

## The struggles for the younger generation

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### Introduction

The younger generations have been struggling with mental health issues for a long time. Trying to find your place in the world while dealing with expectations set upon you is difficult and can lead to such mental suppression that they either get completely stunted and never reach their potential or get dealt a worse fate. This research will be expanding on the mental health struggles of youths. It's important to continue to research this topic to protect not just the youths in our country, but the whole world as well.

The film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*(2018) and *Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse*(2023) accurately portrays the difficulties that young teens can have discovering oneself, by showing how to deal with responsibility and the opinions and expectations of others, it shows the immense struggles that young teens have finding their way in the world, and the ways it can impact them.

Within the movie they use situations that are prevalent within the world that make growing up more difficult for teens, while putting its own spin on it due to the main character having superpowers. Regardless of that addition the movie speaks on the situations in a way that any person can relate to. Those being the difficulty of change within a young person's life, be it changing schools or moving homes, the struggles with expectations, and the difficulty of juggling responsibilities.

The usage of these real-world situations allows for the idea to go further than those who relate to the issues, reaching those who can research why these ideas and situations are so relatable to the younger generation, and how to prevent these from getting out of hand.

### Body Paragraphs

Throughout life change can be considered necessary, but it also affects mental health no matter what type of change it is. Especially for younger people being forced to deal with whatever change is happening without having a say in it. This is shown throughout the movie in multiple ways, and each way shows how it affects the main character's life and his mind. For example, at the start of the movie we see Miles attending a new school he's been enrolled in because his parents believe it is what's best for him and his future. Now attending a new school is difficult in its own sense and will be expanded upon later. What's important is the way the school is structured, having students live in dormitories for the school week and going back home on the weekends. For any young person this is an unprecedented change that is extremely difficult to adjust to, moving is always something that younger people deal with. While it can be a necessary change it doesn't take away from the difficulty it brings into young people's lives. In *Health and Place* it is stated, "Evidence suggests that individuals who are exposed to moving house, report poorer mental health than those who do not." (Morris et al. sc. 1.1). While it can be a necessary change it doesn't take away from the difficulty and mental pain it can cause someone, especially younger people. Another example used within the movie is the changing of schools as previously stated above; in the movie Miles is forced to change schools. At the start of the movie, we see Miles attending a new school he's been enrolled in because his parents believe it is what's best for him and his future. It's shown at the beginning as Miles is taken to his new school that he feels moving schools is an unnecessary change and feels it would be better to stay

at his old school. While most children have difficulty accepting change it is not without reason. When faced with moving it's difficult to find ways to socialize with people you have never met and being separated from people you've grown close with can cause its own set of mental issues. Once again in *Health and Place*, "... children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to deleterious mental health effects of moving." and "Such effects are thought to operate through a number of pathways including weakened social ties, disturbance to social networks, social stress, and social isolation..." (Morris et al. sc.1.1). This is clearly shown within the movie as well, as Miles struggles with gaining new friends and feeling like a social outcast. On top of that he struggles with even speaking to his own roommate going through the whole first movie not speaking a single word to him until the very end.

Expectations are something every person deals with, while important they can also negatively impact a person's psyche when done in an improper way. In the first movie Miles' parents set expectations that he will become someone exceptional, forcing their expectations for that on him. Even at the start of the movie his father states that he does not have a choice for where he goes to school, denying him the ability to think for himself. While it is shown that it is because he doesn't want Miles to become like his uncle who he deems a criminal, when parents place such expectations on their children it leads to negative mental issues for their children, making it harder for them to focus on their school like the parents' desire. "The effects of parental demands on mental health were shown to be impacted by themes such as coping strategies (15%) and stress and anxiety (40%) among respondents." (Iqbal 1237). Obviously, expectations aren't always a dreadful thing, sometimes they are used to spur on greater success and innovation in younger people, as shown within the movie Miles attempts to be better because of how he sees his mentor act. According to experts, "... children are greatly influenced by role models that are a consistent part of their lives..." (Froiland et al. sc.1.3). However, even with this it is shown throughout the movie that the expectations set upon Miles do more harm than good until he can take his life into his own hands, outside of expectations set upon him, showing that expectations have more cons than pros. It is important to allow adolescents to decide for themselves who they want to be and what they want to do with their lives, forcing expectations overloads their minds, making them struggle with deciding who they want to be.

Responsibility is something that every person has regardless of age, it is also an integral part of any Spider-man story, this story is no different. Teens have the difficulty of learning how to juggle their social lives, school, extra-curricular activities, and jobs, basically an introduction into adulthood. While *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse(2018)* does a great job of showing the struggles Miles deals with considering the expectations and changes within his life *Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse(2023)* expertly shows the struggles teens have with juggling responsibilities. With one of the first scenes of the movie, it shows Miles getting better at dealing with the expectations set upon him but still struggling with his responsibilities by showing him good, but not great grades, and being late for his father's birthday. This leads to an argument between him and his parents which any viewer can relate to. While it is important to be able to learn to juggle responsibility, too much can be too much for adolescents to deal with, leading to negative outcomes. According to the National Library of Medicine, "As hours of employment increase, adolescents may experience difficulties in juggling the demands of work and school, as well as other activities." (Protecting youth at work sc.4.1). Obviously, adolescents need to learn how to deal with responsibilities within their lives but forcing too much on them is nothing but detrimental.

## **Conclusion**

This article was meant to highlight the difficulties that adolescents have with finding their own place in the world while also dealing with their own handful of mental issues. It is important to allow adolescents the space they need to grow without being overbearing, as in doing so leads to negative consequences. In this project it was found that adolescents are dealing with entirely too much, be it from parental expectations, moving house, or juggling responsibilities. In doing so it leads to negative mental states in adolescents, which can lead to even more dastardly problems later within their lives. This work is important as it highlights the struggles adolescents go through and can aid in helping them throughout their lives to allow them to become more complete people. It is important to do so to allow the future generations to better learn how to deal with the mental health issues that plague them, rather than continuing the cycle of struggle and pain. Future research could continue to use Spider-Man's influence to highlight the struggles of adolescents, and by doing so spurring on research into the mental health of adolescents to aid future generations.

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