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# THE DISABILITY DIALOGUE



Clients of all generations should understand the importance of income protection

How often do you evaluate the generational makeup of your client base? Depending on your tenure in the industry or what niche clientele you have, you could be working with clients that span a few decades. The three most prominent generations in the workforce — Baby Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials —share a rising tide of financial concerns. A combined total of 71 percent of these individuals worry about lost wages if they can't work. And 52 percent are concerned about support if they become disabled. But each generation has different interests and values, influenced by economic currents when they come of age.

Having insight into what motivates your clients in each of these generations can help you better start the conversation about income protection and the need for individual disability insurance (IDI), helping each client feel prepared for whatever life sends their way.

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THE THREE MOST PROMINENT GENERATIONS IN THE WORKFORCE ARE:

1. BABY BOOMERS
2. GEN XERS
3. MILLENNIALS

# UNDERSTANDING CLIENTS' LIFE STAGES AND VALUES



BEING A CAREGIVER ISN'T EASY, AND A LOVED ONE'S SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION CAN LAST LONGER THAN EXPECTED. DEPENDING ON THE ILLNESS OR LENGTH OF RECOVERY, YOUR CLIENT MAY NEED TO PAUSE THEIR CAREER TO CARE FOR THEIR FAMILY MEMBER.

A client's life stage — whether they're starting a family, moving up in their career, saving for retirement, or caring for children and aging parents — can make all the difference when discussing income protection and the need for IDI. Beyond being in different life stages, generations have different values. Understanding these beliefs and preferences can help you discuss how to protect what's important to clients.

For example, one client may be concerned about depleting savings earmarked for adventure or travel, while another is more concerned about providing for their family. As you prepare for client meetings, think about what generation they fall into and potentially what life events they may be experiencing and their interests using the insights below.

## **Millennials, ages 23-40**

With the average Millennial now in their mid- to late-20s, this demographic is starting to settle into their profession and advance in their career. Thanks to the 2008 recession, Millennials had a slower start to their career. Now, they're more stable and value their ability to do bigger things, like travel, purchase homes and start families.

Millennials finding their footing in adulthood presents you with a huge opportunity to tap into this market for IDI sales. This is because, as Millennials attain greater professional achievements and grow their incomes, they are incurring additional financial commitments and family responsibilities.

## **Gen Xers, ages 41-53**

With a family at home as well as aging parents, many Gen Xers are more apt to respond to a discussion about family caregiving benefits. Being a caregiver isn't easy, and a loved one's serious health condition can last longer than expected. Depending on the illness or length of recovery, your client may need to pause their career to care for their family member.

Clients in this sandwich generation are often in the prime earning stage of their careers, especially in occupations such as medicine, law or financial services where income protection is critical. Time away from their career could significantly impact their income stream and potentially have a negative effect on their ability to provide for their family's needs. Having income protection, should they need to take care of a loved one, provides them with peace of mind, during an already stressful time.

## **Baby Boomers, ages 54-72**

Baby Boomers have already navigated a career and caring for a family. They're now looking ahead to retirement. With retirement on the horizon, clients of this generation need to ensure that the income they rely on to support them in the next stage of life is protected. As Baby Boomers age, the likelihood that they could experience a disabling event often increases, making the case for income protection even more important.

While some Baby Boomers are looking forward to a relaxing retirement, others may be starting or owning a small business. They value having the confidence to do what they want in retirement and are most concerned about having balance.

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## HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

With these life stages and values in mind, here are some questions to start the conversation about income protection with your clients.

### **Millennials**

Is being able to live and travel the way you want important to you?  
Would you feel more relaxed if you had a plan to protect your income?

### **Gen Xers**

How would a loss of income impact your ability to care and provide for your family?  
Would you be able to take time off if someone in your family were seriously ill?

### **Baby Boomers**

Would you have to dip into your retirement assets if you couldn't work?  
If you had to dip into your retirement savings unexpectedly, how would that change your long-term plans?

Many clients, regardless of life stage or age, haven't thought about how an injury or illness could impact their ability to earn a living. Even though they share a need for income protection, not all clients think the same way. Each person has their own hopes, desires and concerns.

However, understanding what drives these different generations can provide insights into what a client may need and value. This can help you prepare clients for when the unexpected happens in life, no matter what stage they're in.

