**COVID-19 PANDEMIC: PARENTING AN ADULT CHILD WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

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 **Objectives:** COVID-19 has altered everyone’s lives, creating uncertainty regarding the ‘new normal’ we will experience in the future. Precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include the closure of schools, recreation facilities, businesses (cafés/theatres), and public places (parks), as well as the cancellation of social events. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals have been confined to their homes, which created drastic changes to the everyday life of adults with disabilities as well as the mothers who maintain the role of primary caregiver. During these unprecedented times, where many support services have been cancelled or severely altered, it is important to understand the immediate and future needs of these caregivers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the everyday experience of parenting an adult child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and an intellectual disability (ASD-ID) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methodology:** Ten mothers (Mage = 49.5 years) of adult, male children (Mage = 25.5) diagnosed with ASD-ID completed a semi-structured interview (35 to 90 minutes; April - October). Nine of the adult children co-resided with their mothers and one resided in an alternative living arrangement. A strengths-based perspective, which emphasizes abilities and resources, was utilized in this study to counter the traditional deficits-based perspective that focuses on impairment, weakness, and pathology. As such, non-directive probes were utilized to acquire information on resources, care, and alternative measures that otherwise might not be mentioned. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

**Results:** Three themes emerged, accompanied by seven subthemes, and were given meaning through participant quotes. The first theme, **Parenting Through a Pandemic**, included: (1) *talking to their child about the virus* - "I really felt [virus] was scary. But [child] doesn't understand that.", (2) *disruption to routine* - “it's been a huge, huge adjustment for [child] because he's used to going to a day program every day.", and (3*) social isolation* - “But he is isolated, totally isolated in a way, he's not with anybody.” The second theme, **Resilience**, encompassed: (1) *adaptive strategies* - "We've altered the activities, like he's been doing some baking. And I got some activities, educational activities to work on, manipulatives and things to keep him occupied.” and (2) *finding silver linings ­*- “We're all spending more time together…So, for me, I'm enjoying having this dinner at the table every night, like we don't usually have that.” Finally, the third theme, **Future Considerations**, consisted of: (1) *financial hardship* *-* “[funding] still another issue. It's never enough to get me through the year.”and (2) *parental recommendations* - "I think that where there should have been more support, is in places of mental health for families, it's hard enough to be in the home.”

**Discussion/Conclusion:** TheCOVID-19 pandemic has forced mothers to provide around-the-clock care for their adult children with ASD-ID, while maintaining their other family and employment obligations. While the COVID-19 virus has produced obstacles, mothers have utilized various strategies to compensate for the changes in available services and programs, illustrating great perseverance during this unprecedented time.

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