



Barriers and resources in transition to adulthood among at-risk young adults



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1. Emerging adulthood among at-risk young adults

Emerging adulthood represents an important developmental period (ages 18–25) in which young people acquire skills and experiences to take on adult roles and responsibilities. During that period they have to make significant decisions in their lives about housing, employment, career and marriage (Arnett, 2000). As opposed to the past, today these traditional milestones of adulthood take longer to reach. Also, in industrialized countries there are more possibilities for young people with regards to occupation and educational choices. As a result, young people today need more time in order to explore their identities and future possibilities. In addition, they experience instability in terms of accommodations and jobs and rely more on their families for practical and emotional support (Arnett, 2014; Settersten & Ray, 2010).

Emerging adulthood is a challenging period for most young adults. However, it is far more challenging for at-risk young people (Arnett, 2007; Shanahan, 2000). At-risk young adults (e.g., youth leaving care, abused and neglected youth) are especially vulnerable during the transition to adulthood given their maltreated history, abrupt move to adult life, and scant to non-existent parental support (Courtney & Hughes-Huering, 2005; Masten, Obradović, & Burt, 2006; Stein, 2006). Similarly to their peers, they must deal with many of the tasks and challenges of this complex period. However, unlike their peers, they are usually forced to confront these normative challenges in addition to further stressors including poverty, emotional difficulties, and stressful relationships with their parents (Arnett, 2007; Sinclair, Baker, Wilson, & Gibbs, 2005).

At-risk young adults emerge from a variety of settings, including: foster care, residential facilities, extended family's homes, and biological parents' homes. The literature indicates that the long shadow of their traumatizing history events extends into the stage of emerging adulthood, putting them at further risk of social isolation and social marginality (Munson, Lee, Miller, Cole, & Nedelcu, 2013). These studies indicate that their disadvantaged background influences their outcomes in core areas of their emerging adulthood. For example, studies of young adults who left care found that compared with their peers, their achievements are lower in education and employment, and they are more involved in criminal activities (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, 2001; Mason et al., 2003; Shimoni & Benbenishty, 2011; Munro & Stein, 2008). Other studies found that maltreated youth have low educational achievements and that they are less likely than

non-maltreated peers to start and to graduate from college (Blome, 1997). Also, young adults with a history of more psychological and physical abuse report more emotional and academic stress and lower social adjustment (Sandberg & Lynn, 1992).

Although earlier studies examined the status and outcomes of at-risk young adults during the transition to adulthood, only a few examined their needs and challenges during that time through the eyes of their caseworkers (Sulimani-Aidan, 2016c). Also, most of the studies focused on particular at-risk populations, such as former foster youth (Courtney & Hughes-Huering, 2005). This study aims to explore the challenges and barriers of young adults who deal with different types of risk circumstances – both those who lived with their biological families and in out-of-home placements – in order to learn more about their common challenges despite the different surroundings in which they were raised.

The identity capital model (Côté, 1997, 2002) asserts that multiple factors contribute to shaping and facilitating pathways to adulthood. According to the model, young adults need personal attributes and resources in order to succeed in their transition to adulthood. Therefore, alongside these young adults' unique challenges during this period, this study aims to explore the resources available to these young people that support their efforts to cope with the challenges of emerging adulthood despite their past and current risks and difficulties. Exploring these young people's barriers, needs and resources through their caseworker's perspectives could broaden our understanding of the experiences these vulnerable young people face during emerging adulthood and assist in the design of services and interventions to support them during this crucial period.

1.1. At-risk young adults in Israel: current status and policy

There are almost 970,000 young adults in Israel between ages 18–26 (12% of the general population). The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services estimates that 200,000 of them are at risk for various reasons. The definition of at-risk young adults is wide and includes different groups, such as young adults under public care, young adults who suffered abuse and neglect, and those who are involved with the law, substance abuse, or experience homelessness. Other causes of risk also include young adults who are at risk due to their ethnicity (e.g. Ethiopian immigrants, Arabs) and those in transition between societies including: Orthodox Jews who leave the

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religious community, or LGBTQ youth. It is estimated that only 30% of these vulnerable young people are being supported by government and private sector organizations, with partial and insufficient assistance in most cases (Katan, 2009; Reuven & Turgeman, 2015).

