

Filial Maturity: Analysis and Reconceptualization

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The concept of filial maturity has often been utilized to describe the nature and quality of the adult parent-child relationship. This paper will critically evaluate filial maturity as a central construct for understanding filial relations, present a reconceptualization of the concept, and identify areas for further empirical and conceptual elaboration.

KEY WORDS: Adult development; intergenerational relations; caregiving.

INTRODUCTION

Concomitant with increases in life expectancy and the overall aging of the population, there has been a dramatic shift in the nature and longevity of familial relationships (Farkas & Hogan, 1995; Hagestad, 1988). The adult parent-child relationship now lasts at least twice as long on average as the relationship between parent and young child (Jarvik, 1990) and brings with it unique developmental tasks as parent and child move together through adulthood and often into old age (Mancini & Blieszner, 1989).

Research and conceptual development regarding the nature and significance of adult parent-child relationships have focused primarily on relatively static, interactional aspects of the relationship including the following: *patterns of interaction* (Lawton, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 1994; Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982; Schaie & Willis, 1995; Shanas, 1979); *assistance provided* (Harootyan & Vorek, 1994; Hoyert, 1991; Kronebusch & Schlesinger, 1994; Mancini & Blieszner, 1986); *feelings of affection* (Lawton et al., 1994; Mancini & Blieszner, 1986; Quinn, 1983; Schaie & Willis, 1995); and *norms regarding appro-*

prate filial behavior (Borland, 1982; Brody, Johnsen, & Fulcomer, 1984; Seelbach, 1984).

Relatively little attention, however, has been given to the changing nature of parent-child dyadic relationships as they evolve through the life course, particularly in relationship to adult development (Brubaker, 1990; Giarrusso, Stallings, & Bengtson, 1995; Scharlach, 1987). Analysis of the developmental nature of filial relationships during adulthood highlights issues such as the *fluidity of familial relations* (Brubaker, 1990; Williamson, 1983), the *continuity or discontinuity of parent-child relationships* (Weishaus, 1980), the *dialectical tension between dependence and independence during adulthood* (Lowy, 1989), and the *relationship between intrapsychic and interpersonal development* (Weishaus, 1980).

The concept of "filial maturity" (Blenkner, 1965) has been proposed to describe the changing nature and quality of the adult child and parent relationship. In a classic, seminal discussion of adult familial relations, Blenkner introduced filial maturity as the developmental stage when the adult child relates to his or her parent as an individual with personal needs, outside of a strictly parental role. Prior to this description, role reversal was the primary conceptualization used to characterize filial relations in later life. In differentiating role reversal from filial maturity, Blenkner described role reversal as a pathological relational development between the adult child and parent, not a normal developmental phase. Consistent with Blenkner's observations, the role-reversal perspective has been criticized by others (Brody, 1990; Gurland, 1990;

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Seltzer, 1990) as a conceptually and clinically inaccurate description of most filial relationships.

According to Blenkner's formulation, most adults in their forties or fifties experience a "filial crisis" at a time when parent and child relations shift. At this point, the provision of assistance is no longer unilateral and the parents begin needing support and assistance from their children, creating the possibility of a new, more mature, filial relationship:

Healthy resolution of the filial crisis means leaving behind the rebellion and emancipation of adolescence and early adulthood and turning again to the parent, no longer as a child, but as a mature adult with a new role and a different love, seeing him for the first time as an individual with his own rights, needs, limitations, and a life history that, to a large extent, made him the person he is long before his child existed. (Blenkner, 1965, p. 58)

This paper will examine the concept of filial maturity as a central construct for understanding adult parent-child relationships. Specifically, the paper will critically evaluate filial maturity in terms of its intrapsychic and interpersonal components, its developmental conceptualization, its relationship to filial responsibility and behavior, and its individual versus dyadic nature. Based on this analysis, we propose a reconceptualization of Blenkner's (1965) original concept of filial maturity and identify areas for further empirical and conceptual elaboration.

CRITIQUE OF BLENKNER'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF FILIAL MATURITY

Although Blenkner's (1965) original description of filial maturity provided an innovative framework for broadening the understanding of filial relations, the construct's clinical and theoretical applicability is limited in a number of conceptual areas, including the following: (1) linkage of filial maturity primarily to concepts of individual autonomy and individuation, (2) assumptions regarding the developmental nature of filial maturity, (3) confounding of attitudes and behavior, and (4) failure to differentiate individual and dyadic processes.

