

"Survival mode"- A peek into the Subjective experience of Dependent Adults

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Abstract: Among the normative population of young adults still living with their parents, there has been a distinctive sub-group of dependant adults who remains completely dependent, fails to gain independence and to maintain productive lifestyle. The phenomenology and the subjective experience of dependent adults ("survival mode" state of mind) is discussed.

The number of young adults who still live with their parents has been grown during the last 15 years due to socio-cultural and economic factors. Among the normative population of adult children living with their parents, there is a distinctive sub-group of dependant adults who remains completely dependent on their parents, fails to gain independence, deal with life challenges and to maintain a productive routine.

Various nicknames have been used to describe those low or non-functioning dependent young adults, including "Hikikomori" in Japan, "Bamboccioni in Italy, and "NEET" (not in employment, education, or training) or "KIPPERS" (kids in parents' pockets eroding retirement savings) in England.

Recently, this phenomenon has been the focus of contemporary research and has been named as Adult Entitled Dependence (AED) (Lebowitz, Dolberger, Nortov, Omer, 2012). AED has defined as a chronic, family systemic condition involving a dysfunctional adult offspring and at least one parent who accommodates to the patterns of dependence by providing age inappropriate services. The dependence (either emotional or material) of adult offspring on parents leads to dysfunction and distress in the family.

The dependent adult who fails to conduct an independent and productive life develops low self esteem and competence since he believes in his inability to do things independently. Consequently depression, anxiety and even violence toward the parents arise in the family context. The parents of the dependent adult share to some extent his incompetence views and supply services and support which deepen the dependence and the incompetence beliefs of the dependent adult. Parents often feel despair, lake of hope and failure in their parental role.

The presentation will focus on (i) Triggers of entitled dependence and obstacles in reaching the subjective transition from teenagers to young adults; (ii) the Subjective experience of the dependent adults- "survival mode" state of mind in line of stress theory (COR; Hobfoll, 2001) which leaves the dependent adult in a defensive stand, trying to protect his already depleted resources; (ii) and the phenomenology of the dependant adult which includes lack of motivation, hope and competence and considerable emotional distress, alleviated anxiety and depression symptoms.