MassMutual Ascend

Future-proof the middle years

How to support Sandwich Gen clients' financial futures

When financial priorities overlap

Nearly **one in four Americans**[1] is part of the Sandwich Generation—supporting aging parents while still helping their own children financially. These responsibilities often arrive while people are still paying a mortgage and trying to stay on track for retirement.

This stage of life introduces real challenges:

- Less time to recover from market downturns
- Concern about "doing everything right" but still feeling behind
- Pressure to support others without becoming financially vulnerable

Without a plan that adapts, clients may:

- Reduce or pause retirement savings
- Tap into long-term assets too early
- Increase debt to manage short-term needs
- Delay important decisions around protection needs and estate planning

Over time, these choices can shift outcomes in ways clients don't intend. But with the right guidance, these moments can become opportunities to realign—and move forward with confidence.

[1]Starks, S. (2026, March 3.) Nearly 1 in 4 Adults Are in the 'Sandwich Generation'—Here's What That Really Means for Families. https://www.parents.com/multigenerational-living-and-sandwich-generation-11915840.

Where you can make a difference

Financial professionals are in a unique position to help Sandwich Gen clients navigate competing priorities with clarity and purpose. By understanding their needs, you can guide more meaningful conversations and decision-making.

Every client scenario is different, but here are a few ways you can help Sandwich Gen clients prepare for what's next:

Reframe retirement planning on what matters now

Caregiving responsibilities often signal the need to recalibrate. Help clients reprioritize goals based on current realities, revisit retirement timelines and evaluate tradeoffs.

Build (or reinforce) an emergency fund

Unexpected expenses are more likely when supporting multiple generations. Guide clients to establish 3-6 months of expenses in reserve and account for any care-related contingencies. A strong safety net can help prevent difficult tradeoffs later.

Review (or revisit) protection and estate planning considerations

Help clients evaluate current life insurance coverage and potential gaps, discuss long-term care needs and review estate plans, roles, directives and beneficiaries.

Bring caregiving into the conversation

Many clients haven't fully planned for the financial side of caregiving. Guide them to have open conversations with family about roles and expectations, understand the potential scope and cost of care and explore ways to fund care without derailing other priorities.

Position their portfolio for growth and protection

Clients need strategies that balance competing demands. Work with clients to maintain exposure to growth opportunities, incorporate elements of protection and stability and ensure assets are aligned with evolving time horizons.

Balance today's demands with tomorrow's goals

A portfolio positioned for growth and protection can help Sandwich Gen clients remain invested for the future while limiting exposure to risk that could set them back during an already demanding time.

Solutions like **fixed-indexed annuities (FIAs)** can help bridge that gap—offering opportunity for market-linked growth, protecting against downside risk, and creating a foundation for future income.

Case Study

The following hypothetical example illustrates how leveraging an FIA can help the Sandwich Generation navigate the unique challenges of saving for retirement.

Meet Molly and Steve

“Stuck in the middle”

Molly and Steve, both 60, are balancing multiple responsibilities. They’re covering assisted living costs for Molly’s mother while still supporting their youngest child through college.

At the same time, they’re concerned about staying on track for retirement. Rising monthly expenses and unexpected care costs are straining their ability to save consistently. But they know it’s important to continue growing and protecting their savings to stay on track for retirement.

They decided to meet with their financial advisor, Walt, to develop a strategy that balances their current responsibilities with their future goals.

Walt helped Molly and Steve reassess their savings and investment strategies to bring greater stability and flexibility to their finances. Together, they clarified cash flow, built a realistic budget and adjusted retirement goals to better fit their situation. After a financial review, Walt recommended adding a fixed-indexed annuity from MassMutual Ascend. By reallocating $100,000 into the annuity, Molly and Steve strengthened portfolio diversification, increased stability and gained greater confidence in their retirement plan.

The result:

Growth potential: FIAs provide the opportunity for growth linked to market index performance, allowing Molly and Steve to potentially boost their savings.

Guaranteed income stream: They can convert their savings into a guaranteed income stream to supplement their income when they retire.

Downside protection: Unlike equities or other direct market investments, their FIA protects against market losses, preserving their savings.

Tax-deferred growth: Their FIA grows tax-deferred, potentially allowing for more compound growth over time.

Moments of complexity create opportunities for deeper partnership. By helping Sandwich Gen clients organize competing priorities into a clear, actionable plan, you can turn uncertainty into forward momentum.

Contact the MassMutual Ascend Sales Team to learn more about how an FIA could help prepare your clients for life's complex moments.

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