Individual Versus Relational Constructs

Filial maturity embraces the degree of psychological differentiation and autonomy an adult child and parent achieve in relation to each other, includ-

ing the ability to accept the needs, limitations, and abilities of the other. Blenkner (1965) described filial maturity in terms of an adult's ability to relate to a parent as an individual with personal needs, outside of a strictly parental role; this suggests that the adult child must also be able to experience herself or himself as psychologically separate, able to relate to the parent outside of the confines of the child role.

Historically, the emphasis on individual differentiation as a salutary factor in filial relationships has derived primarily from a clinical orientation. According to Bowen (1977), differentiation of self is related to an individual's ability to function in an autonomous, self-directed manner without feeling controlled or responsible for others. Healthy interpersonal relationships require that the "self" be clearly differentiated without emotional fusion to others. It is proposed that, in familial relations, once the differentiation of self is achieved, parent and child relations are enabled to transform into "person-to-person" relationships (Bowen, 1977).

Several theorists have argued that an individual's differentiation of self is a key component of adult psychological health and maturity (Bowen, 1977; Bray, Harvey, & Williamson, 1987; Williamson, 1981). Bray et al., for example, found that individuation, measured by the degree of the adult child's responsibility for self and lack of parental control, was associated with lower levels of physical and psychosomatic stress symptoms. Caregiver strain among adult daughters has also been found to be lower when they have maintained a greater sense of autonomy in the parent-child relationship (Scharlach, 1987). Moreover, adults whose relationships with their parents were marked by a greater need for parental approval and emotional reassurance have been found to experience stronger residual grief reactions 1 to 5 years after the parents' deaths (Scharlach, 1991).

It should be noted, however, that the conceptualization of filial maturity in terms of psychological differentiation reflects a value orientation that regards optimum health and growth in terms of self-oriented constructs such as mastery (Gough, 1987; Jahoda, 1950) and autonomy (Bowen, 1977; Loevinger, 1976; Williamson, 1983). This value orientation reflects clear Western and gender biases, with its emphasis on the individual as opposed to the collective or interpersonal experience. Studies of gender differences have demonstrated that men tend to view themselves as more separate than do women, while

women tend to define themselves more through their interpersonal relationships and relational capacities (Frank, Avery, & Laman, 1988; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1992). In terms of moral orientation, for example, Gilligan found that males are more likely to value individual rights and responsibilities, while women tend to place an increased emphasis on the care of and concern for others.

A more complete conceptualization of filial maturity needs also to include interpersonal and communal values such as acceptance and love, warm interpersonal relationships, self-extension, intimacy, and mutuality (Allport, 1961; Josselson, 1992). Research has documented the centrality of human relationships and interpersonal relatedness in understanding psychological development and has illustrated that such constructs as autonomy and connection are not simply dichotomous, but rather both exist within a "relational matrix" (Josselson, 1992). Kegan (1982), for example, has identified a phase of development beyond psychological autonomy, in which interindividual sharing and communality transcend individual boundaries. The "interindividual self," rather than simply perceiving self and other as autonomous individuals, experiences the possibility of a shared experience in which individuals are experienced "not as radically 'other,' but as expressions of the self's own experience" (Souvaine, Lahey, & Kegan, 1990, p. 257).

Research findings support the importance of affectively meaningful filial relationships. Studies consistently have found that most adults report positive relationships with their parents (Barnett, Kibria, & Pleck, 1988; Lawton et al., 1994), and that the affective quality of those relationships is significantly related to the psychological well-being of the adult child (Baruch & Barnett, 1983). Better parent-child relationships have also been found to be associated with a decreased risk of parental mortality (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1991). Moreover, daughters whose relationships with their mothers most closely approximate their perceived ideal mother-daughter bond have reported higher levels of overall life satisfaction (Steindel & Rabin, 1982). Caregiver strain also has been found to be lower when the filial relationship is more positive (Horowitz & Shindelman, 1983; Walker, Martin, & Jones, 1992).

