Bridging Communication Gaps Across Generational & Cultural Divides Among Chinese-Canadian Families & Communities

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Abstract

Intergenerational relationships are becoming increasingly important, as people are living longer and thus spending more time with people from different generations. Despite the growth in the area of research on intergenerational relationships and communication, it is largely lacking in historical and cultural context. Few have explored cultural differences in values, behaviour, and identity in intergenerational conflict and cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, little is known about intergenerational communication, conflict, and coping within the context of Eastern cultures.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the nature of intergenerational communication and conflict among Chinese-Canadian families, the existing strategies used to manage conflict, and the impacts of effective intergenerational communication on the lives of older and younger Chinese-Canadians. Through listening and learning from Chinese-Canadians across four generations and a community of experts, areas of support and needs were identified and incorporated into the design process. The analysis shows a strong correlation between age, history, migration, social environments, and communication behaviours. Overall, the results highlight the complex roles of culture, history, and trauma in communication among multi-generational Chinese-Canadian families.

A game-based approach is proposed to promote understanding between Chinese-Canadians across generations through empathic communication and storytelling. The artifact aims to connect game enjoyment and intergenerational perceptions and communication and serves as an inspiration piece to foster positive intergenerational bonds.

The efforts of this research are an expression of commitment by the individuals and organizations dedicated to supporting Chinese-Canadian communities to foster social spaces that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

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Dedication

For my mom and 婆婆

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Preamble

The journey of my research process was full of pivots and discoveries. Initially, my research plan aimed to explore social isolation and loneliness among older Chinese-Canadian women and the impacts of cultural and gender identity on physical-social environments of aging. Then COVID-19 hit, exposing the fragility of systems to support older adults, and further emphasizing the health, economic, and social disparities they face. Moreover, the increase in discrimination and violence towards the Asian diaspora compounded these risks for Asian seniors. Social movements like Black Lives Matter also prompted reflections on Asian identity, oppression, and complicity. My research began to pivot to explore the cultural dimensions of intergenerational social connectivity. I recognized that social isolation and loneliness were only one part of a deeper underlying issue impacting the Asian diaspora across generations. The pandemic and social justice movements of 2020 put a spotlight on the issue of Asian silence and impassivity that had long been ignored. I was driven by a curiosity to understand the intersections of aging, migration, and social advocacy, and their impacts on cross-generational communication and conflict among Chinese-Canadian families.

My mother and I have always had a tumultuous relationship. We constantly clashed and could never see eye-to-eye. As I grew older, I noticed similar tensions between my mother and her own mother (婆婆). My mother never told me much about her childhood or her relationship with my grandmother. My grandmother spoke very little English, and my Cantonese was not advanced enough to ask her either. By the time she had passed, I still knew very little about my grandmother or her relationship with my mother. It was not until my late twenties, several years after her passing, that I understood the incompleteness in my knowledge of family narrative and history, and its detrimental impact on my relationship with my mother. I began to search for the missing facets of my grandmother's story.

My grandmother grew up in a time of war and terror. She was in her early teens when Japan invaded China. Japanese imperial soldiers had kidnapped many young girls near her village, and her family lived in a state of constant fear. She managed to escape to Hong Kong where it was still peaceful. Shortly after, she married my grandfather and chose to raise a family instead of completing secondary school. While she loved her husband and five children, she deeply regretted abandoning her education. She pushed her children, especially her daughters, to study diligently so they could be equipped with the tools to lead independent lives—something she was unable to do. Even though I never knew the extent of suffering endured by my 婆婆, I felt the crushing weight of her hardships and sacrifices through the extreme behaviours and

actions of my mother. I wondered how different my connections with my mother and grandmother would have been had I sooner understood the trauma that defined our strained relationships and misunderstanding of each other.

These reflections unveiled the complexity of the generational past and its influence on the present as captured through contemporary concepts such as intergenerational trauma, family conflict, mental health, and coping. They made me wonder how my understanding of the past will shape my own future relationships, and what appreciative empathy may come with those older and younger learning from each other’s past and future histories.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background & Significance

Canada is home to nearly seven million seniors aged 65 and older (Statistics Canada, 2020). With the large cohort of baby boomers transitioning into this age group, the senior population will nearly double by 2030 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Furthermore, this population is becoming increasingly diverse, and visible minorities represent a significant and growing share of the older population in Canada (Ng, Lai, & Rudner, 2012). Nearly 60% of seniors living in Canada are immigrants and 18% are visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2011). Out of the various visible minority groups, the largest is from China. As a result, the total population of ethnic Chinese is substantially increasing, accounting for nearly 26% of all visible minorities and making it the largest visible minority group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The gap between generations is widening due to population aging and institutional age segregation. It is not uncommon for different age groups to be isolated through socially constructed divisions according to chronological age, such as the funneling of the young into day care and schools and placing seniors in age-homogenous retirement communities. These changing social patterns and demographic trends create more instances of intergenerational conflict among individuals, families, and societies (Kinsella, 2000). In an aging society where individuals live longer and thus share more years and experiences with members of other generations, it is imperative to foster healthy intergenerational bonds between younger and older generations (Bengtson, 2001).

Communication and interaction between young and older people play an important role in an aging society. Positive intergenerational bonds between young and old have been linked to better psychological health and increased sense of well-being in both parties (Bahrassa et al., 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; J. Li, 2001). Senior involvement in intergenerational programs has demonstrated improved feelings of self-worth, reduced feelings of loneliness, higher levels of social interaction, and positive impacts in overall health. It has also been found that positive experiences during joint participation in intergenerational leisure activities can facilitate relationship-building in peer and family relationships (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). However, much of the research on intergenerational communication and intergenerational programs has focused primarily on Western cultures.

Recent investigations suggest that intergenerational communication may be different in the East than in the West due to the Confucian principle of filial piety held by people in Eastern cultures

(Giles et al., 2003. Filial piety stresses collectivism, centrality of family over individualism, hierarchical relationships, and respect for elders. These differences are especially noticeable within Chinese-Canadian families, where first-generation immigrants are likely to take a traditional authoritative unidirectional approach to communication compared to the more reciprocal egalitarian Western approach taken by their second-generation adult children (Chen, 2006). Intergenerational conflict is a common stressor for Chinese Canadian emerging adults, who must balance individualist and collectivist values. As the older Chinese population in Canada is expected to rapidly increase, it is important to consider cultural and historical contexts in intergenerational relationships and communication.

Several attempts have been made in cross-cultural communication and aging research to study age stereotypes and intergenerational communication within Chinese families and communities (Cai, Giles, & Noels, 1998; Giles et al., 2003; Williams et al., 1997). There is strong evidence that intergenerational conflict is persistent among Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American families and negatively impacting not only older adults, but also emerging adults (Lee et al., 2000; Lee & Liu, 2001; Li, 2001). Moreover, intergenerational conflict is one of the most common presenting problems for Asian American university students receiving counselling services and has been linked to poorer psychological and somatic health (Lee & Mock., 2005; Bahrassa et al., 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Li, 2001). While studies highlight the prominence and negative impacts of intergenerational conflict within Asian American and Canadian families, there is a lack of research on how Chinese-Canadian emerging adults and older adults cope with intergenerational conflict.

There is a growing body of research highlighting the potential of storytelling in facilitating intergenerational and cross-cultural communication and understanding. Storytelling has long been recognized as a fundamental part of cultural identity, teaching, and transmission of values and knowledge (Benham, 2007). Sharing and interpreting life experiences is a mutually beneficial intergenerational exchange that can bridge cultural, linguistic, and generational divides (Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, & T'lakwadzi, 2009). There is no one-size-fits-all solution to intergenerational conflict and divides in communication. The research highlights the lack of intersectional discourse in the context of ethnocultural diversity in studies on intergenerational communication and argues for greater consideration for cross-cultural perspectives in social gerontological research.

1.2 Research Objective

This research intends to define the key challenges in intergenerational communication among Chinese-Canadian families, and to address those challenges with a gamified approach to communication, supporting both emerging and older adults. It is hoped that the proposed artifact – whereby both groups are learning, individually or together, how best to communicate with each other – can offer an inclusive space for older and younger adults to build deeper connections.

This Major Research Project seeks to address the challenges in intergenerational and cross-cultural communication through:

1. Continued effort towards understanding the intersections between age, migration, culture, history, and human social connectivity
2. The conceptualization of a tool to promote positive social connectivity across generations and cultures
3. The involvement of older and younger Chinese-Canadians in the participatory creation of these tools

This research was made possible with support from the Centre for Aging + Brain Health (CABHI) through the Spark-CU Innovation Acceleration Program. The research presented here is the result of all the communities and their continued dedication to supporting older adults.

1.3 Research Questions

To reach the defined research objectives, two main research questions are posed:

1. What are the key factors contributing to conflict in communication between older and younger generations of Chinese-Canadians?
2. What strategies might address these conflicts, contributing to inclusive and culturally conscious intergenerational support systems for Chinese-Canadian older adults and emerging adults?

In consideration of the objective to arrive at inclusively driven solutions, the research process resulted in further refinement of research questions. As this was an inductive approach, the research questions stated at the beginning of research went through several transformations based on outcomes from surveys, interviews, co-design sessions, and data analysis.

1.4 Context

1.4.1 Defining Age Cohorts & Generations of Migration

The term “generation” can be loosely defined as: (a) relationship in a familial sense, such as a parent-child relationship, and (b) societal generations, such as Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), Generation Y (Gen Y or Millennials), and Generation Z (Gen Z or Zoomers).

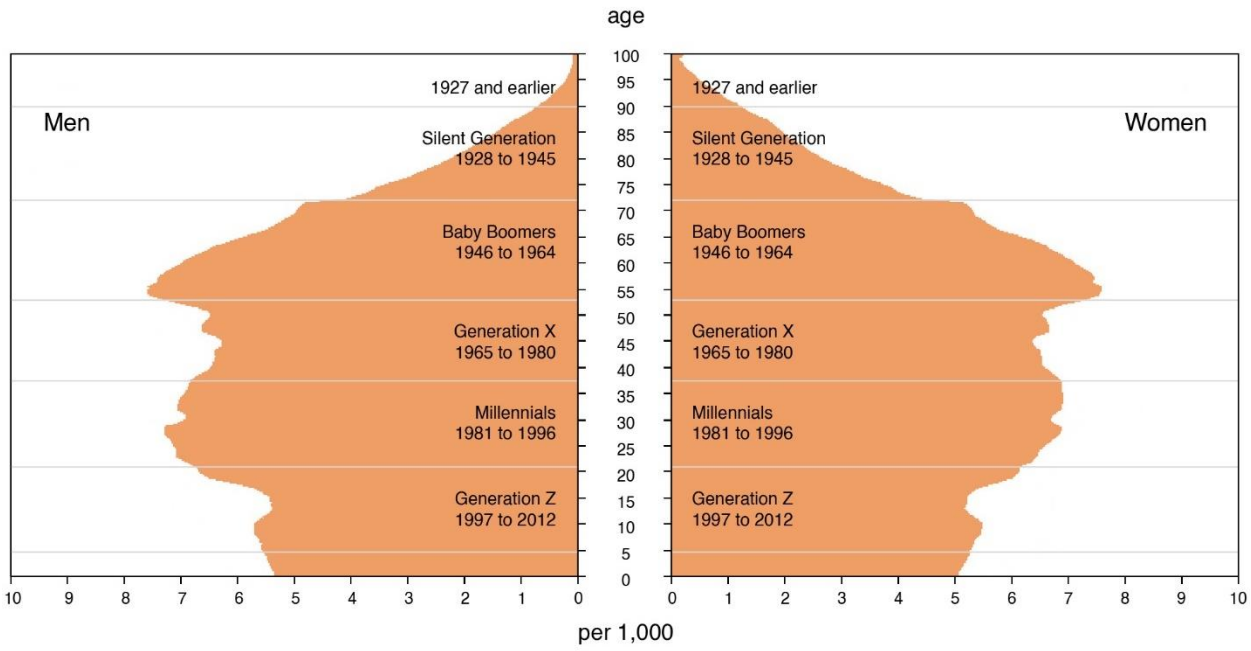

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Canadian Population (Statistics Canada, 2018)

The research also considers generations of migration. Statistics Canada (2011) defines first generation Canadians as anyone born outside of Canada, while second generation refers to those born in Canada with at least one parent born outside of Canada. Within this broad definition lies a more nuanced idea of national and ethnic identity. Contemporary researchers have explored the concept of the “1.5 Generation”, which refers to those who were born outside of Canada but arrived in childhood (Rumbaut, 2004). Children of immigrants who fit within the 1.5 Generation likely have some memory of their mother country and may identify strongly with both identities.

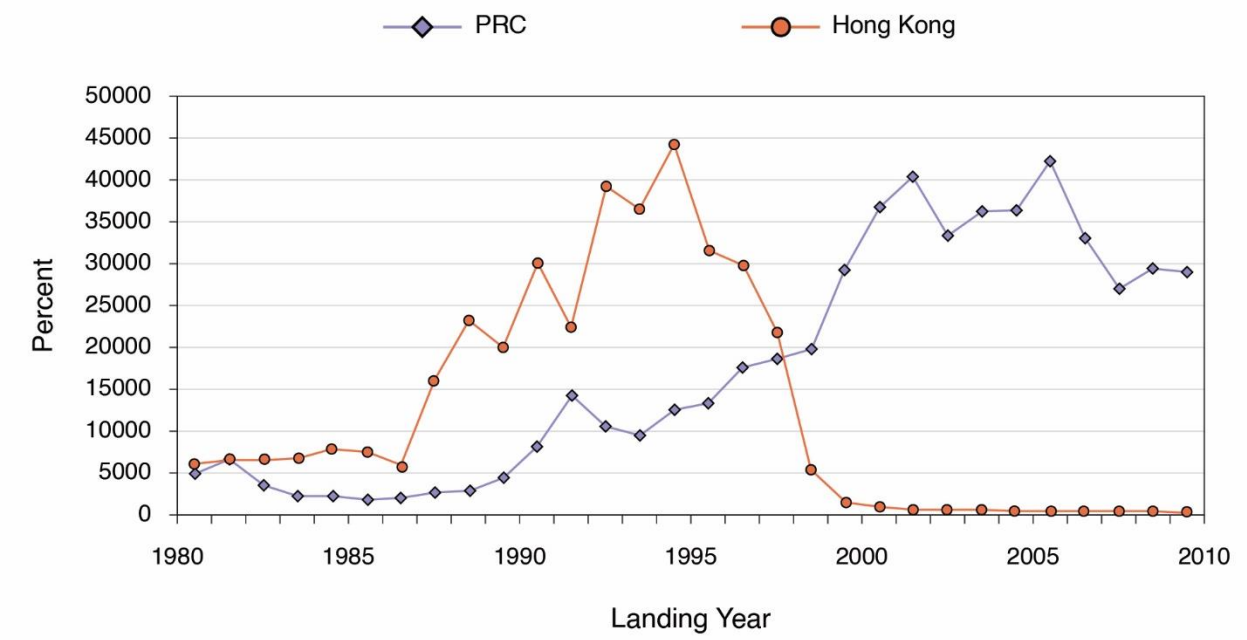

Figure 2. Immigrants Admitted Annually to Canada by Landing Year, 1980-2009 (Li & Li, 2017)

There have been several waves of Chinese immigration to Canada in recent decades. Figure 2 shows a spike in immigrants from Hong Kong from 1986 until 1997 in response to the Handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom (UK) back to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997. Many were concerned about the future of Hong Kong and its sovereignty, resulting in a mass exodus of nearly one million Hong Kong residents to Commonwealth nations and other Western societies with well-established democratic governments, such as the UK, Australia, the United States, and Canada (Li & Li, 2017). A wave of Baby Boomers and early Gen X-ers arrived in Canada during this time and raised a new generation of Millennials and Gen Z-ers who grew up identifying with both Chinese and Western cultures.

