

COOK A FAMILY RECIPE

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Movement Activity

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Nurturing
Parent-Child
Interactions



Social
Connections

PURPOSE

Cooking is a great way to foster deeper connections to yourself and others. Making a meal at home can help you feel healthier, boost your energy, and improve your sleep and resilience to stress. Additionally, cooking together with your kids can foster stronger bonds by creating shared experiences and positive memories.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 1 HOUR

10 minutes for instructions | 40 minutes for cooking | 10 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Favorite recipe or meaningful family recipe

Cooking ingredients

Cooking utensils

Make a recipe book (optional): [Google Docs](#) or [Canva](#) (free), or a [custom recipe book](#) (paid)

Notes for the facilitator

- This exercise would be best to share with survivors to take home and complete on their own time.
- If in a group setting with a shared kitchen space, ask the group how the kitchen is shared. Brainstorm ways the group could agree on how they might take turns with their kids.
- Encourage survivors to choose meaningful recipes that have positive memories associated with them, or favorite recipes that they enjoy making.

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 4–18 years old)
- Adapt how kids participate [depending on their age range](#).



- Share memories of you cooking the dish with your loved ones when you were a kid, or tell them why this recipe is important to you.
- If available to you, you can save these recipes as you make them and turn them into a family recipe book.
 - Have kids help write down the recipes on a piece of paper as you make it together, and keep them together with a paperclip, a binder, or in a notebook.
 - Include pictures as you all make the dish.
 - Can make your own free online version with [Google Docs](#) or [Canva](#).
 - Or buy your own physical [custom recipe book](#).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Think about your favorite recipe, or a recipe that is meaningful to you.
- 2 Set aside intentional time to enjoy the process of cooking and eating.
- 3 Follow recipe instructions while listening to music or put on your Protective Factors Playlist (see Exercise 2: Create a Protective Factors Playlist).
- 4 If you want to build your own recipe book, write down instructions and take pictures as you go along.
- 5 Have fun and enjoy some good food!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why did you choose this recipe?
- What came up for you as you were cooking and eating?
- What does this recipe mean to you? Who does it make you think of?
- How did it taste? Would you want to make it again?

Try this activity virtually!

You can also do this cooking activity as a group virtually. Consider using the same date and time of your usual group so scheduling isn't cumbersome for survivors. To encourage nurturing parent-child bonds, have parents choose the recipe with their children (see the "When Using this Activity with Children" section). In preparation, be sure to ask survivors:

- Do you think it will be safe to do this activity at home and online? *Create a safety plan.*
- Do you have the needed technology to participate (smart device with camera and mic, WiFi connectivity)? *Offer other options if they do not.*
- What ingredients are needed? *Purchase and have ingredients delivered to their home.*
- What else do you need to prepare?

Promising Futures



The development of this guide was supported by Grant Number 90EV0532 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by Grant #90CA1850 from the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Points of view in this guide are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Copyright © 2025 Futures Without Violence. All rights reserved.