

*Supporting our communities*

## Supporting grandparents

Life changes for everyone during a natural disaster or crisis.

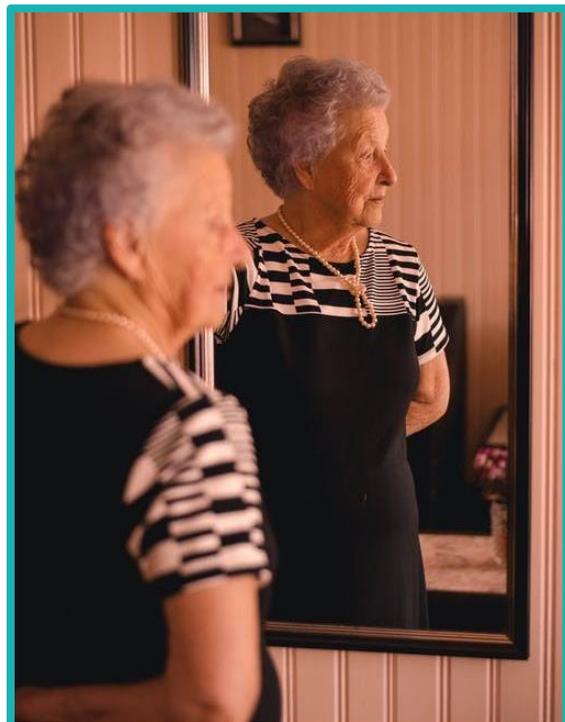
### **Health pandemics and natural disasters can create social isolation**

There are so many benefits of the special bond between children and grandparents and their sense of connection is invaluable for the well-being of both. Grandchildren also keep grandparents mentally and physically active, and grandparents have much knowledge to pass on.

In the event of a health pandemic, it is recommended that older Australians remain at home. This has a significant impact on families and grandparents. Many grandparents are responsible for providing care for their grandchildren.

Many Australian families face the difficult decision of whether children should continue to have contact with their grandparents, especially when they are important and valued sources of childcare.

The challenge is that older Australians (over 60 years of age) are more vulnerable. We know that the disease is much more dangerous for older Australians and we have learned that children with the virus often appear to experience very mild symptoms, making it difficult to know if they even have the disease. Children could be infectious despite not showing any symptoms and so may unwittingly pass on the illness to others, including those more vulnerable to its effects.



## *Supporting our communities*

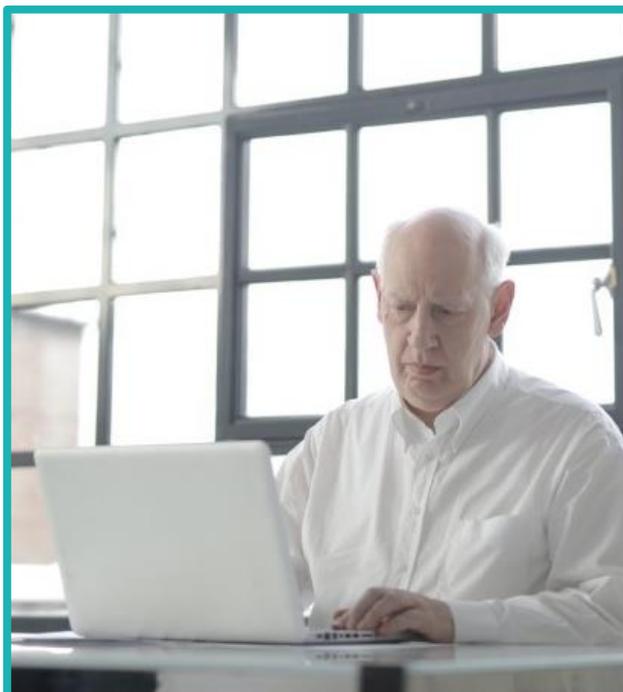
With the Australian Government recommending that people over 70 self-isolate, there is an increased risk of grandparents becoming lonely.

Likewise, during a crisis or disaster families can become isolated from one another. Finding new ways to maintain social interaction is vitally important, particularly for grandparents who are isolated and alone in their homes.

### **Ways that grandchildren and grandparents can stay connected**

Visually seeing a family member has a great impact on health and well-being. While almost everyone has a phone, other technology can be used to create shared experiences. Here are some tips on how to stay connected.

- **Linking up can be easy through Facetime, Zoom, Skype or other methods.** If you haven't used these forms of communication previously, now is a great time to learn. Your children and grandchildren could even help by teaching you how to use any of these online methods. With these, you can do virtual activities together such as reading to each other, playing games, cooking, drawing or painting.
- **Set up fun lessons on topics such as history or learning the alphabet.** Share stories about your life growing up or your family's history. You could even



## *Supporting our communities*

teach each other dance moves or favourite songs from your childhood.

- **Organise a virtual morning tea or share a dinner with the grandchildren.** Plan a virtual celebration if there is a birthday or other celebration.
- **Receiving a letter in the post can be a novel and exciting experience for children.** Write letters to your grandchildren and ask questions that they can answer in a letter back to you. Many children have never even received a letter before.
- **Don't forget** – there's always old after school daily catch ups on the phone! Connecting the old-fashioned way is also a good way to meet up.

There are people who can help you to get through. If you are feeling depressed, lonely or stressed, **Interrelate are here to support** – [contact us](#) to have a chat about how we can help