



# FAMILIES

TACKLING TOUGH TIMES

# TOGETHER



**FAMILY**

OLDER ADULTS

## Our Family is Adaptable! Flexibility to Change

For many older adults, life is full of changes and adjustments to new circumstances. Many of life's changes are expected, and a normal part of growing older. But life during a pandemic is neither expected nor does it allow us to follow our "normal" way of doing things. Helping each other during sudden changes in life is an important part of reclaiming calm and order. Older adults can help themselves and other family members weather the sudden changes by showing leadership and encouraging a "growth mindset" in the midst of crises.

### Sharing Strengths

Older adults can display strong leadership in a family by sharing past experiences. This sharing can help family members to better make sense of challenges and how to overcome them. Communication about family strengths and how these strengths help make meaning of adversity, is an important part of fostering resilience in families.

### Sharing Strengths Activity

This activity can be done virtually or through a phone call for family members who cannot join in person. Family members may also wish to write down their strengths and send them in the mail. Prior to the activity, ask each family member to bring something meaningful or prepare a story about something meaningful that reminds them of challenges faced during the pandemic. One at a time, encourage your family members to describe their item or tell their story, why it is meaningful to them, and how they overcame the challenge. After each family member has had a chance to share, you may wish to continue the conversation with the below questions:

- What is one thing you appreciate more about your family since the pandemic started?
- What is one strength of each family member?
- What is one skill or strength you are proud to have? It may be something you appreciate more since COVID-19 occurred or something you didn't realize the importance of prior to the pandemic.
- How has that strength or skill helped you to overcome a challenge?

The above activity was adapted from the [Strengthening Families Program](#).

To learn more about the science behind how sharing strengths with others helps improve the well-being of the giver and receiver, you may wish to read the below research:

- [When Helping Helps: Autonomous Motivation for Prosocial Behavior and Its Influence on Well-Being for the Helper and Recipient](#)
- [Can Helping Others Help You Find Meaning In Life?](#)