Following the Handover in 1997, Chinese immigration from Hong Kong dropped sharply, and Canada saw its largest wave of immigrants between 1999 and 2009 from the PRC (Li & Li, 2017). The economic boom of the PRC at the start of the 21st century sparked increased immigration opportunities for mainland Chinese. Canada was a popular destination because of its advantageous social welfare system, higher quality of education, and greater opportunities for investment (Li & Li, 2017). This new wave of immigrants from the PRC consisted of primarily international students, largely because Canada granted permanent residency to thousands of visa students at Canadian universities in response to the 1989 student protest at Tiananmen Square. As this cohort spent their formative years in the PRC, they likely identify more strongly with Chinese culture.

1.4.2 Distinct Elements of Chinese Culture

Chinese culture is collectivistic when compared with Western industrialized societies such as Canada (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Suh et al., 1998; Triandis, 1989). While Western cultures tend to promote individualistic thinking, independence, and personal agency, Chinese culture emphasizes social harmony, respect for elders, and collective duty (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In traditional Chinese culture, the welfare of the collective takes priority over individual needs (Chun et al., 2006). Additionally, Chinese culture tends to value being reserved and self-controlled, particularly in terms of emotional expression (Uba, 1994). According to Confucian principles, strong emotions are detrimental to the health of oneself and others (Ames & Rosemont Jr., 1999). Thus, while communication and coping strategies that promote the fulfilment of individual goals and personal expression—such as assertiveness and advocacy—may be appropriate in Western individualistic societies, Chinese culture favours strategies that maintain relationship integrity.

Compared to Western societies, collectivist cultures are more rigid in terms of control, such that obedience, acceptance, and behavioural inhibition are required and expected in these societies (Gelfand et al., 2006). Western individualistic societies tend to be more relaxed, and a wider range of behaviours, values, and attitudes are accepted. As such, communication strategies that emphasize changing and controlling the stressor may be tolerated and effective in individualist societies, while strategies that focus on acceptance and maintaining social harmony are more appropriate for collectivist societies (Gelfland, Nishii, & Raver, 2006). Additionally, traditional Chinese belief systems such as Buddhism and Taoism emphasize the virtues of adjusting and accepting, rather than changing reality (Szabo et al., 2017).

Collective duty is one of the key pillars of traditional Confucian values, especially duty to the family. Early Chinese-Canadian families tended to be patriarchal and communal, however the Canadian context challenged this way of life (Li & Lee, 2005). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese-Canadian girls and women experienced more active roles in both education and employment. More Chinese women began immigrating to Canada in the 1980s when immigration policies became less stringent (Li & Lee, 2005). Nevertheless, Confucian values still affect Chinese-Canadians, and especially first-generation families. Chinese-Canadian parents strive to provide their children with the best opportunities. Many Chinese-Canadian parents emigrated to provide their children with access to better education and continue to prioritize their children's academic and vocational success. As a result, Chinese-Canadians often feel indebted

to their parents for their numerous sacrifices and view success as a duty to their parents (Lam, 2001).

Modern Chinese-Canadian families are gradually adopting more Western values and behaviours. Recent studies on Chinese family dynamics suggest that notions of filial piety have shifted from self-sacrifice towards self-development (Hsueh, Hu, & Clarke-Ekong, 2008). For instance, it is becoming more acceptable for adult children to leave the family home. Chinese-Canadian families may be moving towards more individualistic units where independence and equality are becoming more prominent as the traditional system recedes (Lee & Mock, 2005). Nonetheless, traditional Chinese cultural values continue to affect modern Chinese-Canadian families. Chinese-Canadian parents tend to use more strict authoritarian parenting styles, rather than the warmer egalitarian approach taken by most Western parents (Lui & Rollock, 2013). However, parental control in Chinese families is thought to be reflective of care and concern. Similarly, the expectation for obedience reflects Confucian values of respect for elders and authority (Lui & Rollock, 2013).

1.4.3 Age Integration

Two social structures are highlighted in the domain of social gerontology: (a) Age Segregated, and (b) Age Integrated (Riley and Riley, 2000; Uhlenberg, 2000; Kohli, 1986). An age segregated structure uses age criteria to organize activities—education, work, leisure—across a chronological life course; it represents conventional life stages where people are expected to gain their education when they are younger, spend their middle-ages working, and reserve leisure time for when they are older (Riley & Riley, 2000; Uhlenberg, 2000).

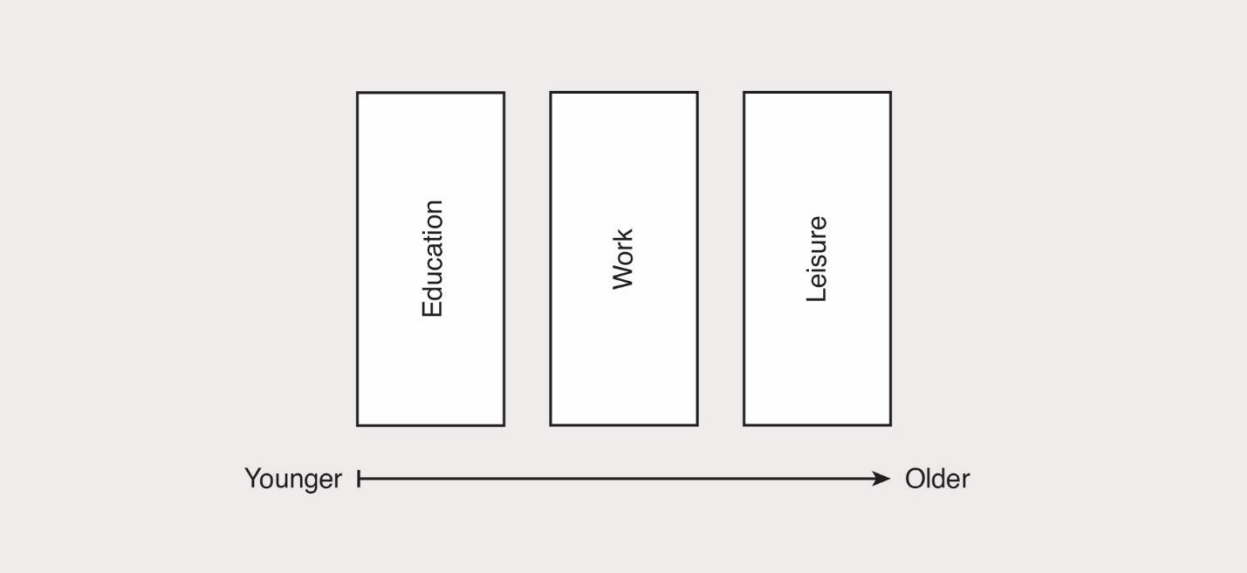

Figure 3. Age Segregated Life Course Structure (Riley & Riley, 2000)

According to Uhlenberg (2000), it may be beneficial to consider how formal and informal barriers limit opportunities for individuals of different ages to interact in environments of living, learning, working, and playing. A lack of healthy interaction between age cohorts is likely to increase prejudices and conflict. Ageism is among the significant ways in which the degree of age integration or age segregation may affect society (Uhlenberg, 2000). For instance, negative age stereotypes may intensify in environments where intergenerational interaction is uncommon (Uhlenberg, 2000). Conversely, integrating older and younger generations through work and community-based organizations can lead to improved cross-age social understanding (Uhlenberg, 2000).

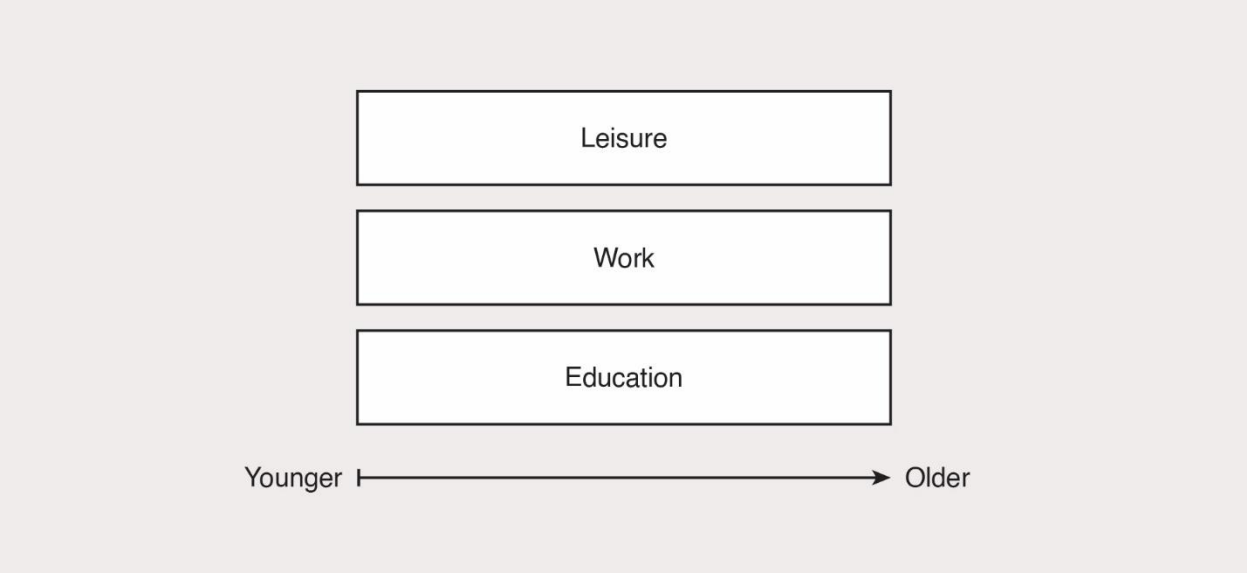

Figure 4. Age Integrated Life Course Structure (Riley & Riley, 2000)

While age integration is emerging, changes in age diversity, technology, economics, and migration are unpredictable and inevitable, and will influence each other in different ways (Riley & Riley, 2000). Both components of age integration are interdependent; flexible age criteria is likely to increase opportunities for interaction between diverse age groups, and interaction between diverse age groups is likely to lead to more flexible lives (Riley & Riley, 2000). These interactions can be just as negative as they can be positive. It is crucial to consider the appropriate conditions that can foster healthy interactions between generations and to avoid situations that could reinforce negative views on aging. One opportunity in overcoming age barriers and stereotypes is to bring together older and younger generations through common interests and collaborative activities (Uhlenberg, 2000).

1.4.4 Intergenerational Programs

Intergenerational programs flourished in countries all over the world since its early development in the 1960s. Intergenerational programs primarily aim to promote the sharing of skills, knowledge, and/or experiences between the old and young through ongoing planned interactions designed to benefit both populations (Newman, 1997). The promoted interactions are not confined only to kinship but are also targeted towards non-biologically linked older and younger persons to encourage cross-generational bonding, promote cultural exchange, and provide positive supportive systems that help to maintain the overall well-being of younger and older generations (Newman, 1997). Several joint efforts have been made to promote

international dialogue and enhance international communications in the intergenerational field (Friedlander, 2004). It is evident of a growing significance for service providers to take on an intergenerational approach to “solving social problems, to understand how culture changes practice, and to appreciating the importance of protecting human values in times of technological innovation, geographic mobility, and shifting economies” (Larkin, 2004).

Published reviews of the literature on intergenerational programs have shown the efficacy of intergenerational interventions in promoting satisfaction and quality of life in both younger and older adults (Kuehne, 2003). Successful programs commonly involved elements of cooperative play and/or learning. For instance, several studies on digital co-creation with students and older adults revealed the positive impacts of intergenerational collaboration in promoting mutual understanding and appreciative empathy (Hewson, Danbrook, & Sieppert, 2015). While the success of isolated intergenerational projects and programs demonstrates the significant benefits of intergenerational engagement to both younger and older adults, there continues to be a lack of consideration for ethnoculturally diverse populations.

Recent developments in cross-cultural intergenerational programs have reinforced the importance of understanding cultural and historical contexts in fostering positive bonds across generations in an age of globalization. A joint initiative by Simon Fraser University and Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice explored intergenerational and multilingual interactions through recording a series of radio documentaries with low-income Chinese elders living in Vancouver (Lui & Lau, 2020). The *Speak My Language* series highlighted experiences of language and cultural barriers to healthy aging in Canada, while exploring individual and collective healing. Culturally adapted intergenerational initiatives, such as the *Speak My Language* series, promote greater awareness of the compounded cultural and systemic challenges faced by ethnocultural minority seniors, and foster meaningful intergenerational connections.

2 Literature Review

This section presents an overview of the theories and concepts that frame the research about intergenerational communication and the relevant historical and contextual dimensions for understanding intergenerational conflict among Chinese-Canadian families. This research draws from social theory and social gerontology and frames culture as an implicit dimension of intergenerational communication. These perspectives will be the framework for understanding the broader literature.

2.1 Intergenerational Conflict and Transmission of Trauma

Intergenerational Trauma refers to the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next (Goodman, 2014). It is the theory that traumatic experiences endured during one's childhood or adulthood may deeply influence the well-being of the next generation(s) (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). The process of intergenerational trauma can be loosely summarized in three stages: (a) the psychological trauma experienced by parents leads them do develop distorted perceptions and behaviours in human relations, (b) these distorted behaviours impact and disrupt the parent-child relationship, and (c) the disrupted parent-child relationship results in potentially damaging experiential outcomes for their children and subsequent generations within that family (Sigal, 1973). Based on this model, intergenerational trauma considers: (a) the degree and nature of parental traumatization, (b) the transmission process of trauma from parent to child, and (c) the behavioural characteristics and experiences of their children and subsequent generations (Felsen, 1998).

As a construct, intergenerational trauma extends beyond individual psychology and intersects many discourses, including culture, history, politics, and victimhood. These intersections illustrate the complexity and importance of understanding the generational past and its influence on present and future intergenerational relationships. Despite a long history of oppression and suffering inflicted upon Chinese people in China and Canada during the twentieth century, the intergenerational effects of these events have scarcely been studied. This section explores the mechanisms of past trauma and transmission that contribute to current cultural and generational divides among Chinese-Canadians.