These findings suggest that Blenkner's (1965) conceptualization of filial maturity, which focuses primarily on individual individuation, needs to be complemented by relational attributes (e.g., intimacy,

contact and assistance, and filial responsibility) in order to develop a more comprehensive and useful model of healthy parent-child relationships in adulthood (Bengtson & Black, 1973). Intergenerational family systems approaches, for example, posit that the development of healthy familial relationships requires "relational autonomy" (Cohler, 1980), "interdependence and mutuality" (Cohler & Scott, 1987), and "invisible loyalties" based on appreciation and reciprocity (Boszormenyi-Nagi & Spark, 1973).

Developmental Nature of Filial Maturity

Maturity, derived from the Latin word *maturitas* meaning ripeness, embodies a sense of development, suggesting the successful completion of prior developmental tasks. Filial maturity is assumed to be a developmental process, facilitated by active involvement in providing assistance to an older parent and serving as preparation for subsequent developmental tasks:

Using developmental terminology, the filial crisis may be conceived to occur in most individuals in their forties and fifties, when the individual's parents can no longer be looked to as a rock of support in times of emotional trouble or economic stress but may themselves need their offsprings' comfort and support. Successful accomplishment of the filial task, or performance of the filial role, promotes filial maturity which has its own gratifications, different from those of genital maturity, and leads into and prepares for successful accomplishment of the developmental tasks of old age, the last of which is to die. (Blenkner, 1965, p. 57)

Filial maturity requires the ability to conceive of one's self as well as one's parents in a more objective, accurate, and differentiated manner, capabilities that only become available in the postconventional stages of adult psychological development, according to ego development theory (Kegan, 1982). Consistent with this perspective, Williamson (1981) has proposed a phase of adult development when the ability to see one's self and one's parents more realistically leads to the possibility of establishing and maintaining personal autonomy in the family of origin, breaking down traditional hierarchical boundaries that previously structured the parent-child relationship. This transformation and redistribution of power establishes the autonomy and "personal authority" of the adult child and allows for a peer-based relationship to develop. Through the negotiation of intergenerational power

structures, the adult child begins to humanize and relate to parents as coequals (Williamson, 1983). Like Blenkner (1965), Williamson hypothesized that this process occurs during an adult's forties.

It is questionable, however, whether the development of filial maturity necessarily occurs as part of a "filial crisis" during one's forties or fifties as hypothesized. Substantial evidence has now been assembled that midlife is not typically a time of crisis and that age does not have a consistent association with identity development and consolidation (Whitbourne, 1986). Neugarten (1986), moreover, has argued that age is becoming virtually irrelevant as an indicator of the timing of life events. This may be particularly true with regard to assistance for older parents, given the variability in childbearing ages as well as the ages at which older persons require assistance (Himes, 1992). With this in mind, Brody (1985) has maintained that parent care, while normative, cannot be considered a developmental stage with a specific age-linked period.

Filial maturity, rather than constituting a distinct developmental stage, may well represent a continuation of the deindividuation process of adolescence and early adulthood, whereby childish images of the omnipotent parent are replaced by more realistic and differentiated representations of personal and parental strengths and weaknesses (Frank et al., 1988; Josselson, 1980). This process is rooted in the emergence and consolidation of a stable personal identity during adolescence (Damon, 1983). A number of studies have documented that at least some young adults begin to develop a more mature relationship with their parents during their twenties, marked by an empathic understanding of their parents' unique needs and abilities (Bengtson & Black, 1973; Frank et al., 1988). Moreover, Selman's (1980) work on the development of interpersonal conceptual models has suggested that even teenagers may begin to conceive of parent-child relationships in terms of autonomy and interdependence. However, the fact that most adolescents and young adults are still concerned about meeting parental role expectations and continue to see their parents as potential sources of tangible and emotional assistance (Damon, 1983; Youniss & Smollar, 1985) has suggested that the acquisition of filial maturity requires the development of an adult capacity for personal and interpersonal autonomy that builds upon, and seems somewhat qualitatively different from, the individuation process that typically occurs during adolescence.

