

MICROMODULE SYLLABUS

Family Support

Lesson 4: How to support to family?

Introduction:

This module introduces some types of family support according to the level of involvement of professionals and classifies types of support. Among these types, counselling helps parents be more proactive in raising their children and promoting their roles. Group consultation and support are widely used to support parents of children with disabilities.

The aim of this learning task is:

- To able to explain the need for many levels and types of support for families.
- To give comments on the current status of support activities for families of children with disabilities in Vietnam through the information provided.
- To describe the current status of support services for families of children with disabilities in your locality.

Task instructions:

- *Group discussion and answer the questions:*

1. Why are there different types of support for families?

2. What do you think about the current status of activities supporting families of children with disabilities in Vietnam?

- *Make a presentation about the current status of support services for families of children with disabilities in your locality*

Module information:

4.1. Classification of family support levels

Support is assistance, mutual help or additional help. Support includes many levels from consultation, consulting, training to coaching. There are many types of support activities.

- ***Based on the level of participation and impact of professionals on the changes of parents and families*** : Can be divided into levels of support including: Consultation, Consulting, Training Parent Training and Parent Coaching.



Diagram: Types of family support

Consultation: is giving advice, suggestions and specific action plans to parents to solve current, immediate problems. Parents consider and choose how to solve the problem among the options given.

Counseling is the practice of providing suggestions, advice, and professional help to support parents increase their ability to cope with difficult problems they encounter. Consulting activities include many interactions and exchanges between professionals and parents/families to build relationships, learn to identify problems, and then the person being consulted solves the problem themselves. Consulting is more aimed at long-term goals than consultation. That is to help individuals improve their own capacity and have enough psychological and spiritual strength to face other situations in the future. Counselors do not provide solutions for parents to choose from, but often provide activities for parents to be self-aware, understand themselves, proactively find appropriate solutions and implement it.

Parent Training: Is the provision and transfer of knowledge and skills to parents and families. During this process, there is practice to form skills. Parent training is often organized into sessions and courses that may or may not include evaluation of training effectiveness.

Parent Coaching: Is improving knowledge or skills for parents to develop themselves, helping them actively participate and be able to solve problems themselves. During the coaching process, parents are guided to set their own goals, wishes to achieve, or situations they wish to improve. A coach is a supporter and companion to help parents achieve their own and their family's goals.

- ***In terms of organizational form*** : There are levels of individual support and group support.

Individual support is a form of direct support for each family, working between a professional and a family, using a family-centred approach. This is a level of support that meets the needs of each family.

Group support is a way of gathering families into groups and organizing group support activities. In groups, there are usually experts and people with expertise leading and orienting. Group members are different families, voluntarily forming groups to participate in activities, share information together and help each other. By working in groups, after being oriented by professionals, families can connect, learn, and exchange experiences about what should and should not do. From there, each family can learn from others experiences and apply to their own situations. This is the level of support based on community outreach, families are highly proactive in participating and implementing support from the group.

4.2. Support for families and parents of children with disabilities

The need for support for families with disabled children is various. The level of support depends on the child's disability, time of diagnosis, or stage of intervention. Therefore, there are many levels of support and support programs for families and parents.

In the research work "*Model of early detection, early intervention and education for children with autism spectrum disorders in Vietnam based on family and community*" by authors Pham Minh Muc, Nguyen Thi Kim Hoa (2021) , the authors point out that: "To well implement the model of early detection and early intervention for children with autism, it is necessary to have the synchronization and consistency of family-society, active participation and initiative of parents of

children with autism, parents have a leading role under the guidance of experts and the participation in a spirit of cooperation, positivity, and enthusiasm of community members.

Author Thanh Ngoc Minh and colleagues (2019) in the research of *"Community-based early intervention process for autistic children"* proposed a community-based early intervention process for children with autism, with the content: "parent training process, child- and family-centered intervention activities with the participation of a multidisciplinary team of experts. Parents are provided with knowledge and skills about children with autism, parents practice direct intervention for their children under the guidance of a group of experts, parents are supported in different forms such as: providing and instructions for using documents, sample intervention videos, instructions for using medication (if any), finding local sources of help, and being able to exchange and share knowledge and experiences between parents on how to teach children with autism at home"

Stoner and colleagues (2013) with the project "Parent-Implemented Communication Strategies (PiCS) Project) have trained and coached parents of children with developmental disorders in a systematic way. Specifically about intervention strategies for children, organize and guide parents through a 5-step process starting from sharing vision and goals, to guiding on goal setting, and organizing parents to implement them and evaluate parents' progress.