2.1.1 Communication Theory & Family Systems

Communication theory intersects with sociocultural worldviews in an intricate way. Often, communication of trauma is found to be either in overabundance or in severe lack. For instance, one study found an absence of communication about internment camp experiences in families of Japanese-Americans who were incarcerated during World War II (Nagata, 1993). In the Japanese context, this lack of communication may be understood through a distinct cultural model where emotional topics are often not spoken about and communicated in an indirect manner (Nagata & Cheng, 2003). However, this omission of explicitness created a sense of shame in subsequent generations, as traumatic experiences became veiled in silence (Nagata, 1993; Nagata & Cheng, 2003).

According to Danieli (1998), silence is a normal process that often follows psychological trauma. This idea is echoed in several studies where the presence of traumatic events seemed to speak volumes, yet the resulting experiences were masked in silence (Bar-On et al., 1998). Danieli (2007) notes:

> "Both intrapsychically and interpersonally protective, silence is profoundly destructive, for it attests to the person's, family's, society's, community's, and nation's inability to integrate the trauma. They can find no words to narrate the trauma story and create a meaningful dialogue around it."

Silence can be transmitted through non-verbal and everyday interactions that insinuate the existence of past problems and traumas (Bar-On et al., 1998; Kidron, 2012). The transmission of silence thus creates an "inability or reluctance of the [offspring] to stimulate their parents to communicate openly about the horrific events" (Bar-On et al., 1998). Transmitted silence contributes to disrupted attachments between parent and child. Parents may appear withdrawn and/or distressed due to their traumas but not explicitly express the nature or cause (Bar-On et al., 1998). Children and descendants are therefore left to decipher fragmented shadows of memories in an attempt to understand their parents' trauma. Silence can be framed within a cultural perspective, as illustrated in Nagata's (1993) study, which portrays silence as being a characteristic part of Japanese culture. Silence can also be maintained and transmitted systemically. For instance, a study examining memories of the Ugandan war found that the lack of space to discuss war experiences perpetuated the silence that influenced economic, political, and psychological dimensions of everyday life (Tankik, 2004). Taking these perspectives into consideration, silence can be understood as both cause and effect of post-victimization trauma that is maintained through intergenerational transmission (Danieli, 1998).

2.1.2 Impact of Intergenerational Trauma on Second and Third Generations

Most of the research on intergenerational trauma seeks to examine its consequential impact on subsequent generations. These studies show that subsequent generations are more vulnerable to experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, general psychological distress, difficulties in coping with stressful experiences, and poor attachment styles (Baider et al., 2000; Bombay et al., 2009; Danieli, 1998; Sigal & Weinfeld, 1989; Yehuda et al., 2014). There are broad implications for the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next, as the intergenerational consequence of trauma is theorized to impact social

ecological levels from the individual and the family, to the community and wider society (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

In current research, the most common approach to studying the impact of intergenerational trauma on subsequent generations is through a psychopathological model. Psychopathology is the scientific examination of mental disorders in terms of their causes, development, classification, and treatment (Yamada & Marsella, 2013). Using this model, the consequential impacts of trauma can be understood through observing addictions, suicidal behaviour, depression, traumatic stress, and anxiety (Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004; Elias et al., 2012; Bombay et al., 2014; Yehuda et al., 2014; Field et al., 2013). Attempts at understanding impacts of intergenerational trauma on Chinese-American emerging adults found a negative relation between family conflict and mental health. Additional outcomes included increased risk factors, such as sexual vulnerability and susceptibility to violence (Pearce et al., 2008; Spencer & Le, 2006). Furthermore, the literature on intergenerational trauma finds that the transmission of trauma can negatively impact one's sense of social coherence, subjective well-being, cognitive flexibility, and perceived threat (Han, 2006; Weinberg & Cummins, 2013; Bombay et al., 2014).

Despite the prevalence of immigrants in the Asian-Canadian population and their range of potentially traumatic experiences, little attention has been given to the intergenerational effect of family history before arrival in Canada on psychological well-being. Previous research has examined the psychological aspects of Asian immigration in terms of acculturation post-migration, but not in terms of the conditions experienced by immigrants in their home countries that drove them to immigrate. Upheavals like the Great Famine, Sino-Japanese Wars, and Cultural Revolution continue to haunt Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American families and have impacts on relationships, communication, and overall health outcomes (Wycoff, Tinagon, & Dickson, 2011; Field, Muong, & Sochanvimean, 2013; Liem, 2007).

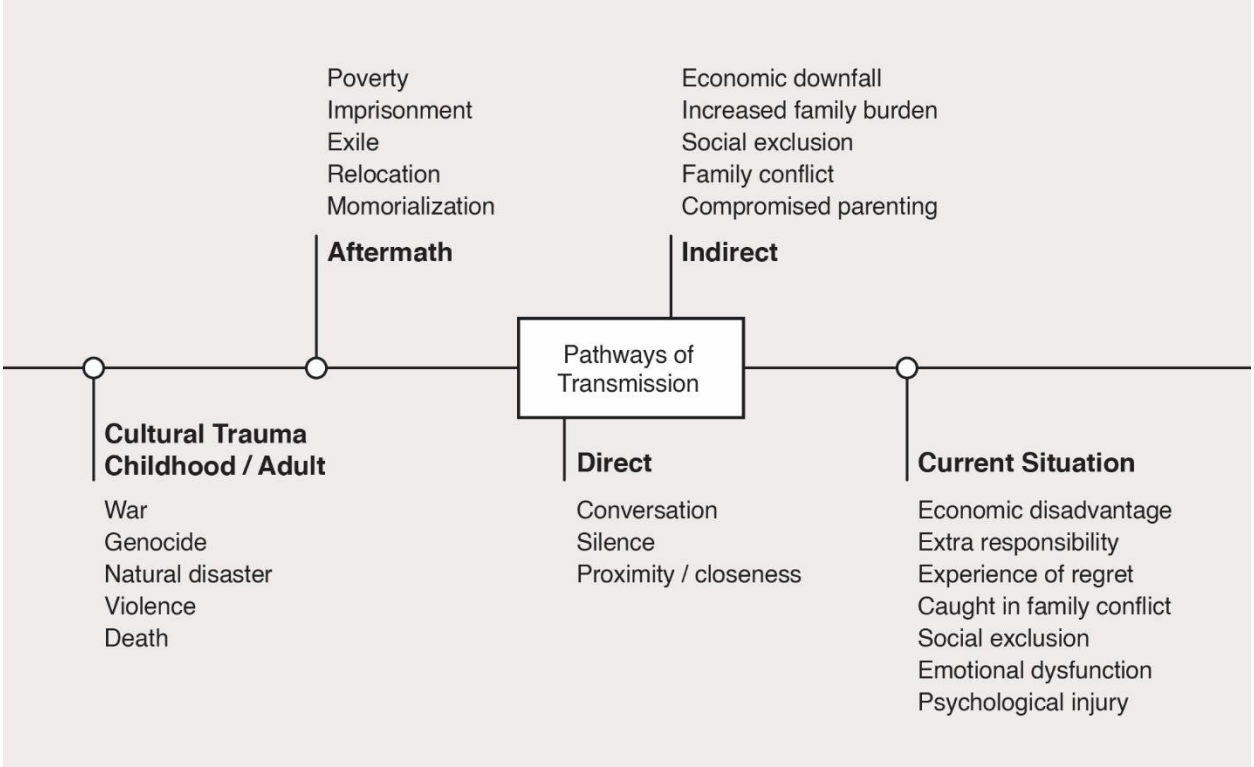

Figure 5. Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma

2.2 The Context of Chinese-Canadians

The potential for exposure to psychological trauma during immigration occurs during three stages: (a) pre-migration trauma—experienced prior to relocation, (b) migration trauma—experienced during the process of migrating, and (c) post-migration trauma—occurring during temporary resettlement, where experiences may include acculturation stress, oppression, and mental health problems (Foster, 2001). When examining the migration-related traumas of Chinese-Canadians, it is important to understand the historical events that may impact individual and collective well-being. This section provides a historical contextualization of the sociopolitical turmoil and collective traumatic events to which many Chinese immigrants experienced in the twentieth century.

2.2.1 Chinese Twentieth Century History & Trauma

Twentieth century Chinese history was filled with the scars of war, chaos, poverty, famine, and disaster. This history transmits across ethnic Chinese diasporas through (un)conscious silences and haunted memories. The force of trauma persists, repeats, and spreads across generations. Chinese individuals born or raised in Canada who feel compelled to seek out the histories of their migrant parents and grandparents are instead met with fragmented or silenced memories concerning their past. Fragmented narratives of an era filled with trauma are expressed as moral lessons that often represent themes of shame, honour, and/or other Confucian virtues such as filial piety. Such narratives can create tensions within both the next generation's cultural identities as well as their relationship with each other.

To understand the contexts of trauma within the ethnic Chinese diaspora, one must account for the societal and personal atrocities, oppressions, and injustices within twentieth century China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This tumultuous era in Chinese history produced a dispersal of ethnic Chinese migration to Western countries—such as Canada, Britain, and the United States—that advertised wealth, success, privilege, and a new life. At the same time, new challenges and successes were juxtaposed with a century of chaos and war. Such horrors ranged from genocide—such as the infamous Nanjing Massacre in 1937, where Japanese Imperial Soldiers engaged in mass murder, rape, and pillaging—to civil war and revolution. Memories surrounding the political and social upheaval during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1967) involved brutal civil slayings and destruction (Yan, 1994). The military massacre of students during demonstrations fighting for democratic reform in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, remains a bloody legacy

of the final decade of twentieth century China (Zhao, 2004). For many Chinese, memories of twentieth century China are painful and better left forgotten.

The modern history of China presents a backdrop for understanding the circumstances Chinese immigrants may have experienced prior to migration. However, in Canada, a history of oppression compounds the continued silencing of the ethnic Chinese diaspora. Significant push and pull factors contributed to the voluntary and forced migration of Chinese people to Canada and other countries around the world. Prior to World War II, migrants from Southern China left to escape poverty and turmoil; they were drawn to working overseas by the prospect of a better life (Collections Canada, 2011; Yu, 2008). Sociopolitical events also contributed to the mass migration of Chinese people. During the period between the Sino-Japanese wars, the Chinese Civil War, and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, nearly three million citizens left for Hong Kong and Taiwan (Skeldon, 1996).

There have been several studies that frame twentieth century events in China as collective and cultural traumas. The key events include the Great Famine, Sino-Japanese Wars, Chinese Civil War, and Cultural Revolution (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, 2003; Gao, 2015; Heberer, 2009; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, 2012). Nevertheless, research that has attempted to understand the intergenerational effects of these events is scarce. In one Canadian study, a reflexive autoethnographic approach was used to examine how the fragmented and silenced memories of previous generations can be understood by second generation Chinese-Canadians (To, 2014). Through reflections of their own experiences, To (2014) reinforces the idea that trauma transmits through silence, expressed through indirect forms such as moral lessons and metaphors that can perpetuate harmful dichotomous thinking. To (2014) proposes that intergenerational trauma is a diffused perception of invisible trauma that intersects with power, memory, and communication that trauma continues through hauntings of both collective and individual histories.

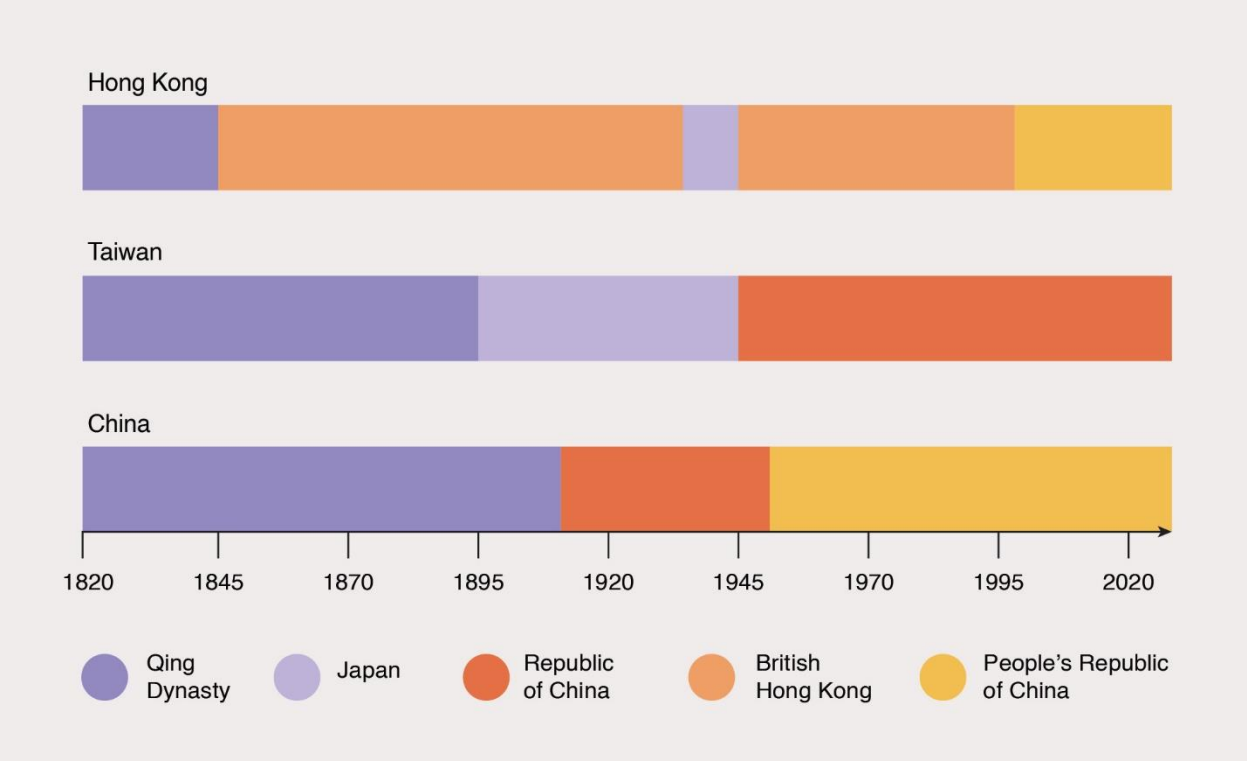

Figure 6. History of Hong Kong, Taiwan, & China

2.2.2 The Sociopolitical History of Chinese-Canadians

Chinese-Canadians have had a long history in Canada. Chinese immigration began in 1858, composed mostly of people who were escaping hardships in China (Lai, 2016). Most early Chinese-Canadians settled in British Columbia and worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway or in gold mines (Li & Lee, 2005). Early Chinese men who went overseas to work were expected to send money home to their families in China, and families supported and took care of each other. Communal support persisted in Canada; Chinese immigrants often provided each other with financial support and shelter. They also congregated in Chinatowns, which became culturally familiar spaces where people visited places of worship, celebrated cultural festivals, and purchased Chinese goods.

