



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



FAMILY
OLDER ADULTS

Our Family is Creative! Collaborative Problem Solving

Living through a pandemic is hard for everyone. It can be especially difficult for older adults who are separated from family and friends. Resilience is fostered when we understand the importance of life stories and how they can help us to overcome difficulties and solve problems. When older adults share life's challenges and the lessons they've learned from those challenges, family members and friends can learn from their experiences. Facing challenges enables us to provide others with thoughts and resources as we share lessons we've learned and remind our families of their strengths and those able to give them support.

Sharing Family Stories and Advice

When older adults with more life experiences offer advice to others, they may see their lives as more meaningful. It's important to encourage older family members to share their wisdom and advice with younger generations. Sharing experiences with others can be empowering and help with problem solving. Our family's story can help other family members to solve problems related to life's current stressors.

Sharing Family Stories Activity

It is helpful to encourage older adults to talk about how they have overcome difficulties. A family story is important in creating your family's identity and strengthening bonds between family members. Discussing difficulties encountered in life can help younger generations to better understand the family history and how problems have been solved in the past. You may wish to set aside a special time for these stories as you learn about your family history. Encourage younger family members to take part by listening and asking questions.

- Consider preparing questions to ask ahead of time.
- You may wish to listen through a phone call, virtual platform, or a socially distanced visit.
- If you are taking notes or recording the story, share the purpose of the interview and how the information may be used in the future. For example, you may wish to record the session to share with grandchildren.
- Listen attentively and gently.
- If something is not clear, take the time to ask more questions.
- If the topic or the story is too challenging, do not force the conversation, move to a different question or a different story.

When it comes to problem solving, no idea, action, or story is too small. Discussing a family history of problem solving can foster a sense of connectedness and resiliency. The process of working together is often as important as the outcome.

To learn more about the importance of sharing family stories, you may wish to read:

- [The Power of Family Stories](#)
- [The Stories that Bind Us](#)

To learn more about the science behind the importance of family stories, you may wish to read the below research:

- [Who Are You From?: The Importance of Family Stories](#)



Welcome to Families Tackling Tough Times Together!

We hope you find the enclosed ideas and suggestions helpful as you care for your family during the pandemic. We know the pandemic is a very big challenge. How families cope can affect both parents and children for a long time.

We are scientists, educators, and students from Purdue University, and we are here to help! For nine weeks this fall, we will provide weekly collections of ideas for families to use to build on their strengths.

These tools are free, flexible, and informed by science. They are designed for families of all types, with tailored suggestions for children, youth, young adults and older adults, and suitable for both civilian and military families. We hope that your family will try one activity each week!

Would you like to earn financial rewards?

We especially welcome families living in the continental US who are interested in trying out project materials and telling us about their experiences. These families can earn financial rewards by sharing about one hour of their time over the next two months. Sign up now at the link below!

https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3vK1BJq2EiUksAJ

For more information

- Join the Families Together Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HHSFamiliesTogether/>
- Or visit the project website: <https://www.hhs.purdue.edu/families-together/>