The relatively high number of at-risk young adults in Israel alongside their vulnerable backgrounds and complex transitions to adult life have prompted the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services to lead a national initiative to promote the status of at-risk young adults during transition to adulthood. Led by the Joint-Ashalim organization (for at-risk children and youth) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, this initiative is currently taking its first steps, and includes the collaboration of all the government ministries and organizations that are responsible for at-risk young adults. Although steps are being taken in this area by the responsible government agencies, there is no official policy in Israel with regards to at-risk young people. Therefore, different organizations are trying to meet the needs of specific groups according to their own professional experience and perceptions and available resources (Pessate-Schubert, 2015). In addition, some barriers prevent the existing services from meeting the needs of these vulnerable young adults. First, the difficulty to find them since they do not belong to formal frameworks. Second, the limited extent of these services. Third, the lack of professional workers who specialize in this life period. Finally, the scarce research about the needs of at-risk young adults (Pessate-Schubert, 2015).

The status of at-risk young adults during emerging adulthood is rarely studied in Israel (Sulimani-Aidan, 2016c). One of the main reasons is the lack of proper documentation and the poor coordination between the government agencies that are responsible for these young adults according to their type of risk. This is relevant especially among at-risk young adults who lived previously with their families and received therapeutic interventions in the community. Therefore, this study serves as an exploratory study aiming to fill in the missing gap in literature regarding these young people. Its findings could also shed light on the similarities and differences between at-risk young adults in Israel and those in other counties in their journeys to adulthood.

1.2. Research goals

This study aims to broaden our understanding of the needs and challenges at-risk young adults face in their emerging adulthood through the perspectives of their caseworkers. This information will contribute to the knowledge of the transition to adult life among vulnerable young people and could inform policy makers in designing services to support caseworkers and young adults in this complex and challenging period. Therefore, the research questions are:

1. What are the barriers and challenges at-risk young adults face in achieving their goals and future expectations during their emerging adulthood?
2. What are the resources that could help these vulnerable young people in their transiting to adulthood?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample included 30 caseworkers who work with at-risk young adults between the ages of 18–25 from 20 youth and young adults organizations throughout Israel (e.g., young adults under public care, young adults who suffered abuse and neglect, and those who are involved with the law, substance abuse, or experience homelessness). Other causes of risk also include young adults who are at risk due to their ethnicity (e.g. Ethiopian immigrants, Arabs) and those in transition between societies. For example, Orthodox Jews who leave the religious community, or LGBTQ youth.

Most of the caseworkers were women (70%) with bachelors degrees,

Table 1
Case workers' demographics (N = 30) age.

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	9	30%
Female	21	70%
Education		
M.A	7	23%
B.A	18	60%
High school diploma	5	17%
Length of mentoring		
Up to 1 year	15	50%
2–3 years	8	27%
3–more	7	23%
Field of education		
Social work	12	40%
Education	6	20%
Other fields (e.g., sociology, criminology, anthropology)	12	40%
Organization's main goal/population		
Supervised apartment/mentoring for youth without family support	11	37%
Academic and career support	6	20%
Others (volunteering, supporting asylum seekers, supporting at-risk young women)	10	33%
Supporting ultra-Orthodox who left religious life	3	10%

mainly in the fields of social science and social work. Half of them (50%) mentored the young adults for two years or more, and reported being mentored once a week themselves. The caseworkers worked in different organizations that help young adults in various risk circumstances, including: care leavers, youth who lack family support, young adults struggling with addiction, and at-risk young women (Table 1).

2.2. Procedure

The study was reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Tel Aviv University. The caseworkers were interviewed in a national learning center for children and youth at risk, where caseworkers occasionally visit in order to strengthen their knowledge and skills in working with vulnerable populations through professional courses. Two researchers approached all of the caseworkers who work with at-risk young adults, explained the study goals, and asked for their consent to participate in the study. Among the 35 caseworkers, five refused to participate in the study. The 30 caseworkers who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study were interviewed. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and each interview lasted approximately 25 min.

