



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



FAMILY

YOUNG ADULTS

Our Family is Adaptable! Flexibility to Change

Since the start of the pandemic, we have adapted to unprecedented situations. These adaptations may have related to areas such as school or work, where we live, or how we socialize; we've changed how we exist in the world. The flexibility that our families have shown as it relates to weddings, attending classes and events at colleges and universities, and other events that would have typically been celebrated with large gatherings is important to recognize. Some, or perhaps most, of those changes weren't actually our choice; the government, our employers or schools, and perhaps even our family, required us to change our way of living to keep ourselves and others safe.

But others of those adaptations were absolutely our own decisions — how we cope, the ways we stay connected to others, and the efforts we make to find the positives in a predominantly negative situation. Those adaptations may seem trivial, but they're not, because what they signal is our ability to be flexible, which is a quality that has innumerable benefits. From being able to learn and integrate information quickly, to solving problems creatively, to rapidly adjusting to new situations, cognitive flexibility is a key trait that allows people to succeed in all different kinds of contexts, including social, academic, occupational, etc. (Verdolin, 2019). So why not take up this opportunity — when we're primed for flexibility and adaptability — to build up those cognitive flexibility skills even more!

Video Resources

- [Three Ways to Measure Your Adaptability and How to Improve It](#)
- [Purdue Graduate Featured on Some Good News](#)

Internal Actions

Dr. Jennifer Verdolin has these suggestions for increasing your cognitive flexibility ([via Psychology Today](#)):

1. Do something you know how to do, but do it differently (and often)
2. Pursue new challenges and experiences
3. Meet new people

External Actions

- Talk with your family about how your daily, weekly, and maybe even monthly routines have changed. **Which ones would you like to keep, even after restrictions on movement and physical contact end?**

For additional reading on the research behind cognitive flexibility read [Getting a Grip on Cognitive Flexibility](#)