

Focus: GT Adolescents & Adults

“What happens when real life takes over and being gifted is not enough, nor matters to society in general?”

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Who am I & Why do I care?

- Licensed Psychologist with over 700 full batteries (assessments, observations & reports)
 - Expertise in testing and interventions with adolescents and young adults
 - Practice is filled with GT adolescents and adults that do not realize that **real** rules apply to them
 - Recognizable pattern of GT teens that do not believe **real** consequences apply to them
- Common Trends in my practice & experience with GT teens and adults:
 - sense of entitlement,
 - behavioral problems,
 - underachievement,
 - magical thinking that “it will all work out”
 - **overall** a “failure to thrive” into adulthood

All of a sudden, my child has changed

“Now, I feel like I am walking on egg shells”

“She throws things and pushes her siblings”

“She will not let me take away her phone”

“He will not let me control his internet time”

Greater Incidence of AXIS I Disorders

- Conduct Disorder
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder (need extensive testing for Bipolar)
- Substance Abuse Disorders
(Abuse & Dependence)

All labels that may or may not apply but can occur in any child and probably has, if the parent is honest about it.

Now they are an adult, over 18 and . . . the rollercoaster is going very fast – I just don't know what happened . . .

He was such a good kid and he had so much potential . . .

She was just beautiful – I never thought that this would happen . . .

His/Her friends are such “users” – how can he/she not see that?

Greater Incidences of AXIS II Disorders

Personality Disorders

Elevated occurrence of

Narcissism (Entitlement)

Borderline Tendencies

Histrionics

with Avoidance Behaviors & Obsessive/
Compulsive Behaviors

Commonalities Across Parental Clientele

- **Parents/Guardian/Grandparents**

Possibly there may be:

Dysfunctional family dynamics

Chaotic home life

Multiple geographic moves

Single family home

Many Times there exists a:

Lack of understanding of educational process &

Lack of ability to work with educational personnel OR

Overinvolvement with educational process &

Parental enmeshment with child's livelihood

Commonalities across Adolescent Clientele

Increase in family members in treating adolescent as younger than age

- Parents, extended family, friends – all cannot accept that child may be changing due to adolescence

Increase in family to minimize the actions of the adolescent

- Parents, family leaders minimize risk taking behavior, acting out behavior as “they were mad,” or “I was too harsh.”

Decrease in the ability of the adolescent child to accept responsibility for their actions

- Adolescent will deny and not accept responsibility and rebel against parent that is enforcing discipline
- May create triad or dyads against enforcing parent

Commonalities frequently seen with Young and Mid-Adult Clientele

- Increase in sense of ENTITLEMENT
 - “Rules are made to be broken”
- Inability to adjust to “regular” life
 - “I bring so much to the table, that society needs to appreciate me for my gifts”
- Inability to accept responsibility for actions
 - “I am not the same as others, I am different, therefore, different rules apply to me”

My recommendations: Early Intervention

Age of Child

- Age of child at time of intervention
 - The younger, the better

Parental Involvement

- Parental Involvement
 - Let's hope that there is parental involvement

Educational Involvement

- Intensity and Amount of structure in program
- Is there a tracking system? Or can the child opt out?

Lack of Early Intervention

What will eventually come out

- Adolescents
 - Diagnoses of GT may appear due to outside assessment as a result of possible LD or assessment for ADHD
- Adults
 - Diagnoses of GT may appear due to outside assessment as a result of career exploration, problems with others (civil or criminal)

Intervention is a nice word for **Guidance** and is a **Necessary** Part of Adolescent/Young Adult Life

- Most importantly – communication with teen/adult
- Set boundaries – with money, phone, internet, friends
- Talk to them daily about their life – realize that they still tend to think magically and may take you for granted
 - If that happens, don't be offended, they are normal, but self-absorbed – which is different from narcissistic.
- Don't back down on rules and regulations – ultimately, they will be treated like everyone else and you will not be able to bail them out.

Finally, be their friend, parent, confidant but not their enabler . . . Which also means buyer, supplier and endless meal ticket.