

## Abstract

Topic: Supporting family in the space of a dysfunctional family. Theory and reality.

This paper treats about the topic of supporting families in the space of a dysfunctional family. This is an important topic both from the point of view of the theory of support for families in crisis and the practice of assistance activities. This is the first study in Poland, which describes the functioning of supportive families.

The subject of the study was to determine the specificity and real significance of the activities undertaken by supporting families, in the process of supporting dysfunctional families, in the context of the adopted theoretical assumptions described in the Polish Law on supporting the family, and foster care system. In the course of research inquiries, the aim was to describe the problem, which, for the purposes of this dissertation, was formulated as follows: What is the real meaning of the functioning of a supporting family in the living space of a dysfunctional family?

Three research goals were formulated, which were focused on the supporting family as a form of support in the local environment. During the collection of documentation, a qualitative strategy was used, which allows for the collection and analysis of retrospective experiences of people participating in the study. Due to the lack of scientific studies it was considered that the experiences of supporting families would be the most reliable research material, which was then analyzed. Nine supportive families participated in the study, which was conducted using the problem-focused interview method. The obtained material (recording of interviews) was transcribed and then operationalized on the basis of four research categories.

This dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion and bibliography. The first, theoretical chapter presents multi-problem and dysfunctional families from a systemic perspective.

The changing trends regarding both the care of an abandoned child and legal acts relating to the protection of the family are presented. In this context, activities for the family and social support are characterized. The last issue presented in this chapter is an attempt to define the functioning of families supporting.

The second chapter describes the methodological assumptions of the undertaken research activities. The motivation for choosing the topic of the dissertation is presented, and the strategy of qualitative research is characterized. The subject of the research, the goals of the work and the research problem are defined. Operationalized research categories, methods and techniques were presented. In this part of the work, the study group is also characterized.

The third chapter is empirical - it presents an analysis of the collected material, conducted on the basis of research categories and available literature on the subject. The results of the conducted research are the conclusions presented below.

The process of becoming a supportive family is greatly simplified - nothing more is required from potential candidates than statutory requirements, which are quite superficial considering the roles and tasks assigned to supporting families.

Assistance activities for the benefit of the supported family are not formalized in any way. They take the form of spontaneous activities adapted to the family situation or current needs reported by the family with dysfunctions. Therefore, there is no specific work plan, goals nor canon of support methods that could be used by supporting families.

The participation of a social worker in the process of appointing supporting families and in subsequent activities is usually limited to conducting a social interview. On the other hand, the family assistant, due to the specific nature of the profession, is present at every stage of the supporting family's functioning. It is also one of the first people to whom families turn to with various problems.

The overall assessment of support for a dysfunctional family in the opinion of the study participants is positive. Despite the difficulties encountered or problems that could not be overcome, people involved in this form of support assess it as a positive impact, far from arbitrary coercion or institutional formalization. Perhaps the key to the success of any form of help is the lack of formal requirements, and the role of the supporting family is based only on accompanying, not helping or giving advice. Supporting families are an element that releases human resources, which should lead to an

improvement in the functioning of a dysfunctional family, especially with regard to support and care for minor children.

The conducted research confirms the belief that it is necessary to conduct further research aimed at learning about the conditions of functioning of families supporting, among others- in the sphere of developing social services in the field of social support. It would also be interesting to extend the conducted research (in this dissertation) to learn the point of view on the importance of supporting families from the perspective of supported families, social workers and residents of local communities from which supporting families come.