

Street Corner Work with Families

Summary

The paper deals with research conducted within the project „Street corner work with families”. For over a year, the researcher went to places where parents come with preschool children and using the participatory observation method discovered risky situations in which adults due to their incompetence lead children to serious stressful experiences, neglect them, even abuse them, most often not even being aware. Researcher - psychologist, competent therapist, entered risk situations, resolved them and thus relieved stress in children, and parents and other adults - triggers/motors, actuators of crisis situations, informed about what really happened to children and raising their parental competence prevented new similar risk situations. During the implementation of the project, eighteen cases were identified in which children experienced stress. In twelve cases, children were exposed to very high-intensity stress, in four the high-intensity stress was found, and mild in two. There were more women than men among adults whose incompetence led to/caused stress in children, but the difference was not statistically significant. In addition to presenting characteristic situations in which children were exposed to neglect or violence, the paper provides analyses of the development and resolution of crisis situations and their outcomes for children and adults. It turned out that in an equal number of situations they were resolved by changing the focus of parental attention from some other content to the child and meeting the child's needs, i. e. stopping stress at the highest point and getting out of it with bringing the child to catharsis after the parent under researcher's/ expert's influence focused on the child. In one case it was not possible to eliminate sources of stress due to the impossibility of reaching the family, and in one case the cessation of the child's exposure to stressful situations was conditioned by the action of several institutions. The project has shown that this form of work is feasible and useful and that, in addition to helping to resolve current stressful situations, it also has preventive effects.

Key Words: *field education, education for social work, field practice, experiential learning, reflection, mentors, students*