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To me, the true meaning of emerging adulthood I feel is almost a new social class, in that not everyone is afforded this opportunity. As it is known from age 18-25/29 years of age, it seems to be the new extended warranty of adolescent years. Some families can afford the extended warranty and other cannot. In the past a child that depended on their parents past the age of 18 or so that lived at home was lazy. But now we add a college education into this equation, and it has the term emerging adulthood. So, I do feel that emerging adulthood is like the song by Britney Spears "I'm not a girl, not yet a woman". It is the in-between phase until they become financially responsible and fully dependent on themselves. EA's have more time to explore who they are in a safe environment and reach goals more effectively rather than going out on their own and trying to achieve them.

It is becoming such a critical period or stage in life in the United States since higher education has increased from 14% to 60% and is due to our economics and culture in the U.S. that this can exist. This is now a critical stage since much of what is experienced through this period forms their cognitive development and who they will become from their academic achievements, social roles, romantic relationships experienced, self-focus, identity explorations, and a sense of what their capabilities are.

The career pathway and college issues for emerging adults have a few key factors that weigh in and this impacts their mental wellbeing and overall growth into adulthood. The EA's career path may change a few times through the issues experienced during college by the way they choose to explore their identity and how they try to figure out who they are and who they want to become. It's not an easy time for them. From the bottom up view, the foundations from childhood set the motion of this developmental stage dependent on these experiences. The way in which the childhood foundations can later develop in the issues the EA experience can resonate from predicting risk factors that fall under three domains, which are childhood risks, current contextual risks, and dispositional risks. For instance,

childhood risks associated with lower childhood socioeconomic status are at risk for developing poor mental health and poor academic attainment since they are more likely to hold a job to help support their academic path in comparison to EA's that are most likely having to work less that are from higher socioeconomic status families.

University students who indicate that they grew up in poor families are substantially more likely (odds ratios above 3) to screen positive for depression or anxiety disorders and to report suicidal thoughts (Eisenberg et al. 2007). Current contextual risks are the possibility of negative effects experienced through this stage; this will then affect the EA's resilience. Dispositional risks factors into the overall wellbeing.

Depending of the spectrum the EA is predisposed to (high to low socioeconomic status, amount of time they may need to work in addition to academics), they have an idea of a career path they want to pursue and are likely to change and pursue a different career path. College experiences that mold and form them, they develop a stronger identity and will pursue a career that they can realistically see themselves in. On the flipside, if they participate in experiences that will have negative outcomes that are risky such as binge drinking, driving fast, drug use, unprotected sex, etc., this is another issue and will ultimately affect their career path as their options may become limited by the results of their poor choices. On the other hand, choices as to become involved in the community, student organizations, positive routines/structure (if they need to work; developing effective time management skills to balance academics/work), and forming healthy relationships will raise their personal goals and self-confidence to decide to take their education further which will change their career path. Positive experiences will likely result in a positive overall growth into a strong sense of self and becoming well-adjusted as they enter the stage of adulthood and can navigate independently and effectively.

My take-away from the article we read on emerging adulthood and how this is hindering the overall growth and mental health development is they are missing important milestones because of not fully experiencing hardships due to these structure limitations. Adult commitments and responsibilities

are delayed. By having this fluid direction of ability to change directions so freely, I can see how this is impacting future romantic relationships and/or marriage. I feel that they are reluctant to work through the hard times that relationships encounter and quickly change relationships if they are not happy in them; and usually they “hop” from one relationship to the next.

Another factor in mental development is the lack of responsibility the EA experience as a result of parents that make it comfortable that they sometimes extend this stage, which places the EA at a disadvantage in life by not having the opportunity to develop the “tough-skin” needed to survive and navigate independently. I see this becoming so much more prevalent currently including in the military, because the EA having not developed the tough skin need in life and the increase level of sensitivity. It’s almost changing society by walking on eggshells to watch what we say, what we do, which pronouns we use, how we say it so that we don’t hurt their feelings and offend them.

In some respects, I appreciate this new view through the lens of an EA, as our society needed to advance ways of thinking, but in other ways the sense of entitlement and lack of taking responsibility is hindering our workforce productivity. By us allowing the degree of which I feel that EA is at now, they are lacking independent decision making, sense of being self-sufficient, accepting responsibility for oneself, and lacking financial independence. In a way I am grateful for my time in college to be able to experience the views of an EA and how to improve my tactics later in the helping field. I feel most adults will not have had this opportunity to really get to know how an EA “operates” mentally.

References

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