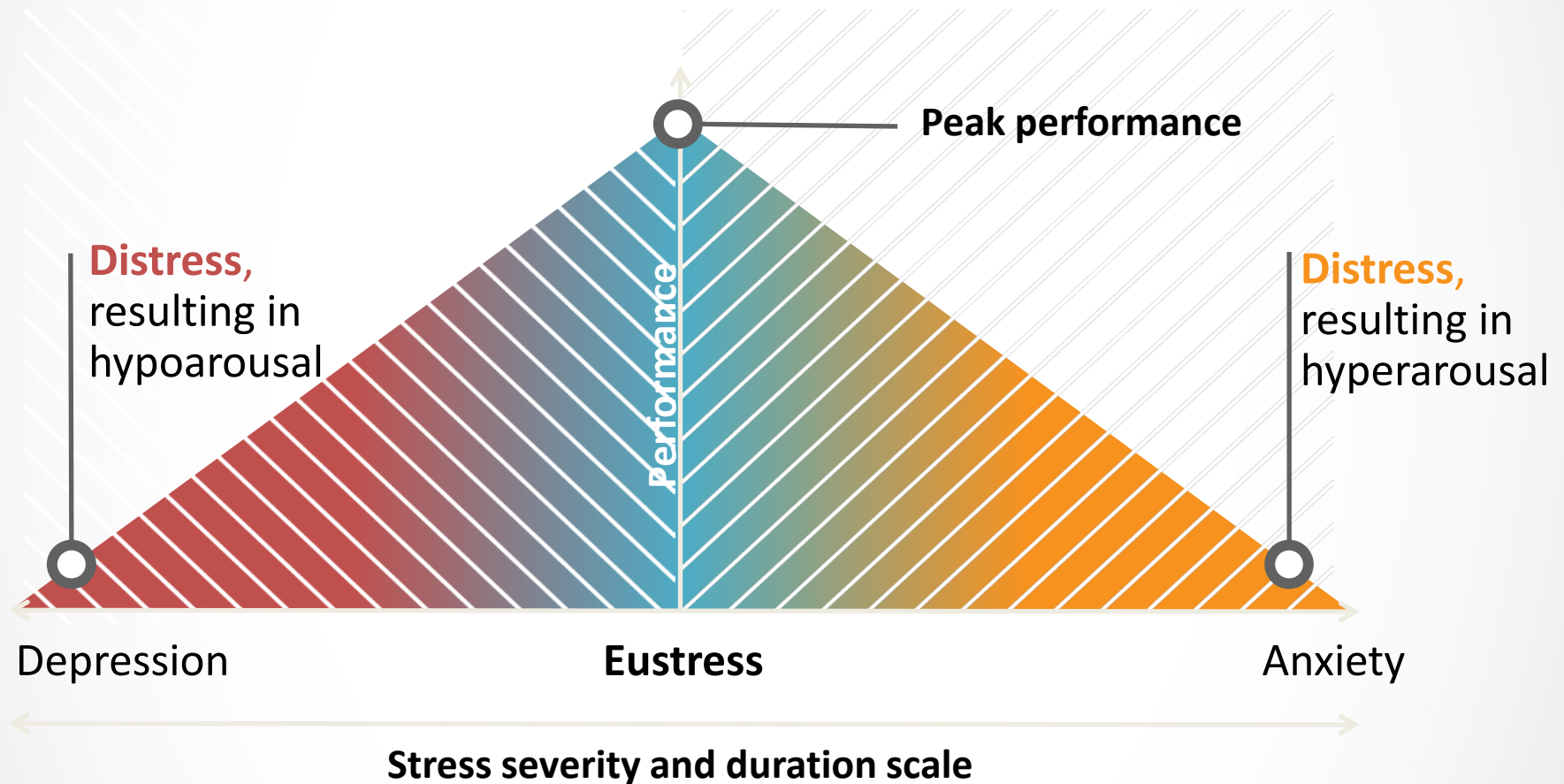
Dr. William Howatt