Chinese-Canadians have also had a history of experiencing racial discrimination. Chinese-Canadians were the largest source of cheap labour in Canada during the 1800s (Lai, 2016; Yee, 2017). In addition to involvement in building roads and railways, many Chinese-Canadians also worked in coal mines, gold mines, and on farms. Many Chinese workers died during railway construction due to poor safety, medical care, and lack of food. However, Chinese-Canadians at the time had limited employment opportunities. Anti-Chinese organizations actively petitioned

against Chinese individuals working in other industries, preferring to retain those opportunities for White European immigrants.

Heavy discrimination against Chinese immigrants continued throughout the twentieth century. Racism was so prevalent that it was integrated into early Canadian law. Following the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian federal government passed the Chinese Immigration Act to restrict Chinese immigration to Canada. The bill imposed a $50 head tax for each Chinese person seeking entry into Canada; this sum represented nearly a quarter year's wage for an average Chinese labourer (Lai, 2016). Consequently, the number of Chinese immigrants dropped dramatically. In 1900, the head tax was increased to $100, and was further raised to $500 by 1903 (Li, 2008). Chinese-Canadians remain the only ethnic group in Canada to have been subject to a head tax. Anti-Chinese sentiments continued to rise after World War I, and Chinese immigrants were accused of taking jobs away from white individuals (Lai, 2016). As a result, Chinese immigration was completely banned with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923 which limited Chinese-Canadians' political and civil rights (Li & Lee, 2005).

Hostility and prejudice against Chinese-Canadians persisted well into the 1960s. Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1947, several restrictions to Chinese immigration remained in place (Roy, 2007). In 1967, the race-based immigration policies were replaced by a merit-based system, resulting in an influx of more educated Chinese immigrants (Li & Lee, 2005). Further, lobbying by Chinese communities prompted Canada to reevaluate its anti-Chinese legislations and grant voting rights to all Chinese-Canadians (Li & Lee, 2005). The Canadian government formally recognized the contributions of Chinese-Canadians in 1980 and issued an official apology in 2006 for the mistreatment of Chinese-Canadians throughout Canadian history (Lai, 2016).

2.2.3 Chinese-Canadian Intergenerational Conflict & Coping

Drawing on the literature on Chinese and Chinese-Canadian history in the twentieth century provides a foundation for understanding historical trauma and its influence on relationships, conflict, and coping across generations of Chinese-Canadians. It is important to note that not all Chinese-Canadians experienced trauma to the same degree, given the heterogeneity of migratory generations and Chinese-Canadian communities (Yu, 2013). Experiences vary based on exposure to different social contexts pre- and post-migration. However, it is unlikely that an individual would face no exposure to trauma in Chinese-Canadian contexts, given the scale of

traumatic historical events and the communal nature of Chinese-Canadian communities (Con & Wickberg, 1982; Li, 1998).

To understand intergenerational conflict and coping in Chinese-Canadians, it is important to acknowledge their fundamental connection to cultural and historical contexts. Cultural values and beliefs inherently shape an individual's interpretation of situational stressors. As such, conflict and coping must be understood from a collectivistic perspective that affirms systemic and sociocultural contexts (Inman & Yeh, 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Given the long history of traumatic events, the silence surrounding trauma, and transmission of trauma through perpetuated silence and distorted social behaviours, it is not surprising that intergenerational conflict continues to fester among Chinese immigrant families.

A study examining intergenerational conflict in Chinese-Canadian parent-child dyads revealed that 59% of parents endorsed experiencing intergenerational conflict, and 84% of adult children indicated that they experienced intergenerational conflict (Lai, 2011). Compared to European-American and Canadian families, where the rate of intergenerational conflict tends to decrease as children mature, the rate of conflict in Chinese-Canadian families tends to rise as children enter early adulthood (Laursen et al., 1998). This difference may be due to the collectivistic nature of Asian families as well as overprotective behaviours, where parents expect their children to delay seeking autonomy (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). As such, intergenerational conflict is often exacerbated when Chinese-Canadian or Chinese-American children enter adulthood and begin to experience more independence and personal agency (Lee & Liu, 2001).

The literature on coping presents two dominant strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping refers to coping mechanisms that place emphasis on altering the situational stressor or event, while emotion-focused coping refers to individuals' changing their reactions to the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Chinese people have historically been characterized as having a tendency to use avoidant or emotion-focused coping, and lower probability of seeking out and utilizing social support (Cheng et al., 2010). In general, collectivist societies employ emotion-focused strategies, or passive/avoidance coping, more than problem-oriented strategies (Lam & Zane, 2004; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2016). However, several studies suggest that individualist and collectivist coping strategies are not mutually exclusive. Rather, individuals may in fact use both types of strategies (Kuo & Gingrich, 2004; Kuo et al., 2006). For Chinese-Canadians, the need to negotiate Western-individualist and Chinese-collectivist approaches to coping is an ongoing endeavour that requires a cross-generational effort to balance both types of strategies.

2.3 Connectivity & Healing Through Storytelling

Narrative gerontology is based on the belief that human beings are fundamentally storytellers and story-listeners (Kenyon, Clark, & de Vries, 2001). This has been largely influential in ageing care, where a growing body of research has shown that engaging older adults in activities that encourage them to recall positive and specific memories builds resilience, increases well-being, and sustains a sense of self-identity (de Medeiros, 2014). Research has also shown that having one's story heard and acknowledged can be affirming to a person's sense of identity and self-worth (Heggestad and Slettebo 2015). As noted by one social gerontologist, "There is intrinsic value in enabling older adults to tell their stories, and, just as important, to listen to what their stories tell them" (Randall, 2012).

Storytelling serves multiple functions for older adults. From a physiological perspective, reminiscing and sharing of life stories can improve self-esteem, mood, well-being, and enhance feelings of control and fulfillment in life as one ages (Li et al., 2020). From a social perspective, stories transmit cultural and individual traditions, values, and moral codes (Kemper, 1984). Stories told by the elderly create meaning beyond the individual and provide a sense of self through historical time and in relation to family members, and thus may promote positive self-identity (Fivush, 2007).

From a broader perspective, stories told by the elderly are invaluable sources of cultural heritage. Storytelling is a fundamental part of cultural identity, teaching, and transmission of values and knowledge (Benham, 2007). As individuals approach the end of their lives, they tend to document defining moments in their personal history that can be passed on to younger generations (Unruh, 1983). In Chinese culture, storytelling can be understood as a fundamental way of passing on knowledge, values, and traditions to younger generations (Boerdahl, 2013).

For younger adults, storytelling serves as a means of building intergenerational resilience. Intergenerational resilience can be understood though cultural constructs of resistance and perseverance cultivated through verbal communication and storytelling. In this context, resilience can be framed through the notion that sharing and witnessing the stories of others can profoundly shape one's own identity (Merrill & Fivush, 2016; Thornton, 2008). Younger adults also play an important role in the cooperative process of intergenerational storytelling in that they are not only the audiences of the storytellers (the elders) but can also serve as the memory trigger providers and organizers of shared stories (Li et al., 2020).

Beyond physiological and social perspectives, the narrative process of storytelling serves as a valuable exercise in trauma therapy (Paivio & Angus, 2017). Approaches such as Emotion-Focused Therapy and Narrative Exposure Therapy work to acknowledge and organize traumatic narratives in a coherent and meaningful manner (Robjant & Fazel, 2010). Life stories bring together the many layers of understanding about a person, their history, and how they have created meaning in their lives (Etherington, 2009). In this context, intergenerational storytelling can be the mechanism for disrupting the transmission of trauma across generations, thus breaking cycles of intergenerational trauma and promoting understanding and healing (Goodman, 2014; Danieli et al., 2017).

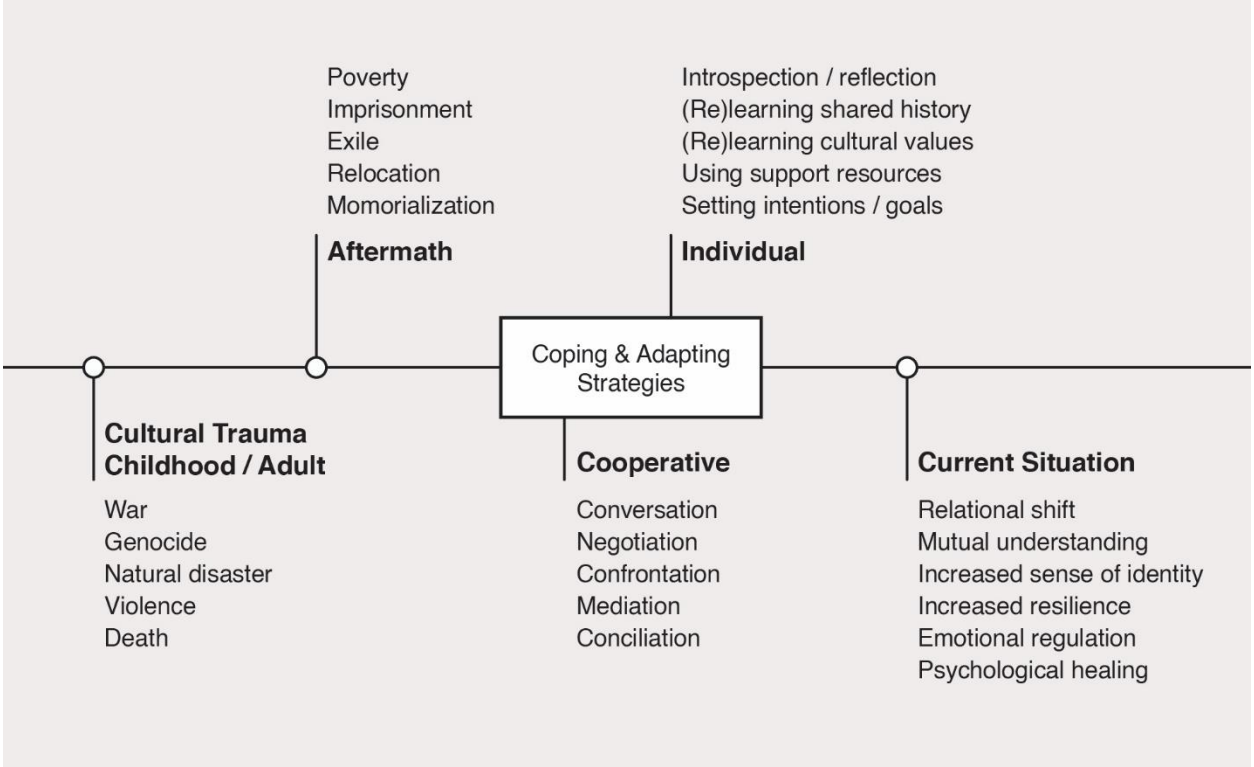

Figure 7. Interruption of Transmission of Trauma

3 Methods

3.1 Research Approach

This research study implemented qualitative methods which were chosen to ensure that the voices and perspectives of individuals with lived experiences were represented in the research. Purposive sampling was the main data-collection strategy used. The general principles of purposive sampling are to select an “information-rich class”, to provide insight on the research topic, or a “good informant” with the necessary knowledge or experiences to help researchers to address the research question (Patton, 2002; Flick, 2009). Individuals with lived experiences included older Chinese adults, adult children of Chinese immigrants, and professionals who worked closely with Chinese communities. The information gathered from online surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions helped inform the development of design recommendations.

Narrative inquiry was used to collect and analyze data. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative analysis approach that is helpful for studying participants’ experiences as it enables the exploration of personal meaning and narrative coherence (Keats, 2009). The meaning of these experiences can be understood in a way that gives “greater equality and closeness, and gives primacy to human action and lived experience” (Durham, 2002, p. 430). Narrative offers a form of knowledge that is fluid and direct, constructing cultural nuances as understood by individuals and the collective (Bamberg, 2004). Narrative provides a form of research practice that can honour cultural understandings and relationships (Barton, 2004). Narratives can also serve as a bridge over generational gaps and can have a reparative function (Danieli, 2007).

The OCAD University Research Ethics Board reviewed and approved this research study. The OCAD University REB reference number is 2021-12. All participant data has been anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

Research Stages

1. Literature Review
2. Online Surveys
3. Semi-structured Interviews
4. Co-design Sessions
5. Expert Consultations (informal discussions)

There were nine respondents to the initial online survey and 19 respondents to the second survey. Those who participated in semi-structured interviews and co-design sessions ranged in age from 24 to 85 years-old. Semi-structured interviews, co-design sessions, and informal discussions were conducted over Zoom.

To conduct this research, the author used survey, interview, focus group, and participatory design techniques to collect the required data. Data collection began in February 2021 and lasted five months. During this time, the author spoke with: (a) older first-generation Chinese immigrants, (b) adult children of Chinese immigrants, (c) experts that work closely with Chinese communities in the Greater Toronto Area, and (d) Canadian and American seniors. Table 1. describes the various demographic characteristics of interview and co-design participants.

	Older Adults (Baby Boomers & older)	Middle Aged Adults (Generation X)	Younger Adults (Generation Y - Z)
Place of Birth			
Canada		1	2
People's Republic of China (PRC)			3
Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau	3		2
Other		1	
Generation of Migration			
First (1.0) Generation	3		
1.5 Generation		1	6
2.0 Generation		1	1
Mother Tongue			
Cantonese	3	2	4
Mandarin			3
Other			

Table 1. Characteristics of Interview & Co-design Participants

There were several pivots in the research as a result of COVID-19. The research procedures did not follow a traditional chronological sequence, and processes were revisited as research questions evolved over the course of the study. Figure 8 illustrates the sequence of procedures for data collection.

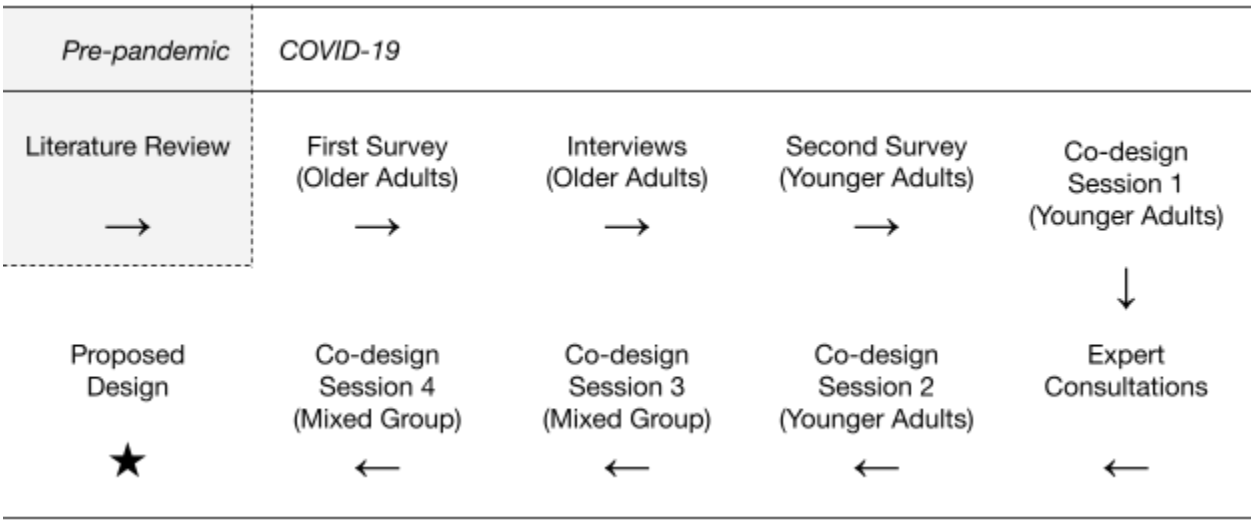

Figure 8. Sequence of Participatory Research Procedures

3.2 Online Surveys

An initial online survey was conducted to gain a better understanding of the range of experiences of older Chinese adults. There were nine responses from older Chinese adults. A link to the initial survey was shared with community-based organizations via email. These included one Chinese church in North Toronto as well as a community centre based in Toronto's Chinatown. The survey focused on community involvement, attitudes towards social technology for communication, and general sociodemographic characteristics (age range, marital status, living arrangement). The survey results showed that many Chinese elders mostly maintain social involvement with those they have already formed strong bonds with (family and close friends). The results also revealed the overall disinterest in technology for social communication among Chinese elders. The surveyed elders preferred in-person communication and communities and showed hardly any interest in online communities. It is important to note that the survey was distributed via community-based organizations, and elders who received the survey were likely to be at least somewhat socially active.