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed, consisting of open-ended questions on the difficulties and challenges in working with at-risk young adults. First, the caseworkers were asked about their own personal characteristics (age, position, length of mentoring period, the characteristics of the young adults they worked with). The caseworkers were then asked about the future aspirations of the young adults they mentor and the challenges they face in achieving their goals. Finally, they were asked to describe the resources these young people have to support them during this period. The questions were as follows: 1. What are the aspiration and future goals of the young adults you work with? 2. What are these young adults' difficulties, barriers and challenges in achieving these goals? 3. What could help the young people you mentor in their transition to adulthood?

2.3. Data analysis

The main method used to analyze the caseworkers' interviews was theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is used to identify patterns and themes within qualitative data. This analysis allowed the use of pre-existing theoretical frameworks, such as in the area of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2007). Analysis was performed by three

readers (the two interviewers and the leading researcher), who interpreted the caseworkers' answers and extracted central themes that expressed their perceptions of the young adults' challenges, needs and resources. The readers employed an incident-by-incident coding technique, in which every portion of the interview transcript was read and coded for important themes. This was followed by a focused coding process, during which the incident codes were re-read and analyzed in order to identify larger themes (Charmaz, 2006). During these phases, the readers analyzed the interviews and then met to discuss themes and resolve any discrepancies by discussion. Finally, to further check the validity of the findings and to provide feedback to the caseworkers and to the heads of their organizations, a written report describing the study findings was provided to the participants and their feedback was integrated into the final data analysis.

3. Results

3.1. Struggling their way: young adults' challenges in transition to adulthood

The caseworkers' descriptions of the young adults' barriers and challenges in emerging adulthood included several themes: survival mode, lack of family support, low self-efficacy, and limited knowledge regarding their possibilities and rights.

3.1.1. Survival mode

The young adults' daily struggle to survive was a central theme in the caseworkers' interviews. By "survival mode", they referred mainly to the lack of financial resources and tangible support. This theme included both the young adults' poor socioeconomic history and their current financial shortage. As one of the caseworkers who works in a volunteer organization for at-risk young people described: *"They must provide everything for themselves. Their rent, food, studies, cloths. In many cases they help their parents and siblings financially."* Another caseworker who mentors young adults in a program that helps them complete their GEDs after a three-year mandatory army service explained: *"They are absorbed in their daily war to survive. They struggle each day for basic things such as shelter and food."*

3.1.2. Complex relationships with the family

The absence of family support among these young adults was a central theme in their caseworkers' descriptions. Besides the lack of the family's ability to support them financially, it seemed that their parents did not have the ability and resources to support these young people in the important tasks and decisions they must take during this period, including educational and career choices. Not only are these young people unable to lean on their families for support or guidance; in most cases, they invest a great deal of time and energy in supporting their families' different emotional and material needs. A caseworker who works with former residents of group homes described: *"The relationships with their families, especially their parents, are very complicated and hold them back. They need counseling from their families, but they don't have anyone to consult with... a lot of them support their families."*

Other caseworkers emphasized the troubled history that these young people have with their parents, which casts a shadow on their lives as adults, including a history of neglect and maltreatment. In some cases, the relationships with their families are also harmful and include rejection and contempt, as in cases of ultra-Orthodox who leave the religious fold. A caseworker who works for an organization that supports young adults who left the traditional religious community described: *"As far as their parents are concerned, they are not a part of the family anymore. They are 'damaged goods'...they are despised. They are all alone without their family's support or acknowledgment."*

3.1.3. Low self-efficacy

Low self-esteem and lack of self-belief also emerged as major themes among at-risk young adults. The caseworkers emphasized that these

young people face their current challenges with little or no self-belief in their value, skills and potential. In most cases, they are not aware of their own abilities. A caseworker who mentors at-risk young women explained: *"They struggle with very low self-esteem...there are things they won't try even if they have the potential to succeed."* It appears that the low self-esteem and self-efficacy these young people have due to their traumatic history and life experiences leads to fear of failure and much confusion in making important decisions about their lives. A caseworker who works with young adults who graduated from foster care explained: *"They don't trust themselves and their self-confidence is very low."* Another caseworker who works with young adults who left the ultra-Orthodox community mentioned the connection between their history and current status: *"Their personal background is experienced as a personal failure. That leads to a very poor start, therefore their self-esteem is very low, and they don't believe in themselves. It also causes them to be less motivated and to be unstable emotionally."*

3.1.4. Poor awareness and realization of rights

Lack of awareness regarding their possibilities was a central theme in the caseworkers' interviews. The young adults were described as unaware of suitable training programs, services or interventions designed for them in particular: *"They are unfamiliar with ways to help them make progress in their life. Their knowledge is very limited about the possibilities in this phase of their life... in many cases when they have a problem that relates to government offices or when they need help with their vocational training or studies, they don't know where to go or who to ask"* (a caseworker who works with young adults struggling with addiction).