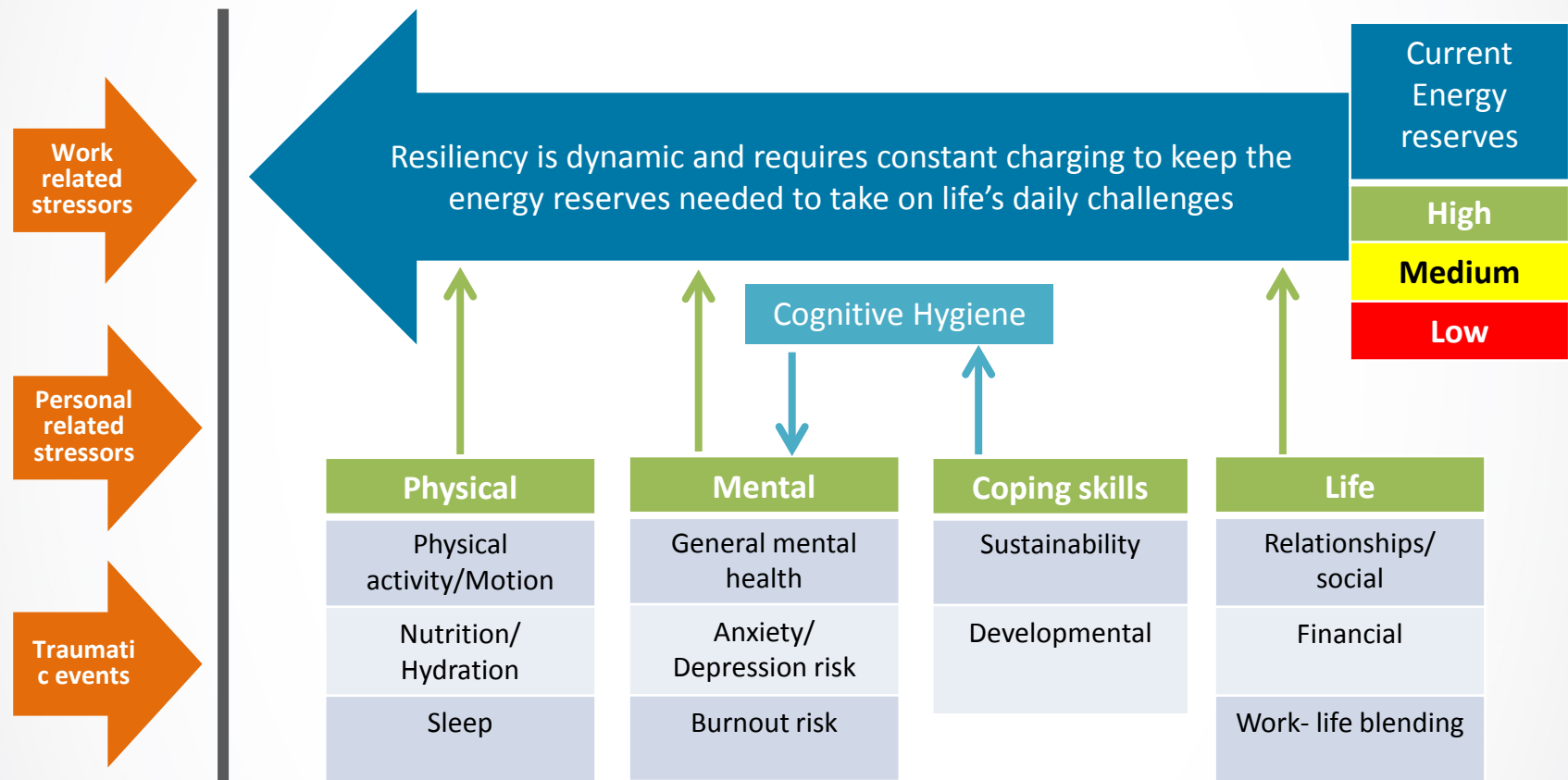
The challenge for people leaders

