



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



FAMILY

OLDER ADULTS

We Care About Each Other! Connectedness

In times of social distancing, uncertainty, and loss, many of us, especially older adults, may be socially isolated or feeling lonely. Even those of us who are living with others can feel lonely during stressful times. The way we connect with each other matters. Connections that are meaningful and engaging can help us to feel less lonely, be more encouraging of each other, have a sense of purpose, think more clearly and improve our overall well-being

Growing Connections Across Generations

Relationships that span more than one generation are beneficial for both older adults and younger people. Helping older and younger people connect can help improve our sense of purpose, provide learning opportunities, and strengthen relationships. For example, older adults who may be away or separated from the younger people in their lives, can do many activities from a distance. These connections not only help give meaning to life, but can become another form of encouragement for family members.

Virtual Musical and Art Activities

Music and art can bring people together and add a sense of connection, even from afar. Music and art have been shown to have many positive effects on physical and mental health, particularly for older adults. Your family members can encourage each other as they play musical games or discover art together.

- **Music and art comparisons:** Encourage older adults and younger family members to discuss their favorite kinds of music. Compare music genres by together listening to a concert online. You may also wish to do a virtual art tour together. Many museums offer online tours.
- **Sharing songs and art:** Older adults in your family may enjoy sharing and teaching family members songs from their childhood. In response, younger members of your family can teach the older adults one of their favorite childhood songs. It may be fun to sing songs that have simple motions or dances so that your entire family can engage in their own way. You may also wish to share pictures of favorite kinds of art or crafts.
- **Name that tune or craft activity:** Encourage family members to hum the notes to a song while other family members try to guess the song. You may also wish play a game of 20 questions. Encourage a family member to ask questions as they try to guess the kind of craft activity you are thinking of.
- **Coloring together:** Older adults may enjoy coloring with younger members of your family. This can be done virtually as they discuss the activity together.

To learn more about the science behind the importance of family connections with older adults and the benefits of music, you may wish to read the below research:

- [Keep Your Brain Young with Music](#)
- [How Does Music Benefit the Health of Senior Citizens?](#)
- [Social isolation, loneliness in older people pose health risks](#)
- [Engage at Every Age: The benefits of intergenerational relationships](#)