

USU HDFS Faculty Discuss their Research on Instead Podcast

Diana Meter

10/19/2021



What do HDFS faculty researchers actually do? Presented by Utah State University's Office of Research, Wyatt Traughber, M.A., learns just this as he interviews four HDFS faculty as part of an ongoing podcast series on the research being conducted at USU. The goal? To learn how Utah's researchers move our state forward as new challenges circle the world. Below, we share four episodes of *Instead*.

Setting People Up for Step-Parenthood, with Brian Higginbotham

[Full Podcast](#)

"You can't have too many caring adults in a child's life" says [Brian Higginbotham](#), Professor in the department of Human Development and Family Studies and Associate Vice President for Extension, in the latest episode of *Instead*. Dr. Higginbotham leads one of the largest research-based relationship education initiatives in the county with programs for those who are single, dating, married, remarried, and divorced. In this episode, he discusses building and navigating step-family relationships.

First and foremost, Dr. Higginbotham reminds us it's normal for children to need a period of adjustment to a new adult in their lives. And, for adults and children alike it's not only okay, but probably necessary to lean on resources to adjust in a healthy and loving way. Dr.

Higginbotham assures us that finding resources to help you with your family dynamics is not admitting that your family is wrong, but it is a sign of strength that you know that there are others out here that research this for a living and can help you make your family relationships better.

Family Caregivers and Dementia, Dr. Beth Fauth's Research on Late Life

[Full Podcast](#)

"When someone begins to take care of older parents, spouses, or siblings, they don't usually think of themselves as a caregiver; it's just what you do for family. But people doing these tasks take on a significant emotional and physical load," says [Dr. Beth Fauth](#), Professor in the department of Human Development and Family Studies. The problem is that when caregivers don't think of themselves as filling that role, they are less likely to reach out and find the resources they need.

Dr. Fauth talks us through her research and efforts to provide and communicate resources for caregivers of family members with dementia or other needs. She reminds us that the health of caregiver and the care receiver are equally important. When new parents have a baby, they are expected to reach outside of themselves for help and resources; we consider it essential to care for both the parents and the infant. However, we have not yet normalized the same act of reaching out for late life caregivers, and we need to. Fauth's research has shown that caregiver interventions work – they reduce stress and improve well-being of caregivers that utilize them. They are available face-to-face, online, and in other formats.

How Your Siblings Shaped You, with Dr. Shawn Whiteman

[Full Podcast](#)

Did you know kids these days are more likely to live in a household with a sibling than a father? Did you know siblings in rural areas may build stronger bonds with one another? In this episode, Wyatt sits down with USU researcher [Dr. Shawn Whiteman](#), Professor of Human Development and Family Studies and [Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services](#) Associate Dean for Research to discuss how siblings directly and indirectly shape each other's behaviors. From risky behaviors to pushing you to go to school, your siblings may have influenced some of your current behaviors.

It Doesn't Build Character: Dr. Diana Meter Explains how Defenders Create Belonging

[Full Podcast](#)

Research shows that strong peer relationships in adolescence lead to strong relationships in adulthood. In this episode of *Instead*, [Dr. Diana Meter](#), Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, explains why people become aggressors and how bullies identify people to target. Defenders witness a person being victimized and do something to help. Dr. Meter's research shows that even though a defender's actions seem small, they make people feel seen. So demystify your adolescence and listen to this episode of *Instead*.