- 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime

- One of the root problems of mental illness is the fact that those with an illness are not disclosing their issue

- 1/3 get treatment

Stress is not all bad

It is when it moves from eustress to distress

Peak performance

Distress, resulting in hypoarousal

Distress, resulting in hyperarousal

Performance

Depression

Eustress

Anxiety

Stress severity and duration scale

Benefits³ 2017 CONFERENCE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
MEDAVIE BLUE CROSS

Proud to support the
MEDAVIE HEALTH FOUNDATION

The link between total health, coping skills and maturing resiliency

Work related stressors

Personal related stressors

Traumatic events

Resiliency is dynamic and requires constant charging to keep the energy reserves needed to take on life's daily challenges

Current Energy reserves

| High |
| Medium |
| Low |

Cognitive Hygiene

Physical	Mental	Coping skills	Life
Physical activity/Motion	General mental health	Sustainability	Relationships/ social
Nutrition/ Hydration	Anxiety/ Depression risk	Developmental	Financial
Sleep	Burnout risk		Work- life blending

How coping skills can help in predicting outcomes

Perceived Stress Load

Chronic disease
Competencies
Effort Health Attendance
Environment Disease
skills Teamwork Pro-health Mental
Bullying Safety STD Addictions
Management effectiveness
Turn Leadership Conflict
Procedures Culture
Psychological demands
over Work load Fitness
Policies Stress
Benefits cost Presenteeism
Coping Fulfillment
Discretionary Effort

Environmental and Internal

Coping **skills**

LEADING INDICATOR

Health

Engagement

Productivity

LAGGING INDICATOR

Exploring how to curb the slippery slope from health to mental illness
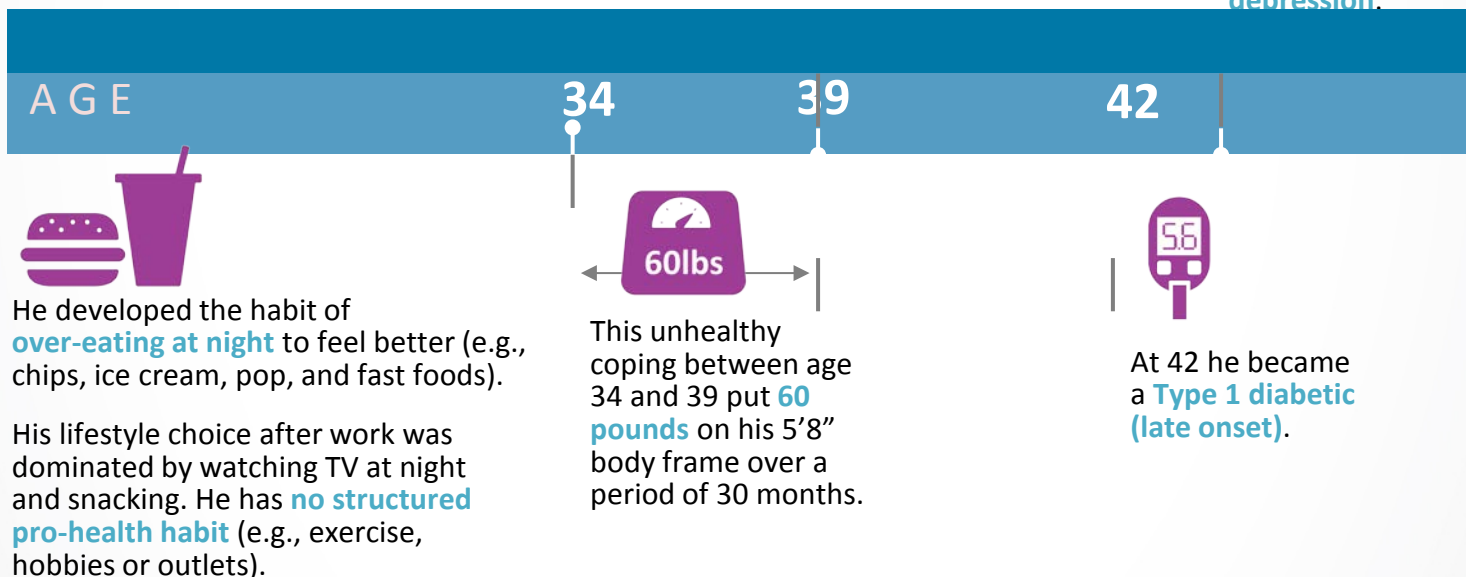
The Case of Sam

Sam is struggling to cope with **job stress** in his current role and work demands. He thinks he is trapped with no options.

