



EMOTIONAL REGULATION OF PARENTS WITH INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED CHILD

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ABSTRACT Emotion regulation is the unconscious or conscious process used to increase, maintain, or decrease one or more components of an emotional response. Because an intellectually disabled children in families display positive and negative influence on family and demand of family for some particular needs. In such situation the role of the parents is very important in looking after a child with a disability. Mild to moderate level of stress was reported by most of the parents. If there was more than one mentally challenged child. higher levels of behaviour disorder, lower age of the mentally challenged and lower income of the family then the family would experience higher stress. The decrease in allocated time for preferred activities was positively related with time spent in executing prescribed therapeutic activities but on the other hand family well-being may be negatively affected. Parents who feel competent in their parenting tasks are less likely to perceive their child as problematic. Problem focussed coping mechanism proved to be very helpful to the parents in dealing with stressful situations.

KEYWORDS : emotional regulation, parents, mental illness, intellectually disable

INTRODUCTION

The role of the parents is very important in looking after a child with a disability. It has been found in the research that talks about the importance of activating that role and the need to overcome obstacles that prevent parents from playing their important role with institutions specialized in building their children's personalities through partnership in their upbringing and education (Sandlund, Dock, Häger, & Waterworth, 2012). According to Berkson (1993), behavioral and developmental features of individuals with ID, such as a lower self-concept differentiation, poor sense of self-efficacy and low competence perceived in several areas of their life, seem to contribute to a greater emotional vulnerability and increased difficulties in terms of behavioral self-control and emotional self-regulation. Emotion regulation is the unconscious or conscious process used to increase, maintain, or decrease one or more components of an emotional response (Gross, 1999). The peer group significantly contribute to emotion regulation of child during middle childhood, This is the time when child learn how emotion regulation can be helpful in maintaining social relationships. Appropriate expression of intense or difficult emotions can elicit peer support and too much expression of emotional intensity can push people away at times (Fabes, et al, 1994). Behavioral problems in mentally retarded children will limit the opportunities for mentally retarded children to be able to have meaningful social interactions, acceptance from those around them and their role in the environment (Siperstein, Parker, Bardon and Widaman, 2007).

Rao (2008) also admitted the various on needs of the parents of mentally challenged children. Some of them require money, some supportive services and some need information, etc. Intellectually disabled children in families display positive and negative influence on family and demand of family for some particular needs. Upadhyaya and Havalappanavar (2008) assessed Fathers and mothers of 628 mentally challenged individuals for their perceived stress. There was higher level of stress among mothers as compare to fathers. Mild to moderate level of stress was reported by most of the parents. Stress for care, social stress and emotional stress was higher among parents of disabled child. If there was more than one mentally challenged children. higher levels of behaviour disorder, lower age of the mentally challenged and lower income of the family then the family would experience higher stress. Honig and Winger(1997) conducted a study involving families of 65 preschoolers with mild to severe ID. Study revealed higher the level of parental stress when there was more severe the child's intellectual impairment. Further, in one of the studies Peer & Hillman concluded that parents of normally developing children faced lower level of stress as compare to the parents of children with intellectual disabled child.

According to Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, (1998a) parents react with supportive and reassuring behaviors or, conversely, may avoid contact with the child, minimize the emotional experience. Common needs of most families with children having disabilities include informational demands, knowledge, and skills regarding how to collaborate with professionals, maintaining parental influence over

services, and understanding their children's rights (Bailey et al. 2006). In their study (Reichman, Corman, & Noonan, 2008) found that the couple with the need for specialized services and the out-of-pocket medical expenses, represents a significant financial burden for many parents raising a child with a disability. Ahmadpanah (2001) have shown mothers of mentally retarded children compared to those of the normal children have generally lower health levels, more stress and lower life satisfaction and psychological well being level. Ego resiliency of fathers of children with Down syndrome, has been assessed by Kózka, Przybyła-Basista (2018). Ego resiliency can be understood as an inner mental structure which assist people to cope with difficult circumstances. It has been observed in the study that the fathers who expressed lower levels of such coping style reported poor psychological well-being where as the fathers revealing higher levels of ego resiliency reported good psychological well-being.

In a recent study, McConnell et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between parent-mediated intervention for children with disabilities and family well-being. It has been seen in the study that parents shorten the time allocated to family, leisure and employment-related activities for adjusting a slot in the daily routine in order to implement therapeutic activities suggested by the therapist. The decrease in allocated time for preferred activities was positively related with time spent in executing prescribed therapeutic activities but on the other hand family well-being may be negatively affected. It was noteworthy that the change family well-being was greater than the changes observed adaptive behaviour deficits of the child. The researchers came to the conclusion that mental health professionals must compare the advantages and disadvantages of parent-mediated intervention. They should also keep in mind over all routine of the parents in suggesting therapeutic activities for children with disabilities.

Recommendations

In order to provide better care to intellectually disabled child it is essential for parents to maintain physical wellbeing, suitable housing, short-term care and skills in dealing with their child's sleep problems. The formal support services should extend the helping hand to facilitate the emotional wellbeing parents. More specifically, professional counselling support and contact with other parents were identified as important outcomes for parents with disabled children (Beresford, Rabiee & Sloper, 2007). According to (Tkach, & Ortega, 2020), parents who successfully raise children with disabilities are those who have been provided with accurate information about the nature of the child's disability.

Parents who feel competent in their parenting tasks are less likely to perceive their child as problematic and more satisfied (Coleman & Hildebrandt Karraker, 2000). Positive reappraisal was found to be a significant independent predictor of positive perceptions in mothers of children with an intellectual disability. (Hastings et al., 2002). If a family's potential and strengths are emphasised during a difficult time, it can help that family to move away from self-blame, helplessness and a sense of failure, while establishing a feeling of pride, self-confidence and a "can-do" attitude in family members (Walsh, 2009, 2012). The

parents cope with different situation differently. Problem focussed coping mechanism proved to be very helpful to the parents in dealing with stressful situations. Contrarily, emotion focussed coping mechanism adopted by parents may cause mental health issues.

The parents were having a high level of stress hence proper counselling therapy and training should be provided for parents for the most appropriate form of parenting style (Tripathi, 2015). Consequently, Payne, *et al.*, 2015) considered resilience of parents as the capacity to provide a scientific method of parenting to their children even in the difficult circumstances. The parents who are highly motivated appears to be high in resilience as the child requires support from the close family. If the parents accept, adapt and get used to their disabled child the parent can easily provide education to their children. Parents who are able to accept the difficult situation would be motivated to give good care to their children. This is because they are confident that their support would have positive influence on their children.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, the parents are the primary care givers for the intellectually disabled child. The behavioural and the emotional issues of the child may affect the emotional regulation of their parents and hence their mental health may be negatively affected. Problem focussed coping mechanism proved to be very helpful to the parents in dealing with stressful situations. Parents need to adopt strategies to regulate their emotions.

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