



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



FAMILY
OLDER ADULTS

We Share Our Feelings Constructively! Open Emotional Expression

Many people are currently having difficulty expressing their emotions in light of social distancing. When others are far from us, it can be difficult to truly open up and share how we feel. We may want to protect others from the worry of our emotions or hold in our emotions because they can be confusing. It is just as important to share our emotions as it always has been.

Sharing social supports continues to be important, even during this period of isolation. Sharing positive interactions is essential when everyday life is saturated with adversity. Positive interactions may include expressions of love, pride, appreciation, and gratitude. Sharing of emotions can also take different forms. One way to share emotions is through storytelling.

Storytelling

The benefits of storytelling are numerous. Telling stories can help us to connect and engage with others through our emotions. There are several psychological reasons why stories are so powerful:

1. Stories are a form of communication. They connect us to traditions, legends, myths, and symbols
2. Stories engage us through emotions as we collaborate and connect
3. Stories help us to make meaning of life
4. Stories can withstand intense emotions because there is resolution
5. Stories create genuine emotions, the sense of being somewhere, and behavioral responses
6. Stories engage our imagination

Material adapted from [The Psychological Power of Storytelling](#)

When telling stories, consider sharing memories from your childhood or past. You may wish to focus these stories on how you overcame grief or loss, or you may wish to share accomplishments you are proud of. Sharing these messages can help you to focus on how you dealt with different emotions in the past. But, stories don't just need to be about the past. Sharing current stories can also help frame positive thoughts and emotions. When sharing stories orally, you may wish to consider prompts such as "What was challenging?" or "How did you overcome it?" In addition to telling verbal stories, there are several other ways to share your emotions through storytelling.

- **Writing blogs.** Create an online blog page and encourage family members to share their feelings and concerns. Some free blogging sites include [WordPress](#), [Wix](#), [Weebly](#) and [Blogger](#).
- **Writing a poem or song.** Writing a poem or song can be a helpful way to express emotions while telling a story. If you are interested in learning more about how to use poems and songs to communicate your emotions during the pandemic, read articles by [The National Writing Project](#) or [Psychology Today](#).
- **Using art.** Storytelling through art can be done in a variety of ways. Photographs, paintings, drawings, sculpture, and beadwork are all wonderful ways to tell stories through art. [The PBS Metrofocus Storytelling Through Art video gives an example of how different kinds of art can tell a story.](#)