He drastically increased his body fat. At age 39 he was put on **hypertension medication**.

At age 43 he was put on medication for **clinical depression**.

AGE   34   39   42

He developed the habit of **over-eating at night** to feel better (e.g., chips, ice cream, pop, and fast foods).

His lifestyle choice after work was dominated by watching TV at night and snacking. He has **no structured pro-health habit** (e.g., exercise, hobbies or outlets).

60lbs

This unhealthy coping between age 34 and 39 put **60 pounds** on his 5'8" body frame over a period of 30 months.

At 42 he became a **Type 1 diabetic (late onset)**.

Recommended steps to coping skills

- **The Coping Crisis and psychosocial factors**

- **How many Sam's** are out there today who are not aware of how their micro decisions and choices are shaping their health?

Proud to support the MEDAVIE HEALTH FOUNDATION
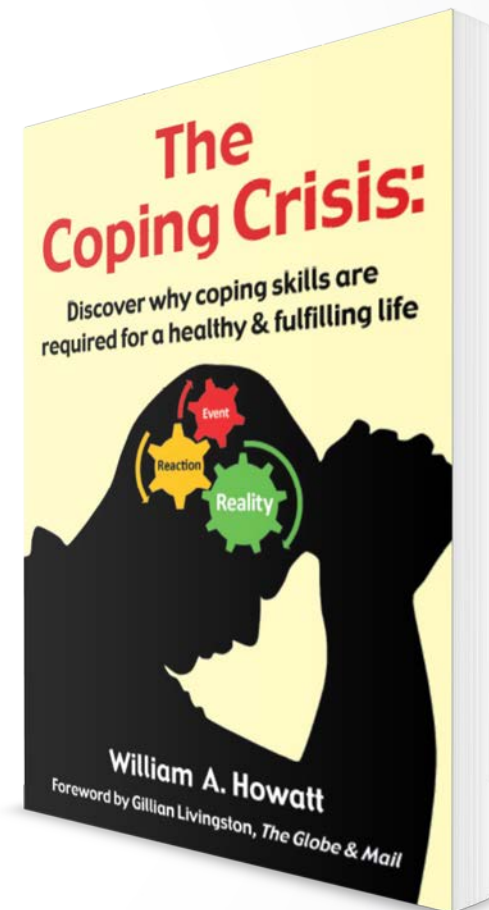
Sustainability Coping Micro Skills for Employees

Such as:

- How to clean out your negative thoughts
- Learn to calm your stressed mind with visualization
- How to boost your confidence at work with good thoughts