While conducting semi-structured interviews with several of the initial survey respondents, it became evident that the most significant intergenerational interactions occurred within families, and older adults expressed lower interest in non-kin intergenerational interaction. A second survey was conducted to gain insights into intergenerational relationships within Chinese-Canadian families. A link to the second survey was shared through virtual Chinese cultural advocacy communities. The survey focused on variables affecting intergenerational communication within Chinese-Canadian families across multiple generations. There were nineteen responses to the second survey. The majority of respondents were 1.5 and 2.0 Generation Chinese-Canadian millennials. The results revealed that many adult children of Chinese immigrants experienced some degree of difficulty communicating with their parents and older family members due to language, cultural, and generational barriers. Many felt that they lacked the vocabulary to hold deeper conversations or discuss contemporary ideas and issues with parents and older family members. Examples of these topics included systemic racism, intersectionality, queerness, and colonialism, to name a few. The majority expressed that they would feel more confident having these conversations with their parents and family members if equipped with the tools to address these barriers. The questions for both surveys can be found in Appendix A.

3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

The third stage of the study consisted of semi-structured interviews with older adults. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a better understanding of the experiences of older Chinese adults in physical isolation during COVID-19. The semi-structured interview format allowed participants to expand on the questions. There were two interviews conducted with older adults aged 67 to 84. Participants were recruited through returned responses to the initial online survey. The length of each interview ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Participants were encouraged to share their aging experiences, tools and strategies used to maintain social activity both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic, insights into intergenerational social connectivity, preferences related to social technology, and the supports that could help with social isolation. Participants responded using a mix of English and Cantonese. The interview questions can be found in Appendix B. The data was collected through note-taking, audio recording, and video screen recording. The ideas and recommendations from the interviews helped to structure the co-design sessions of the research study.

3.4 Co-design

The fourth stage of the study consisted of four co-design sessions, where each co-design session informed the structure of the subsequent session. Co-design is a method of designing with participants and enables participants to make creative contributions based on their personal knowledge and lived experiences. Data from the sessions was collected through note-taking, audio recording, and video screen recordings. The co-design facilitation guides are included in Appendix C.

3.4.1 Session 1: Younger Group

Of the 19 respondents to the second survey, seven participated in a series of co-design sessions, where each co-design session informed the structure of the subsequent session. The first co-design session was developed based on findings from the initial literature review, both online surveys, and semi-structured interviews with older Chinese adults. The purpose of the first session was to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by adult children of Chinese immigrants when communicating with parents or elders and to collaboratively generate possible solutions to these challenges. The facilitation guide for the first session is included in Appendix D. Participants included 6 adults aged 24 to 29. The co-design session was 90 minutes in length and took place online via Zoom. Participants were recruited with support from Chinese churches and cultural advocacy groups.

The session began with a focus group. Participants were encouraged to talk about their experiences with intergenerational communication, the challenges encountered when communicating with parents and elders, strategies used when communicating with parents and elders, and what they would like to see in a tool to better facilitate communication with parents and elders. This led into a brainstorming session where participants shared ideas for possible design solutions to challenges identified in the focus group. The main challenges that were identified were the issues of language barriers, divides in values and beliefs, and differences in communication styles and behaviours as a result of these barriers and divides. Concept ideation focused on leveraging and combining different strategies used by participants to bridge these barriers. Examples of concepts generated during this session included: (a) a conversation facilitation guide with translations, (b) worksheets for specific topics (such as mental health), and (c) a virtual community for younger adults to connect and share personal experiences and tips.

3.4.2 Session 2: Younger Group

The second co-design session was structured based on the results and feedback from the first session. The purpose of the second session was to assess an initial design concept—inspired by ideas generated in the first session—and develop it further. Of the original seven participants from the first co-design session, four were present for the second session. Participants were encouraged to think about ability to address communication challenges identified in the first session, usability, probability of adoption, and suggestions for improvement. The main feedback from this session was to include prompts for lighthearted conversation as well as deeper discussions and to design for flexibility to accommodate different comfort levels.

3.4.3 Session 3: Mixed Group

The third co-design session was structured based on the feedback from the second session. The purpose of the third session was to: (a) gain insights into intergenerational communication from Baby Boomers and Generation X adults with older parents; and (b) test and collect feedback on a prototype. Three participants were recruited from the Seniors Advisory Panel through the CABHI network. This group included healthcare professionals in the geriatric care sector.

The session began with a semi-structured interview. The interview guide was developed based on findings from the initial interviews (Section 3.3) and previous co-design sessions. Participants were asked to share their experiences with intergenerational communication, challenges faced when communicating with those from different age and migration cohorts, tools and strategies used to facilitate intergenerational interactions and manage intergenerational conflict, and the supports that could help promote understanding between generations. Participants were interviewed in two groups. Participants shared their experiences as both parents of second / third generation Canadians and children of first-generation immigrants. The interviews were followed by a prototype demonstration and feedback discussion. Participants were asked to provide feedback on usability, probability of adoption by older adults, and suggestions for improvement. The main feedback from this session was the importance of empathic communication and respecting boundaries of elders, as they will likely need time to open up to talking about their stories and experiences.

3.4.4 Session 4: Mixed Group

A separate intergenerational discussion and design workshop was conducted by CABHI in partnership with the San Francisco Village[1]. The purpose of the design workshop was to: (a) challenge assumptions and unpack the underlying beliefs about human connection, (b) understand how ageism influences human connections, (c) explore how biases and stereotypes impact connections, and (d) collaboratively conceptualize ideas for what human connectivity could look like in a post-COVID world. The workshop began with a group discussion which led into a brainstorming activity in smaller groups. The workshop ended with each group sharing their design concept and providing feedback and suggestions. Participants included older and younger adults from the Leap community[2], the CABHI network, and the San Francisco Village network. It is important to note that all seniors from this group were Caucasian. The brainstorming activity resulted in three ideas for intergenerational social connectivity. The first was a question-and-answer card game for older adults to share their stories and experiences and younger adults to learn about older generations. The second concept was a weekly discussion forum centered around storytelling and lesser-known historical facts and figures. The third concept was a cross-generational peer-support program for South-east Asian seniors.

3.5 Expert Consultation

Following the first co-design session, two experts who worked closely with Chinese-Canadian communities were interviewed over the phone. They shared their experiences working with Chinese-Canadian youth/young adults (ages 12-29), and the difficulties of cross-cultural and cross-generational communication among Chinese families and communities. They also provided key insights on methods and strategies to help bridge these gaps in communication. The experts provided feedback on design concepts and recommendations throughout the duration of the research study. Their experiences, insights, and feedback reinforced and validated findings from the literature review.

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[1] San Francisco Village is a community organization led by older adults who share their skills, support, and expertise with each other to navigate the challenges and opportunities of aging.

[2] Leap is a diverse community of older adults, caregivers, healthcare providers, and decision makers who share, learn, collaborate, and advise on the creative solutions that are being developed for better aging and brain health.

3.6 Language Consideration

As the research involves older ethnic minorities, additional measures were put in place to prioritize participant welfare, improve data credibility, and prevent eligible participants from being excluded. English was the second language of all older participants who fell on various points along the English language proficiency spectrum. The literature revealed that allophones (people whose first language differs from that of the host country) 65 and older tended to revert to their mother tongue and experienced greater difficulty understanding languages acquired later in life (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2016). Recognizing that proficiency and comfort conversing in a second language can regress due to aging, additional accommodations were provided to conduct data collection processes in the mother tongue of some participants.

3.7 Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has considerably affected all areas of research. The methods and protocols for this research were adapted in order to safely proceed within the constraints and risks associated with COVID-19. The research followed an ‘action at a distance’ approach to avoid face-to-face contact with participants (Nicol et al., 2020). This involved shifting data collection processes with participants online and relying primarily on digital tools such as video conferencing and email. While older adults are increasingly becoming more involved in using digital tools, activities were simplified to reduce any potential discomfort for those who were less familiar with digital social technology.

Over the course of the pandemic, older Chinese adults were increasingly experiencing the compounded negative health and social impacts of COVID-19. Members of the Asian diaspora, especially elders, became targets of social discrimination, racism, and violence in response to COVID-19. The author needed to consider these areas of sensitivity in order to safely conduct research with older participants in this context. Several experts in anthropology and social research have presented several key questions to consider when conducting social research during COVID-19 (Lupton, 2020). Questions that were relevant to this study include:

1. How are people from diverse social groups responding to the crisis? What are their lived experiences and social relationships as the pandemic’s effects continue to unfold and into the future of the post-COVID world? How do attributes such as location, age, gender, health or disability status, ethnicity/race, income, educational background, employment status, housing situation structure their experiences and well-being?

2. Which individuals and social groups are the target of neglect, stigmatization, or marginalization? How has this been recognized and dealt with (or ignored) in different socio-geographical-political environments?
3. What social and cultural theories can help us understand the COVID and post-COVID worlds?

While measures were taken to prioritize the welfare and safety of older Chinese adults, members of this population—who are typically reserved and guarded—were still hesitant to speak about sensitive topics or be involved in participatory design. To prevent further risk and discomfort, the focus for participatory design processes shifted to adult children and grandchildren of older Chinese adults, as they could share their experiences communicating with parents and grandparents and were more available to participate in the research.

4 Discussion of Findings

This section presents the aggregation of the data collected from the online surveys, semi-structured interviews, and co-design sessions to inform the design of a question-and-answer card game. This analysis will present the perspectives, experiences, and needs of participants to design a tool to support intergenerational communication within Chinese-Canadian families. All participants have been anonymized to protect their identities. The corresponding participant pseudonym key is included in Appendix D.

4.1 The Nature and Sources of Intergenerational Conflict

Intergenerational conflict was present and persistent in the lives of participants. Three main factors were identified as sources of intergenerational conflict, including: (a) language barriers, (b) environments of upbringing, and (c) differences in values and behaviours. These factors influenced how older and younger adults responded to intergenerational conflict.

4.1.1 Language Barrier

Language was highlighted as a major communication barrier by both younger and older participants. Older participants mentioned the decline in Chinese language proficiency among Generation Y and Z children of Chinese immigrants. Even in homes where children grew up speaking Chinese at home, there was still a noticeable struggle communicating in Chinese. For older adults who were comfortable speaking in English, this was less of an issue. For those who preferred to speak Chinese, they admitted that they would still try to communicate with younger family members but were less interested in non-kin intergenerational interactions primarily due to this language barrier. Participant K spoke about their experience working with older Chinese adults in senior homes. They also shared their own situation communicating with their second-generation children who did not grow up speaking Chinese.

> "I would say [older adults] find it difficult to relate to their grandchildren. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren mostly do not speak a lot of Chinese. Some grandchildren do attempt to communicate with their grandparents with their limited ability to speak Chinese, but a lot of them would speak to their grandparents in English and hope that their grandparents would understand. They may speak a few words in Cantonese and Mandarin, but they by and large have adopted Western culture. My children were not brought up to speak Chinese, simply because my [Caucasian] wife doesn't speak Chinese and it wasn't practical."

Participant K also mentioned the process of assimilation and its impact on intergenerational communication. They felt that younger Chinese-Canadians found it too difficult to preserve or improve their Chinese language skills and could not carry conversations with older adults who only spoke Chinese or had limited English proficiency.

> "A lot of kids drop [Chinese school] after grade four or five. To [the younger generation], it is a bit of a nuisance having to go to Chinese school, so it is difficult to maintain that culture because Chinese is not easy. Some parents are strict and say, 'you have to

> speak Cantonese in the house', but even then the use of proper wording tends to slip away. Of course, older grandparents are gradually passing on. The next generation, like me, are relatively proficient in both Chinese and English, so the children or grandchildren can communicate with them in English before learning Chinese. It's unfortunate, but that's the natural progression of assimilation.

Younger participants felt that they lacked the vocabulary to carry certain conversations regardless of their level of Chinese language proficiency. Participant E grew up speaking Chinese at home, but still struggled to communicate certain ideas with their parents. They expressed having difficulties putting abstract concepts and complex topics into words, in part due to a lack of knowledge of the specific terminology to adequately describe these topics and express their opinions in Chinese. Participant D also grew up speaking Chinese at home and described a similar situation where there was still a disconnect in communication.

> "My Chinese is not good enough for me to have any kind of complex conversation. At the same time, if we try to switch the conversation into English, I always feel a little bit hesitant. I feel like the playing field is not equal for any kind of meaningful conversation to happen because there are terms in English that I am very used to deploying in my day-to-day talking that I think [my parents] are not used to and not comfortable talking about."

An adjacent sentiment shared by younger adults was the desire to have the ability to engage in meaningful discourse in Chinese with others their age. Participant D described a recurring situation where they would observe conversations among Chinese international students but felt unable to participate due to the language barrier.

> "What is a real tragedy for me is the fact that I feel like these conversations—like this kind of conversation that we're having with one another—surely exist in some form already in Chinese with people our age as well. There's always this weird sensation that I get whenever I listen to international students in my class having a very sophisticated conversation about topics that are very relevant to me. But I feel like I can't participate because of the vocabulary issue. All of that is to say another practical thing that I really want are resources to be able to participate or even just peripherally watch these kinds of high-level conversations so I can begin to absorb some of that language and the way that people frame and discuss things."

4.1.2 Contexts of Upbringing

Another main contributor to intergenerational conflict and miscommunication was the difference in environments of upbringing. These cultural and historical contexts shaped beliefs and behaviours of their respective generations. Growing up in different times and different cultures has a strong influence on how different generations communicate with each other. Older adults spent most of their childhood and early adulthood surrounded by instability and uncertainty in their home countries, whereas their children were able to grow up in a time and place of opportunity where they would never have to experience the same hardships as their parents and elders. While the Chinese diaspora is not a monolith, many older adults did have similar narratives of survival, war, and poverty. As a result, older Chinese adults tended to avoid anything that challenged order and prioritized maintaining peace and harmony. Participant K described a common moral clash between Baby Boomers, who grew up in post-WWII Hong Kong, and their adult children, who grew up in modern Western societies.

