1. Objectives
   - Define Failure to Launch
   - Identify underlying causes and symptoms
   - Discuss responsibilities of the parent, adult child and family unit
   - Identify solutions for launching successful adult children

2. Definition from Failure to Launch movie trailer
   - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KZM3PRV0NM

3. Failure to Launch
   - Syndrome – Recognized in the research
   - Helicopter parents – Landing pad kids
   - Boomerang kids – Accordion families
   - 30 – 76% of 18 – 34 year olds
   - Adolescence extended 10 years
   - Causes distress/disability
   - Not developmentally or socially normative.

4. Outside Causes
   - Economy – Recession - Globalization
   - Real Estate costs
   - Job loss
   - Student and Parent Debt
   - Higher levels of education taking longer & costing more
   - Failure to prepare adolescent

   - Changes in roles, relationships, identity
   - Meaningful leisure, educational, and occupational options
   - Emotional and psychological dependence on caregivers
   - Parental involvement/advocacy
   - Communication,
   - Easily accessible comprehensive, up-to date information
   - Assessment, funding, and equipment and support

6. Transition for differently-abled persons
   - Self-determination and self-advocacy
   - Build a work resume & teach soft employment skills
   - Build social networks
   - Money management
   - Adult service providers
   - Housing, healthcare, education
• Challenge societal beliefs

7. Parent Issues
   • Over involved, Over anxious
   • Dysfunctional Interdependence
   • Fear and need for control
   • “Perma-parenting” – stunt adolescent to maintain identity
   • “Confusion mixed with guilt” – Falls (2009)

   • Live in Fear or teach child to think/act independently
   • Prolong immaturity or allow child to grow up
   • Allow boredom, delay gratification, accept, learn from consequences.
   • Work with parents to reduce anxiety- trust their parenting
   • Work with students to increase self-assurance, decision-making skills

   • Nurture Paradox - strong bio instinct to nurture offspring
   • Unlimited time and resources & totally focused on offspring
   • Issues of control and challenge
   • Live at home and contribute vs. live off parents
   • Dad’s - No more Mr. Fix it – teach the teen
   • Mom’s – Step-down mom – make teen contribute - learn the joy of nurturing

10. Responsibilities of Parents
    • What is best for my child?
    • Goals of parenting?
    • Goals of this stage of development?
    • Landing pad vs. push out of the nest
    • Expectations and reality

11. Role of Parental Involvement - Cullaty (2011)
    • Supportive involvement vs. intervention
    • Establish adult relationships with child
    • Relinquish unnecessary control
    • Foster responsibility

12. Adolescent - Adult Child Issues
    • Lazy or unmotivated
    • Overwhelmed
    • Lacking direction
    • Decreased personal control
    • Substance use/abuse
    • Mental illness
    • Avoidant
   - Qualities of avoidance, low self-esteem
   - Doubting ability to be independent/take risks successfully in an increasingly competitive society
   - Dependent on their parents/remain in comfort zone
   - Avoids thinking about the future
   - Reduced motivation to work on long-term goals
   - Seek comforts from instant gratification

   **Challenges:**
   - Homesickness
   - Managing freedom
   - Failing at College
   - Unemployment
   - Roommate Issues
   - Fear of the Future
   - Substance Use
   - Break ups
   - Indebtedness
   - Stress
   - Emotional Crisis

15. **Boomerang Kids: A Revealing Look at Why So Many of Our Children are Failing on their Own and How Parents Can Help - Pickhardt, C. (2011)**
   - Challenges to face and overcome
   - Return contract for living arrangements
   - Adversity develops strengths & lessons learned
   - Benefits of the Boomerang experience

   - Have a plan and deadline
   - Offer help not handouts – resentments → enabling
   - Foster strong financial habits – satisfaction and confidence from financial security vs. fancy lifestyle
   - Life raft not cruise ship
   - Allow anxiety, curb criticism
   - Don’t sacrifice parental finances

17. **Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and go do that, because what the world needs is people who come alive. ~Howard Thurman**

18. **Failure to Launch - Gibran-Hesse & McCracken (2009)**
   - Teach teen life skills – manage finances, etc.
   - Structure college experience
   - Teach employability skills
   - Help them become independent
   - Better psychological adjustment & life satisfaction
19. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world. (Woodrow Wilson)

Failure to Launch:
Helping Parents and Adult Children Gain Autonomy and Independence
Dawn M. Hosey, MS, LPC-S, NCC – June 21, 2014

References


