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

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Introduction
Parenting is a significant life role for adults with psychiatric disabilities. Not only is success in this role one of the life goals many, but success as well as possible as parents would seem to be intimately related to the recovery process and successful functioning in other major life domains. 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 for parents in meeting their children’s needs as well as managing their own.

Generic Parenting Challenges
• Housing
• Employment
• Money management
• Health care

Challenges Specific to Parents with Mental Illness
• Stigma & stereotyping in: mental illness
• Medications
• Hospitalization
• Relationships with in-laws
• Advocacy for self & children
• Child’s perception of parent’s illness
• Family members having child mental illness

What “works” for families living with parental mental illnesses?

Interventions that are:
Family-Centered
• Integration of adult and child services
• Intergenerational collaboration
• Funding to meet family-identified needs

Strengths-Based
• Non-judgmental approach
• Support of parents in all roles

Trauma-Informed
• Safe environment
• Emotionally, dependable relationship
• Attitude of non-judgment & control

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

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

Comparing the U.S. & The Netherlands
• United States — 300 million inhabitants
• The Netherlands — 16 million inhabitants

Research & Program Development in The Netherlands
• What are the needs of parents with psychiatric disabilities?

Identified Needs
• All have contact with mental health institutions
• All were satisfied with the quality of care
• Half judged helpful around personal care
• Support in the relationship with the child
• Starting a conversation about one’s problems
• Educational & legal support
• Needs related to disabilities
• Handling documents,如 tax forms
• Support with housing needs

Program Essentials
• Giving emotional support & warmth
• Stimulating the development of the child
• Listening to the needs of the child
• Organizing & guiding activities
• Teaching abilities to the child
• Meeting needs
• Making social contacts
• Balancing personal and own needs
• Improving communication with the child

Upon creating opportunities for people to have successes, to be successful, to develop the positive sense of self necessary to change the conditions of their lives.

Background Characteristics of Parents Surveyed (n = 47)
• Living in community
• Often single parents
• Low income/stress to meet day-to-day needs
• High barriers to service

Recommendations
• Provide programs for parents in all kinds of settings
• Improve communications about own problems with children
• Make a plan for the support of children
• Where psychiatric problems increase
• Organize small meeting groups for parents

Parenting with Success & Satisfaction
A research based program for parents with psychiatric disabilities

Evaluation Research: Testing Interventions

The Research Question:
What are the effects of “Parenting with Success & Satisfaction” in terms of success, satisfaction, improvement & quality of life? Measuring variables of the intensity of support, the intensity of contact between parent & practitioner will be included.

The design is a non-equivalent control group design, in which the parents for 48 parents participating in the program will be compared with extension for 48 parents receiving care as usual and/or in other locations.

Program Characteristics
• Based on Psychiatric Rehabilitation (Boston – Approach)
• The (Choice-Go) - Keep model
• Connection & provide in individual meetings or parents in groups
• Some components are self-help
• Self-care

I. “Current functioning in the parent role”
• Who am I & who are my children
• Who am I & who is my child
• What is required of the parent
• Conflict: how to spend time & attention for the child

II. “Strengthen the parent role”
• What will be different in the parent role?
• What is required of the parent
• Choosing for solutions
• Training in the environment
• Outcomes & success issues

II. “Take back the parent role”
• Parent’s needs
• Daily activities
• Who have demands & what kind
• Who is responsible
• Who supports?
• Next steps

Needs Assessment & Descriptive Research

Needs Assessment & Descriptive Research

Research & Program Development in The Netherlands

The Netherlands — 16 million inhabitants

U.S. National Comorbidity Survey: Prevalence of Parented Home

The Netherlands — 16 million inhabitants

United States — 290 million inhabitants

Tasks & Barriers to Service Use

Men

Women

Family Mourns Have Overlapping Needs

Who supports?

Who gives support?

What is required of the parent?

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U.S. National Comorbidity Survey: Prevalence of Parented Home

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