Group support for parents of children with autism is considered one of the approaches and methods of support for parents of children with disabilities in general, and parents of children with autism in particular.

Barnett and colleagues (since 2003) have applied a form of group support

for parents of children with autism in the locality where their children live. The special education expert organized the following steps: Gathering parents into groups, organizing meetings, working sessions, and discussions at the local community cultural center. Group support activities are conducted in about 6 to 8 sessions, lasting about 3 to 6 months. Group members are able to share feelings, concerns, be provided with documents, jointly determine educational goals and share child care and education techniques. Parents participating in the support group are limited to parents of children who are preschool age or older and their children have been diagnosed within the past 6 months, so that they can find general needs for child development. Parents of newborns should not join the group because this stage needs to focus on diagnosing and determining the child's symptoms. Support results show a change in the feeling of attachment to the child, a better understanding of the reality of the child's condition, and a more forward-looking view of the child's future development (Barnett et al., 2003).

The authors Banach et al. (2010) also conducted group support for parents of children with autism in the post-diagnosis stage. The study organized a total of 6 activity sessions, including sharing documents, chatting, exchanging information, understanding, sharing, and expressing emotions. After this process, the parents' sense of confidence, belief in their own abilities and skills is enhanced, and they can face the reality of their child's needs and participate in supporting them. In the support team, the role of the special education teacher is very important. In a study by this group of authors in 2012 (Banach et al., 2012), group members were supplemented with social workers, helping to increase the effectiveness of supporting parents.

In summary, group support for parents of children with autism is one way to conduct family support. When organizing group support activities, people with education-related expertise will gather parents. Parents are volunteer to participate in this type of support, professionals such as special education teachers will lead and coordinate the meeting. More or less activities can be organized in the group depending on the leader's consideration, but they all aim to provide diverse psychological support, equipping knowledge and skills for parents of children with autism. The results of group support help parents increase their positive emotion and gain more knowledge and skills in caring for and educating their children.

Story: Current status of supporting families of children with disabilities in Vietnam:

In Vietnam, there are also a number of parent group and club models such as “The Club for Vietnamese Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder” - a member of the Vietnam Association of People with Disabilities and the ASEAN Autism Association. This organization was established in October 2002 with the purpose of creating an environment to share experiences and scientific knowledge about special education for autistic children, helping autistic children have the opportunity to integrate into the community and at the same time improve their skills, raising awareness throughout society about autistic children, helping families detect early signs of autism so that their children can receive timely intervention, enhancing social concern and responsibility for autism disorder. In general, the Club’s activities aims at supporting children with autism spectrum disorder to easily access to education, employment and medical care

services. In recent years, the Club has cooperated with many professionals or organizations to organize courses to help improve parental skills and created an open environment where parents can share their difficulties and support each other.

Vietnam Autism Network (VAN) is “an organization of parents, families of autistic people, autistic people themselves, private and public organizations, and people working related to autism spectrum disorder. This network was established in August 2013 with the following activities: Sharing knowledge and experience with parents; Policy advocacy; Media to raise community awareness about autism; Collaborate to implement programs and projects that bring benefits to the autism community.

In the comprehensive care and education of children, the Parent Education Program in comprehensive care and development of children is a coordinated activity between the Vietnam Women's Union and the Plan organization deployed in the ethnic minorities in 9 provinces in the Northern, Central and Central Highlands regions (Ha Giang, Thai Nguyen, Phu Tho, Bac Giang, Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Quang Ngai, Gia Lai, Kon Tum) to promote participation of parents and community in comprehensive care and education of children. Parents of children with developmental disorders and parents of children with autism in each province and city have groups and associations where parents can exchange, search for information and learn through forums on social networks. However, this group is spontaneous, so there are no experts and key teachers to advise and support parents closely and in detail. The information given for exchange is sometimes subjective and not highly official, parents are still struggling to find methods to teach their children at home.

References:

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