Filial maturity, if truly developmental, might be expected to be reflected in better parent-child relationships in midlife and beyond. Existing evidence, however, suggests that parent-child relationship quality typically peaks during early adulthood, as children marry and have children of their own, and then declines during midlife, as parents begin to encounter health problems (Bengtson & Black, 1973; Richards, Bengtson, & Miller, 1989). Moreover, middle-aged children's perceptions of the parent-child relationship do not more closely approximate their parents' perceptions, as might be predicted if they indeed had acquired greater filial maturity (Richards et al., 1989). The quality of parent-child relationships in midlife seems to be related most closely to the degree of previous relational stability during childhood rather than to the frequency of contact or the current developmental tasks of the parent or adult child (Weishaus, 1980). These findings raise serious questions regarding the developmental nature of filial maturity, at least in terms of its impact on parent-child relationship quality.

Also unclear is the issue of whether filial maturity is conceptually distinct from life-long personality development or whether it is an expression of developmental maturity in the particular relationship of child to parent. Like filial maturity, many models of adult psychological development (e.g., Levinson, Darrow, Klein, & McKee, 1979; Loevinger, 1976; Ryff, 1986) encompass such factors as autonomy, self-determination, self-regulation, self-evaluation, and interpersonal orientation. While this issue requires empirical assessment, the distinction between filial maturity and general developmental maturity seems to be a useful one. By focusing exclusively on adult child and parent relations, filial maturity helps to elucidate the interweaving of life cycles between and across generations that has been discussed by Erikson and others (Erikson, 1959), including identification of specific factors most likely to impact later life events such as caregiving and the death of an adult child or parent. However, it seems premature to assume that qualitative changes necessarily occur in parent-child relationships during midlife or that whatever changes do occur are necessarily developmental.

Filial Attitudes and Behavior

Blenkner's conceptualization of filial maturity involves adults taking responsibility for helping to assure their parent's well-being, "being dependent on

and therefore being dependable insofar as his parent is concerned" (Blenkner, 1965, p. 57). Adults are expected to attempt to meet the physical and emotional needs of their parents in a crisis situation as well as assisting parents with ongoing needs associated with health limitations (Kivett & Atkinson, 1984).

Indeed, numerous studies have documented frequency of contact (Lawton et al., 1994; Shanas, 1979) and intergenerational exchange of instrumental and emotional assistance (Harootyan & Vorek, 1994; Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982; Mancini & Blieszner, 1986) between adult children and their parents. The frequency of contact and amount of assistance exchanged, however, has not been found to be a consistent predictor of parental well-being or relationship satisfaction (Dowd & LaRossa, 1982; Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982; Mancini & Blieszner, 1989) nor has it been found to be associated with the psychological well-being of the adult child (Weishaus, 1980).

While Blenkner (1965) attempted to differentiate filial maturity from role reversal, her conceptualization relied on a perspective of filial relationships that portrays a parent as dependent upon his or her adult child. This perspective has been criticized as being a conceptually and clinically inaccurate description of most filial relationships, typically representing a pathological relational development between adult child and parent rather than a normal developmental phase (Brody, 1990; Gurland, 1990; Seltzer, 1990).

Assistance between adult children and their parents is not unidirectional, but instead largely reciprocal (Hoyert, 1991). Well into their seventies, parents continue to give at least as much assistance to their adult children as they receive (Kronebusch & Schlesinger, 1994). Older adults, rather than desiring and benefiting from dependency on their adult children, apparently prefer to preserve as much personal autonomy as possible (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987). Moreover, older adult parents typically hold lower expectations regarding filial responsibility than do their adult children (Hanson, Sauer, & Seelbach, 1983).

These findings suggest that helping behaviors and attitudes regarding filial responsibility are independent constructs that may best be examined separately from filial maturity itself. The concept of filial responsibility, for example, may more productively be reserved for situations involving parental illness or disability. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979, 1980) would suggest that a natural concomitant to such ex-

periences would be filial anxiety, defined by Cicirelli (1988) as "a state of worry or concern about the anticipated decline and death of an aging parent as well as worry or concern about the ability to meet anticipated caregiving needs, either prior to any caregiving or during the provision of care and in anticipation of further parental decline and additional needs for care" (p. 478). The adult child's anxiety regarding the ability to provide caregiving assistance has been found to be associated with lower levels of psychological (e.g., internal control orientation) and instrumental (e.g., education and employment) resources and higher perceived levels of parental care needs, whereas anxiety regarding the parent's well-being is associated with the intensity of the parent-child relationship and the extent of parental health limitations (Cicirelli, 1988).