www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/workplace-award/

Coping skills are a trainable skill
Pathway to Coping Evidence based online course
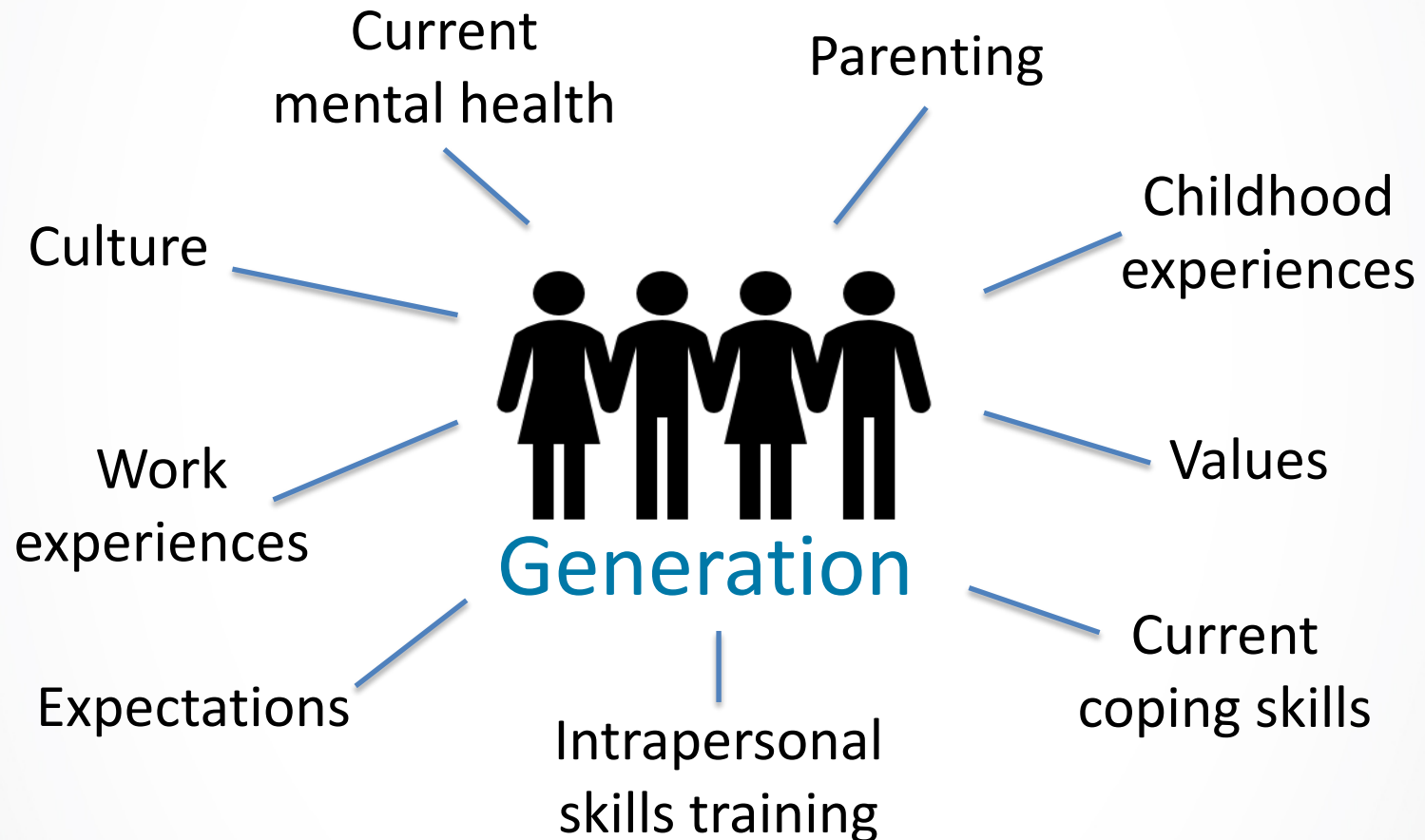
UNB | College of Extended Learning
EST. 1785
UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Benefits of the course to employers:
- Provides a supportive social environment encouraging employees to seek help
- Creates an engaged workforce that is motivated to succeed
- Reduces absenteeism and turnover rates
- Builds positive employee/employer relationships where employees want to come to work
- Enhances both the psychological and physical health of your employees, which will lead to higher employee job satisfaction and increased productivity

Benefits of the course to individuals:
- Develop new, more adaptive ways of coping
- Find peace
- Get ahead personally and professionally
- Improve relationships

Benefits³
2017 CONFERENCE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
MEDAVIE BLUE CROSS

Proud to support the
MEDAVIE HEALTH FOUNDATION

What impacts how a person copes ?

Current mental health

Parenting

Childhood experiences

Culture

Values

Work experiences

Generation

Current coping skills

Expectations

Intrapersonal skills training

Generations – 2017 benchmark

2% *Traditionalists*/Silent Generation/Matures
1925 – 1945 - 65+

29% *Baby Boomers* - 50+
1946 – 1964

33% *GenX*/Baby Busters/13th Generation - 35 to 50
1965 – 1981

35% *Millennials*/Generation Y/Nexus - *folks born in 1982 are now 35*
1982 – 2000 (Howe and Strauss authors of Generations – definition suggests period starts around 1982)

1% **Nexters/Z**
2000 – present – generally accepted as the post millennial generation – many have today feelings of unsettlement and insecurity growing up in the Great Recession

Veteran/Traditionalist Work Values

- **Loyalty**
- **Persistence**
- **Hard Working**
- **Wisdom and experience over technical knowledge**
- **Authoritarian**

