



Let's talk about Covid 19

Dorit Braun revisits the **Family Album** pack in the context of 2020 concerns and reminds us just how important it is to talk about issues

Dorit is retired. She has worked in adult, community and family education for many years, including as Chief Executive of Parentline Plus (now Family Lives). Dorit's first full time job was as the first staff member at the DEC [now Tide~], where she worked for five years.

Are those his children or is he helping care for a key workers' children?

Is the older child a brother or other relative of the baby?

Where is the mother? Ill? In hospital? At work? A key worker? What kind of key worker? Has she died?

The **Family Album** pack, now available to download, was produced in 2001. It was a development of an earlier resource, produced in 1985 in partnership with the Open University Family Life Education project, directed by Dorit Braun with Naomi Eisenstadt.

Looking back from the vantage point of a global pandemic, in Summer 2020, what is striking is how relevant the pack remains. Yes, the photos are old and dated, but what they depict is not.

Take a look at the photograph of a father changing a baby, with an older child looking on. This can be used to question and challenge stereotypes of who does the care work in families. The pandemic experiences raises further questions.



In 2020 it is impossible to argue that we are not connected to the rest of the world. The existence of Covid 19 throughout the world tells us that we are. We are living in dangerous times. Not only is there a life threatening global pandemic, suggesting a future 'normality' that none of us can be sure of, but there is also mistrust in politicians, allegations of corruption of political decisions, of intervention by other countries in elections, of 'fake news' including of the coronavirus being a hoax.

Never has it been more important to enable and encourage children and young people to assess and evaluate information, to recognise their own assumptions and prejudices and those of others, to review those assumptions and be willing to change their opinions and ideas on the basis of new information and ideas.

We have to engage with what is taking place around us, talk about it, consider other people's ideas and experiences, be open to changing our minds, be open to understanding that we are all human, whatever our differences, and be open to allowing our essential humanity to guide our choices and behaviours as we attempt to shape our future world. And to do this, starting with family is really helpful.



Are they related?

How might they be related?

Have they been able to see each other during the pandemic?

Do they even live in the same country?

Is the man still alive?

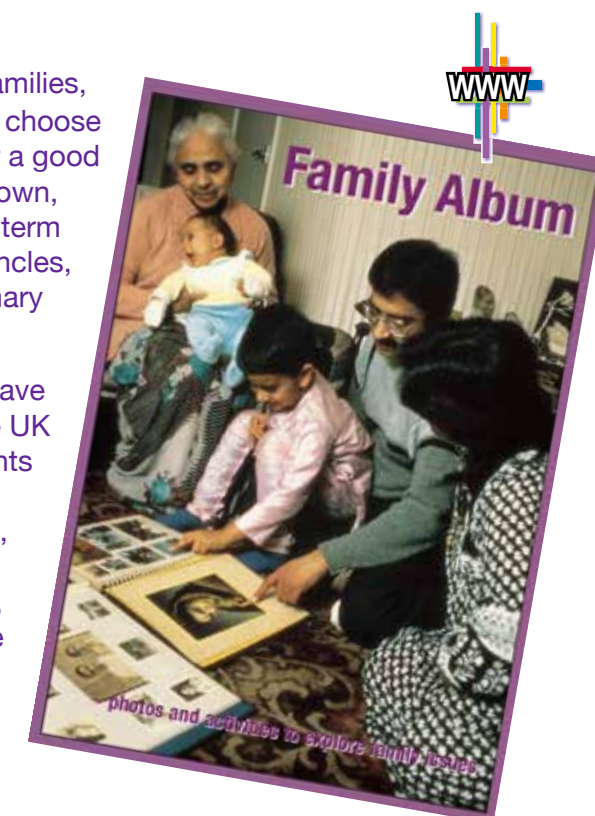
Family means different things to different people, we have a range of experiences of our families, not all of them good, but our families shape who we are, our sense of our own identity. Exploring what family means to us is an important step to working out who we are and could be in the world.

Using photographs allows us to talk about and consider other families, so that we do not have to reveal too much about our own if we choose not to. Bear in mind that for some, family is not a safe place or a good place. This too may have been more problematic during lockdown, with fewer opportunities to escape. But also, family is a broad term – for many it includes beloved pets, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, family friends...and indeed many of these are the primary carers of children who cannot live with their birth parents.

The twentieth and twenty first centuries are full of events that have led to migrations around the planet. The people who live in the UK come from a very diverse set of background. Some of the events are traumatic. You may be teaching pupils whose family has similar trauma in their history: famines in Ireland, the Holocaust, genocides in Rwanda; in Serbia; pogroms in Europe; war in Syria, war in the Yemen, tyranny in Iraq, political dissent in Iran, partition in India, the legacy of colonial brutality, slavery ...there is a long list of possibilities. Not to mention the invitations to people from former UK colonies to come to the UK and help to rebuild postwar, only to be met with signs saying - 'No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs'.

It is precisely this dehumanisation of people that allows their mistreatment, sometimes on a genocidal scale, and sometimes on a smaller, but nonetheless institutional scale.

