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Supporting Parents with Psychiatric Disabilities and Promoting Recovery: An International Challenge

Peter van der Ende
Hanze University of Applied Sciences

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Supporting Parents with Psychiatric Disabilities and Promoting Recovery: An International Challenge

Peter van der Ende, M.Sc., Senior Researcher/Psychologist, Hanze University of Applied Sciences & Joanne Nicholson, Ph.D. Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Introduction
Parenting is a significant life role for adults with psychiatric disabilities. Not only is success in this role emotionally and physically exhausting, but success as well as possible as parents would seem to the majority to be the most important. Research on the prevalence and needs of parents with psychiatric disabilities in two countries, the United States and the Netherlands, provides the framework for developing and testing interventions. Essential program components include supports as well as possible as parents would seem to this role a normal life goal for many, but functioning at least as likely to be parents as are adults without psychiatric disabilities.

Generic Parenting Challenges
- Housing
- Employment
- Money management
- Child care
- Transportation management
- Health care
- Relationships

Challenges Specific to Parents with Mental Illness
- Stigma and misconceptions about mental illness
- Medication
- Hospitalization
- Relationships with relatives
- Advocacy for self and children
- Child’s perception of parent’s illness
- Communication with the child

U.S. National Comorbidity Survey: Prevalence of Parenthood

Parents & Their Children

- Parents with psychiatric disabilities
- Children of parents with psychiatric disabilities
- 290 Million people
- 50%

The Netherlands — 16 million inhabitants
- 60%
- 80%

Parents & Their Children

- Project First: 50% of parents in the Netherlands
- Project Second: 50% of parents in the United States

Parents

- Parents with psychiatric disabilities
- 47 parents (n = 47)

Needs Assessment & Descriptive Research

- High barriers to service use
- Low income/struggle to meet day-to-day needs
- Lack of meaningful roles
- Low perceived social support
- High stress levels

Who has demands & what kind?

- Parents
- Providers
- Providers
- Providers

What "works" for families living with parental mental illnesses?

Interventions that are:

- Family-Centered
- Interventions
- Interventions
- Interventions

Strengths-Based

- Non-judgmental approach
- Support of parents at adult role model

- Trauma-Informed
- Social environment
- Emotionally stable relationship

- Admit to stress of parent & control

Program Essentials

- Change thoughts & attitudes.
- Develop skills—communication, coping, relationships, parenting.
- Develop resources & supports.
- Restore success.

Goal:

- To create opportunities for people to have success to be successful, to develop the positive sense of self necessary to change the conditions of their lives.

What are the needs of parents with psychiatric disabilities?

- Identiﬁed Needs
  - All have contact with mental health institutions
  - All are satisfied with the quality of care
  - Half express difﬁculties in providing care
  - Support in the relationship with the child
  - Sharing a conversation about one’s problems
  - Educational & legal support
  - Needs related to disabilities
  - Managing socioeconomic status & problems with children
  - Making a plan for the support of children
  - Problems when psychiatric problems increase
  - Organize small meeting groups for parents

Who are the parents?

- Parents
- Providers
- Providers
- Providers

Providers partner with parents to:

- Increase self-awareness.
- Increase knowledge & awareness of children as unique individuals.
- Change thoughts & attitudes.
- Develop skills—communication, coping, relationships, parenting.
- Develop resources & supports.
- Restore success.

Research & Program Development in The Netherlands

- 300 million inhabitants
- 10 million inhabitants

Background Characteristics of Parents Surveyed (n = 47)

- Living in community
- Often single parents
- Low income/struggle to meet day-to-day needs
- High stress levels

Recommndations

- Provide programs for parents in all kinds of settings
- Improve communication about one’s problems with children
- Make a plan for the support of children
- Problems when psychiatric problems increase
- Organize small meeting groups for parents

Parenting with Success & Satisfaction

A research based program for parents with psychiatric disabilities

Marie Nederink & Peter van der Ende

 Evaluation Research: Testing Interventions

I. "Current functioning in the parent role"

- Who am I & who are my child?
- What are the current problems?
- Conflict between parents & child

II. "Strengthen the parent role"

- What are the demands on the parent?
- What are the required tasks?
- Changing the environment
- Tools to deal with stress

II. "Take back the parent role"

- Parents
- Providers
- Providers
- Providers

Contact Information

Joanne Nicholson, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
University of Massachusetts Medical School
Worcester-Massachusetts, USA
Email & Websites
joanne.nicholson@umassmed.edu
www parentingwell.org

References

- Nicholson et al., 1998
- Nicholson et al., 2004
- van der Ende et al., 1996
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A Global Community of Practice

- A Common Path & Shared Vision

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