

Current issues in dissability studies activity 6



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What do you think are the key issues in parent-professional collaboration and how are the boundaries for the collaboration developed? Post your thoughts on FLO.

Interacting and working with the support groups and professionals is never without difficulty for families with a child or children that have special needs. Transformation happens almost everyday as brought about by new experiences with other people and other significant persons for families with a child with special needs (Scorgie & Sobsey, 2000). As much as these parents desire to have their children reach their fullest potential, they often find interacting with a wide range of service providers another challenge than what they already have. Their requests for help has often result in increased parental stress due to the fact that their needs and their children's needs may not always be in agreement with professionals about what constitutes actions that are helpful (Prezant, & Marshak 2006). A number of disability-related literature proposed that problems with the provision or absence of help are often reported by respondents in these categories. For example, a study of 120 parents conducted by Prezant, & Marshak (2006) that narrated the parents' actual experiences over the kind of help that they got from their collaboration with professionals suggest that not all the help they got from these professionals are perceived as truly appropriate. Parents reported that although some are perceived as helpful collaboration, still they desire a relationship with professionals that focus on respect, collaboration, communication, and information-sharing.

Relate any experiences that you may have had in working with people/families from a different cultural background from your own. What did these experiences teach you, or if you have had no such experiences yet,

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what are your thoughts on working with families from diverse cultural backgrounds? Post your thoughts on FLO.

There are quite a number of experiences that I can relate to based on the readings. Teaching children with autism in Saudi Arabia has been quite an experience such that the cultural background and approaches differ from that of my strategies and their expectations. It has been quite a challenge at first since in order to help the children, I also have to make the parents understand why such action or strategy is important because sometimes, it contradicts with what they believe. The challenge mainly was that sometimes, the consistency of the strategies applied for children with autism ends in school as the parents have different views and approaches very unique to their culture. But despite of this, I find parents in Saudi Arabia cooperative in general. They have faith in the teacher and although they have different belief and approach, they put so much respect on the teacher's strategies. Based from this experience, I learned that the cultural difference also play a major role in defining the kind of help that these children needs. The contradicting views and level of support may be affected by the fact that some of the approaches and strategies a professional may do may be in contrast with how such approach is seen in different cultural perspective. I believe that being flexible and open to other helpful insights can help any professional in achieving understanding cultural differences. Post your comments on FLO on any one of the readings for this week. What was it about the reading that impressed you? Were there any concerns or criticisms you had of the reading? Remember to be specific about the reading to which you are referring.

The reading on “ Helpful actions seen through the eyes of parents of children

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with disabilities” has been particularly interesting for me considering my experiences before. As professional in mental health and social work, it cannot be avoided that sometimes, we see the situation as something that we can fix given the fact that we have plenty of experience in the field. According to Prezant & Marshak, (2006) the boundaries for collaboration may be exhibited by the fact that some support groups and professionals failed to consider that parents too have insights regarding their children’s situation since they are the direct persons to which these children have daily life interactions. Hence, it was suggested that all possible actions professionals can take, listening and respecting input, according to parents, are the number one desired behaviour. I believe listening is the most important and the very first thing that should be done by any professional given the fact that parents are families are the very first support group that see and experience the situation. We can truly gain insights from them.

References:

1. Gormly, Ann V. (1993). *Understanding Psychology*. New York. Random House.
2. Prezant, F. P., & Marshak, L. (2006). Helpful actions seen through the eyes of parents of children with disabilities. *Disability and society*. National Center for Disability Services, USA; Indiana university of Pennsylvania, USA. Vol. 21, No. 1 pp. 31-45.
3. Scorgie, K., and Sobsey, D. (2000). Transformational outcomes associated with parenting children who have disabilities. *Mental retardation*. Vol. 38., No. 3 pp. 195-206.