EXPLORING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN FAMILY DYNAMICS AND PREPAREDNESS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVING AT THE END OF LIFE
Aimee Fox1, Julia Sharp2, and Christine Fruhauf2. 1. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, United States, 2. Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, United States

The transition to providing end-of-life (EOL) care to a family member can be challenging for family caregivers as they face difficult decisions regarding medical course of treatment, increasing caregiving responsibilities, and anticipatory grief. Low preparedness for EOL caregiving is associated with higher levels of caregiver strain, increased levels of depression and anxiety, and complicated and prolonged grief after the death of the family member. Despite the breadth of caregiving research, little is known about how family relationships and interactions relate to caregiver preparedness for EOL caregiving. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the association between family caregivers’ family dynamics and their perceived preparedness for the transition to EOL caregiving. A sample of 173 family caregivers were recruited to complete an online, self-report survey. A structural equation model was used to analyze the association between family dynamics and caregiving preparedness. Most caregivers reported balanced family cohesion (75.1%) and family flexibility (75.7%), but low family communication and low family satisfaction. In addition, 20.2% of caregivers reported being not at all prepared for the transition to EOL caregiving. Although there was a lack of meaningful association between family dynamics and caregiving preparedness, it may be that family relationships and interactions grow more complex as families age and individuals take on new and different roles (such as family caregiving) within the family system. This study demonstrates the need for future research to develop new measures to explore how aging family dynamics relate to family caregiver experiences and outcomes.

FAMILY CAREGIVER SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS: TECHNOLOGY USE ACROSS GENERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Janet Pohl1, Jude Kolodisner1, and David Coon1. 1. Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona, United States, 2. Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, United States

During the COVID–19 pandemic, maintaining connectedness was difficult for caregivers. Family caregivers represent multiple generations whose experience with and use of social technology to maintain connectedness can vary and differentially impact critical health outcomes. The aims of this study were to examine caregiver connectedness and technology preferences across three generations of caregivers who provide care to older adults with chronic illnesses. The semi-structured focus-groups/interviews conducted in August of 2020 with family caregiver participants including Millennials (n=6), Generation X (n=5), and Boomer (n=8). Two researchers analyzed the transcribed content via thematic analysis. Similarities and differences across generations were assessed via comparative analysis. The themes that emerged from the data were: (1) Millennials (a) Altered stage of life, (b) Altered connectedness, (c) Need others to understand, (d) Stay away from social network sites; (2) Generation X (a) Altered connectedness, (b) Need others to understand, (c) Burden, (d) Fear-of-failure; and (3) Baby Boomer (a) Altered connectedness, (b) Technology builds connectedness, (c) Information seeking. All generations expressed alterations in connectedness with caregiver role. Millennials and Generation X caregivers emphasized need for others to understand that caregiving altered their lives with unique responsibilities. Technology use differed across the generations, with Millennial texting for confidential communications. Millennial and Generation X caregivers do not use social media due to envy of others’ fun. Baby Boomers expressed increased connectedness with the use of Zoom. Understanding the variation in the experience of caregiver connectedness and technology use by generation may identify targets for future caregiver connectedness intervention studies.

SESSION 2260 (PAPER)

INNOVATION IN GERONTOLOGY EDUCATION
In this session, gerontology educators describe a range of unique strategies for extending students’ aging education and faculty development.

EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STARTING A UNIVERSITY GERONTOLOGY RESEARCH LABORATORY
Brittney Howell1, and Jennifer Peterson2. 1. University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska, United States, 2. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, United States

Although founding and directing an independent research laboratory is often expected of faculty at American universities, there are several barriers to successful completion of this important task. There is little guidance in the literature regarding exactly how to go about starting a research laboratory. The guidance that does exist for faculty often focuses on running research labs in the “hard sciences,” such as biomedical science and engineering, leaving social and behavioral scientists out of such considerations. Additionally, smaller or teaching-focused universities often have little infrastructure or support for starting a research lab, so faculty at these institutions may not know where to begin. These barriers are significant concerns for junior faculty, who are often unprepared for the realities and challenges of starting a successful research lab while obtaining other milestones required of promotion and tenure. We present two examples of recently-formed gerontology research laboratories begun by junior faculty, one in the psychology department of a research university and one in public health at a teaching-focused university. Our case studies present the audience with specific examples, lessons learned, and guidance for starting their own gerontology research laboratory in higher education,
as well as recommendations on maintaining its functioning during a global pandemic (COVID-19).

