

Metaphors as A Tool for Expressing the Parental Experience of Children with Disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perception of the parental experience of parents of children with disabilities using metaphors. This study was conducted in Israel with a group of 150 parents of children with a variety of disabilities participated in the study. The research tool was a questionnaire in which the parents were asked to present a metaphor that best expresses their personal perception of parenting a child with a disability. In the analysis, four themes were determined: "Pressure cooker, race and survival" - the difficulties of coping during growth; "New and unknown journey" - an unknown journey that includes learning and surprises; "A roller coaster with ups and downs" - the fluctuations in raising a child with a disability; and "Empowering gift" - the positive aspects of parenting a child with a disability. Most of the metaphors focused around the themes of the difficulties of coping and fluctuations in raising a child with a disability. The research findings may mainly help multi-professional teams to develop awareness of the parents' experience and formulate ways of assistance and support that will lead to coordinated and collaborative work with them.

Keywords: the parenting experience, parents of a child with a disability, a child with a disability, metaphors