Tips for supporting coping:

- Taught to deal with things alone
- Important to normalize and educate it is OK to ask for help
- Disciplined learners once under the understand

Veteran/Traditionalist Work Values

- Barriers
  - Veterans of the workplace
  - Provide a wealth of knowledge, but do not usually share this unless they are asked to
  - Struggle with digitalization

- Coping Tips
  - Encourage cross-generational mentorship
  - Provide Flexible Options
  - Provide avenues for education around new technology and communication platforms

Baby Boomer Work Values

- **Politically sensitive**
- **Workaholic**
- **Acceptance of stress**
- **Team-oriented**
- **Importance of title/status symbols**
- **Demanding of respect and sacrifice from subordinates Follow protocol**
- **Uncomfortable with conflict**

Tips for supporting coping:

- Motivated do a good job and to be viewed as being effective in assigned role.
- Have a hard time admitting to self when having a hard time coping (e.g., fearful of stigma). As a result under stress may rationalize until it is too late.
- Senior leaderships opinion matters. As a result this can result in becoming overly task –orientated or distraction –orientated.

Baby Boomer Work Values

- Barriers
  - Struggle to admit when stress and potential burnout become issues
  - Workaholic, believe hard work and sacrifice are the price to pay for success
  - Demand respect, struggle to understand younger generations

- Coping Tips
  - Create workplace environments, which address mental health stigmas
  - Be flexible and willing to compromise, push Boomers to adjust their expectations
  - Encourage healthy responses to stress, such as reading, meditation or counselling

GenX Work Values

- **Confident**
- **Independent**
- **Challenge the status quo**
- **Sacrifice personal life for advancement**
- **Dependent on close supervision**
- **Dedicated to goal achievement**
- **Desire for job security**
- **Insecure**
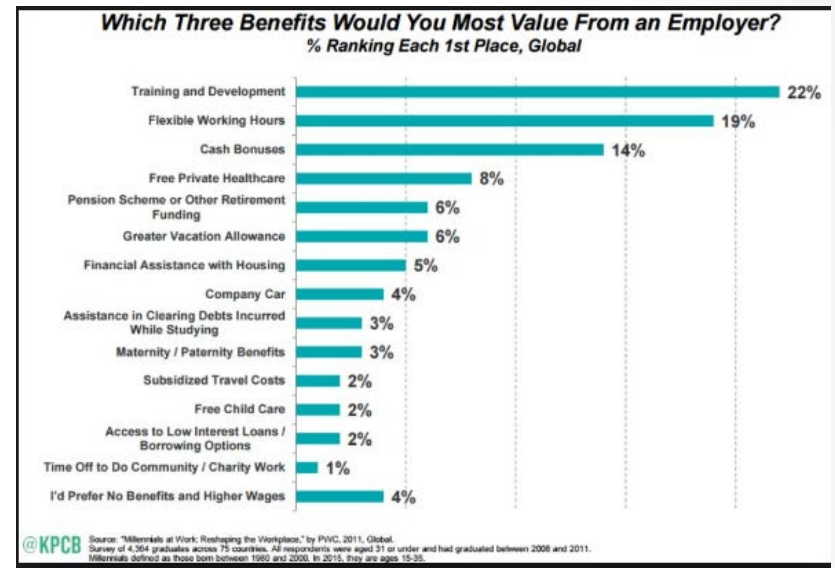- **Desire to be recognized**

Tips for supporting coping:
- Constantly worried about making mistakes and rejection – re-assurance and access to decision makers is helpful to lower unwarranted stress.
- Coaching is excellent to teach and support this group to understand the link between their actions, goal and success
- Motivated by job security before their health – motivated to work and can be somewhat structured. Promoting and facilitating total health is a positive to preserve this group.

