

# Empty Nest Syndrome

Thushara Ninan

Lecturer, TMM College of Nursing, Kaviyoor

**Abstract:** *Empty nest syndrome describes a collection of symptoms including loneliness, grief, and loss of purpose that some parents experience when their children need to step out their comfort zone (home) in order to pursue higher education, career or relationships, however, it is not commonly considered as a mental health condition. This article reviews the prevalence, etiology, general manifestations, stages and measures to ease the impact of empty nest syndrome. The positive impact of empty nest syndrome such as self - acceptance, positive relation with others, personal freedom, environmental mastery, a new purpose in life, continued personal growth, an emptiness can promote freedom and improved relationship.*

**Keywords:** Empty nest syndrome, yoga, loneliness

## 1. Introduction

The nest of familial love is like a nest of birds, when right time will knock the opportunity, the young ones will fly away. As this is the way of life. Parent must deal with the absence of family members, friends and love when children have flown from the nest of their family to build their future. However, for some people, especially for the primary caregiver in family, this would be a time of emptiness and sadness that can easily tip in to depression if unheeded.<sup>1</sup>

Empty nest syndrome describes a collection of symptoms including loneliness, grief, and loss of purpose that some parents experience when their children need to step out their comfort zone (home) in order to pursue higher education, career or relationships, however, it is not commonly considered as a mental health condition. Interestingly, later on in their life it could lead to mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. The term empty nest syndrome was first introduced in 1914 by the writer Dorothy Canfield, and then popularized in 1970s. This syndrome portrays life of birds who nest a comfortable place for their family members especially for their off springs, sadly one day younger ones will grow up and become sound enough to fly from the nest, Leaving their parents alone<sup>2</sup>

### Prevalence:

The problems of empty nest elders are more acute in central and southern Kerala, while north Kerala it is relatively more surviving vestiges of the joint family system, provided more comfort emotional security to the elderly.

### Definition

Empty nest syndrome is a feeling of grief and loneliness parents may feel when their children move out of the family home, such as to live on their own or to pursue a higher education.

### Causes of Empty Nest Syndrome

Some common causes of empty nest syndrome include:

- **Loss of identity:** For many parents, their identity is closely tied to their role as a caregiver. When their children leave home, they may feel a loss of purpose and struggle to find a new sense of identity.

- **Change in routine:** With children out of the house, parents may find themselves with more free time and a change in daily routines. This shift can be challenging for some individuals who have grown accustomed to a busy family life.
- **Relationship changes:** The departure of children can also lead to changes in relationships, particularly with a partner or spouse. Some couples may struggle to adjust to a new way of relating without the presence of their children.

### General Manifestation

Empty nest syndrome is a feeling of loneliness, it is an unpleasant feeling in which a person feels a strong sense of emptiness and solitude resulting from inadequate level of social relationship. The phenomena of loneliness occur in people of all ages but may be particular problem in elderly. Empty nest syndrome can have a significant impact on a parent's health and relationship. They may

### Behavioral symptoms

- Worry
- Sadness
- Emptiness
- Uselessness
- Feeling loneliness
- Feeling no longer having a purpose in life
- Anxiety over the child welfare guilt. Parents may experience symptoms associated with clinical depression, include difficulty in concentrating, inability to seek or derive pleasure, indecision, excessive worry or anxiety.

### Physical symptoms

- Hot flushes
- Night sweat
- Fatigue
- Change in eating pattern
- Some may spend time in the child's room.

### Stages of Empty Nest Syndrome

While the stages of empty nest syndrome can vary from person to person, there are generally three main stages: grief, relief, and joy. <sup>[2]</sup>

- 1) **Grief:** In the grief stage, parents may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, and loss. This is a natural response to the absence of their children and

the changes in their daily lives. Parents may mourn the loss of their role as primary caregivers and the close relationship they had with their children.

- 2) **Relief:** After the initial grief, some parents may start to feel a sense of relief. This stage is characterized by a newfound freedom and the ability to focus on personal interests and goals. Parents may enjoy the extra time and space they have to themselves and may find new hobbies or activities to engage in.
- 3) **Joy:** As parents adjust to their children being independent and living their own lives, they may experience a sense of joy and pride. This stage is marked by a shift in perspective, where parents can appreciate the accomplishments and growth of their children. They may feel proud of the individuals their children have become and find joy in seeing them thrive.
- 4) Empty nest syndrome affects people in different ways.

It is important to understand that these stages do not always happen in the same order for every parent. Each stage can happen at the same time or in different orders. Some parents do not experience all three stages.

Factors that can affect it include the bond they have with their kids, the help they receive, and their own personal well - being

#### Common Measures:

*“Give your stress wings and let it fly away” - Terri Guillemets.*

There are some tips to ease the impact of empty nest syndrome:

- 1) Prepare for the departure
- 2) Set goals
- 3) Get regular exercise.
- 4) Talk about feelings
- 5) Learn relaxation techniques
- 6) Get professional help.
- 7) Adequate sleep.
- 8) Consider nest fillers.

## 2. Conclusion

The parents dealing with empty nest syndrome experienced a profound sense of loss that might make them vulnerable to depression alcoholism, identity crisis, and marital conflicts. The positive impact of empty nest syndrome such as self - acceptance, positive relation with others, personal freedom, environmental mastery, a new purpose in life, continued personal growth, an emptiness can promote freedom, improved relationship<sup>4</sup>

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