

Abstract

The objective of the thesis "The Father's Responsibilities in Caring for Autistic Child" is to explore and evaluate the father's attitudes, his involvements as well as his experiences during the process of nursing a child with autistic condition. The study is conducted via documental analyzes and the interviews with six fathers who are responsible for attending autistic children.

The result of the study reveals the fathers' willingness and acceptance in caring for autistic children and undertaking household chores as their responsibilities to ease the traditional burdens of the mother. This is because the present social and economic climates require her participations beyond the domestic sphere. She must also acts as the source of the family's income. Her potentials would surely decreased or became less effective should the traditional domestic responsibilities are limited solely to the mother. Moreover, children with autistic condition also possess these following problems for their parents:

1. The problem of caring for autistic children, which requires the understanding of their specific conditions and different upbringing methods than normal.

2. The problem of education, which requires different and special curriculums that focus on developing various special skills.

3. Economic problem, especially in the cost of medication and treatment. Even though some cases have received welfare benefits from various government organizations, there are still other unaided expenditures such as the cost of the caretaker. Meanwhile, the children's growth and the livelihoods of their parents are undoubtedly affected in cases that received little or no welfare benefits.

4. The problem of the parents having to readjust their way of life in relation to their own well-beings and the nursing of the autistic children. Other problems also arise in various case studies. Some couples have to alter their personal life, move to different residence or change their work place.

5. The problem of the children's future. This is the main problem that troubled the parents. The anxiety arises from the fear of their children's incompetency to take care of themselves in the future should the parents later become incapable of doing.

6. The problem of prolonged period of treatment. Curing an autistic child is impossible; however, it is possible to develop the child's adaptability to his/her existing condition. Again, such procedure requires lengthen treatment period and high level of consistency.

The fathers' nursing methods in the case studies appear to be quite similar to the ones used on normal children despite the obvious differences autistic children exhibit. The key here is devotion as autistic children think and behave uncommonly.

Hence, the father's responsibilities are not only limited to just solving these problems but also to aid and improve the child's competency in conducting his/her daily routines. The father has to assist the autistic child in adapting and living with other people to function as part of the society. Moreover, emotional and behavioral assistances from the father are a must. They are to help the child lessen any improper conducts, to learn to do the right things at the appropriate times and to develop better emotional growth. Communication assistance would also help the child to interact with others and to articulate his/her needs better. Finally, the father must provide a safe environmental to prevent the child from any danger and to accommodate the child's daily routines to the full. The father uses the following eight methods in caring for an autistic child in order to accomplish these tasks: doing for, coaching, being with, giving preferable things, punishing, ignoring, controlling environment and advocacy.

The result of the studies show that a father who takes full responsibility in taking care of his autistic child greatly engenders positive effects on the child's development, increases the mother's opportunities to participate in events of her interest as well as creates better bonding in the family.