

CLINICAL WORK ON POST ADOPTION IN ITALY

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Abstract

Introduction

The psychological-clinical attention for the families who have adopted a child can respond to different needs or demands. Maybe the family itself asks for a consultation, be it due to their own difficulties or suggested by the paediatrician, the school, etc. Or it may arise from a proposal by the specialised teams who work in the area of adoption. Also the kind of clinical activity can be varied, can be a therapeutic task with the adoptive parents individually or as a couple, with the adopted child, with the family nucleus as a group or it can be a task for reflexion support for the family that is being formed, with individual interviews with each family, with therapeutic family assessment or with groups of parents at the same time with groups of children.

The arrival and following integration of the adopted child into the family, determines that each one of the adults that has comprised the couple or family, brings new modifications to the model of the internal relationship, to the affective dynamics, related to the husband or wife (and/or with any children): if they are only two, the changes to pass from being a couple to being a couple of parents.

This process which represents one part of the couple's cycle of life, needs an activation in each of the people involved, from affectivity they have and which has been activated in the previous phase of the life cycle, in the passage of the individual to becoming part of a couple.

The professionals' job in the postadoptive period has the objective to help the adults and consequently the children, to tolerate their doubts, the affective instability; to construct new and different bonds. The systematic observation carried out over time, on the new adoptive families have made us think that working with them is accepted and productive if between the couple and the professionals there is a relationship and dialogue in the phases prior to the adoption process. This enables the parents to ask for help in difficult moments, in the evolutive crises or to face or verify how they are using their own resources in their new role as parents.

The involved professionals' capacity to observe, to listen and to become involved in the triple relationship that is being created favours the development of fruitful work during the postadoptive period.

For this reason we think it is opportune for groups of parents to participate together, not immediately but a few months after adding the child to the family, initially supporting the family with individual interviews and or home visits.

To be able to observe the internal movements and the relationship dynamics of the new parents, to read the verbal and non verbal communication, to observe the emotional climate that the family has constructed, to replace certain observations, supporting those parts of the parents most in contact with the child's needs, who give most relief to the suffering, do not represent only a support for the family but also is an important prevention task.

We consider that the modality of group support for the parents, during the postadoption, should be carried out in the first 2 years. The changes to them in this period of emotional dimension of every member of the family, can be of an evolutive kind or present conflictive aspects that can cause difficulties or obstruct

the process of child bonding. It is very important during this period of time to have the sufficient elements to formulate an early diagnosis that enables an understanding of the resources that the family possesses. To overcome the difficulties, or to recognise if a situation of psychopathic problems is being created which could damage the adoption process.

For this reason the support work via groups of parents, in the post adoption period and the parallel observation of the groups with children, permits a greater understanding of the interactive dynamics in the first year of living together.

These groups are formed by 10 couples of adoptive parents and are led by two professionals, generally a psychologist and a Social Worker, plus two observers. The frequency is every 15 days with a total of 8 two hour sessions.

The children participate in parallel groups only over 4 years of age, trying to form groups of children with chronological ages or similar development, that is 4 to 6 year olds, 6 to 10 year olds, preteenagers.

The groups of children or teenagers (10 or over if there is the adoption of siblings) are guided by a leader and an observer, two educators or psychologists also participate in the formation, who collaborate with the leader in the development of group activities.

The emotional aspects, the latent anxieties both of the parents and the children, create an area for expression that favours the integration and development of their own identity, in the group and the minds of the professionals who are guiding them. The leaders encourage the expression of the past temporary historic dimension, past, present and future in the group via verbal expression (by the adults) and ludic (by the children) stimulating the capacity to communicate, to think, also those aspects that in other ways would not be mentionable

Bibliography

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