Families are often too traumatised to talk about what happened in their family, and they may not even know. Making it about other families, in other places, makes it less personal, allows us to talk about tyranny, to acknowledge the trauma and pain it inflicts down the generations and to recognise why valuing all humanity is key to our very survival.



See stimulus on next page >>





Dorit Braun's article highlights the need for approaches that engage learners in a way that values their own experiences and ideas but does not expose them to embarrassment or worse. We were planning to seek a group of teachers to use 'Family Album' pack to develop ideas to generate discussion about Covid 19. However, as Dorit points out the photos are dated ... and also handling the same bits of card does not fit with Covid-19 precautions.

To our delight The National Gallery have just launched a new collection of photographs on a Covid 19 theme. See: [Hold Still at National Gallery](#).

The activities suggested here are based on that collection. The photos illustrate the potential. We would value your feedback.

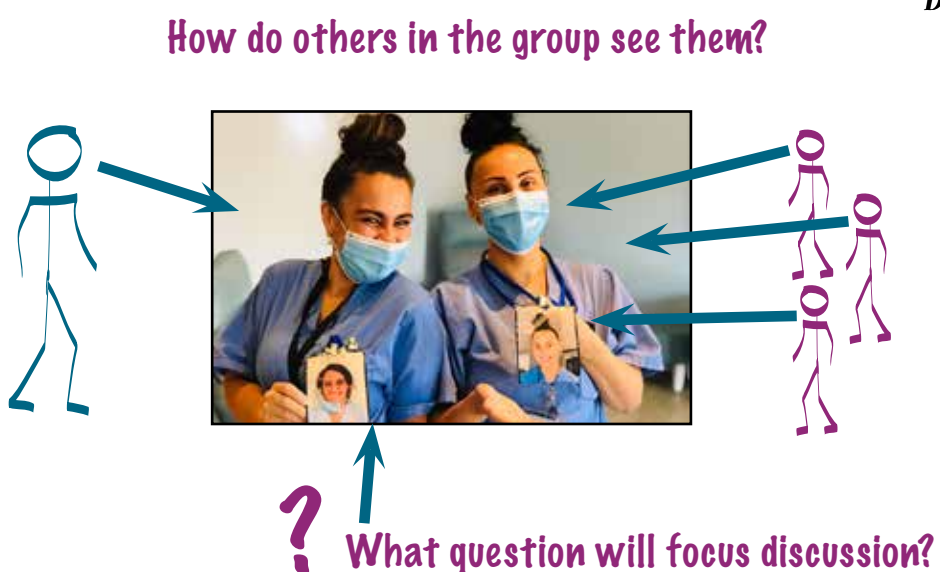
We also recommend taking a look at these short video clips developed by Toni Pyke of 80:20. They feature young people in different parts of the world talking about their experiences. See: [Generation Lockdown](#).

We would like to set up a Zoom consultation to develop these ideas further. See p 8

Suggested Process

- ❑ Review the collection of photographs. [Web link]
- ❑ Individually [A]: choose 3 that say something important to you.
- ❑ Focus on one photo. [B] Generate questions looking at the detail.
- ❑ Some question will have answers, some you might guess an answer, but many are just good questions.
- ❑ Share your photo [C] What do others see ?
- ❑ Pose a question to help focus discussion.
Eg - *What are the challenges of being a Care Worker?*

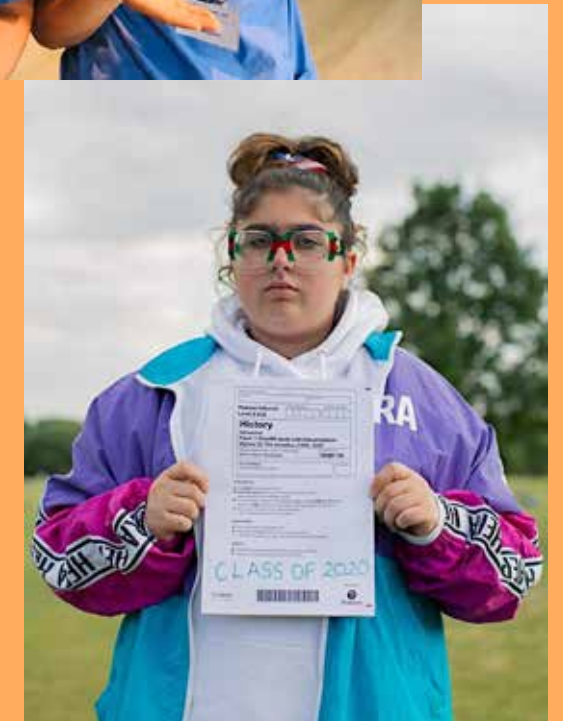
[C] Share your choices - The process:



Featuring articles from:
Dorit Braun

[A]

Choose 3 photos that say something important to you.



[B]

What is he watching? Why?
What is he thinking?

Where is he?

Why is we wearing a black tie?



What is the building?

Where is it?

How many people are there?
Why is he not there?

Why has he got two screens?

What notes has he been writing?

