

Maintaining Family Balance

Managing the challenges of multiple generations under one roof

They're called the "sandwich" generation: adults with children and aging parents at home. Summertime and having kids home more often can add to the challenge of maintaining some sense of family balance within these multi-generation households.

However, when armed with knowledge, families can enjoy balance, stability and maybe even a little summer vacation.

According to Coleman Adult Day Services, 80 percent of the elderly in Portage County reportedly live with a family member – usually a grown son or daughter. In households where the primary caregiver also has children in the home, the senior family member may enjoy the family closeness. However, some may not be used to the energy and active lifestyles of younger people.

Sometimes the aging parent will have personality changes when life with young children in the home becomes busier than normal, such as during summer break. The "sandwiched" caregiver often finds themselves needing to balance the entertainment needs of the child with the emotional needs of the older adult.

Coleman Behavioral Health's child and adolescent psychologists often observe among children in this situation that they have a wonderful bond with the grandparent living in the home. The child is often much more impacted by the illness or death of a grandparent than children whose grandparent lived far away.

Parents may find that children occasionally exhibit jealousy, irritability and anger in this kind of situation. When kids have a hard time dealing with the emotional strain of these relationships, it's wise to seek treatment from a child psychologist such as those at [Coleman Behavioral Health](#) in Portage County.

Situations entailing multiple generation homes usually have two issues in common: time and money. Families with those issues should prepare a realistic schedule and budget that is honest and acceptable to everybody.

The strain of these relationships is without a doubt falling on the shoulders of the caregivers. The "sandwiched" caregiver needs support and breathing room to navigate the stresses of maintaining family balance.

Resources like [Coleman Adult Day Services](#), which allow elder relatives to have time with peers as well as the caregivers time alone or with their children, have proved a very successful arrangement for these types of families. Caregivers struggling to maintain balance can also get help coping with inter-generational issues from Coleman Behavioral Health family counseling or through employee assistance programs that may be offered through [Coleman Wellness Solutions](#). Coleman's support can help maintain the balance.