



*Balancing Life's Transitions Through Help, Hope and Healing*

## **When the Empty Nest Isn't So Empty Anymore Adjusting to the "Boomerang Generation"**

LINCOLN, Neb. – Thursday, March 5, 2009 – Just when you're getting used to an empty nest, the baby birds come back home to roost. They're members of what's described as the Boomerang Generation – young adults ages 18 through 35 who move out but end up back on your doorstep.

Maybe they're in between jobs or relationships, need childcare to continue working or go to school, or are waiting for acceptance into college. It could be that they've never left home – either fearing the unknown or taking comfort in a sense of entitlement without responsibility.

Currently, 16 million American families have a child 18 years or older living at home – a 70 percent increase from 1995. Fifty-six percent are male and 43 percent are female.

In these challenging economic times the number of adult children remaining home longer or returning home will only increase. As a result, children postpone dreams of independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency and parents give up personal and financial freedom, and a chance to reconnect as a couple.

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Because aging adults are living longer, and finances are tight, there's also a growing number of seniors moving in with their adult children for assistance. No matter what the

circumstance, the family in transition is a reality that creates great emotional burden, disappointment and fear as each member changes course to accommodate the new living arrangement.

The key to remaining a strong, healthy family is creating boundaries within the family system and supporting one another.

**Set Limits** Provide guidelines that every family member understands and agrees on to create a happy home. Clear, open, honest communication is the lifeblood of family life. The goal is to set up rules so all members are content and taken care of.

**Compromise is Imperative** With a variety of ages under one roof, it's important to work out differences. For example, it's not uncommon to set reasonable curfews for adult children. Everyone needs uninterrupted rest; rules are created so the home will be quiet for a period of time.

**Plan Meal Time** With this blending of generations, meal plans and times should be established. Give each member roles and responsibilities so everyone is contributing and labor is distributed fairly.

**Set a Budget** The budget should include contributions by all members, whether it's paying part of the rent, buying food or taking on a utility bill. Young adults need to be taught financial responsibility and understand how much running a home costs. Aging parents need to know where their money is going and know the cost of living. Keeping all members informed of finances and allowing them to contribute reinforces a sense of dignity and self-esteem.

As a family works together to support each member and work toward smooth transitions, values are reinforced and individuals feel good about themselves and family life.

For many families this unexpected change is overwhelming and stressful.

Professional help can be sought as a solution to gaining support in setting boundaries, rules, roles, responsibilities and budgeting.

For more information, contact Red Tent Counseling at (402) 570-4605.