The case workers also mentioned the fact that in some cases the young adults might be aware of their rights and possibilities but make no effort to claim them because of their daily struggle to survive and the difficulty to plan their future. As one of the caseworkers who works with at-risk young adults without family support said: *"The young adults I mentor must provide for themselves. They don't have their family's financial support or help in making decisions about their future. They don't have the privilege to 'get lost' and try different possibilities. That's why they prefer to continue to work wherever they find themselves today instead of 'wasting their time and money' on long-term professional training or further education."*

3.2. Resources young adults need in transition to adulthood

The caseworkers' descriptions of the resources young adults need during their emerging adulthood revealed two major themes: expansion of possibilities and a profound mentoring process.

3.2.1. Expansion of possibilities

One of the main themes that the caseworkers emphasized was exposing the young adults to possibilities they were not aware of or that they were facing difficulties to pursue. This theme included several subthemes:

3.2.2. Enhancing/fostering formal possibilities

This subtheme focused on expanding the young adults' present and future possibilities through the mediation of the caseworkers. The purpose is to connect them with formal services in different areas and needs in their lives, including: increasing the young adults' access to services and programs, helping them claim their rights in different government offices, and connecting them with services that could help them financially.

3.2.3. Enhancing/fostering informal possibilities

Encouraging the young adults to strengthen their informal ties in order to broaden their possibilities was another important theme that emerged. The caseworkers emphasized the importance of helping the young adults to lean on their extended family members and to use their social ties with their close friends, peers, and their community, in order

to learn about new opportunities and to be supported in the process of their decision-making in important areas of their lives: “We need to encourage them to seek the support of others... close relatives, siblings. They need to hold on to social ties from their past and work on positive relationships that can help them emotionally and support them in reaching their future goals” (a caseworker who works with youth adults in a supervised apartment).

3.2.4. Mentoring

The caseworkers described mentoring relationships with the young adults as a key resource these young people need in transition to adult life. Within the mentoring process the caseworkers described two aspects that are important in order to properly meet the young adults' needs. The first aspect included extensive counseling and information that is relevant to their needs and goals. Caseworkers emphasized the importance of helping the young adults learn how to lead an independent adult life, including: financial management, commitment to their workplace, and household management. The second aspect involved the caseworker's ability to help the young adults learn to own their strengths, abilities, skills, and inner forces of which they were not fully aware, in order to increase their motivation and self-competence. This aspect also includes the caseworkers' acting as role models and supportive figures that express their belief, trust in the young adults, and constantly encourage them to dream and pursue their future goals. As one caseworker said: “The mentoring we provide is very helpful because it forces them to deal with things and work their way through them. They need someone to be there for them and listen but also to set higher expectations... Once you expect more of them and give them the ‘springboard,’ they will use the opportunity” (a caseworker in a youth organization for social change). Another caseworker who works with young people who left the ultra-Orthodox community said:

“It is very important that they have someone to reach out to. They need someone who believes in them. We have to show them that we believe in them...with an emphasis on being nonjudgmental. Accept them as they are. Make them feel welcome and never give up on them... let them believe in their ability to try new things even if there are difficulties. Show them that they can succeed!”

4. Discussion and implications for practice

This study addressed the challenging transition to adult life of at-risk young adults through the perspectives of their caseworkers, seeking to reveal the barriers these young people face during emerging adulthood and the resources that can help them succeed despite adversity.