> "I grew up in Hong Kong 60 years ago where it was very peaceful. We had no political freedom, in the sense that we couldn't elect anyone we wanted, but we had freedom to express ourselves 'within the law'. For a lot of people that was adequate. Growing up [in Canada], most of the young people understand what political freedom means. You can really express yourself and you can choose the people who you want to govern you. This was not available to the older generation like me who grew up in Hong Kong. For them to understand that young people now want to talk about things like freedom and self-expression is very alien. Why rock the boat if everything is going well? In the old days, people in Hong Kong just wanted to make money. Their religion was money. There was very little concern for political freedom as long as you weren't persecuted, which was the case in Hong Kong. The police wouldn't knock on your door if you haven't committed a crime. Peaceful existence is ideal because it's an environment where you can concentrate on making money. I think most expatriates like myself do feel sorry for the way Hong Kong has become[3]. However, I think most of us do yearn for the peace and order that we enjoyed when we were there as children and do not want to see society disrupted."

[3] Referring to the conflict between Hong Kong and mainland China

Several younger adults admitted to not knowing enough about the environment their parents grew up in, partially due to ignorance. While participants tried to ask their parents about Chinese politics and history, some were met with avoidance or oversimplification. For Participant D, they realized that gaining an objective understanding of the historical and political landscape of their parents' upbringing would require gathering their own research.

> "One thing for me is just to have a grasp of Chinese history and politics. I feel like they are these huge black holes in my knowledge. It's my own ignorance, to be honest, because invariably any kind of political argument with my parents will go back to historical events like Tiananmen Square, etc. Conversations that are rooted in a nationalistic sensibility are very difficult for me to diffuse because I just don't really know enough...I can't really argue or push back because my knowledge is already so shaky. I think that's my own work to figure out how to become less ignorant. To talk about these kinds of subjects, I think that would just give me more firepower within a conversation."

Overall, younger adults acknowledged the affordances of growing up in a more stable political environment than their parents and grandparents. Many expressed feeling guilty for speaking about their emotions or personal struggles with their parents and elders. In the case of Participant C, they understood the sacrifices and journeys of their parents, but felt like it would be burdensome and disrespectful to bring up comparatively more "trivial" issues.

> "My parents and grandparents have had a relatively hard and strugglesome life compared to mine. Most of their days have been spent surviving rather than thriving. So when I talk to them about something that is happening to somebody else and not even to my immediate family—like talking to them about Black Lives Matter, for example—I sometimes feel like I'm not being sensitive to their journey and their struggle. It's hard to balance sensitivity for their issues, their journeys, and respect for all that they've endured to bring me here—so that I can have this [comfortable] life where I don't have to experience the things that they went through—while also trying to [honour] what I think is right and what I think is important…which isn't less important because I didn't experience the same hardships, it's just a different set of struggles. I think they're starting to realize that they have afforded me this life where I am able to take my emotional resources and think about things that are bigger than myself. I think that makes them proud. But it is a constant struggle to remember where I'm from, or who brought me here, and why I'm here."

4.1.3 Differences in Values and Behaviours

Values, behaviours, and expectations strongly differed between older and younger adults. Older adults were generally more conservative and followed more traditional Chinese values and beliefs. These values emphasized collectivism, hierarchical relationships, and respect for elders. Both older and younger adults mentioned the Chinese emphasis on family that prioritizes maintaining peace and harmony. This meant that individual feelings and personal struggles were not to be spoken about openly, as this would disrupt the peace. While younger participants generally respected these values, many felt that this perpetual pursuit of harmony often came at the expense of their own mental and emotional well-being. Behaviours such as avoidance and repression exacerbated these feelings and led to poor communication.

With older adults avoiding topics that could disturb balance and younger adults repressing feelings and emotions, it is not surprising that conflict and miscommunication continue to persist. Most younger adults felt that their parents and elders lacked an understanding of emotions—both their own and their children's—due to avoidance and repression for the sake of maintaining peace and harmony. Participant J revealed that they did not learn to recognize and express their own emotional needs until later in life because it was not something they talked about until early adulthood.

> "I find that certain things aren't really talked about in Chinese. Maybe it's just from my upbringing, but we don't talk about feelings. I don't even know what the concept of mental health is in Chinese. I just learned about it recently from talking to friends my age. There are international students in my class, and we often talk about how to translate certain concepts from English to Chinese. One of them asked me what the term 'checking-in' meant in Chinese. We couldn't think of anything or how to say it. How do we explain something like that to our parents to have a conversation about it?"

Psychologists, social workers, and healthcare providers agreed that having a poor ability to recognize and express one's needs is widespread among East Asian adults and is a common Chinese trait.

4.2 Communication & Conflict Management Strategies

4.2.1 Passive Strategies

Several strategies were used to facilitate conversations and manage conflict between generations. Identified strategies were characterized as active strategies or passive strategies. In general, all participants used some form of passive/avoidance-based method to manage conflict. Physical avoidance, cognitive avoidance, and disengagement were identified by both the older and younger groups as the easiest ways to prevent and/or manage conflict. People would physically remove themselves from the situation, refrain from thinking about or discussing topics that could potentially trigger conflict, and/or decrease interaction altogether. Common topics that were avoided include politics, social issues, relationships, and mental health. Participant K described a common scenario where their parents constantly avoided these traditionally taboo topics and would shut down any attempts to discuss them. Participant J explained that many older Chinese adults believed it was disrespectful to inquire about such personal topics, even within the family. Older generations were raised on the pillars of honour and respect. Speaking openly about “disruptive” topics could cause other family members—and people outside the family—to see the person in a negative light which would bring shame to the family.

Another passive method used to cope with conflict was acceptance and resignation. Most younger adults and Generation X adults mentioned at least one topic that their parents and elders did not want to talk about. Some had made peace with the fact that these were things they would likely never be able to openly discuss with their parents. In cases where sensitive topics were leading to heated arguments, some recognized that they could not be in agreement and conceded, as continuing the conversation would inevitably lead to conflict. These strategies generally did not address the root causes behind conflict and served only to mask or delay conflict.

4.2.2 Active Strategies

While passive strategies were the general default for both older and younger adults, several active strategies were mentioned by younger adults. One strategy that was mentioned by multiple participants was to relate abstract topics to tangible examples. Several participants revealed that they would anchor conversations to people within their parents’ communities and

peer groups. This made it easier for their parents to conceptualize and understand something happening to someone close to them versus a general group of people.

Another common active strategy was leveraging the support of siblings. Participant G shared their experience communicating with their parents when they had opposing viewpoints.

> “If we want to touch on sensitive topics, I usually bring my sisters into the picture. My oldest sister has the best Chinese out of the three of us, so when we try to talk with our parents, we all chime in and are able to bring up ideas or viewpoints to try to sympathize with them. The three of us also bring in different sources that we know of, in terms of that topic, so we're able to have a broader conversation rather than an argument. I think each of us can then quell each other's fire if something rises up.”

Participants M and N revealed that over time they had gradually settled into designated roles when discussing certain topics with parents based on their personal knowledge and expertise.

> “We seem to have a specific line between who covers what. That’s because my expertise is finance, my sister’s is health, and my brother’s is anything to do with home maintenance. It’s whoever’s expertise they trust the most that will bring up the topic…there's a really nice divide and conquer [system] in that sense. We work with each other across different domains, and it doesn’t only sit with one person.”

They also mentioned timing and coordination when broaching difficult topics with their parents. If there was a potentially triggering topic they wanted to discuss, one sibling would casually mention it first. After a few days, the other sibling would bring it up again. Based on the parents’ responses, they would coordinate when and how to continue gently introducing the topic.

Another strategy was finding tools and activities to engage with parents and elders and help initiate conversations. One example was an online voting compass designed to help Canadians gauge which political party and policies best aligned with their personal values and beliefs. The tool included a questionnaire and follow-up information about each party so that voters could make informed decisions. Participant C described the positive outcomes of sharing this tool with their parents.

> “My parents historically have always voted conservative, even though in conversations with them I had a suspicion that they didn't actually lean towards that party. It's just how they have always voted, or how their friends have always told them to vote. I sent [the voting compass] to both my parents, just so that I didn't have to start that conversation. Not surprisingly, both their results came back as not conservative at all. I think that was

> the beginning for them to reevaluate what politics means for them. There was a real eye-opening moment for them to see what they have been voting for just because they'd been told to versus what they feel is right in their heart of hearts. I'm really glad and thankful for that tool, because it basically carried out a really tough conversation for me. I didn't really have to do anything other than send it to them. I realize that's not everybody's experience, but at least to have that tool there that can open the box or shed some light was very useful."

Another example was leveraging Chinese language news outlets to spark conversations and understand which topics parents could be comfortable talking about. Participant G described how they would observe the reactions of their parents when listening to or watching Chinese news channels with them.

> "My parents usually listen to the Chinese radio at home. Everyone was stuck at home during lockdown, so we either watched TV or listened to the radio together. There are usually some talk shows in Cantonese with hosts and people calling in to discuss current events. You get to hear different viewpoints from regular people like them. And everyone has a different viewpoint. Some are a bit crazy. But you're able to gauge reactions from your parents and where they lean in terms of where their opinions lie relative to the people that they listen to."

Overall, maintaining persistent yet empathic interaction was imperative in supporting effective communication across different generations and cultural identities. Participants M and N emphasized the importance of providing parents and elders with the space and time to open up in their own way, as parents tended to immediately shut down and disengage if they felt pressured.

> "It has to be on their time frame so much more now as [our parents] grow older. The only way we will catch their time frame is if we see them often and talk to them often. At some point in time, we'll hit [the right] time frame. Staying persistent, maintaining the open lines of communication, and giving them the space to reach a point where they're comfortable to talk about things…that's when we can have these regular opportunities to capture their stories."

4.3 Perspectives on Intergenerational Social Connectivity

4.3.1 Older Adults

Older Chinese adults were less likely to seek out intergenerational programs or activities. Interviews and informal discussions with older adults revealed that many did try to maintain physically and socially active. Common activities they enjoyed included language classes, dance classes, calligraphy, volunteering, and church fellowship groups. Participant B revealed that they would join activities with peers and friends from their social circles, who were also older Chinese adults, and leaned more towards activities that were held in Chinese (Cantonese). Aside from volunteering, few younger adults joined these Chinese language activities, due in part to the language barrier that was previously discussed.

On the other hand, older adults from CABHI's Leap community expressed wanting to connect and share stories with younger people, but rarely found opportunities to interact with them. They agreed that having a purpose for gathering and sharing that was not age-focused could increase opportunities for intergenerational interaction. Examples included various visual and performance art activities, such as painting, acting groups, and choir groups.

4.3.2 Younger Adults

Experts who work closely with Chinese-Canadian communities were asked to share their experiences and perspectives on intergenerational communication and social connectivity. They confirmed that language barriers and cultural differences were a common pain point among younger Chinese adults. Their approaches were primarily focused on building empathy and developing skills for effective communication and coping with conflict.

One expert revealed that intergenerational conflict and miscommunication was a persisting challenge observed when working with first, second, and third generation Chinese-Canadians ages 12 to 29. There continues to be a lack of space and support for younger Chinese-Canadians in speaking about their needs and emotions, especially within the family. Community-based approaches to address these issues centered around youth engagement initiatives to provide younger adults with the space to talk about personal challenges and the tools to help manage conflict with parents and elders. Some of these initiatives include community discussions on specific topics and events (such as Black Lives Matter and Anti-Asian Racism), social media campaigns, and peer-positive courses where community members teach and learn from each other. While these approaches did not necessarily address the

issues in intergenerational conflict and communication, they provided supportive spaces for younger Chinese-Canadians to speak about challenges and share experiences with each other.

5 Proposed Design

This section builds upon the findings in the data analysis to propose a card game to encourage cross-cultural and intergenerational social connectivity. It presents three guiding design principles that are applied throughout the proposed artifact.

5.1 Guiding Design Principles

The proposed design is adapted from an emerging empathic card game model. This genre of card game centers around prompts and questions that gently lead players along a path of vulnerability and intimacy. The purpose of these games is to encourage honest and meaningful conversations between family members, colleagues, neighbours, and other adults.

There are several existing games that follow this model, such as *We're Not Really Strangers*, *Uncurated*, *Big Talk*, *Story Stitch*, *The Empathy Project*, and *Parents Are Human*, among others. While they are similar in structure, many of these games focus on a specific demographic, category/topic, and/or activity. For instance, *Story Stitch* and *Parents Are Human* were designed to facilitate conversations between immigrants and their children and/or new acquaintance. The purpose of these examples is to help alleviate cultural bias and understand the difficult situations many immigrants have endured to arrive in their host country. The proposed design takes inspiration from several of these existing games and follows three guiding design principles in hopes of addressing the challenges identified in the literature, interviews, co-design sessions, and expert consultations. The guiding design principles include:

1. **Promote Diversity, Empathy, & Respect**

   Designs should promote empathy and understanding between generations, and respect for diversity including but not limited to age, gender, language, and ethnicity to support positive experiences and well-being.

2. **Design for Engagement and Learning**

   Designs should provide opportunities to engage and learn by incorporating design features throughout the proposed solution that promote communication skills building and understanding across generations and cultures.

3. **Create Flexible Tools**

   Older adults have innumerable lived experiences and journeys that shape their worldviews, which in turn influence the way they perceive and interact with others. The design of intergenerational programs and innovations should respond to the various ways these experiences impact human social connectivity across generations. Intergenerational initiatives should offer flexible tools and strategies to meet changing needs of diverse populations as they age.

5.2 Components

The proposed design solution includes three components: (a) the primary deck for the card game, (b) secondary expansion packs, and (c) a web-based community and resources.

Primary Deck: Base Card Game

There are two primary types of cards: Question cards and Action cards. Each question card is assigned a colour and symbol based on the question category and level of depth. Question types include identity, life events, lessons and legacies, and relationships. The initial question set was based on various life interview frameworks and conversation tools (The Legacy Project). Action cards add a sense of play and moments of relief between questions. Actions range from sharing artifacts to engaging in a joint activity. The proposed questions, actions, and accompanying translations were the result of a combined design effort by older and younger participants. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate examples of each primary card type.

Secondary Decks: Expansion Packs

Expansion packs can provide additional card types to add variety to gameplay, as well as more topic-focused and targeted questions and actions. Initial packs are in development based on findings and feedback from interviews and co-design sessions. Examples of expansion packs may include additional card types, such as quickfire questions, as well as topics and concepts such as mental health, boundaries, forgiveness, and healing. These would be developed based on user feedback and with the guidance of experts. Figures 11 and 12 illustrate examples of secondary card types.

