

## What is the Sandwich Generation?

**Candace Dellacona:** This is the Sandwich Generation Survival Guide, preparing for your children, your parents, and yourself with your host,

**Jody Argentino:** Jody Argentino and Candace Dellacona this week. What is the sandwich generation?

**Candace Dellacona:** So that's a great question. I think, um, you know, one of the reasons Jodi, you and I decided to get together and, and have this podcast is because we found ourselves, um, in what we call and many others call the sandwich generation.

**Candace Dellacona:** Um, the sandwich generation is, I think refers to people who are caring for their aging parents and caring for their kids, and they feel sort of squeezed between the demands of their parents and their, and their children. Um, so since our

**Jody Argentino:** podcast cover Right, ex Exactly. We're stuck in that sandwich balancing all of the things and, um.

**Jody Argentino:** I was actually doing a little bit of research on this too. It was that, that this was coined in like the 1980s. Um, and so, you know, we were, we were what, in kindergarten, first grade

**Candace Dellacona:** back then, maybe a little older for me, but Yeah, exactly. Before we were part of the sandwich generation, the sandwich sandwich generation was invented or identified anyway.

**Jody Argentino:** Right. And now it's people in their thirties, forties, fifties, um, that have these multiple roles.

**Candace Dellacona:** Exactly right.

**Jody Argentino:** Exactly.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. I mean, I think, I think the research, um, and the statistics show us that almost half of adults are part of this sandwich generation. They're sort of struggling between balancing their relationships, um, in their marriage or their partnerships.

**Candace Dellacona:** They have their families, they have their job, and they're also trying to find time for themselves.

**Jody Argentino:** Right. I find that one to be the most challenging. Right. And I think we're gonna talk about that a little bit more in our, um, in our second episode. Um, but can, I think we should talk about a little bit why, like what types of things, um, are gonna be in our survival guide?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. I mean, I think that that's, that's really the crux of the issue, right? And, and why we're hoping that this podcast will be a resource to our listeners and maybe our

clients. Uh, I think that I. One of the things that you and I have both learned being in practice for combined, you know, 40, almost 50 years maybe, um, is we have resources and along our path in guiding our clients, we've assembled this, this sort of, uh.

**Candace Dellacona:** Cachet, let's say, of people and organizations that can help make those of us who find ourselves in the sandwich generation make our lives a little easier. So I think that's really our intention, isn't it?

**Jody Argentino:** Yeah, I, I think so, because even those of us who are in it, and even though I have that Rolodex of, of professionals, I don't use it.

**Jody Argentino:** Right? So I'm hoping this is a guide for me as well as for the host of people that are listening to it or watching it. And, um. Because I, I think we can all learn a lot from each other.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, and maybe it's, it's about accountability and keeping each other on track. And I think when you're in the thick of things, it's really hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

**Candace Dellacona:** Um, I think there's a lot of, uh, validity that comes from hearing from other people who are struggler struggling similarly, um, it can be a really lonely place providing care for everyone else. Um, and sometimes feel like you're not even doing a good job at that. Right?

**Jody Argentino:** Yeah. I remember when I was a kid, my mom was running around like, you know, working in my dad's business, taking care of her parents, taking care of me.

**Jody Argentino:** My other grandmother lived with us, and as I'm sitting here and you're saying those words, I'm like, oh my gosh, that is exactly it. Right. And that was in the 1980s or then? Uh, yeah, by the 19, mid 1990s. I was outta there, but, um, but I saw that and. She took absolutely no time for herself. And, um, and that's, you know, that we've got what?

**Jody Argentino:** Yeah. You said 50% of adults in their forties and fifties are living like that, right. Are doing that. And there has to be a better balance.

**Candace Dellacona:** I mean, that's really what the struggle is, right? I mean, I think that you hit the nail on the head that because of life expectancy, um. Our parents are living longer than their parents did, and then their grandparents did.

