

Social withdrawal, what it is and how to recognize it

Social withdrawal is an increasingly widespread manifestation of **suffering** among **adolescents** today.

This is a very complex phenomenon which, if it initially involved young people in Japan, where the phenomenon of **Hikikomori** (from the Japanese: HIKU to stand back + KOMORU to withdraw, to isolate oneself) has taken on almost epidemiological dimensions, it now also represents in Europe and Italy one of the current psychological problems linked to the **adolescent developmental crisis**.

The phenomenon of social withdrawal concerns those adolescents who tend to increasingly **reduce their friendships** and, over time, also their **attendance at social and scholastic contexts**, sometimes ending up locking themselves in their room. Contacts with real people are often replaced with **frenetic activity on the web** that includes playing video games, watching films, and a series of virtual contacts.

Withdrawal can be accompanied by experiences of shame and impotence, towards peers and above all towards one's own bodily self. The room in which they take refuge acts, on the one hand, as a place of protection from concrete experiences, and on the other, as a field for self-experimentation online.

In some cases, in addition to the main symptoms of social withdrawal such as dropping out of school, signs that concern the psychosomatic sphere may appear (for example: altered or inverted sleep-wake rhythms, headaches, stomachaches, etc.)

The project psychologist deals with consultancy activities aimed at parents, educators, teachers and social-health workers who intercept situations at risk of social withdrawal:

>> SCHOOL AREA

- support to the school for the construction of good internal practices useful for managing cases identified at risk of withdrawal.
- consultancy for individual children at risk of withdrawal, for teachers and for internal school operators.
- creates the network between the school and the health, social and educational resources of the area.

>> FAMILY AREA

- Counseling for parents of adolescents at risk of social withdrawal, in collaboration with the local health network.