

*Connection is real. It can be profound. Generations connecting authentically on nutrition and physical activity can have powerful affects both psychologically and physically. Good program design in public health capitalizes on this – noting the importance of authentic connection and communication. An **intergenerational lens** sees people – not in silos – as youth or parents or older adults – but in their natural, fluid daily environment - which is one where there is authentic “interconnection” between age groups - in households, family gatherings, and community events.*

While it is essential that we continue to preserve and fortify our audience specific programs – we also should look at opportunities to connect generations with evidence-based approaches that have the potential to change health trajectories - by bringing people in families and communities together to build common knowledge in good health practices, build trust in relationships, and unify intent and resolve to make healthful changes.

We all are aware of the importance in having a friend or family member working with us to nudge us toward attaining nutrition or physical activity goals – why should this be age specific? An intergenerational lens allows you to see opportunities to mix older adults with youth, or families with youth, parents and grandparents – in programming. Through mixing age groups there is potential to have ongoing reinforcement of key activities and messages that will resonate across age groups in households. Intergenerational work can build a sense of community, belonging, and ultimately an authentic new connection where one may not have been present.

By taking an intergenerational lens to your work – new opportunities develop. It can be cost effective and therefore pragmatic both economically and socially. The intergenerational transmission of economic insecurity and its adverse effects on educational achievement and lifelong health are well known. Poverty affects families development of specific skills and mindsets. It can be isolating. Consider how we can take this simple concept of building “connection” to a new level to disrupt the intergenerational effects of poverty.