Individual Versus Dyadic Construct

While filial maturity has been conceptualized primarily as a task of adult children during midlife, it is possible also to conceive of related developmental tasks for older adult parents. At a minimum, it has been suggested that parents must have the "capacity to be appropriately dependent" if their adult children are to be "dependable" (Brody, 1985). In one exploratory study of older adults' subjective perceptions of themselves as parents, most indicated a change in the parent-child relationship, viewing their children more as friends than subordinates (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987). Three-fourths indicated that they maintained a parenting role, but did not rely on such a role as a major source of identity.

Surprisingly little empirical attention has been given to the manner in which older adult parents view their relationships with adult children. In one of the few studies to address their perspective, older parents indicated that those qualities they desired most in their relationships with their adult children included affection, consideration, open communication and a "noninterfering closeness" (Blieszner & Mancini, 1987). In a previous study, Mancini (1979) found that, in later life, parents' feelings of competence in the parental role were associated with their feelings of overall well-being.

The limited research to date suggests that parental perspectives may differ from adult children's experiences in terms of the nature and quality of the filial relationship. For example, older adult parents

tend to describe their filial relationships much more favorably than do adult children (Gesser, Marshall, & Rosenthal, 1985; Giarrusso et al., 1995; Richards et al., 1989). In a longitudinal study of the quality of parent-child intergenerational relationships over a 20-year period, parents consistently reported higher levels of affectual solidarity than the children (Giarrusso et al., 1995). The interpersonal nature of the relationship and the potentially differing experiences and perceptions of the parent and adult child suggest the importance of examining parental maturity as well as filial maturity.

Filial maturity can also be conceived in part as an attribute of the parent-child relationship, rather than only the individuals involved. The dyadic relationship itself can be understood as having properties of its own, apart from the individual perspectives of the adult child and parent. For example, mother-daughter dyads may represent a special bond whose potential for closeness and conflict differentiate it from other gender pairings (Scharlach, 1987). From this perspective, it is important to examine the level of maturity of the parent-child relationship as well as the levels of filial and parental maturity.

Conceptual Reformulation

As we have seen, Blenkner's (1965) original description of filial maturity, while providing an innovative framework for broadening our understanding of filial relations, has several conceptual limitations: (1) Healthy filial relationships involve self-oriented components (i.e., autonomy and differentiation), but also relational components (i.e. intimacy and mutuality). (2) Filial maturity reflects aspects of psychological development, but may not necessarily be developmental. (3) Filial maturity reflects concern about parental well-being, but not necessarily sole responsibility for caregiving behavior. (4) The perspectives and tasks of adult child, parent, and relationship dyad may differ.

Based on this analysis, we propose a reconceptualization of Blenkner's (1965) original concept of filial maturity in an effort to articulate further and clarify the concept and differentiate it from a number of different, although related, dimensions of filial relations (e.g., filial responsibility, filial behavior, parental maturity, and relational maturity). We suggest the following definitions:

Filial maturity: The capability of an adult child to engage in intimate, empathetic, compassionate, and reciprocal child-parent relationships, viewing parents as individuals with needs, limitations, and abilities.

Filial responsibility: An attitude of personal obligation to meet parental needs (Schorr, 1960; Seelbach, 1984).

Filial behavior: Specific and observable activities performed by adult children in relation to parents.

The conceptual formulation presented here is preferred because it clearly differentiates intrapsychic and interpersonal processes, attitudes, and behaviors, as they concern filial relations. According to this approach, filial maturity is a psychological dimension of the adult child, encompassing constructs of autonomy as well as intimacy. It is an attribute of the individual rather than the dyad and it is differentiated from the characteristics of a parent. In so doing, the locus of the constructs is clearly established, accurately reflecting the term filial-child to parent.

In order to incorporate the interactive aspects of filial relations, parallel sets of constructs can be established to encompass the parental and relational perspectives. *Parental maturity*, for example, can be defined as follows: The capability of a parent to engage in intimate, empathetic, compassionate and reciprocal parent-child relationships, viewing adult offspring as individuals with needs, limitations, and abilities. Parental maturity, as a psychological construct of the parent, reflects the role of the parent in the filial relationship and provides for the differentiation of characteristics and levels of maturity between adult children and parents.