Figure 9. Primary Card Typologies — Questions

Figure 10. Primary Card Typologies — Actions

Figure 11. Secondary Card Typologies — Quickfire Question

Figure 12. Secondary Card Typologies — Focus Topic

Community & Resources

A website and social media account will accompany the card game. These will include updates on the project and additional resources, as well as a community for users to connect, share experiences, and provide feedback/suggestions for improving the design.

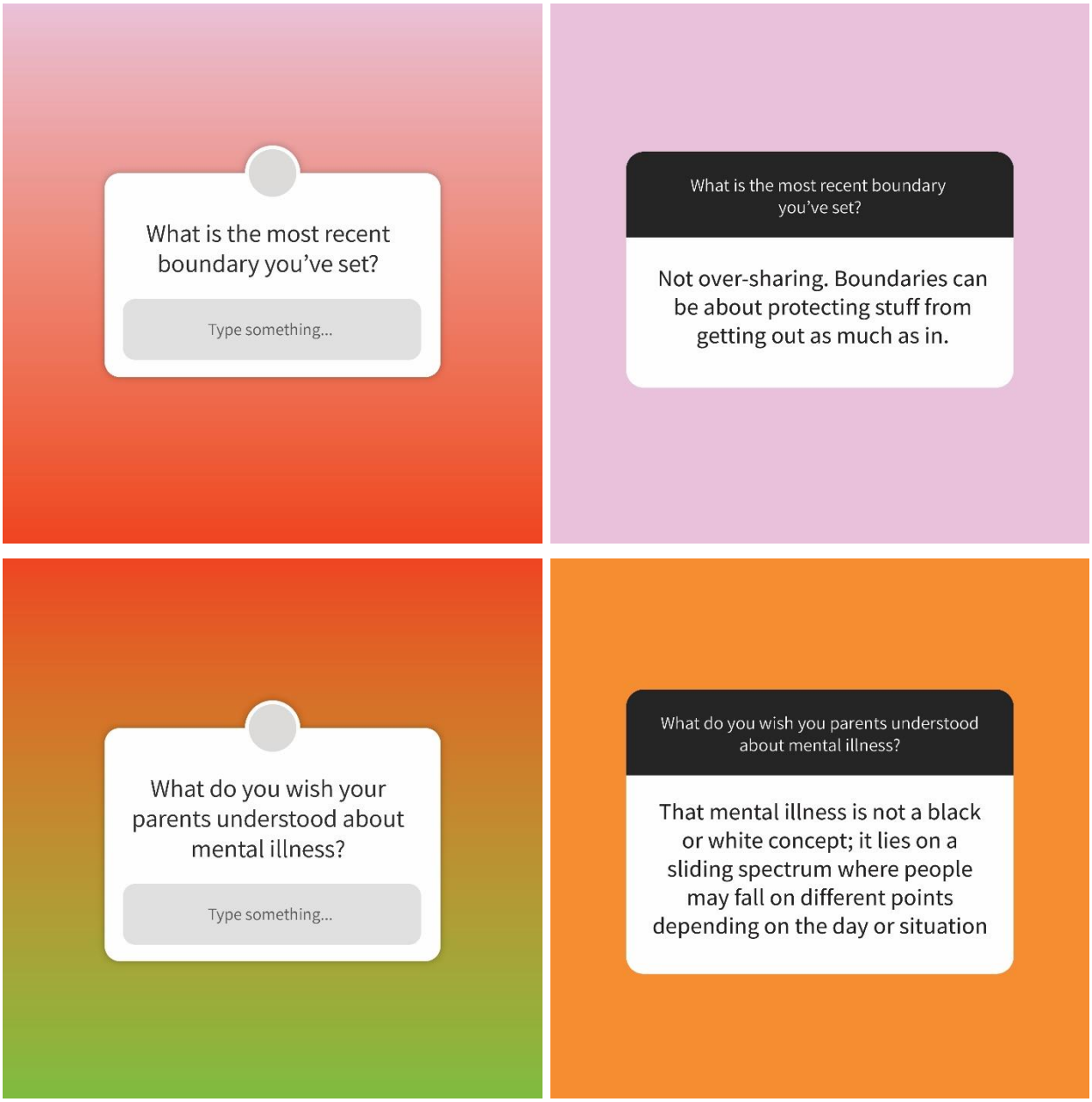

Figure 13. Sample Social Media Content for Community Engagement

A key resource that will be included is an educational series to help build intergenerational and cross-cultural communication skills. Some examples of series topics include building empathy, active listening, recentering conversations, apologizing, and setting boundaries. These would be designed in partnership with the experts consulted during data collection processes.

Figure 14. Sample Content for Educational Series

5. 3 Gameplay

The design of the deck is meant to be flexible yet simple to accommodate different comfort levels and environments. The cards can be played together as a complete deck or in separate modules. For example, parties may choose to start with only level 1 cards to ease into the game. Cards could also be played by category and/or card type (ex. just question cards, just action cards, or alternating between the two). For those who prefer spontaneity, they can choose to shuffle the whole deck and draw cards at random.

Additionally, gameplay does not need to occur in one sitting or in person. For instance, a photo of a card can be shared and responded to through text, email, or video call. Another option could be to choose one question and action per day that could be discussed over a family meal. Figures 11a to 11c illustrate several suggestions for gameplay styles based on feedback from co-design sessions.

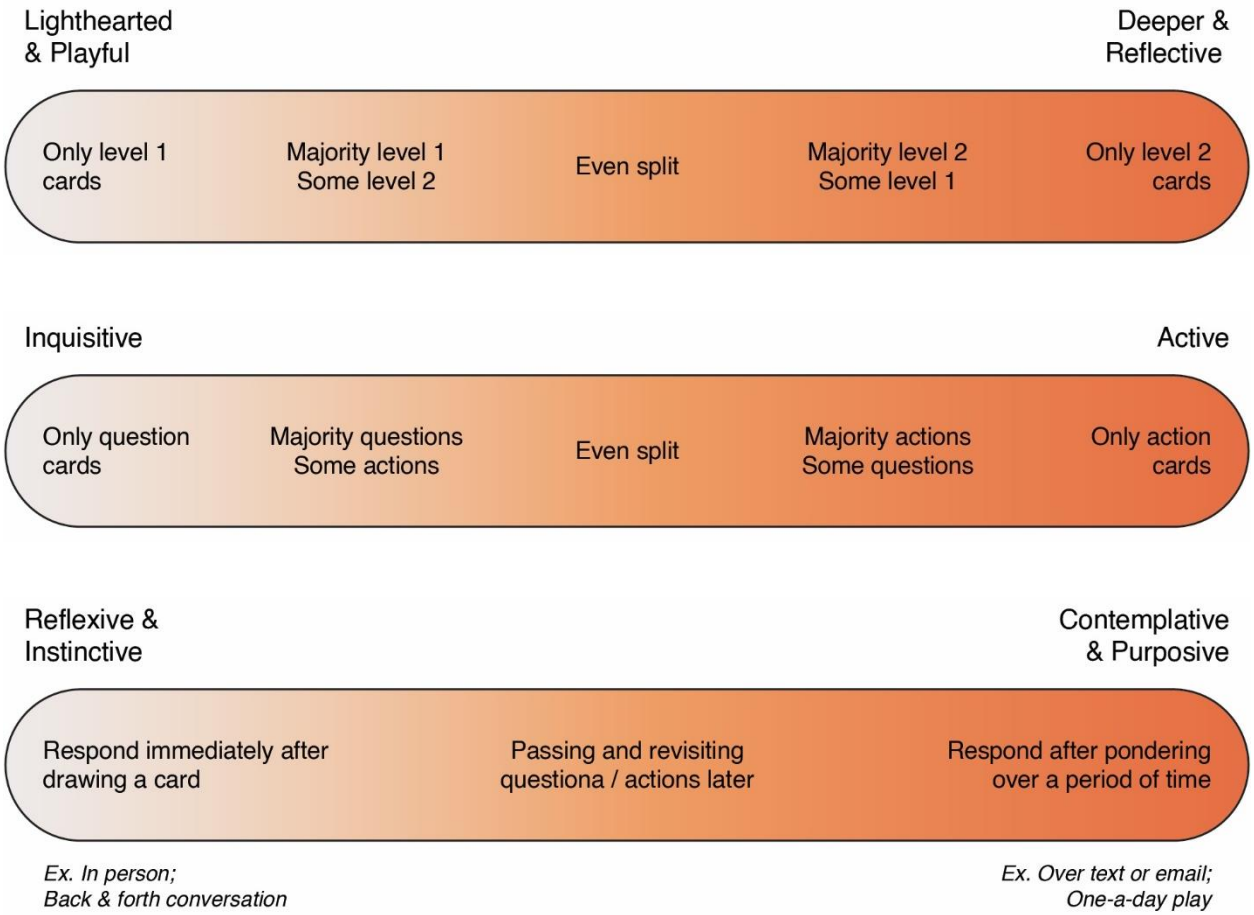

Figure 15. Gameplay Styles

6 Conclusion

The intention of the research study and development of the card game and accompanying virtual community is to demonstrate the positive influence of intergenerationally integrated communication tools on older and younger Chinese-Canadians to introduce engagement opportunities that support healthy intergenerational and cross-cultural bonds. Providing flexible communication tools that respond to diverse experiences and needs helps older and younger adults build empathy and resilience throughout their life course.

Understanding the ways in which tools for intergenerational communication can support Chinese-Canadian families, particularly older immigrants with vastly different experiences, is imperative to the improvement of inclusion in a diverse and aging society. The literature review and research study support the proposal of a culturally adapted social game to positively impact intergenerational relationships, health outcomes, and overall well-being among Chinese-Canadian families and communities.

6.1 Outcomes & Next Iterations

Feedback on the proposed design solution revealed areas of success as well as persisting pain points. Younger adults enjoyed the playful aspect of the design. For subsequent iterations, they proposed putting more emphasis on “play” and including a potential points system and/or incremental goals and achievements. Another highlight for younger adults was the community aspect of the design solution. An idea for an integrated mobile application was proposed, which could house all the three components (primary deck, expansion packs, and community with resources) as well as a living glossary with translations, pronunciations, and sentence use cases that would be updated based on user feedback.

Older adults and Generation X adults were more interested in the storytelling and reminiscence aspect of the proposed design. While they found the questions thought provoking, they expressed that their own Chinese parents (ages 85 and older) would not be as receptive to a question-and-answer game. Based on their experiences communicating with their parents over the years, older adults and Generation X folks found that the most profound conversations and stories were shared when they were engaging in leisurely activities with their parents, such as cooking and gardening. For subsequent iterations, they proposed the idea of centering prompts around artifacts, such as photos and music, to create moments to capture stories from parents and elders.

6.2 Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

This research includes insights, perspectives, and recommendations from the broader Chinese-Canadian community which includes 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 Generation Chinese-Canadians across four age cohorts, psychologists, social workers, and geriatric healthcare specialists. Although the research prioritized close collaboration with these communities, the preliminary surveys, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions, and co-design sessions were met with constraints due to COVID-19. Recruitment of older participants proved to be challenging during a global health crisis. Insights into how generations interacted therefore relied heavily on younger adults/adult children of first-generation Chinese immigrants. Due to these limitations, only three older Chinese adults participated in semi-structured interviews and co-design sessions.

Qualitative processes used a self-report format. As is typical of self-report, data may be affected by social desirability and memory bias effects. An effective way to address this limitation would

be to examine parent-child dyads to gain both perspectives on intergenerational conflict. Alternatively, interviews with informants (ex. caregivers, siblings, significant others) could also provide additional data on intergenerational communication and conflict. Relatedly, although the semi-structured interviews and informal discussions allowed rich accounts of participants' lived experiences, the nature of the online interactions may have led some participants to feel ashamed or embarrassed and thus uncomfortable revealing full details. Although participants appeared to be comfortable throughout the course of the research, there is still a possibility that some information was omitted.

This research would benefit from more involvement of a wider range of older adults that have varying experiences and needs. The data provided are heavily based on the accounts of adult children of first-generation Chinese immigrants, psychologists, social workers, and healthcare providers. Additional limitations include challenges in testing the proposed artifact on a large scale with stakeholders. The design would benefit from further outreach to older Chinese communities and testing post-pandemic to gain a more complete understanding of the persisting pain points.

Designing tools for inclusive social connectivity creates an opportunity to actively approach intergenerational integration through the perspective of diverse human experiences and the many ways in which humans connect with and relate to each other. By considering the idiosyncrasies of older adults, the design of culturally adapted age integrated tools can build capacity to respond to the changing needs of diverse populations as they age. Inclusive intergenerational programs and tools promote diversity, empathy, and respect so that older and younger adults feel a sense of belonging and empowerment. Recognizing that every intergenerational interaction can have potential for meaningful engagement and learning is essential to successful age integration. It also means ensuring that there are flexible ways in which diverse populations can engage with each other no matter what historical, societal, and migratory generations they belong to.

Aging experiences and needs are vast and varying. The research provides valuable evidence of how culture and history matter in the context of aging and social connectivity and reinforces the need to consider the compounded systemic challenges faced by diverse populations as they age. Findings consistently affirmed the cultural disparities in health and support in youth and later life. Understanding these imbalances through a critical postcolonial lens is crucial when conceptualizing supportive social environments to promote resilience and well-being of ethnocultural minority youth, adults, and elders experiencing intergenerational conflict. A

dialogue between designers, care providers, and ethnocultural minority seniors must be established and maintained in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the possibilities for intergenerational programs and innovations for age integrated social environments.

