Young and old teaching each other a surprising range of skills

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Twerking, snowboarding and where to get good tattoos! New research into the relationship between under 25s and over 55s shows that though they might be generations apart, Britain's young and old love spending time together and like nothing better than to share advice and swap skills.

A desire to learn about smartphones, online shopping, tablets and social media is prompting many over 55s to seek out the younger generation for guidance.

In turn, the under 25s report they are picking up better manners, social skills, relationship advice and want to spend more time with older relatives and friends.

The report, entitled "Generation Games", which was commissioned by the Oddfellows Friendly Society and coincides with its Friendship Month, highlighted how much the two groups can offer each other.

Over 55s said they'd like lessons in breakdancing, snowboarding and learning to laugh again. They'd happily teach fly-fishing, hula-hooping and self-confidence.

Skills the under 25s said they'd like to teach their elders include mastering Instagram, rollerblading and twerking. In the meantime, they'd like to learn to appreciate 70s music, how to be frugal and "where to get good tattoos".

Jane Nelson, chief executive officer of the Oddfellows, said: "Younger and older people want to spend time together, swapping talents and advice, and benefit hugely from each other's company.

"These groups are miles apart in terms of their life experience and expertise but our research found that it is these very differences that make their companionship so rewarding and fun."

The research asked what advice over 55s would give to their younger selves. Responses included: "live life your way", "worry less", "have more sex", "be more glamorous" and "buy better underwear"!

Tips under 25s would give to their older selves include: "Enjoy life to the full", "listen", "have more fun", "stay young at heart" and "don't sing in public"!

Around 95% of under 25s and over 55s said they enjoy spending time together; 37% of under 25s want more opportunities to spend time with their elders, and 29% of over 55s said they'd like more time with the young.

The research also highlights that, despite the pleasure to be had from each other's company, many young and old struggle to find the chance to meet. One in four of the over 55s rarely or never spends time with the other age group, while one in five 13-25 year olds has few opportunities to spend time with over 55s.

"What is saddening is that it is the over 75s who value the company of the under 25s most highly yet have the fewest opportunities to spend time with them," said Jane.

"Unfortunately, it appears through our research that, as we get older, there are fewer and fewer opportunities to mix with younger people.

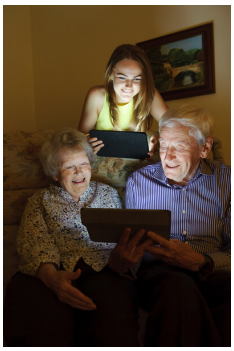
"Given the enjoyment and benefits over 55s derive from the company of young people, and vice versa, this is an issue more people need to be made aware of. We also need to focus attention on how to build more opportunities for old and young to come together.

"Our Friendship Month events, running throughout September, is a way in which we can help bring people together through tea parties, craft sessions, walks and trips out, activities that are open to everyone, regardless of age."

The survey questioned 528 over 55s and 501 13-25 year olds.

To learn more about the Oddfellows and Friendship Month, or to view the report in full, visit

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About the Oddfellows

The Oddfellows is a friendship organisation open to everybody. It has Branches all over the UK where people are encouraged to meet and enjoy social activities together. Members organise days out, holidays, coffee mornings, informative and educational talks, and charity fundraising events.

In addition to social activities that help build friendships, the Oddfellows provides care support, advice helplines and a range of life-enriching financial benefits. The Society is a non-profit making mutual, run by and for its members.

Though most of those active in the organisation are over 55, the Oddfellows also has a substantial number of Child Trust Fund members and is as interested in their welfare as it is in that of its older members.

The Oddfellows has a long and illustrious history. It was founded in 1810, offering a means for workers and their families not covered by traditional trade guilds to pay small regular sums to insure themselves should they fall on hard times.

During the industrial revolution, the Society continued to play a vital role in protecting workers from destitution – pioneering early forms of social security such as sick pay, unemployment benefit and life insurance.

By 1850 the Oddfellows had grown into the largest friendly society in Britain with its members playing a vital role in establishing the welfare state and National Health Service.

Though the establishment of the welfare state reduced the need for friendly societies to fulfil this important function, the Oddfellows still takes seriously its commitment to the wellbeing of its members and wider community.

The publication of this Oddfellows Insight Report coincides with Friendship Month, when the Society celebrates and encourages friendship.

For more information visit: www.oddfellows.co.uk.

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