PASSING THE TORCH: EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AN INTERPROFESSIONAL GERIATRICS FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Kimberly Davis, Sarah Marrs, Ishan Williams, Kristin Zimmerman, Constance Google, Pamela Parsons, Patricia Slattum, and Leland Waters, 1. Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing, Richmond, Virginia, United States, 2. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, United States, 3. University of Virginia, School of Nursing, Charlottesville, Virginia, United States, 4. Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Pharmacy, Richmond, Virginia, United States

Faculty development programs (FDPs) are an effective, evidence-based method of promoting the knowledge, skills and self-efficacy of faculty. However, the implementation and sustainability of curricula are rarely reported. Furthermore, the challenges to sustaining programmatic implementation of interprofessional FDP curricula in academic and clinical settings over time have yet to be extensively evaluated. Using dynamic sustainability as a framework, we aimed to assess the evolving barriers and facilitators that influence the implementation and sustainability of the geriatrics curriculum. Capstone projects designed by faculty scholars in our FDP were planned to report on projects that were and weren’t successful. A survey, sent to 115 faculty scholars from eight different cohorts who completed our 10-month FDP, recruited faculty participants and set the stage for qualitative data collection to help us better understand the sustained impact of the program. Thematic analysis of virtual interviews with 17 Scholars revealed several key factors facilitating and hindering the implementation and dynamic sustainability of curricular projects. Three major themes and sub-themes were identified as follows: Project Implementation (Supportive Factors, Hindering Factors and Filling in Gaps in the Field); Pedagogical Development (Enhancement of Skills and Culture Change); and Sustainability Impact (Project Sustainability, Career Development and Passing the Torch). Supporting these factors through skills development may favorably impact project sustainability and thus the aspects of workforce development that catalyze practice change. Implementation of geriatrics-focused FDPs provides an evidence-based approach to sustainability. Further study of the ongoing barriers and facilitators to sustainability is encouraged.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGING HUMANITIES: READING HESSE’S STEPPENWOLF THROUGH MOODY’S FIVE STAGES OF THE SOUL
Stephen Fogle, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, United States

This paper explores Herman Hesse’s Steppenwolf through Harry Moody’s Five Stages of the Soul. Steppenwolf speaks to gerontological education objectives as it deals squarely with humanizing old age though, “deeply lived spiritual events which [the main character] has attempted to express by giving them the form of tangible experiences.” (Hesse, 1963, 21) Five Stages of the Soul is a seminal conceptual model for understanding spiritual development across the life course: particularly in old age. It documents lived experiences in five stages: call, search, struggle, breakthrough, and return. This paper follows Steppenwolf’s main character, Harry Haller, though each of these five stages. In doing so, this paper positions aging and spiritual development center stage in a tale featuring themes of enduring struggle such as personal identities, war & violence, sex, magic, and technological advancement. The plot line of Steppenwolf matches Five Stages of the Soul with enlightening consistency. Originally published a century ago, Steppenwolf enjoyed resurgent popularity among the baby boom cohort of older adults in the United States and globally during the 1960s. Today, Steppenwolf retains relevancy for understanding aging and spiritual development in lived contexts of social chaos and uncertainty. Steppenwolf is a classic and engaging piece of literature for contemporary readers of all ages. This paper helps students and teachers of gerontology apply a conceptual model of aging to a relevant case study. The paper contributes to incorporating literary masterpieces into gerontological curricula. Finally, this paper sheds light on the humanity of older adults engaged in spiritual development.

TEACHING THE INTERSECTION OF AGING AND DISABILITY FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
Kristine Mulhorn, Drexel University, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, United States

The honors college at Drexel included their Freshmen Seminar in a recent effort to offer various courses on the theme of aging across the campus. Usually, the themed courses are for juniors and seniors who can choose electives. This year, the theme of aging was interwoven into two freshmen seminars with a maximum of 20 students. The purpose of this course was to examine the complexity of these two concepts and recognize possible avenues for study, research, and careers based on these perspectives. Disability is not only a way of describing how someone lives with biological or physical difference, but disability can be a social identity, and a group recognized in recent civil rights legislation. Aging is not only at the individual level, but an ongoing demographic change that is happening throughout the world. Students reflected on online quizzes on ableism and ageism to gain insights about their own biases and the biases within their chosen career fields. Through class discussions and reflections, students achieved course objectives: 1) describe how society can better prepare individuals to fully participate in society throughout life; 2) recognize key factors affecting those with disability and aging with disability as they navigate education, health services, housing and work; 3) synthesize literature on aging and disability to make recommendations for improving social participation for those either aging with disability or aging into disability; and 4) describe public policy challenges for those over 50 and those who identify as disabled.

THE JOY AND CHALLENGES OF STORY CREATION WITH TIMESLIPS: STUDENT FACILITATOR PERCEPTIONS
Emily Ihara, Emily Perez, Kendall Barrett, Megumi Inoue, and Catherine Tompkins, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, United States

Creative arts interventions for people living with dementia have been shown to improve mood, emotions, communication, and relationships for older people living with