**Candace Dellacona:** And because of that, the amount of time you're spending in the in-between has increased. Um, so that means the struggles of the sandwich generation are increasing exponentially. You know, most of us suffer from burnout. Um, many of us suffer from depression and isolation and guilt. Right. So I think that by creating a community here of people like us, um, in every facet of, of their lives can really be a resource to each other, whether it's just venting or coming up with solutions for whatever the topic of the week happens to be.

**Jody Argentino:** Sometimes I would probably just surprise you with a, a question because I need a solution, Candace, and I feel like you've got it all together. I mean, I

**Candace Dellacona:** definitely do not, and I'm sure my kids can tell you the same. I mean, I think that it's important though to remember how much time we're talking about right?

**Candace Dellacona:** In, in terms of, I. How much of our lives are spent caregiving between our parents and our kids? Um, so if we have resources to make Bill paying easier and we have resources, uh, to do all of our online banking and our shopping, you know, let's figure out our resources to make our caregiving easier, especially when the studies are saying that on average, Jodi.

**Candace Dellacona:** You and I are spending 24 hours a week on average providing care to people other than ourselves.

**Jody Argentino:** I mean, that's, you know, that eye boggling actually qualifies. That qualifies as a full-time job, right? I think at 25 hours you're be eligible for benefits, right? So, so really that's crazy. If you think about it, this is a full-time job on top of your assumedly full-time job, um, right.

**Jody Argentino:** That's, I mean, that's an average. That doesn't ca to me, that doesn't, you know, count those people that have three, four, or five kids, or four PA four parents that they're taking care of or multi-generations because, you know, given life expectancy, there's definitely cases where you have cases lives, families, where you have an 80-year-old, a 60-year-old, a 40-year-old, a 20-year-old, and.

**Jody Argentino:** Even maybe a, a baby though. If my kids give me babies at 20, we're gonna have a much larger discussion. Um, but that could be

**Candace Dellacona:** another topic,

**Jody Argentino:** right? But there's, but I mean, we can talk about multiple generations and intergenerational households or multi-generational households are actually a huge topic and family law as well.

**Jody Argentino:** So I'm sure, um, we're gonna be talking about those dynamics, um, you know, as well along the way.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, I mean I think, you know, you bring up the fact that there are multiple generations, and this is if everyone is healthy, you throw in some kind of diagnosis related to memory impairment or a child who is neurodiverse.

**Candace Dellacona:** And I would imagine that the amount of hours will just grow exponentially, and that's why it's not one size fits all.

**Jody Argentino:** For sure, for sure. You have to be creative. And that's, uh, one of the things I tell people in my family law practice is that don't, don't come up with a formula and like try to fit your life into it.

**Jody Argentino:** Let's talk about your life and then let's see what actually works. So we haven't actually told anybody what we do, Candace, so. Um, so I've been practicing family law for about 21 years, just about approximately 21 years. Not that I'm counting the month. And, um, in there I've done some civil rights litigation and some personal injuries, um, and some property stuff.

**Jody Argentino:** So, uh, I, I like to, I'm not gonna say have a breadth of knowledge with regard to the issues, because to me, family law encompasses everything, right? It, it really is one of the areas of law that gets like. Um, pushed aside, but we actually have to deal with a whole lot of, um, complicated issues. And I've been doing that in New York and New Jersey, and I have my master's in developmental psychology as well.

**Jody Argentino:** Um, and so, but the one thing I don't know anything about is trust and estates estate planning, um, and all of that stuff that you're phenomenal at. So, can we talk, talk a little bit about what you do on a daily basis?

**Candace Dellacona:** Well, thanks. I mean, first of all, you absolutely do. I think you're underselling your own knowledge,

**Jody Argentino:** but

**Candace Dellacona:** you know, so similar to, to family law, I think trust in estates does encompass the issue of family, right?

**Candace Dellacona:** It's how do we plan for the unexpected, uh, an illness. A disability, some kind of bump in the, in the road of life, right? And death, which is certain for everyone. And so, you know, from an estate planning perspective, I often help generations, um, within the same family, you know, uh, the parents, the adult children, and then their children, of course.