Relational maturity can be defined as follows: The degree that a dyad (in this case, the adult child and parent) is able to maintain each member as an individual with needs and abilities in the context of intimate, empathetic, compassionate, and reciprocal dyadic relationships. Relational maturity highlights the dyadic and interactive aspects of the parent-child relationship and permits the overall assessment of the organizational and reciprocal nature of filial relations. If the adult child and parent relationship is to achieve a sense of relational maturity, it is proposed that both dyadic partners need to be capable of "warm relating to others" (Allport, 1961), the ability to engage in intimate, empathetic, compassionate, and reciprocal relationships. It is likely that, by defi-

tion, relational maturity and reciprocation will be low in the absence of filial and parental maturity. Under certain circumstances, particularly if there are disparities between levels of filial and parental maturity, relational maturity provides for an assessment of such differences and of the interaction between the two. In addition, such a conceptual base allows for an analysis of relational maturity in the parent and adult child dyad as compared to other adult dyadic relations such as partners, intimate friends, and siblings.

CONCLUSION

Blenkner's (1965) original description of filial maturity, while providing an innovative framework for broadening our understanding of filial relations, was found to have several conceptual limitations, including its emphasis on individual autonomy but not interpersonal intimacy, its developmental assumptions, its expectations of parental dependency, and its failure adequately to differentiate filial, parental, and dyadic perspectives. In an effort to articulate further and clarify the concept of filial maturity, we have proposed a new set of definitions designed to incorporate more directly both interpersonal and intrapsychic constructs and differentiate filial maturity from related dimensions of filial relations (e.g., filial responsibility, filial behavior, parental maturity, and relational maturity).

Filial maturity was redefined as the ability of an adult child to engage in intimate, empathetic, compassionate, and reciprocal child-parent relationships, viewing parents as individuals with their own needs, limitations, and abilities. This definition was preferred because it clearly established filial maturity as a psychological dimension of the adult child and as an attribute of the individual rather than the dyad. This enables assessment of parent-child relations from the orientation of both adult child and parent, an analysis lacking in the majority of existing research. Further, this conceptualization allows for the differentiation of filial maturity from a number of related concepts, such as filial responsibility and behaviors, parental maturity, and relational maturity.

Further elucidation of filial maturity as an adult psychological construct will require clarification through additional empirical investigation. To date, relatively little is known regarding the developmental life cycle of filial relationships. Additional research

regarding the life cycle of adult child-parent relationships is needed in order to differentiate changes in filial relationships from potentially related changes in other adult relationships, which may reflect more fundamental intrapsychic developments. While existing research does suggest that filial relations do at times exhibit an affective quality different from an adult child's other relationships (Barnett et al., 1988), there is insufficient evidence to determine how, and to what extent, changes in filial relations might differ from changes in other adult bonds.

It also is important to determine characteristics likely to be associated with specified indicators of filial and parental maturity. For example, the available theory and research suggest that an adult child's degree of filial maturity is apt to be affected by the continuity of secure bonds within the filial relationship (Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Weishaus, 1980), the psychological resources of the adult child (e.g., internal control orientation and sense of mastery) (Cicirelli, 1988), and the adult child's social resources (e.g., support network and involvement in other primary relationships) (Barnett et al., 1988).

Further theoretical development and application are also needed to guide research and the interpretation of findings. A number of specific theoretical perspectives (e.g., trait, attachment theory, developmental perspectives, and life events models) hold promise for explaining more adequately the development of filial relations and the acquisition of filial maturity. Empirical research is needed regarding the association among intrapsychic, interpersonal, and behavioral dimensions of filial relations and their relationship to later life events (e.g., caregiving and parental death). In addition, an assessment of filial maturity in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status is needed. For example, although some research suggests that young adult women experience less emotional autonomy with their parents than do men (Frank et al., 1988), it is not known whether these differences continue into midlife. Research designs that sufficiently sample diverse populations are necessary in order to determine the suitability of filial maturity constructs across populations as well as to assess conceptual bias.

Drawing upon the seminal work of Margaret Blenkner, we have attempted to articulate further and clarify the concept of filial maturity and thereby develop a more comprehensive framework for understanding adult filial relations. Additional empirical research is needed to examine the utility of filial ma-

turity as an adult developmental concept and to evaluate its relationship to personality development and parent-child relationships across the life cycle.

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