



# FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



FAMILY

YOUTH

## Our Family is Creative! Collaborative Problem Solving

Let's just be blunt — the pandemic sucks. It's scary and heartbreaking and has turned so many things upside down. Spending more time with family can cause new problems. Our teens may have different ideas about how to social distance or ways to connect with friends. The ability to solve problems is an important skill for everyone. With guidance and patience we can help our teens learn to solve current problems and problems they may face in the future. Flexibility, patience and understanding can go a long way in better understanding our teens and helping them to become more resilient as they solve problems.

### Reframing

Reframing is a tool used in [Collaborative Problem Solving®](#) (CPS). Making a habit of positive reframing may help our teens to develop better ways of thinking and behaving over time. Choosing to look for positive solutions to tough times enables us to cope better and reduces stress. Negative thoughts about problems only complicate the process of solving them. Reframing can help our teens to look at negative things in a more positive light.

### Reframing Activity

It's important to listen to how your child feels and to let them vent. Then you can try to help them reframe the situation. With communication you can help your teen to understand the importance of their feelings. It's important to try to look at things in a more positive, supportive and encouraging way. These kinds of conversations aren't easy, but necessary in helping young people to deal with things that cause them stress. Consider helping your teen to reframe their problems and look at them in a new way. Below are some examples of reframing:

*Example:* "I feel like I'm going to go insane since I've had to be home so much because of COVID-19!"

*Reframe:* "I need to take this time to learn something new so I feel better about spending so much time at home."

*Example:* "I don't think I can take another day of being asked to wear a mask!"

*Reframe:* "Wearing a mask is one of my least favorite things to do during this pandemic. I know this is only going to last for a while and then I won't have to wear a mask anymore. I need to try to feel better about it by thinking about how it's helping me and others around me."

Reframing doesn't mean that a teen's problems don't matter. Rather, it helps teens put things into perspective and helps them to better reflect on the moment they are experiencing. Teaching teens that life has its ups and downs is important in helping them to navigate future problems and strengthen their ability to become resilient.

The reframing activity was adapted from: [Reframing Your Thinking](#)

To learn more about the science behind encouraging positive thinking related to problem solving, you may wish to read the below research:

- [Constructive and Unconstructive Repetitive Thought](#)



## **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](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/>