**Candace Dellacona:** Uh, there are so many issues that bleed into my area of. Of practice. And I do find myself not only providing legal advice, but really becoming sort of, um, you know, a, a contact, a go-to person in a, in a family. Um, I think that when you a resource. Yeah. And I think that when you get to know, uh, a family and you do their planning, you learn about their fears and their goals and their family structures and the addictions and the divorces and the bad marriages and all the things that go along with it, uh, along with it, which really does sort of dovetail with your practice, Jody.

**Candace Dellacona:** And I think that's really what we sort of found in common with each other, right? Where we have very different looking families. Um, but at the end of the day, we have. Similar issues in dealing with those families,

**Jody Argentino:** right? Three, well, we both have three kids. We've got that in common. That's true. And that's about where it ends exactly right.

**Jody Argentino:** I I, I'm in a gender diverse neurodiverse, um, family. Um, that's a blended family, a poly family. So, um, so I've got a lot of moving parts in that, um, in that situation. And I mean, I look at your life and I'm like, oh. You've got a cisgender heteronormative, like, you know, 2.3 kids, but three kids. You know, I, I don't know if you have a dog and a cat, but I imagine that

when I, when I picture your house a dog and a cat and a white picket fence, like, you're like, no, Jody, that's not what my life looks like.

**Candace Dellacona:** I mean, you know, maybe from the outside it does. And I think that that's, you know, one of the things that we're gonna talk about, that it's okay to ask for help. And just because everything looks perfect on the outside. Does not mean that it is perfect on the inside. And yes, I think my family does look pretty typical and normative, as you say.

**Candace Dellacona:** Um, but we, like every family have issues and struggles and I need help and I need advice just like many of my clients and my friends and my colleagues do. So I'm really happy that we're taking this opportunity and providing a platform for people that look like us and don't look like us. Yeah. Um, you know, and.

**Candace Dellacona:** You know, at the end of the day, I think one of the things I would love to be able to impart upon our listeners are our tips for survival and what that's going to look like.

**Jody Argentino:** Right. You know, because it is and, and thriving, right? So, I wanna say we hired the survival guide, but we wanna not just survive this life, right?

**Jody Argentino:** We wanna thrive and we wanna live and we wanna live well. And so, um. You know, we've got this punchy survival guide type thing because that's how we think, but. Really like societally, we actually think in terms of survival, which is really a, a systemic narrative that we have to work on. Candace, we're gonna change.

**Jody Argentino:** It's unfortunate.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, it's unfortunate. You're right. Because we wanna do more than survive. We want our kids to feel that they have. The tools that they need to go out into the world and make sure that they're loved and supported in whatever endeavor they have to whatever degree they need. Um, you know, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and likewise for our parents as we sort of usher them through the next phase in their life, to the extent that as adult children, we can do that.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right?

**Jody Argentino:** Right.

**Candace Dellacona:** Um, so it's not just about survival.

**Jody Argentino:** We're at like the top of the peak. Uh, I hate to say that, but like, it's, uh, I was reading this article and it was like, okay, you're, you're growing your children, right? And then your elderly parents are, you know, on, on the other side of that hill, literally over the hill, right?

**Jody Argentino:** And the sandwich generation sort of is smack on top of the hill. And we're like, okay, come up here and pull up. Like we're pulling everybody up and down and, and balancing it all. Um. So what do we have some really quick tips for survival that we wanna start this off with?

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, I mean, I think, I think one of the things that will be a recurring theme for us in our podcast is just constantly reaffirming for our listeners that you cannot do it all.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right. You simply can't do it all, and you're gonna have good days, and you're gonna have bad days. You're gonna have successful days and days that are literal, abysmal failures, and you'll just wanna go to bed and start all over. So I think that that's number one, that we need to be kind to each other and we need to be kind to ourselves because you can't do everything right.

**Candace Dellacona:** Um, like handling it with grace.

**Jody Argentino:** Yeah. And forgiveness to yourself. Someday we're gonna have to crawl into bed and, and stay there, and not just on Mother's Day. Right. Um, but it is, uh, it, it's okay to give ourselves that space, that time to heal, that time to feel

**Candace Dellacona:** agreed. And I think, you know, in doing that, it means that you're gonna have to rely on other people and you're gonna have to put other people to work because you can't do it all.

