

Connecting through sharing photos and stories

Younger generations are used to sharing photos quickly and easily through social media and smartphones. Here are some ideas for sharing photos and stories to build meaningful connections with older adults or others in your life.

According to a survey by [AARP Foundation](#), one in three adults age 45 and older in the U.S. is lonely. Whether it's looking at old photographs in an album or pictures of puppies online, sharing photos with an older adult is a creative and easy way to help them feel connected.

If you can't see them in person, share copies of photos, such as:

- **Photo albums or scrapbooks**—Ask older adults in your life to share a photo album with you and tell you stories related to the pictures, or bring a scrapbook of your own to share with them during your next visit.
- **Curate a set of photos on your phone just for them**—Don't have photo albums or scrapbooks? Pull out your phone for an instant slide show. Swipe slow and be sure to share why the photo is meaningful to you.
- **Framed pictures**—Many people have framed photos around their home, usually of people and places significant to them. If you are visiting or doing a video chat, ask for a photo “tour.”
- **Yearbooks, programs from important events and other memorabilia**—These kinds of archives can be a treasure trove of inspiration for storytelling and learning about one another.
- **Illustrated books and magazines**—Sometimes it doesn't even have to be your photos to spark conversation and connection. Try looking through books or magazines for images to discuss, such as foods you'd like to eat or places you'd like to visit.

If you can't be in person with the older adult, coordinate with them to mail or deliver physical photo copies, or find ways to share photos electronically such as:

- **Electronic picture frame**—These devices rotate multiple photos.
- **Online albums**—There are lots of options for this. If necessary, include a little technical assistance in your plan. Ensure the older adult has a device to view the photos. If the older adult can navigate the technology, share a phone call with them and instruct them on accessing photos through the device. If the older adult needs assistance and lives in a residential community setting, coordinate when staff can share the photos with them.