The journey into emerging adulthood includes many challenges, such as taking on more adult roles and responsibilities, exploring participating in social networks, and pursuing employment opportunities and additional education (McCabe & Barnett, 2000; Seginer, 2008). At-risk emerging adults are especially vulnerable during the transition to adulthood. They are less ready for the transition and usually forced to confront these challenges with little or no support (Benbenishty & Schiff, 2009; Stein, 2006). In addition, they enter this complex period with many more stressors and prior and present difficulties such as poverty, maltreatment, instability in housing, and emotional distress (Arnett, 2007; Collins, Spencer, & Ward, 2010; Sulimani-Aidan & Benbenishty, 2011). Despite the diverse risk conditions and surroundings of the young adults in this study, the challenges they face in emerging adulthood are common to most of them. Their caseworkers' descriptions emphasized the “survival mode” in which these young people operate during this period due to their lack of financial resources and familial support.

In the context of extended transition into adulthood, the family plays an increasing role in providing financial, practical and emotional support. However, at-risk young adults often experience disconnected, problematic, or unsupportive relationships with their families

(Biehal & Wade, 1996; Sinclair et al., 2005). This situation forces them to concentrate on their daily needs instead of planning and working on achieving future goals that can lead to their social mobility. This study's findings strengthen this aspect and emphasize concrete and financial barriers with which at-risk young adults struggle during emerging adulthood. In addition, the caseworkers' descriptions demonstrate the link between these concrete barriers, lack of support, and limited possibilities and aspirations.

The need for support and guidance in this period is also evident as one of the most important aspects in the young adults' self-reports (Geenen & Powers, 2007). For example, in the study by Goodkind, Schelbe, and Shook (2011), former foster youth reported that one of the greatest challenges they faced in emerging adulthood was receiving continued emotional and social support. Therefore, one of the implications for policy is to acknowledge these young peoples' need for further support through their twenties, and extension of the state's responsibility for their wellbeing even after they are officially considered adults. This can be achieved by creating follow-up frameworks and experiencing transitional situations to give them the time and psychological space they need for the transition.

According to Arnett (2000), one of the central characteristics of emerging adulthood is that it is the age of identity exploration and the age of possibilities. The current study shows that at-risk young adults during this defining period have many limitations that prevent them from exploring their future possibilities. In most cases they are not aware of them or do not have the resources, self-belief, or ability to pursue them. Their limited personal and social assets narrow their possibilities as adults, and likely have a profound impact on the way they perceive their future and fare in many areas of adult life. Similar insights were also found in other studies of at-risk young adults. For example, an earlier study among Asian and Latin American immigrants showed that they experienced less opportunities for exploration than their peers who were born in the USA (Fulgini, 2007). In another study of young adults from poor neighborhoods the young adults reported that they followed their current career paths mostly because they did not have enough opportunity, choice, or resources to choose otherwise (Hendry & Kloep, 2010). With regards to the Israeli context it is important to note that young adults join a mandatory army service in the early phase of their emerging adulthood (between ages 18–21 for young men and 18–20 for young women). Therefore, as opposed to their peers worldwide they might face these challenges later, especially concerning their identity exploration and focus of future possibilities.

In sum, findings indicate that the features of emerging adulthood with regards to this period as a period of possibilities exploration is not evident or very limited among at-risk young adults. Allowing these young adults to fully experience the possibilities of this period calls for acknowledgment of their further vulnerability during this time and the designing of services and programs that serve as transitional bridges from adolescence to emerging adulthood and from emerging adulthood to adult life.

4.1. “Transitional bridges” to adulthood

One of the main resources raised by the caseworkers in order to help at-risk young adults during emerging adulthood is the expansion of their possibilities. Those were done in several ways including: increasing their accessibility to services and programs; helping them to claim their rights; strengthening their informal ties, and encouraging them to lean on their social ties in their extended family, close friends, peers and in their community. Earlier studies that focused on promoting the resilience of at-risk young people had argued that building resources of formal and informal social support is critical for these young people (Collins et al., 2010; Courtney & Hughes-Huering, 2005). However, these studies focused mainly on the emotional, concrete and social meaning of these social networks. This study adds the unique role of the formal and informal relationships for at-risk young adults in relation to

the challenges of this crucial period. It is evident that these young adults need those ties. First, in order to be able to explore their identities and strengthen their social ties; and also in order to broaden their future possibilities and take on more adult roles and responsibilities.