**Candace Dellacona:** And what that looks like may be different for all of our listeners. Right. Right. It may be your spouse or your partner and maybe your child who, you know, has agency and can make his or her own lunch,

**Jody Argentino:** right? Um,

**Candace Dellacona:** right.

**Jody Argentino:** My nine year old's do, and it's amazing.

**Candace Dellacona:** Uh, lunches are the worst. We were so happy to be done with those in my house.

**Jody Argentino:** I'm like, how many carbs can you put in a bento box at one time?

**Candace Dellacona:** Shout out to the parents who are still making lunches.

**Jody Argentino:** I will tell you, I just commented the other day that we, we started the year with like bento boxes and cookie cutters and cutting the little sandwiches and, and it was ridiculous. And then, and now.

**Jody Argentino:** Brown paper bags and the kids make their own much, and it's like a couple of carrot

**Candace Dellacona:** sticks and you're done, call it a day, couple of

**Jody Argentino:** carrot sticks, the pita with some peanut butter and uh, and some grapes and we're calling it a day. There you go. So, um, I mean, not if they make their own, there's to be Oreos, a granola bar and some like Captain Crunch in a container.

**Jody Argentino:** But

**Candace Dellacona:** I mean, but you know, that's part of it, right? So, so there's the evolution of, of. All good intentions and, and where it ends up. And I think changing your expectations, uh, and removing perfect from the narrative, right? And, and really, you know, just doing the best you can every day is really where we wanna go with this.

**Candace Dellacona:** And that's, I think, why it's important to delegate and rely on other people. Um, and that could be assigning tasks to other people, whether it's your 9-year-old making mm-hmm. Their own lunch. Um, or it's. You know, your brother who lives in a different city who can't necessarily pick up grandpa from his doctor's appointment, but maybe he can make the appointment, um, remotely.

**Jody Argentino:** Right, right. Or be in charge of paying the bills or something. Something of that sort. Absolutely. Exactly. The other thing that comes along with delegation though, Candace, is one I have a really hard time with, so no one else is gonna do it the exact same way that you do it. Right. But that's okay. Right?

**Jody Argentino:** Yeah, it still gets done and it's okay that it, the peanut butter and jelly sandwich may be cut crosswise instead of, um, in half. Um, but, uh, but it still has the same nutritional value and it still gets eaten. So, um. Control. I grew up with a, a dad who wanted to do all of the things. Like, he'd be like, oh, well let's do this together, but then he would do it himself.

**Jody Argentino:** He's still like that, you know? And, um, and that's okay. I give it to him now, but it's, um, it's, you know, so I have a tendency to do that. I'm like, well, I'll just do it. It's just easier, right. But that's, that's what we can't do. We have to put everyone to work like you're saying. We have to share that because otherwise.

**Jody Argentino:** I think my favorite visual is like, I feel like a starfish. Like I'm just being pulled like a starfish being pulled. Like something out of finding Nemo, I think. Yeah. Right. And it just, we can't do that all.

**Candace Dellacona:** Well, we can, but we won't last. Right, right. So, you know, the other thing I, I really hope that our listeners find helpful is we're gonna do some research for you.

**Candace Dellacona:** We're gonna come up with professionals and organizations that will provide you with some of the relief so that you don't have to do it all. Um, yeah, I was on a. A call with a client recently, um, who came to see her mother here in New York City. She lives in Washington State, so you couldn't get much further in the country.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah. From being Seattle to New York City. And she noticed some deficits with her mom on the phone and came to see sort of what the story is and really. Put her own eyes on the situation. And she said to me, how do I know what type of care my mom needs? She's telling me she doesn't need care, but what I'm seeing is something different.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right? And one of the things I suggested to her was a geriatric care manager. She didn't even know that that was a thing. And I bet many I didn't know that that was a thing. Many listeners. Well, there you go. And so, you know, I think, Jody, it's gonna be our job and our goal to give a little insight. To our listeners about those options for people and how to find those people and know that they even exist and what function they serve.