GenX Work Values

- Barriers
  - Struggle with conflict resolution and office politics
  - Struggle with balancing work and family, sacrificing personal life for work
  - Crave recognition and security, often struggling with career development

- Coping Tips
  - Create a coaching environment, where supportive relationships can flourish and grow
  - Encourage continuous learning and skill development
  - Promote and discuss flexible options and working alternatives

Millennial Work Values

- **Expect feedback**
- **Wants options and choices**
- **Think digital**
- **Independence and autonomy**
- **Challenge seeking**
- **Impatient**
- **Entrepreneurial**
- **Want to be led**
- **Often distrust of hierarchy and authority**
- **Continuous development of skills**
- **Gaps in loyalty/unwillingness to commit**
- **Work-life balance**

Which Three Benefits Would You Most Value From an Employer?
% Ranking Each 1st Place, Global

Benefit	%
Training and Development	22%
Flexible Working Hours	19%
Cash Bonuses	14%
Free Private Healthcare	8%
Pension Scheme or Other Retirement Funding	6%
Greater Vacation Allowance	6%
Financial Assistance with Housing	5%
Company Car	4%
Assistance in Clearing Debts Incurred While Studying	3%
Maternity / Paternity Benefits	3%
Subsidized Travel Costs	2%
Free Child Care	2%
Access to Low Interest Loans / Borrowing Options	2%
Time Off to Do Community / Charity Work	1%
I'd Prefer No Benefits and Higher Wages	4%

Source: "Millennials at Work: Reshaping the Workplace," by PWC, 2011, Global. Survey of 4,364 graduates across 75 countries. All respondents were aged 31 or under and had graduated between 2008 and 2011. Millennials defined as those born between 1980 and 2000. In 2015, they are ages 15-35.

@KPCB

Tips for supporting coping:
- Motivated to learn to develop their skills – put online & make interactive
- Ensure instructions are clear and the steps are understood for any task. Keep in mind mobile is their primary internet medium.
- Technology verse words in person. Feedback matters and actions mean a great deal. They are good at a lot of things but coping with stress.

Benefits³
2017 CONFERENCE | BROUGHT TO YOU BY MEDAVIE BLUE CROSS

Proud to support the MEDAVIE HEALTH FOUNDATION

Millennial Work Values

- Barriers
  - Raised in a child-centric time, shaped by parental excess, resulting in a need for immediate input, feedback and direction
  - Demanding and confident Generation, with a distrust of authority and a desire to be independent
  - Shaped by computers and dramatic technological advances
  - Higher levels of mental illness

- Coping Tips
  - Go digital
  - Provide instructions and expectations to allow for clear pathways to success and achievement
  - Create time and space to address and cope with mental illness, including physical activity, yoga and meditation

Are generations really that different?

Everyone wants respect , however, each generation do not clearly define the same way.

Leaders must be trustworthy. Different generations do not have notably different expectations of their leaders. Trust matters across all generations.

Nobody likes change. The stereotype is that older people resist change while younger people embrace it. All generation have people who struggle with change.

www.amanet.org/training/articles/The-Myth-of-Generational-Differences-in-the-Workplace.aspx

Are generations that really different? (cont'd)

Loyalty depends on context. It is said that younger generations are not as loyal to their organizations as older workers. The fact is the amount of time a worker puts in each day has more to do with his or her **level** in the organization than age. The higher the level, the more hours worked.

Everyone wants to learn. Learning and development were among the issues brought up most frequently by people of all generations. All generations want to ensure they have the training to do their job well.

Everyone likes feedback. All generations wants to know how they are doing and to learn how they can do better.

www.amanet.org/training/articles/The-Myth-of-Generational-Differences-in-the-Workplace.aspx

Factors that support generations difference and coping

Company culture
- Focus on the entire workforce needs.

Communications styles
- Discuss openly communications preferences, use of meetings, text, email, phone and honor each others style.

Generational stereotypes
- Commit to stop hallucinating and judging people by the generation they were born in. There are some lessons but we need to stop generalizing.

Cultural expectations
- Move away from one rule fits all. The number of hours may not equal high quality and committed work, life balance is good for people, technology is evidence the world is changing.

Who are the one out of five?
Six part series available - Every Wed until May 8th

- The motivation behind this award is to give employees and their organizations a unique perspective on the total health: **physical, mental, work and life.**

  www.employeerecommended.com

Coping skills support tip for all generations

Remember the Golden Rule?

"Treat others as you would like to be treated."

Change it to the Platinum Rule

"Treat others as <u>they</u> would like to be treated"