As people grow and move through different stages in their lives, all of their accumulated experiences shape the ways in which they perceive and interact with others. Having a sense of belonging in all areas of their lives, including where they live, work, play, and learn, means that they can interact and engage meaningfully. The proposed artifact reinforces the importance of including the perspectives of older ethnic minorities, their children, care providers, and service providers, and presents tools and strategies that can be implemented within personal networks to support older Chinese adults and their adult children in building positive intergenerational bonds. The proposed artifact is aimed at individual families, as kinship plays a significant role in understanding intergenerational relationships, yet the insights can prompt further consideration into how tools for cross-cultural and intergenerational social connectivity can be designed inclusively for the wider society. The richest forms of human development are most available to those willing and able to consider their own needs and potential in relation to the needs and potential of others, especially those younger or older. The question now lies in going beyond individual acts to making a larger commitment to inclusively supporting intergenerational connections such that they become a part of daily life and social fabric.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Survey 1 (Older Chinese Adults)

1. What age range do you fall under?
    a. 55 to 64
    b. 65 to 74
    c. 75 to 84
    d. 85 and over

2. How long have you lived in Canada?
    a. I was born and raised in Canada
    b. More than 30 years
    c. 20 to 30 years
    d. 10 to 19 years
    e. Less than 10 years

3. What is your living situation?
    a. Living alone
    b. Living with a spouse or partner
    c. Living with a family member (parents, children, grandchildren
    d. Other

4. What is your marital status
    a. Married or common law
    b. Widowed
    c. Divorced or separated
    d. Never married
    e. Other

5. In general, would you say your health (mental and physical condition) is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?
    a. Excellent
    b. Very good

c. Good
d. Fair
e. Poor

6. How active are you in your community? (This could include organizations and/or social groups such as attending church, mahjong, dance class, karaoke, volunteering, helping neighbours, etc.)
    a. Very involved – I participate in community activities a few times a month
    b. Somewhat involved – I occasionally participate in community activities once every month
    c. Slight involvement – I participate in community activities less than six times a year
    d. I do not participate in community activities

7. How would you describe your experience finding culturally appropriate social support/programs for either yourself or a parent/grandparent?
    a. Very easily – I was recommended many support options by friends/family
    b. Somewhat easily – friends/family did not have many recommendations, but I found some support options online
    c. Somewhat difficult – I searched everywhere online and found a limited number of options for social support
    d. Very difficult – I could not find any options from asking friends/family or searching online
    e. I have not tried to access culturally appropriate support

8. How would you describe your experience assessing culturally appropriate social support/programs for either yourself or a parent/grandparent?
    a. Very easily – many available options
    b. Somewhat easily – some availabilities
    c. Somewhat difficult – no immediate availabilities but there is a wait list
    d. Very difficult – no availabilities for the foreseeable future
    e. I have not found access culturally appropriate support

9. Would you be open to sharing stories about parts of your life with the researcher? (These could include topics like stories of home, memories of places in Toronto, challenges living in Canada, etc.)

a. Yes
b. No

10. Would you be open to having some of these stories shared in the research report? All information will be anonymous and nothing will be shared without your consent.
    a. Yes
    b. No

11. What are your thoughts on technology-based communication? (Smartphones, tablets, computers, etc.)
    a. I use technology daily to communicate with people
    b. I sometimes use technology to communicate, and I would like to learn about it more
    c. I sometimes use technology to communicate, but I prefer speaking over the phone or in person
    d. I don't know how to use technology to communicate, but I would like to learn about it more
    e. I don't use technology to communicate and I would prefer to keep it that way
    f. Other: please explain

12. What are your thoughts about online communities?
    a. I am part of online communities and would recommend them to other seniors
    b. I am currently not involved in any online communities, but I am open to learning about them
    c. I am currently not involved in any online communities and prefer physical communities
    d. Other: please explain

13. Would you be interested in participating in several activities to further contribute to the study (one-on-one interview and design feedback discussion)? These would be conducted over the phone or video call. Information on the interview and design discussion will be provided if interested.
    a. Yes, I am interested in learning about and participating in both activities
    b. Yes, but I am unsure about participating in both activities
    c. No, I am not interested

Survey 2 (Younger Chinese Adults)

1. Which statement applies best to you?
    a. I was born and raised in Canada / USA
    b. I was born outside of Canada / USA and moved there as a young child
    c. I was born outside of Canada / USA and moved there as a teenager
    d. I was born outside of Canada / USA and moved there as an adult (18+)
    e. Other: please explain

2. What age range do you fall under?
    a. 18 to 24
    b. 25 to 29
    c. 30 to 34
    d. 35 to 39
    e. 40 to 45

3. Which statement applies best to you?
    a. I am fluent in both English and Chinese
    b. I can hold a basic conversation in Chinese
    c. I can understand Chinese but cannot speak it
    d. I cannot understand or speak Chinese

4. What language do you use when speaking with parents/family members?
    a. English
    b. Chinese
    c. A mix of both English and Chinese
    d. Other: please explain

5. In the past year, have you discussed current world issues with your parents / grandparents / family members? (Black Lives Matter, Anti-Asian violence, COVID vaccine hesitancy, etc.)
    a. Yes—we frequently discuss topics of concern and freely express our opinions to each other
    b. No—I avoid discussing politics or difficult subjects with parents or other family members
    c. Somewhat—we sometimes discuss these topics but not in great depth

6. Do you feel like you have the vocabulary to discuss difficult subjects in Chinese?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Somewhat
7. Have there been instances where things were lost in translation/misunderstood due to a language barrier?
    a. Yes
    b. No

8. Would you feel more confident having these conversations with your family members if you had the tools to bridge these misunderstandings?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Other: please explain

9. Can you describe/list any specific topics, terms, and/or phrases that you would like to see in this tool?

10. Can you describe/list any activities you would like to see in this tool (ex. Identifying personal biases, unlearning and questioning, etc.)?

11. Would you be interested in being involved in the concept design for this guide? This would involve providing feedback on initial prototypes and subsequent iterations (and potentially providing translations if you are willing and able). If so, please provide your email address and/or preferred method of communication (phone, social media direct messages, etc). If not, please write "N/A" in the textbox.

Appendix B: Interview Guide (Older Chinese Adults)

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
   How long have you lived in Canada? What is/was your occupation? What do you enjoy doing? What is your living situation?

2. Can you walk me through your day-to-day?
   What do you do on a regular day? What do you enjoy doing? Do you interact with other people regularly?

3. Thinking more about your home and living situation, what do you like about it? What do you dislike?
   Ex. independence, proximity to family and friends, familiar neighbourhood, access to amenities, access to public transportation, etc.

4. Is there a community you are a part of (ex. church, school alumni group)? Can you tell me about it?
   How did you interact with others in your community pre-pandemic? How did you stay active in your community pre-pandemic? Has the pandemic affected this? If so, can you describe how your community has been affected? What changes, if any, were made so that you could continue interacting with your community?

5. Are there social activities that you participated in pre-pandemic (ex. volunteering, potlucks, dance class, mahjong, book club)?
   How has the pandemic affected them? Are you still able to engage in these activities? What changes were made so that you could continue doing these activities?

6. Are there relatives that you regularly keep in touch with?
   How many do you keep in touch with? How do you feel after talking / spending time with them?

7. Are there friends that you regularly keep in touch with?
   How many do you keep in touch with? How do you feel after talking / spending time with them?

8. Do you often interact with younger generations? Can you describe these relationships to me?
   Are they family/part of a community you are involved in? What impacts do these relationships have on your life? Do they bring you joy/frustration?

9. What knowledge do you think/would you like to pass on to younger generations of Chinese-Canadians? What do you think/would you like to learn from younger generations?

10. COVID-19 has made it difficult to socialize and interact with friends, family, and colleagues. Are there things that you do or tools that you use to help you stay in contact with others?
    Can you describe them for me? What do you like / dislike about them?

11. We have talked about the challenges of social interaction during the pandemic. Is there anything that you think you have gained during this time that has had a positive impact on your life?
    Ex. talking more with friends and family, learning new skills, etc.

12. Can you describe to me what you feel could help you to maintain social interaction with friends, family, and colleagues?
    What are specific things you would need? How would you feel best supported?

13. Can you describe to me what an optimal solution would be for you?
    What are the ingredients that make up this solution? What would it look like?

Appendix C: Co-design Facilitation Guides

Co-design Session 1 Guide: Younger Chinese Adults

Timing	Activity
10 minutes	Introduction to session; project background and significance
35 minutes	Focus group; identifying challenges in intergenerational communication
5 minutes	Break
30 minutes	Design concept brainstorming; high-level concepts that can address identified challenges
10 minutes	Wrap-up and close

Session 1 Focus Group Questions

1. What do you find particularly challenging when approaching sensitive topics with parents and / or elders?
2. When was the last time you had a hard conversation with a parent / elder? Do you remember how the conversation started and ended? How did you feel when the conversation ended?
3. Do you feel confident discussing difficult subjects with your parents / elders?
4. Have there been any tools / strategies that you have used in the past to approach these difficult conversations?
5. Tell me about a time you felt a difficult conversation went particularly well. Do you remember anything you did that made the conversation easier?
6. What skills related to cross-cultural/generational/lingual communication would you like to gain?
7. What do you think could help you gain these skills? What would you like to see in a possible design solution/conversation facilitation guide?

Co-design Session 2 Guide (Younger Chinese Adults)

Timing	Activity
10 minutes	Introduction to session; recap of session 1
15 minutes	Prototype demonstration; present initial design concept and design precedents/inspiration
45 minutes	Feedback and suggestions for subsequent iterations
5 minutes	Wrap-up and close

Co-design Session 3 Guide (Mixed Group)

Timing	Activity
10 minutes	Introduction to session; project background and significance and recap of previous sessions
25 minutes	Semi-structured interview; understanding perspectives on intergenerational communication and connectivity from older and middle-aged adults
15 minutes	Prototype demonstration; present revised design concept and examples of designed output
20 minutes	Feedback and suggestions
5 minutes	Wrap-up and close

Session 3 Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself? How long have you lived in Canada?
2. Can you tell me about your relationship with your family?
   Do you speak with/see each other often? Are there things you like to do together?
3. Are there any particular challenges you experience when talking with your children/younger generations (or parents / older generations) of Chinese-Canadians? Can you describe these for me?
   Ex. language barriers
4. Are there any topics that you avoid talking about?
   Ex. politics, social issues, relationships, finances, etc.
5. Are there things you would like to talk about with your children/younger family members (or parents/older family members), but you are unsure how to talk to them about these topics? If so, can you describe these for me?
6. Are there any tools / strategies that you use when speaking with your children/younger family members (or parents/older family members)? Can you describe these for me?
7. Can you tell me about a time you felt a difficult conversation with your children/younger family member (or parent / older family member) went particularly well?
   Do you remember anything you or the other person did that made the conversation easier?
8. What do you think could help improve conversations between you and younger generations/older generations?
9. Can you describe to me what an optimal support solution would be for you?
   What are the ingredients that make up this solution? What would it look like?

Co-design Session 4 Guide (Mixed Group)

Timing	Activity
10 minutes	Introduction to session; recap of larger community discussion held by CABHI
30 minutes	Group discussion; sharing examples of successful initiatives for intergenerational human social connectivity
5 minutes	Break
20 minutes	Brainstorming; breakout into three groups to propose a concept for a program/framework that could be integrated into existing CABHI communities
20 minutes	Sharing and feedback; each group presents followed by feedback from the other groups
5 minutes	Wrap-up and close

Appendix D: Participant Pseudonym Key

Pseudonym	Age Cohort	Place of Birth	Migration Cohort	Mother Tongue	Fluency in Mother Tongue
Participant A	Silent Generation	Hong Kong	1.0	Cantonese	1st language
Participant B	Baby Boomer	Hong Kong	1.0	Cantonese	1st language
Participant C	Millennial	Hong Kong	1.5	Cantonese	Conversational
Participant D	Millennial	PRC	1.5	Mandarin	Conversational
Participant E	Millennial	PRC	1.5	Mandarin	Conversational
Participant F	Millennial	Canada	1.5	Cantonese	1st language
Participant G	Millennial	Hong Kong	1.5	Cantonese	Conversational
Participant H	Millennial	Canada	2.0	Cantonese / Mandarin	None
Participant J	Generation Z	PRC	1.5	Mandarin	Conversational
Participant K	Baby Boomer	Hong Kong	1.0	Cantonese	1st language
Participant M	Generation X	Canada	2.0	Cantonese	Conversational
Participant N	Generation X	Other	1.5	Cantonese	Conversational

Appendix E: Sample Game Questions & Actions

Questions

1. What is your favourite motto, quotation, or saying? When did you first hear it and what made it resonate with you?
   你最鐘意嘅座右銘,名言或者諺語係咩? 你第一次喺邊度聽到, 又點解會產生共鳴呢?
2. What is something you wish to understand about my generation?
   你有冇想了解關於我呢一輩嘅事?
3. What do you think has stayed the same about you throughout life? What do you think has changed?
   你覺得喺你嘅人生過程入面有冇咩係保持不變, 有咩係改變咗?
4. How would you describe our family to a stranger?
   你會點同陌生人描述我地一家人?
5. How have your dreams, goals, and values changed throughout your life?
   你嘅夢想, 目標同價值觀有冇改變過?
6. What is something you had to stand up for when you were my age? Why was it important to you?
   你喺我嘅年紀嘅時候有冇挺身支持任何事? 點解你覺得呢件事對你重要呢?
7. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for? (excluding more wishes)
   如果你有三個願望 你會許咩願望? （唔包括更多願望）
8. If you had the power to correct one problem in the world, what would you fix and why?
   如果你有能力解決世界上任何一個問題, 你會揀咩? 點解？
9. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
   你細個嗰陣時, 想你大個做咩?
10. When did you first move out on your own? What was it like?
    你幾時第一次搬出去自己住? 有冇咩經歷?
11. What world events had the most impact on you growing up?
    你成長嘅過程入面有冇邊件世界大事對你影響最深?
12. How would you like to be remembered? What would your legacy be?
    你希望其他人記住你嘅咩? 你最大嘅成就又係咩?
13. What are the best and worst decisions you have ever made?
    你做過的最好和最差嘅決定係咩?

14. How would you spend a whole day without any obligations?
    如果你可以用任何方式過冇責任嘅一日, 你會點樣過?

15. If I could do anything to make your life better, what would that be?
    我可以做啲咩去改善你嘅生活?

16. What is something that you have always wanted to do, but never have?
    你有冇咩一直想做但係又冇機會去做?

17. Is there anything you have always wanted to tell me but never have?
    你有冇咩一直想話我知但係又冇機會去講?

18. Is there anything you have always wanted to ask me but never have?
    你有冇咩一直想問我但係又冇機會去問?

19. What do you wish I understood about you?
    你有冇希望我可以了解你嘅事?

20. Is there anything you regret not having asked your parents?
    你有冇後悔冇問過你爸爸媽媽嘅事?

21. In what ways are you like your mother and father? And different?
    你同你爸爸媽媽有咩相似同唔同嘅地方?

22. What were your parents like when they got older?
    你爸爸媽媽年紀大咗之後有咩改變?

Actions

1. Take turns sharing and listening to three of your favourite songs
   輪流分享和聆聽您最喜歡的三首歌
2. Take five minutes to make a playlist together
   花五分鐘時間一起製作一份歌曲播放列表
3. Draw your family tree together
   一起繪製您的家譜
4. Draw a portrait of each other without looking down at the paper
   在不看畫紙的情況下畫對方的肖像
5. Take five minutes to write about a particular situation or event that involved both parties and how it made you feel. Then exchange.
   花五分鐘時間設想涉及雙方的情況或事件和你的感想, 然後和對方分享
6. Write down a list of three things you want to work on in this relationship, then exchange
   寫下在這段關係中你想改善的三件事, 然後和對方分享
7. Answer the next question in your parents' mother tongue (to the best of your ability)
   盡你所能用你父母的母語回答以下問題
8. Share a video that made you laugh recently
   分享一個最近讓你發笑的視頻
9. Show each other a movie that stuck with you
   分享一部令你難忘的電影
10. Go for a walk together without your phones
    不帶手機一起散步
11. Do something together that you haven't done since you were a child
    一起做一些自你長大後就沒有做過的事情
12. Do a Tik Tok challenge together
    一起完成一個抖音/Tik Tok 挑戰
13. Find a photo of you together, and describe your favourite things about it
    尋找和對方的一張幅合照並描述你喜歡的地方