**Candace Dellacona:** Right, to make your life easier.

**Jody Argentino:** Huh. That's so interesting. Okay. Yeah. Um, so what else could we give as our initial tips?

**Candace Dellacona:** Well, you know, I think that. Particularly for the sandwich generation, you just used a great metaphor, right? The starfish and being stretched all over the place. So what works for your family?

**Candace Dellacona:** What about your living situation? If a parent lives an hour, hour and a half away, should they continue to live an hour, an hour and a half away? Should you consider what your living situation is? I think that, you know. Our older generations were much more used to sort of living in close proximity right here in New York City, right?

**Candace Dellacona:** We have multiple, multiple family dwelling units. It was very common to have grandparents on one level, adult kids on the next, and the kids who are about to leave. The ne, the, the nest on the on the bottom level, not so much anymore. Maybe we'll talk about exploring the various options, whether it's. Do you cohabitate like you, like your family when you're in a, a, a molecule and you're, and you're sort of dividing and conquering, um, those responsibilities,

**Jody Argentino:** right?

**Candace Dellacona:** Do you have to be in the same house? Do you have to be in the same town?

**Jody Argentino:** How does it like, certainly, yeah. I, I mean certainly it's like if you're gonna, I think it's one of those things where if you're gonna share responsibilities, you have to be able to, um, find your strengths, right? And you have to be able to utilize those strengths.

**Jody Argentino:** So, um. It's really sort of akin to the practicalities of living. If you're not gonna drive a car, you have to be near a train station, right? So if you are not gonna be, if you're not good at finances, somebody in your, your family has to be, or else you have to outsource that. Like, it's, it's really about looking at those resources like you were talking about.

**Jody Argentino:** I.

**Candace Dellacona:** I think you're right, and I think those resources are going to look different for every person. I think one of the things that you and I have talked about as being sensitive to is that we come from a place of privilege just by virtue of our, our level of education and our jobs. And I think that it's really important for us to be able to provide information to people, uh, who come from all walks of life with different, um.



**Candace Dellacona:** Bank accounts and different access to information, education, and resources.

**Jody Argentino:** Absolutely. I mean, I know I walked into adult life having no idea what the stock market is, having no idea what, um, what retirement assets are. So I really wanna make sure that when we're going through this, we're being accessible to people who don't necessarily have even a base knowledge of that information.

**Jody Argentino:** Because I came into the sandwich generation without much of that. And yeah, I have a lot of privilege now. I recognize that after, you know, two decades of. Being an attorney, but it's, um, but some of those things I can't go back and re, like, I can't go back and make that base understanding there. So I really, um, am hoping that this survival guide gives people, I don't know, the ability to create a foundation if they're at that, if it, they're at the beginning part and the ability to fill in the gaps if they're, you know, um, more on my end of that sandwich.

**Candace Dellacona:** You know what though? What you said. Really resonates because you used the word hope, and I think what you just showed our listeners is that you walked into a situation not having the foundation and now you found yourself in a position of having a little bit better of an understanding of those things.

**Candace Dellacona:** So I think for our listeners, we're gonna give them the tools to get them there and that, you know. It's a hopeful situation as overwhelming and as burdensome, maybe as being a member of the sandwich generation. Could be. I think there's hope there. There's a lot of beauty in that space as well. Yeah, and having the privilege of being somebody who is relied upon.

**Jody Argentino:** Right. And there's a lot of potential joy. Because you, all of the people that you are caring for or that care for you, right? In that we have all of those moments of potential joy. And so I don't wanna get too buried in all of the responsibility without looking at all of the positives there as well. So Candace, I think we've given our, our listeners a pretty good foundation, um, about.

**Jody Argentino:** Um, about our sandwich generation survival guide, and I'm really looking forward to, um, to this endeavor.

**Candace Dellacona:** Yeah, and I, I'm really excited for our listeners to join us and, and help us figure it out as we go.

**Jody Argentino:** Right. So next week we're gonna be talking about survival of the fittest, caring for yourself in order to care for your family.

**Jody Argentino:** I think that's a great place to start.