

Family support for people suffering from mental disabilities in Malaysia

Through the eyes of family members with children suffering from developmental disabilities

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The current research focused on the effectiveness of establishing a family psycho-education group in order to lower the level of expressed emotions (EE) family members had towards their children who are suffering from developmental disabilities, and at the same time, their own secondary problems (Depression and Anxiety). A total of 5 educational groups were established with each session containing a half hour psycho-education and 1.5 hours of group talk. 3 questionnaires which are the Family Attitude Scale, Beck's Depression Inventory, and Beck's Anxiety Inventory were used in the current research and after all the sessions had ended, a semi-structured interview was also conducted. Results were positive with the average score for all three questionnaires dropping. As to the semi-constructed interview, a thematic analysis was adopted to identify patterns. Results revealed two patterns as to how EE can be related to secondary problems; 1) family members first displayed emotional over-involvement before suffering from secondary problems and, 2) family members who were displaying hostility and critical comments suffered from secondary problems first before displaying such attitudes. Since results proved to be positive, it can be said that the possibility of establishing a family psycho-educational group in Malaysia is rather high.