



Intergenerational health programs: bridging age gaps for mutual wellbeing

In an era where more people are feeling lonely and isolated, fostering connections between younger and older generations is vital to enhance both groups wellbeing. Intergenerational health programs encourage meaningful relationships that offer lasting benefits, promoting wellness, reducing loneliness, and enriching lives.

Research highlights that engaging in intergenerational activities significantly improves mental and physical health for older adults, while young participants develop confidence, empathy, and respect for their elders. These connections can be nurtured through various activities such as shared reading, technology interaction, and structured intergenerational programs.

One effective approach is intergenerational playgroups, designed to encourage mutual learning, active participation, and social connection. These settings enable both age groups to give and receive support, fostering a sense of community and belonging.



Key benefits of intergenerational relationships:

Enhanced health and wellbeing:

Older adults involved with children often experience better physical health, lower rates of depression, and greater life satisfaction. The engagement provides a renewed sense of purpose and joy.

Valuable social connections:

Bringing together different generations helps combat social isolation by creating meaningful bonds. Young people benefit from the focused attention and wisdom of older adults, while seniors enjoy the vitality and joy that children bring.

Skill sharing and lifelong learning:

Interactions offer opportunities for both generations to acquire new skills. Older adults can impart wisdom, stories, and hobbies, while children share contemporary knowledge, especially about technology and current trends.

Passing on life lessons and family heritage:

Strong intergenerational ties help children understand their identity and heritage, fostering self-esteem and confidence. Older adults serve as trusted mentors, offering guidance and emotional support.



Key benefits of intergenerational relationships *cont.*



Changing perceptions of ageing:

Regular contact with older adults helps young people challenge stereotypes about ageing, promoting a healthier, more accepting attitude toward the ageing process.

Strengthening community:

These relationships extend beyond individuals, building empathy and respect across age groups and contributing to more inclusive, compassionate communities.

Cognitive benefits:

For older adults, engaging with younger generations stimulates mental activity, helping to maintain brain health through conversation, learning, and shared activities.

Joy and fun:

Intergenerational moments often bring laughter and delight, whether through creative projects, dancing, or cooking, enriching lives with shared joy.



Tuna and sweet potato bake

This lighter take on a potato bake is chockful of veggies with the added boost of omega-3 rich tuna. A diet high in oily fish and vegetables is vital to maintain healthy brains as we age.

Ingredients list

- ▶ 1 Large orange sweet potato, 2cm cubes
- ▶ 2x 400 g can tinned tomatoes
- ▶ 2 red capsicums, diced
- ▶ 1 red onion, diced
- ▶ 1 carrot, chopped
- ▶ 1 250g bag English spinach
- ▶ 1 tbsp Italian herb mix
- ▶ Olive oil
- ▶ 1/2 cup grated cheese

Method

- ▶ Pre heat the oven to 180 degrees (fan-forced). Select an oven and stove proof pot.
- ▶ Sautee onions and capsicums in olive oil until translucent. Add carrots and herb mix, cook for a further 5 minutes.
- ▶ Add canned tomatoes and bring to a simmer for 5 minutes, then add spinach and wilt.
- ▶ Stir in tuna and sweet potato, simmer for another 5 minutes then top with cheese.
- ▶ Place in the oven and cook for 30 minutes or until potato is soft.



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