The absence of familial support, which was another main theme in the study, also narrows these young peoples' possibilities and chances of identity exploration. Not only are these young people unable to lean on their families for support or guidance, to the contrary, in most cases it is the youths who invest much time and energy in supporting their families' various emotional and concrete needs. These findings illustrate the differences between at-risk young adults and their peers in the general population during emerging adulthood. They show that at-risk young adults have less time, opportunities and legitimacy to invest in their self-exploration. Moreover, their peers in the general population are entitled to be self-focused during this period (Arnett, 2000). Therefore, they experience increased freedom from social control and decreased parental support, guidance, and monitoring (Arnett, 2000). At-risk young adults, however, need guidance and monitoring mainly because they have less time to linger and their transition to adulthood is accelerated. Their un-gradual move to adulthood was also described by Stein (2006), who explored the status of care leavers after emancipating from the care system. Stein also argued that for these young adults there is the expectation of instant adulthood. As a result, they often miss out on the critical preparation stage that could have provided them with time for freedom, reflection, risk-taking and identity exploration. These aspects are evident in the descriptions of the caseworkers in this study and emphasize the need of these young adults for “transitional bridges” into adulthood.

One such transitional bridge is the presence of a mentor. Mentoring was the most important resource for at-risk young adults that was raised by their caseworkers. Mentoring is described as essential in order to deal successfully with the many challenges they must face in this period. The two aspects that are most important in the mentoring process include counseling and information essential for this time period, as well as support and interventions that increase competence, abilities, and self-confidence. Mentoring was also found in other studies to be an important factor in bridging the unmet needs and deficits of emerging adults from the public systems (Greeson & Bowen, 2008; Sulimani-Aidan, 2016a, 2016b). In addition, profound mentoring relationships were linked with positive social, cognitive and affective processes that strengthen outcomes in adulthood (Ahrens, DuBois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano, 2008). Therefore, whether they are natural or assigned mentoring relationships, they have the potential to become “transitional bridges” into adulthood for at-risk young adults. According to current mentoring models (Rhodes, Reddy, Roffman, & Grossman, 2005), mentoring relationships are expected to tailor the support they provide to the unique developmental needs of the youth and provide a safe environment for self-exploration, reflection, and self-expression. Young adults who do not have their family and community support during emerging adulthood must be provided with meaningful mentoring features that will allow them to explore different ways of thinking and acting, while eventually learning to operate more effectively without their support and guidance (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). This also might allow the young adults to cope gradually with the challenges of this period and offer them an alternative secure base and a safety net that their non-at-risk peers have naturally.

With regards to policy and practice implication, this study's findings emphasizes the need to extend services to meet the needs of these vulnerable young adults. Varied and holistic resources to support them in transition to adulthood. This conclusion relates to the identity capital model (Côté, 1997, 2002) that highlights the need for multiple personal attributes and resources in order to cope successfully with the challenges of emerging adulthood. Meaningful mentoring relationships serve as a central key to promote many of these aspects (Sulimani-

Aidan, 2016b; Sulimani-Aidan, 2016c; Greeson & Bowen, 2008). In light of their central role in supporting the successful transition into adulthood of at-risk youth, services should invest more resources in designing programs based on long-term meaningful mentoring. Also, services should invest more resources to help their caseworkers effectively improve their skills and expertise in meeting these young peoples' complex needs. This can be achieved both by providing support for their emotional needs in dealing with the young adults' harsh life circumstances and by providing ongoing resources to help them support the young adults' various concrete needs (Sulimani-Aidan, 2016c).

5. Summary

Transition to adulthood is a crucial period in which young people must make significant decisions in their lives regarding housing, employment, career, and marriage (Arnett, 2000), through participating in social networks and pursuing employment opportunities and higher education (McCabe & Barnett, 2000; Seginer, 2008). As an exploratory study, this study was based on a relatively small sample and focuses only on the perspective on the caseworkers without distinction between youth in care and youth who remain with their caregivers. However, this study indicates that at-risk young adults from different types of risk and surroundings experience similar challenges and barriers during this period, which prevent them from achieving the developmental tasks of this defining and crucial period. Transitional bridges in the form of mentoring figures and the expansion of these young people's possibilities could strengthen their resilience and enable them to effectively negotiate the challenges and opportunities of adult life.

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